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YANKTON DAILY

PRESS & DAKOTAN



MMC Women Race To Victory Over Hastings ■ 8

HEALTHY LUNCHES



KELLY HERTZ/P&D

Yankton School District cook Laurie LaCroix prepares vegetables to be distributed Tuesday to the various public schools in the daily school lunches that the district offers. The USDA recently loosened some of the strict new guidelines it had imposed on school lunches, but caloric limitations are still in place.

Changes To New School Lunch Regulations Allow More Flexibility

BY DEREK BARTOS
derek.bartos@yankton.net

When Yankton School District food services director Sandi Kramer read the first few lines of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) latest rules for school nutrition programs last month, she was excited.

In response to public feedback criticizing the previous guidelines implemented at the beginning of the school year, the USDA had decided to relax its restrictions and allow more meat and grains in meals.

"But then I read the rest of it, and the calorie restrictions were still the same," Kramer said. "It didn't give us a whole lot to work with."

The students and staff at the Yankton schools have since worked to adjust to the latest rules. And while Kramer said the changes weren't as helpful as she had hoped, they have provided some flexibility.

"It's a little step in the right direction," she said. "For example, I was stressing on pasta days with the breadstick and the amount of pasta we could give them to go with it without being over on the breads and grains. Now I can relax a little bit with that."

Kramer said the relaxed guidelines

also allow her to add food with more substance when completing a meal. Previously, the schools often had to use food with "empty calories," such as potato chips, in order to stay within the meat and grains limit, she said.

"It's kind of ridiculous, giving food that really did not have a nutritional value to it just to make up the calories," she said. "Now at least when we make up the calories, we can make it up in proteins and grains."

Even though the rule changes have helped, Kramer said she still wishes the USDA would raise the meals' calorie limits, which have been at the forefront of the nationwide criticism of the program. School lunches are currently limited to 650 calories for elementary students, 700 for middle school students and 850 for high school students, and many students have complained about not getting enough to eat, she said.

"Our hands are still tied on a lot of things," she said. "It doesn't take long to fill those calories."

Kramer added that while she thinks the lunches should include more calories, the current limits do provide enough food for students in most cases.

LUNCH | PAGE 3

A Hot Topic

2012 Was The Hottest Year On Record For South Dakota And Nebraska

BY NATHAN JOHNSON
nathan.johnson@yankton.net

Nebraska and South Dakota had their warmest years on record in 2012, according to preliminary findings by the NOAA National Climatic Data Center.

They were not alone, as a total of 19 states across the nation experienced their warmest year on record. In addition, 26 more states had one of their 10 warmest years.

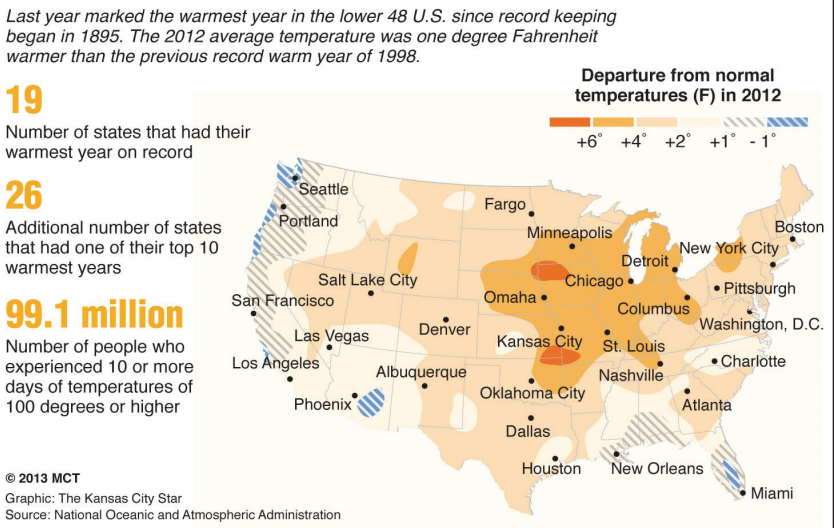
"In 2012, the contiguous United States (CONUS) average annual temperature of 55.3 degrees Fahrenheit was 3.3 degrees above the 20th century average, and was the warmest year in the 1895-2012 period of record for the nation," the NOAA writes in its 2012 State of the Climate report.

