

Anniversary Planning Moves Forward

BY CHET BROKAW
 Associated Press

PIERRE (AP) — South Dakota's celebration of its 125th anniversary of statehood will include a wagon train that will travel from Yankton to Pierre in September, members of a panel planning the celebration said Friday.

The celebration is expected to end with an event in Pierre on Nov. 2. South Dakota and North Dakota were both granted statehood on Nov. 2, 1889.

The planning commission appointed by South Dakota Gov. Dennis Daugaard worked Friday to put the finishing touches on its recommendations for the celebration. The commission came up with a report that ranks proposed events and other activities in terms of priority, and recommends the governor do as many as possible after considering the availability of money and volunteers.

The top-rated item recommends that Daugaard invite American Indian tribes to suggest how they want to take part in the anniversary of statehood.

Many of the events for the yearlong celebration will be organized by local communities. Mike Mueller of the state Bureau of Administration said the ending event in Pierre has not yet been planned.

The wagon train, organized by Gerald Kessler of rural Fort Pierre, will start Sept. 3 in Yankton and follow an old trail that runs to Mitchell and Pierre. Presentations on history will be given each evening along the trail until the ride ends Sept. 20 in Pierre.

Daugaard and North Dakota Gov. Jack Dalrymple plan to take part in events in each other's state.

The celebration will be funded by donations and licensing fees from commercial use of South Dakota's 125th anniversary logo.

Some of the highest ranked ideas in the commission report include promoting the State Historical Society's traveling exhibits in communities around South Dakota, creating a guideline for local students to use in writing local histories and using any leftover money for history scholarships and other long-term projects.

"We're trying to get local people involved to do things. We're enablers and encourage to try to get local activities done throughout the year," said Jim Soyer, an aide to the governor who worked with the commission.

The report also recommends creation of a Native American legacy project that would involve cooperation by the state, South Dakota's nine tribes and nine cities. Each tribe would pick a great tribal leader from the past, and a statue of that leader would be placed in a city to help teach Native American history to students and tourists.

Police Arrest Man In Hate Crime Case

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Omaha police have arrested a man in connection with an October assault that's being investigated as a hate crime.

Police say 35-year-old Gregory Duncan was arrested Friday and charged with third-degree felony assault. The charge was enhanced from a misdemeanor to a felony because the attack is being investigated as a hate crime.

Ryan Langenegger says he was punched in the face during the early hours of Oct. 27 in the Old Market area. He says he was hit by a man who, with some other men, allegedly used derogatory names regarding his sexual orientation and those of his two friends.

Police say Duncan hit Langenegger. Additional information about the case has not been released.

Court records do not list an attorney for Duncan.

Woman Pleads Guilty In Trooper Case

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A woman now acknowledges she drove drunk and ran over a South Dakota Highway Patrol Trooper in Sioux Falls.

Rachel Coleman pleaded guilty Friday to aggravated assault of a law enforcement officer and felony driving under the influence fourth.

The 26-year-old could get up to 42 1/2 years in prison. Trooper Andrew Steen tried to pull Coleman over in the early morning of Oct. 17, 2012, but she led authorities on a 20-minute chase. It ended in a parking lot when Steen got out of his vehicle to try and stop Coleman but she accelerated and ran him over.

Coleman was shot by other officers and arrested nearby. Her attorney says she can't remember anything from that night.

Steen suffered a broken ankle, a skull fracture and traumatic brain injury.

Officials: 2 Inmates Fought In Vehicle

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Two prison inmates have been accused of fighting while being transported near Lincoln.

The Lincoln Police Department says the fight occurred Friday morning as a private company transported seven inmates. The vehicle was forced to stop on Interstate 80.

Omaha television station KETV reports two guards called for help after one inmate allegedly choked another inmate with his restraints. Additional information has not been released.

The Lancaster County Sheriff's Office says it is investigating the incident.

Redfield, Contractor In Dispute Over Sewer Work

BY DIRK LAMMERS
 Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS (AP) — The South Dakota city of Redfield and a contractor are engaged in a legal battle over work done on a \$757,000 storm and sanitary sewer project.

The Spink County community of about 2,400 residents entered a contract with Willmar, Minn.-based Quam Construction Co. in September 2012 for construction of the Shar-Winn Estates project.

Tom Vollbrecht, an attorney representing Quam, said the subsurface conditions of the site made it impossible to

do the work.

"The way the engineer designed the project to be performed, it can't be performed," Vollbrecht said Friday.

Attorneys for the city, which sits about 40 miles south of Aberdeen, said it specifically disclosed to Quam that dewatering would be required. The city said the company never inspected the subsurface conditions at the site prior to its bid to determine what work was needed.

City attorney Paul Gillette did not immediately return a message seeking comment Friday afternoon.

Vollbrecht said if the company knew of the conditions upfront, it would not have bid the project.

Quam and the city of Redfield met last year for mediation that included two full-day sessions in Sioux Falls, but the two parties could not reach an agreement. Quam then asked U.S. District Judge Charles Kornmann to force arbitration. Kornmann denied that request, and this week the company appealed his decision to the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

The Redfield City Council rejected a settlement offer by Quam at an August meeting and declared the company in

material breach of its contract with the city.

Earlier this month, the city also filed a federal suit against Liberty Mutual Insurance Co., which issued a performance bond for the project, asking that the insurer perform and complete the work under the contract.

Redfield's attorney said the city incurred dewatering costs of about \$70,000, and Liberty Mutual is liable for any additional cost in completing the project under the performance guarantee.

Rich Angevine, a Liberty Mutual spokesman, said the company does not comment on matters in litigation.

Lawmaker: Make Grad Loans Tax-Deductible

BY GRANT SCHULTE
 Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — A legislative panel will consider a bill this year that would make college loans for graduate degrees tax-deductible in Nebraska.

Sen. Paul Schumacher introduced a measure Friday that would allow taxpayers to deduct the principal paid on loans used to obtain a graduate degree. The deduction would only apply for the first 10 years after earning the degree.

Schumacher said he proposed the bill after talking with a young woman who grew up in Nebraska, earned a law degree out-of-state, and returned with about \$100,000 in student debt.

"She's bringing her talents here," Schumacher said. "One day, hopefully, she'll make lots of money and pay taxes. But isn't this really a business expense? If these people were going to a professional convention to enhance themselves, they'd be able to deduct it. So why don't we allow them to deduct their student loan payments?"

Schumacher argued that a similar deduction was given to Nebraska's state-sponsored college savings plan, but that plan assumes that parents and grandparents have enough money to save ahead of time.

The Legislature's Fiscal Office had not yet calculated a cost for bill.

Nearly half of the families participating in Nebraska's state-sponsored college savings plan make at least \$100,000 per year, according to the state Department of Revenue. Families with an adjusted gross income of more than \$100,000 accounted for nearly 45 percent of the plan's participants. Families who made less than \$50,000 per year accounted for less than 7 percent.

Lawmakers will consider a bill designed to help low-income families participate in Nebraska's state-sponsored college savings plan.

Sen. Rick Kolowski on Thursday introduced legislation that would exclude the college-savings plan, scholarships and work-study income from the formula that determines whether a person qualifies for public benefits. The formula disqualifies applicants who have too many assets or too much income. Kolowski said his measure would include aid to dependent children, child care subsidies and a home-energy program for low-income residents.

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