



Mainly Sunny And Breezy

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Neb. Gov. OKs Pipeline Route

New Keystone XL Path Would Avoid Sandhills

BY GRANT SCHULTE
Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — Nebraska Gov. Dave Heineman approved a new route for the Keystone XL oil pipeline on Tuesday that avoids the state's environmentally sensitive Sandhills region.

The Republican governor sent a letter to President Barack Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton saying he would allow the pipeline to proceed through his state.

His announcement came one day after Obama promised in his inauguration speech to tackle climate change during his second term. Pipeline opponents have urged the president to deny a federal

permit for the project, which is required because the Canada-to-Texas pipeline crosses an international border. Obama rejected the original proposal for the pipeline last year and later agreed to let construction begin on a southern leg of the project starting in Cushing, Okla.

The project has faced some of its strongest resistance in Nebraska from a coalition of landowners and environmental groups that say it would contaminate the Ogallala aquifer, a massive groundwater supply. Canadian pipeline developer TransCanada and some unions say the project is safe and will create thousands of jobs.

Surveys commissioned by the University of Nebraska, independent polling firms and industry-

backed groups have shown that most Nebraska residents support the project itself, but wanted a route that avoided both the Sandhills and the Ogallala aquifer. Public outrage over the original route prompted Heineman to call state lawmakers into a special session in 2011, but the issue hasn't gained as much traction in the Legislature after TransCanada agreed to keep the project out of an area that state officials designated as the Sandhills.

TransCanada's pipeline is designed to carry tar sands oil from Canada across Montana, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas. The company also has proposed connecting it to the Bakken oil field in Montana and North Dakota.

The original Nebraska route would have run the pipeline through a region of erodible, grass-covered



DAVID LIAS/VERMILLION PLAIN TALK
A student walks past a small generator operating outside of Coyote Village near the building's south doors Tuesday afternoon. Students were able to return to their rooms during the day long enough to retrieve needed items.

Broken Water Main Forces USD Students Out Of Coyote Village

BY DAVID LIAS AND TRAVIS GULBRANDSON
Vermillion Plain Talk

VERMILLION — It all started when the fire alarm kept going off in Coyote Village, a residence hall on the University of South Dakota campus, at about 9 p.m. Monday.

Several hours later, on one of the coldest nights Vermillion has experienced this winter, a number of the 500 USD students who reside at in the almost new student housing found themselves scattered — first at several different university locations, and later at a couple Vermillion motels that are serving as students' temporary homes.

They were forced to leave the building after a water pipe burst, forcing university officials to shut off electricity and water utilities to the residence hall.

By mid-Tuesday afternoon, it appeared that those students likely would have to spend at least one more night in their substitute housing.

University officials suspect the temps could have caused the pipe to freeze and break, which led to flooding in parts of the main lobby, a hallway, a maintenance room, laundry room and three residential rooms in the facility.

According to the National Weather Service, Vermillion's outdoor temperature was single-digit at about the time the pipe failed.

"It is one of the coldest night we've had in several years," said Tena Haraldson, director of communications and media relations at the university. "That dorm opened in 2010, and it's got to be probably some of the coldest weather we've had since it was brand-new."

Haraldson added that the root cause will not be determined until the incident has been investigated more fully.

The first thought that entered the mind of Jilanne Doom, a junior at the University of South Dakota from Wagner who resides in Coyote Village, was that such a cold night was a bad time to hold a fire drill.

"The fire alarm started going off at about 9 o'clock last night, and we were all kind of confused because they weren't like normal alarms. We were thinking that a fire drill on the coldest night of the year didn't sound like the best idea, so we were just going to stay in our rooms," she said, laughing, during a phone interview Tuesday morning. "People didn't know whether they should leave or not, and finally the CAs (Community Advisors) came around and had us all go to different buildings, like the wellness center and the fine arts center."

"We were thinking that it would be a couple hours, maybe, and we could get to our rooms," Doom said. "We went to a friend's house, and then we found out at about 1

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Yankton County Sets Goals For 2013

BY NATHAN JOHNSON
nathan.johnson@yankton.net

While laying out their 2013 goals Tuesday and reviewing those set for last year, Yankton County commissioners acknowledged that numerous objectives had been met but many more remain.

Among the biggest accomplishments in 2012 were completing the new Highway Department shop and enacting a drainage ordinance.

"When you do your planning, you know you are not necessarily going to meet every goal, but you have a working document so you can keep moving forward," Commissioner Garry Moore said of the annual planning session held at Yankton's Planning and Development District III. "We had our successes, and I don't know that there were any failures. We just didn't complete some of the objectives, so they are ongoing."

Ongoing projects on last year's list of goals include the grain facility proposed for Napa Junction; improvements to Stone Church Road, Bill Baggs Road and Kaiser Road; and completing the Deer Boulevard bicycle trail.



Moore

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Facing A Rough Climate

Meteorologist: Farmers Need To Brace For 'Volatile' Weather, Finances

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF
randy.dockendorf@yankton.net

Corn Belt farmers need to brace themselves for a continued drought cycle and other volatility, an Iowa State University (ISU) meteorologist said Tuesday night.

Dr. Elwynn Taylor spoke to the AgriVisions conference, sponsored by First Dakota National Bank, at the Kelly Inn. Taylor teaches ag meteorology at ISU, works with disaster response and serves as consultant for financial, legal and agricultural firms and agencies.

