



Increasing Clouds And Windy

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FRIDAY ■ January 17, 2014



RIVER CITY

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■ 'Gravity' Shines In Oscar Race

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Storm Wreaks Havoc In SD



KELLY HERTZ/P&D

The flags at the Yankton School District administration strained at the cord holding them to the pole Thursday morning as wind gusts of more than 50 miles per hour were recorded. Yankton saw only light snow from a system that caused blizzard conditions elsewhere.

Wind, Snow Hamper Traffic On I-90, I-29

BY CARSON WALKER
Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS — Separate crashes involving multiple vehicles hampered traffic on both major interstates in the Sioux Falls area Thursday afternoon during a blizzard.

An accident involving more than 20 vehicles on Interstate 90 near Humboldt blocked the west-bound lanes of the road for several hours between Sioux Falls and Salem. Authorities also cleared a series of crashes on Interstate 29 near Tea that involved as many as a dozen vehicles.

There were some injuries but no fatalities in the accidents.

Driving conditions were still treacherous late Thursday with snow-packed and slippery roads and blowing snow creating low visibility situations, authorities said.

Travel was not advised across much of eastern South Dakota due to slick roads and poor visibility, including in Sioux Falls where schools let out early. Numerous other events were also canceled.

Bands of snow were to continue into Thursday evening, said Todd Heitkamp, warning coordination meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Sioux Falls.

Less than 3 inches of snow fell in Sioux Falls by early evening, but winds of 35 mph or higher still created whiteout conditions, the agency said. A 63 mph gust was recorded before sunrise.

"The snowfall developed about 30 miles farther west than what we expected. We knew the wind was going to be an issue, but it shows you when you get a little bit of snow how treacherous

STORM | PAGE 9A

Helping Out Is Top Priority For New Veterans Service Officer

BY DEREK BARTOS
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When Mike McDonald was serving in the military 40 years ago, he was routinely told to support the soldiers around him — a lesson he carries with him to this day.

"My Master Chief said the first priority in leadership is to take care of your men," he said. "I think that goes for not only in the military, but every walk of life. You take care of the people that get things done for you, and good things happen."

McDonald is now putting that philosophy to use to help his fellow veterans as Yankton County's new veterans service officer, a position he began last week. He replaces Chuck Haffner, who recently retired after 29 years in that position.

"This opportunity came up, and seeing as how I'm a vet, I thought I could help some others that need some help getting through the paper work," McDonald said.

As the veterans service officer, McDonald is responsible for assisting with submission of claims to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). He helps veterans get benefits ranging from VA medical care and pensions to educational assistance and home loan guaranties.

He also coordinates Disabled American Veterans (DAV) van transportation, which was started in 2003. Through the DAV program, volunteer drivers take veterans to VA medical appointments, usually in Sioux Falls.

McDonald said many of his duties are similar to those that he had as a yeoman in the U.S. Navy



KELLY HERTZ/P&D

U.S. Navy veteran Mike McDonald recently began his role as Yankton County's new veterans service officer. McDonald is using his past experience as yeoman in the military to help veterans with submitting claims to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. He also coordinates transportation for the Disabled American Veterans program.

in the 1970s. Yeoman perform administrative and clerical work and typically process a large amount of paperwork, he said.

"Some of this is just going back 40 years and doing the same thing over again — helping guys out so they can cope with the bureaucracy," he said.

While many of the tasks of his new job seem familiar, McDonald said he also has his share of learning to do, as he is investigating some new

MCDONALD | PAGE 2A

Death Penalty Debate Back In Spotlight

(Editor's Note: This is the second of a two-part series looking at the death-penalty issue in the South Dakota Legislature.)

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF
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Marty Jackley and Denny Davis stand on opposite sides of the death-penalty debate in South Dakota.

Jackley, the state's attorney general, supports keeping capital punishment, reinstated in South Dakota in 1979. He argues the death penalty is needed for vile crimes.

"South Dakota has imposed capital punishment on only the most dangerous defendants," he said. "These are individuals who not only visited unspeakable suffering to their victims but who also pose a serious risk of future harm to

South Dakota citizens."

Davis, a Burbank resident, serves as director of South Dakotans for Alternatives to the Death Penalty (SDADP). The organization is working to repeal capital punishment during the 2014 Legislature, which began this week.

"I simply ask the question: Do we have to kill human beings who murder? Supporters of the death penalty justify it by saying it's the consequence of the criminal's terrible actions," he said.

"The death penalty is not about what the murderers have done. It's about what we as citizens do in response. South Dakota should repeal the death penalty. Doing so would reflect on each of us and our actions as citizens."

After 60 years without an execution, South



RANDY DOCKENDORF/P&D

Burbank resident Denny Davis is lobbying during the 2014 South Dakota Legislature, now under way, for repeal of the state's death penalty. Davis serves as director of South Dakotans for Alternatives to the Death Penalty (SDADP).

DEATH | PAGE 10A

SPORTS



Strong Second Half Lifts USD Over IUPUI • 6A

INSIDE



USA Weekend

* * *

Climatologist:

Climate Variability Shown In 2012, 2013

BY NATHAN JOHNSON
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The last two years have been a tale of climate variability for the region, according to Dr. Stuart Foster, the state climatologist for Kentucky.

During the telephonic Midwest and Great Plains Climate and Drought Update Thursday, he noted the vast differences between 2012 and 2013.

"We can certainly see extremes of variation in portions of the central region (including Nebraska and South Dakota)," Foster said. "The central region was well above the normal temperature average for (2012). We came into 2013 and went the opposite direction. Nearly everyone was normal or below normal."

Furthermore, the story of 2012 was one of drought for the region, while normal or above-normal precipitation prevailed last year.

For the next three months, climate models suggest an equal chance for below-normal, normal or above-normal temperatures in this area. The same is true of precipitation.

"We've recently seen colder than normal conditions," Foster said. "We've seen drought conditions persist in portions of the Great Plains and Midwest. Wet conditions persist over the eastern portion of the Midwest."

DROUGHT | PAGE 3A

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TOMORROW: New MNRR Superintendent Looks To Grow Local Partnerships

YANKTON RECYCLING THIS WEEK:

SOUTH
OF 15TH STREET