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Farmers: Drainage Key To Surviving Drought

BY ORLAN LOVE
Associated Press Writer

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa — Counterintuitive as it may seem, farm fields with the best tile drainage systems generally produced the highest yields during last year's drought, area farmers and other experts say.

"I saw that right away in the first field I harvested this fall," said Marion-area farmer Curt Zingula.

Zingula said he became "100 percent convinced" of the benefits of tile in a dry year when he observed a disappointing harvest of soybeans on his traditionally wettest field.

"My conclusion is that you have a better soil structure yielding better root growth in well-drained fields," he said.

Tracy Franck of Quasqueton said dips in his combine yield monitor data showed him exactly which of his Buchanan County fields were most in need of more tile.

Iowa State University Extension field agronomists reported similar findings at a meeting in October, according to drainage tile expert Matt Helmers, an associate professor of agricultural and biosciences engineering at ISU.

Better yields on better-drained soil "was common this year," Helmers said.

While it may seem counterproductive to drain subsoil water away from plants in a drought year, "tiling removes only excess water. It does not reduce the amount of plant-available water," Helmers said.

Tile drains soil only to the depth of the tile — typically between 3 and 4 feet — so it does not affect water stored below that depth, said Gene Blazek, whose company, Blazek Corporation of Lawler, installs agricultural drain tile along with its specialty, sewer and water system repairs.

Well-drained soil encourages deep and healthy root systems, which in 2012 enabled corn to tap subsoil moisture to depths well below 5 feet, said Blazek, a past president of the Iowa Land Improvement Contractors Association.

"Tile is always a plus, even in dry years," said Blazek's brother, Don Blazek, who farms near Lawler.

"You pay for tile, whether you have it or not," Don Blazek said.

Thorough tiling of formerly undrained land can increase corn yields as much as 50 bushels per acre, he said.

Increasing tile density on already tilled fields will typically increase yields from 5 percent to

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AN EMPLOYER'S DUTY



KELLY HERTZ/P&D
Tami Keller of Yankton's Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Home has been honored with the Patriot Award from the Department of Defense's Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) agency. She was nominated by Bravo Battery Pfc. Jordan Schurman (pictured with Keller) because of Keller's efforts to provide him with flexible hours for his National Guard duties.

Yankton Woman Honored With Patriot Award

BY DEREK BARTOS
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As a funeral director at the Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Home in Yankton, Tami Keller has witnessed the sacrifices of soldiers and their families.

"Unfortunately we've been on the awful side of bringing our soldiers home and putting them to rest instead of greeting them off of buses," Keller said.

Seeing this firsthand, along with having a son in the Air Force, has inspired her to go above and beyond in her support for local soldiers, she said. Whether it's supporting fundraisers for local troops, keeping in touch with families who have lost loved ones or assisting employees in the military, Keller has tried to help whenever possible.

"We try to support them as much as we can, wherever they are," Keller said. "They might not be overseas, but you still have to support them 100 percent, 365 days a year."

Keller was honored recently for that support

with the Patriot Award from the Department of Defense's Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) agency. The award recognizes supervisors and bosses nominated by a Guardsman or Reservist employee for support provided directly to the nominator.

According to the ESGR, the Patriot Award reflects the efforts made to support citizen soldiers through a wide range of measures, including flexible schedules, time off prior to and after deployment, caring for families and granting leaves of absence, if needed.

"I was shocked when I got this," Keller said about the award. "It is a wonderful honor."

The funeral director was nominated for the award by Pfc. Jordan Schurman of the South Dakota Army National Guard's Bravo Battery unit of Yankton.

Schurman, who is employed at the fu-

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NRA: Ban On Assault Weapons Won't Pass

BY EILEEN SULLIVAN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The powerful gun lobby is gauging enough support in Congress to block a law that would ban assault weapons, despite promises from the White House and senior lawmakers to make such a measure a reality.

Senators plan to introduce a bill that would ban assault weapons and limit the size of ammunition magazines, like the one used in the December shooting massacre that killed 27 people, most of them children, in Newtown, Conn. Democratic Sen. Dianne Feinstein of California has promised to push for a renewal of expired legislation.

The National Rifle Association has so far prevented passage of another assault weapons ban like the one that expired in 2004. But some lawmakers say the Newtown tragedy has transformed the country, and Americans are ready for stricter gun laws. President Barack Obama has made gun control a top priority. And on Tuesday Vice President Joe Biden is expected to give Obama a comprehensive package of recommendations for curbing gun violence.

Still, the NRA has faith that Congress would prevent a new weapons ban. "When a president takes all the power of his office, if he's willing to expend political capital, you don't want to make predictions. You don't want to bet your house on the outcome. But I would say that the likelihood is that they are not going to be able to get an assault weapons ban through this Congress," NRA president David Keene told CNN's "State of the Union."

Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., responded with a flat out "no" when asked on CBS' "Face the Nation" whether Congress would pass a ban on assault weapons.