It adds, "Precipitation averaged across the CONUS in 2012 was 26.57 inches, which is 2.57 inches below the 20th century average. Precipitation totals in 2012 ranked as the 15th driest year on record."

In fact, Nebraska was one of two states that saw not only its hottest year on record, but also its driest.

"Below-average precipitation totals stretched from the Intermountain West, through the Great Plains, into the Midwest and Southeast," the report states. "Nebraska and Wyoming were both record dry in 2012. Nebraska's annual precipitation total of 13.04 inches was 9.78 inches below average, and Wyoming's annual precipitation total of 8.08 inches was 5.09

Record hot year for Midwest — and U.S.



inches below average."

South Dakota, meanwhile, had its 13th driest year on record with 14.45 inches of rain, which is 4.03 inches below the 20th Century average.

The footprint of drought in the CONUS during 2012, the report states, roughly equaled the drought of the 1950s and peaked at approximately 65 percent.

Meanwhile, the average temperature in Nebraska was 3.8 degrees above average, breaking the 1934 record of 3.7 degrees above normal.

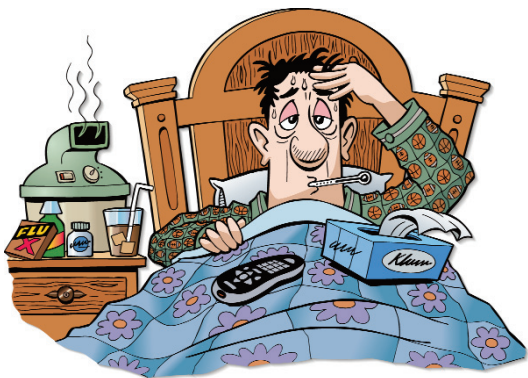
According to the High Plains Regional Climate Center (HPRCC), Norfolk, Neb.; Scottsbluff, Neb.; and

Valentine, Neb., had their warmest years on record.

The NOAA reported that 2012 included the second-highest seasonal anomaly on record in Nebraska. The spring was 8 degrees above normal. The biggest anomaly on record was the winter of 1991-92, when temperatures were 8.2 degrees above average.

The average temperature in South Dakota was 4.4 degrees above normal, making it the hottest since records began in 1895. It broke the previous record set in 1931, which was 4.2 degree above normal.

HEAT | PAGE 11



Flu Season Off To An Early, Active Start

BY NATHAN JOHNSON
nathan.johnson@yankton.net

The flu season is here early, and officials don't know how long it will stay.

Through Dec. 29, the latest date for which statistics are available from the South Dakota Department of Health, 409 cases of influenza had been lab confirmed in the state. Last year's total for the season was 505 cases.

Yankton has not been spared, according to Jan Johnson, an infectious disease specialist at Avera Sacred Heart Hospital. She said the hospital is now seeing flu patients daily since activity really began to ramp up in December.

"More than half of those that

come in with flu-like symptoms are testing positive for influenza," Johnson stated. "It is mostly influenza A, but a small percentage are testing positive for influenza B."

She said it is usually February or March before such a high volume of flu cases occur.

During the last flu season, the state reported five confirmed cases at this point.

The Centers for Disease Control reports that, as of Dec. 29, 41 states had widespread geographic influenza activity. South Dakota was one of seven states that reported only regional activity.

FLU | PAGE 11

Neb. Legislature Battles Loom In 2013 Session

BY GRANT SCHULTE
Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — The Nebraska Legislature chose a new speaker, elected new committee leaders and welcomed 10 new lawmakers Wednesday as it began a new session with looming battles over tax cuts and spending.

Lawmakers returned to Lincoln with the state facing a projected \$194 million budget shortfall, far less than the \$1 billion hole they had to fill when they last wrote a budget in 2011.

The 90-day session will see 10 new members and mark the return of Sen. Ernie Chambers, of Omaha. All were sworn into office Wednesday morning. Chambers, the longest-serving and best-known state senator in Nebraska history, is returning after term limits forced him out of office four years ago.

Lawmakers also chose a new speaker, Sen. Greg Adams, of York, to replace the term-limited Sen. Mike Flood, of Norfolk. Adams, who was unopposed, said he would bring "an agenda of fairness, above all else" to the officially nonpartisan Legislature.

"I'm humbled by the responsibilities of this position — a responsibility to all of you, a responsibility to the citizens of Nebraska and a responsibility to this wonderful institution," Adams told his colleagues.

SESSION | PAGE 11

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