From 1925-2011, the Corn Belt has seen four stable weather periods, each 18 years long, alternating with four erratic periods, each 25 years long, Taylor said.

"2011 was Year 18 of the stable period," he said. "If the weather continues the way it has been, we have just entered one of these (25-year) periods of volatility."

In that case, farmers need to adjust not only their planting but also their financial planning, he said.

"All the (risk management) practices during the last 10 years was just practice," he said. "Use it, and you're likely to make these years of higher volatility to be one of higher profit."

Taylor offered a number of climate outlooks.

"There is an increased possibility of harsh winters for the next 20-plus years. It's switching to give us a return to the harsh winters on a par with the 1960s," he said. "There is (likely to be) less than a full recharge of Midwest soils over the winter. And an El Nino during the growing season



KELLY HERTZ/P&D
Iowa State University meteorologist Elwynn Taylor outlines the ups and downs of both a volatile climate and financial situation during Tuesday night's "AgriVisions" conference at the Kelly Inn.

is not probable."

Those conditions create concerns for the upcoming planting season, he said.

"Midwest crops are likely to be, on the average, better than 2012 but not up to (historical) trends," he said.

Long-term weather patterns have remained positive for areas west of Interstate 35, running from Minneapolis-St. Paul and Des Moines to Kansas City and Dallas-Fort Worth, he said.

"Climate change has been favorable for Minnesota, the Dakotas,

western Iowa and Nebraska," he said.

Based on historical patterns, he sees continued harsh conditions for southeast South Dakota and Nebraska when it comes to both the weather and farmers' financial situation.

With the current drought, the Corn Belt would need 16 inches of moisture to offset the moisture deficit, he said.

"We're not likely to get back up (to that level) this year," he said. "It

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Area Couple Honored For Green Farming

BY ANDREW ATWAL
andrew.atwal@yankton.net

MISSION HILL — Maintaining an environmentally friendly farm has made Ray and Pam Epp winners.

When Ray found out he would be honored with an award, he was surprised and humbled.

Ray and his wife Pam from Epp Farms of Mission Hill were recently selected as winners of the fifth annual Pork Environmental Stewardship Award, as chosen by the South Dakota Pork Producers Council. The award goes to a pork farmer to recognize his or her dedication to the industry through their environmental stewardship practices and community relations.

"I heard that we would receive the honor in the first part of January," Ray said. "I was surprised when I found out we had gotten the award and I didn't really realize that so many people were paying attention to what we are doing, which was humbling."

Nominees for the award were evaluated on their manure man-

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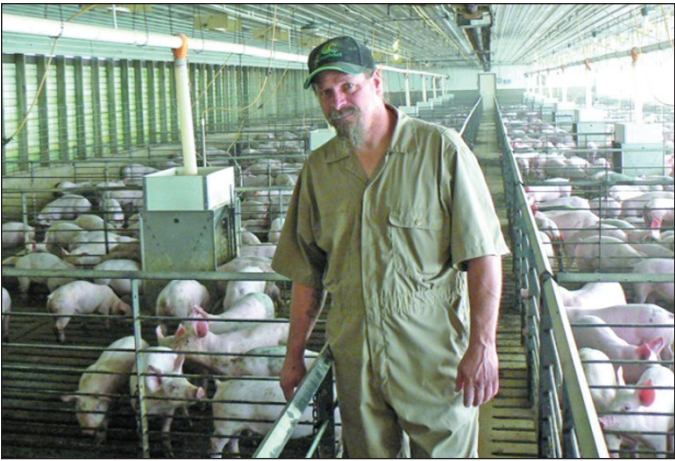
Yankton County

agement systems, conservation practices, farm aesthetics, wildlife habitat promotion, odor-control strategies and innovative ideas used to protect the environment.

"Your name gets submitted for the award, then you get called and asked to answer some questions and eventually the winner gets selected through that process," Epp said. "The questions we had to answer were in regards to the precautions I take to make the farm more pleasant to the environment."

In addition to having hogs on the farm, the Epps also farm about 1,100 acres of alfalfa, corn and soybeans.

"To be diversified is an asset for a farm. If something is not hitting in one place, it can hit elsewhere so it helps in maintaining the farm," Epp said. "It's a little more work, but it is a way to hopefully realize and help the



SUBMITTED PHOTO
Ray and Pam Epp of Epp's Farm in Mission Hill were recently recognized as winners of the Pork Environmental Stewardship Award, as chosen by the South Dakota Pork Producers Council. Nominees for the award were evaluated on their conservation practices, manure management systems, wildlife habitat promotion, odor-control strategies, farm aesthetics and innovative ideas used to protect the environment.

farm ride through the rough spots."

The Epps first began their hog enterprise in 1998, two years after Ray came to work on the farm. He had worked in a factory but said he got tired of that job.

"We built our hog barn when the hog industry was really at a dire time," he said. "We came into hog production at a tough

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Trial Begins For Scotland Man In Infant's Death

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF
randy.dockendorf@yankton.net

PARKER — The murder and manslaughter trial has begun for the Scotland man charged with the March 2011 death of his infant son.

Chris Miller faces three counts in the death of four-month-old Jacob Miller at their Scotland home. He has pleaded not guilty to charges of second-degree murder, first-degree manslaughter and aggravated assault of a child under 3 years of age.

Chris Miller is accused of beating and shaking the infant, which led to the child's death.

The jury has been seated and the trial proceedings are moving forward, according to Sara Rabern, spokeswoman for the South Dakota attorney general's office.

The case is prosecuted by

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