Democratic West Virginia Sen. Joe Manchin, a lifelong member of the NRA has said everything should be on the table to

Gun Show Group Says Attendance Is Up At Annual Events

BROOKING (AP) — A spokesman for a group holding gun shows throughout the Dakotas says the number of participating collectors and vendors are on the rise this winter.

The 11th annual Brookings Gun Show this weekend is the second of 11 events scheduled by the Dakota Territory Gun Collectors Association through the spring.

Group spokesman Vic Carter tells KSFY-TV that the Brookings show has space for 340 booths, all of which were rented. He says the event has drawn vendors from North Dakota, South Dakota and other states.

Carter says the talk about gun control following the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting has led to higher prices. He believes sales will return to normal once the debate settles down.

The group will hold its next show in Bismarck, N.D., this weekend.

prevent another tragedy like Newtown. But he assured gun owners he would fight for gun rights at the same time. "I would tell all of my friends in NRA, I will work extremely hard and I will guarantee you there will not be an encroachment on your Second Amendment rights," Manchin said on ABC's "This Week."

The NRA's deep pockets help bolster allies and punish lawmakers who buck them. The group spent at least \$24 million in the

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KELLY HERTZ/P&D
Yankton school board member Kathy Greenway was recently named to the Associated School Boards of South Dakota (ASBSD) board of directors. Her four-year term on the board begins next month.

Greenway Named To State Board

YSD School Board Member Gives Back To Group That Mentored Her

BY DEREK BARTOS
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When Yankton School Board member Kathy Greenway was elected to the board nearly four years ago, one of the first things she did was look for guidance on how to approach the new position.

She found it with the Associated School Boards of South Dakota (ASBSD).

A private, nonprofit organization, the ASBSD provides services and support to local school boards and local school districts. It offers a variety of training events related to the governance of public education, such as classes on finance

and parliamentary procedure, and Greenway took full advantage of those opportunities.

"I just wanted to try to wrap my arms around as much information as I could so that when I became a board member, I could hit the ground running," Greenway said. "The Associated School Board has been a great resource for me for my professional growth."

Having benefited from the ASBSD's assistance, Greenway has sought an opportunity to help others like her, and now has a chance to do so. She was recently elected to the ASBSD's board of directors.

"I've utilized the resources of the Associated School Boards for the four years that I've been on the board, and I look at this as an opportunity to give back to that division and to be able to provide more outreach and support to those

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South Dakota

Blood Run About To Become New Park

BY DIRK LAMMERS
Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS — After years of private fundraising and piecing together property parcels that for centuries were home to thousands of Native Americans, South Dakota officials are ready to make the picturesque acreage along the Big Sioux River a state destination.

Gov. Dennis Daugaard in his State of the State speech last week said that he's introducing a bill to designate the 600-acre Blood Run nature area as South Dakota's 13th state park.

And the governor is asking for \$2 million in general funds to make the first phase of improvements and build a visitor's center within two years, said Doug Hofer, parks and recreation director for the state Game, Fish and Parks Department.

Officials this past summer opened the property 11 miles southeast of Sioux Falls for

self-guided hikes and appointment-only tours led by a veteran interpreter-historian.

Hofer said the response has been overwhelming. He counted 20 cars on the site when he visited with his grandchildren during a Sunday afternoon in mid-October.

"The interest is there," Hofer said. "Once we're able to move forward with providing more interpretation, more information about the history of the area, improve the hiking trails and ultimately build a visitors' center there, I think it's going to become extremely popular."

The acreage along the Big Sioux River bordering Iowa was used by thousands of Oneota Indians into the early 1700s, and its diverse landscape boasts a large oak forest, rolling hills, flood plains and riverside bluffs. The site has a story to tell, holding historically rich burial mounds, refuse pits and artifacts.

"Long before white settlers came to what is now South Dakota, a number of Native Ameri-

can tribes gathered along a winding, wooded creek to trade, bury loved ones and establish bonds of peace and friendship," Daugaard said in his address last week. "Rolling hills, broad floodplains, rock-covered burial mounds and steep riverside bluffs mark the area, one of the oldest sites of long-term habitation in America."

The \$2 million in state funds will be matched with \$2 million in private donations being raised by the South Dakota Parks and Wildlife Foundation. The department is also shifting \$1 million from its budget to the project.

Foundation fundraiser Dick Brown said the effort commitment will help turn Blood Run into a destination location for eastern South Dakota on par with what Custer State Park does for the Black Hills.

"It really will become the premier state park of the east, similar to what Custer is out here," Brown said.

EXPRESSIONS



KELLY HERTZ/P&D
The Yankton Children's Choir presented its winter concert, titled "Vocal Expressions," Sunday afternoon at the Riverview Reformed Church in Yankton. The choir, directed by Deb Kruse and accompanied by Dixie Church, performed a variety of numbers, ranging from "Let There Be Peace" and Mozart's "Ave Verum Corpus" to "You've Got a Friend in Me" from the movie "Toy Story." To see or purchase images from this event, visit spotted.yankton.net.

