

SDHSAA Rolls Back Extra \$1

Lawmakers Schedule Meeting For Tuesday

BY BOB MERCER
State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE — The executive director for the South Dakota High School Activities Association will appear before the Legislature's Joint Committee on Appropriations next week regarding finances, policies and accountability.

The association was created by the Legislature but doesn't follow South Dakota laws on public meetings and public records and has claimed its financial audits are private.

The meeting between executive director Wayne Carney and the 18 senators and representatives on the committee is set for Tuesday at 3 p.m. CST in the Capitol.

The proceedings will be available over the Legislature's Internet broadcasting system. "We're making it a standard meeting," said Sen. Deb Peters, R-Hartford. She is the chairwoman of the joint committee.

"There's a lot of controversy in the public eye," she said.

Helping prompt the meeting was a set of decisions by the association's governing board last year to increase ticket prices by \$2 for district and regional events effective in the 2013-2014 school year.

The board then voted in August to dedicate \$1 from each ticket to the foundation that Carney has been working to establish financially.

Officials from many school districts protested to legislators about the move to take \$1 for the foundation.

On Wednesday, board members

voted 5-3 to repeal \$1 of the increase and to stop taking money from ticket sales for the foundation.

Carney's staff also presented information Wednesday showing that many of the communities that have hosted SDHSAA state events have deficiencies.

Audience members weren't allowed to have a copy of the deficiency report Wednesday. Carney declined to provide a copy of the chart to a reporter Thursday.

Carney told the board Wednesday he had spoken twice with Sen. Corey Brown, R-Gettysburg, about the 2014 legislative session.

He said Brown arranged for the meeting Tuesday with the appropriations committee.

Brown said Thursday that he and Carney engaged in a long discussion during a meeting of school superintendents in Roscoe last fall.

Brown, who is the Senate's No. 2 presiding officer after the lieutenant governor, said he didn't previously know Carney.

Brown said he recently met for approximately five hours in Gettysburg with Carney and the SDHSAA lawyer, Lindsey Riter-Rapp.

The next forum is the Legislature. "A lot of folks have talked to us about concerns they have," Brown said.

"It seems like one of the best ways to address that is to start a conversation with the Legislature and see if there are further things to be addressed.

"I think the Legislature is glad they (the association) are willing to come up and answer some of the questions that

"There's a lot of controversy in the public eye."

DEB PETERS

are out there," he said.

Voting to repeal the \$1 were board members Todd Trask of Wall, Mike Miller and Jason Uttermark of Aberdeen, Dan Whalen of Pierre and Rick Weber of Flandreau. Voting to keep the \$1 were Eldon Marshall of White River, Mike Ruth of Miller and Darren Paulson of Rapid City Central.

Carney said the foundation will retain the \$73,628 received from fall 2013 ticket sales.

The foundation previously had \$65,000 that included \$55,000 approved by the association's general membership last year and \$10,000 refunded by the national association.

The South Dakota Community Foundation administers the foundation for the association. The state House of Representatives has twice rejected legislation that would have allowed the association to put money from events into a foundation.

A brochure distributed at the board meeting Wednesday said the association would begin distributions from the foundation when \$2 million of funding was reached.

At that point, according to the brochure, 4.5 percent of the average fair market value would be distributed to association member schools annually, an amount the brochure said would be approximately \$90,000.

Prices, Future Markets On Minds Of South Dakota Corn Growers

BY DIRK LAMMERS
Associated Press

SIoux FALLS — South Dakota corn farmers grew a record crop last year, but lower prices and questions about how to expand markets will likely be on their minds during their annual convention in Sioux Falls.

Lisa Richardson, executive director of South Dakota Corn Growers Association and the South Dakota Corn Utilization Council, said high prices after the drought led to a huge decrease in exports, and ethanol companies aren't building new plants. The China market is ripe for expansion, but it hasn't opened up enough to have an effect, she said.

Farmers who must decide whether to plant corn or switch to soybeans, oats or small grains need answers to such questions as they make plans for their next crops.

"Is it going to come from exports? Are we going to grow our ethanol industry? Where are we going to get the next billion or 2 billion bushels worth of demand?" Richardson said. "That's really the unknown question



Richardson

agement, conservation and sustainability.

Corn, which sold for about \$8.20 per bushel in June 2012, was trading at about \$4.28 per bushel Thursday on the Chicago Board of Trade. Last week, corn dropped to its lowest price in more than 3 years on the announcement of a large increase in ethanol supplies, but rose 5 percent the next day after the U.S. Department of Agriculture cut its estimate for last year's corn crop.

Whether South Dakota farmers can pull a profit from current prices depends on many factors. Yields in South Dakota vary widely from year to year, and fertilizer, feed and land costs continue to rise, Richardson said.

"Is \$4 break even? Not al-

out there right now."

Saturday's annual meeting at the Sioux Falls Convention Center will also include panels on nutrient man-

ways," she said. "It totally depends on what your land costs are and it also depends on what your yields are."

Troy Knecht, a Houghton farmer with about 4,700 acres in a corn-soybean rotation, said South Dakota corn growers typically earn about 40 cents to 50 cents per bushel less than the Chicago price.

Knecht's not planning any drastic changes for this year's planting, but potential local prices of about \$3.75 per bushel are pushing him to shift slightly toward beans — perhaps a 55 percent soy-45 percent corn mix. He's hoping that spring weather patterns allow him to get his corn crop planted early so it has the chance to meet its full potential.

"We are kind of going to stay the course, I guess," Knecht said. "Ideally, we'd like a 50 percent corn-50 percent rotation."

Knecht, who also sells seed, said his customers are expressing similar sentiment. But a few farmers with marginal land told Knecht that they're planning to shift those acres to soybeans.

South Dakota produced

an estimated 809 million bushels of corn in 2013, which is 51 percent more than the year before, according to the National Agricultural Statistics Service.

Richardson said that's a record harvest, and the state's average yield of 138 bushels per acre, up 37 bushels from the previous year, was the second largest in South Dakota history.

"Mother Nature was very, very helpful this year," she said. "Farmers are doing more on those same acres of land."

A November proposal by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to reduce the amount of biofuels required to be blended into gasoline in 2014 by nearly 3 billion gallons is also a major concern for South Dakota farmers.

Richardson said the ethanol industry and those who supply the plants just want expanded market access through the offering of 15 percent blends.

"They want to be able to compete head-on with oil," she said. "Not subsidized, they just want market access."

Another Loan Withdrawn From Northern Beef

BY BOB MERCER
State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE — The state Economic Development Finance Authority voted Thursday to halt its \$8 million commitment made to Northern Beef Packers.

The withdrawal was the second in two days by a state government agency. The state Board of Economic Development pulled a \$5 loan commitment Tuesday.

The Aberdeen processing plant shut down last year and declared bankruptcy.

The state loan commitments along with various grants and related financial assistance were made in 2010 during the final year of the Rounds administration.

The future of the project

is unclear. The Daugaard administration appears to be winding up state government's involvement in it.

The \$5 million commitment was scheduled to automatically expire March 1, but the Board of Economic Development didn't wait.

"Given the progression of the bankruptcy proceedings, and the subsequent sale of the plant in December, (the Governor's Office of Economic Development) deemed it prudent to bring the matter before the board at this time to consider withdrawing the commitment," said Tony Venhuizen, a spokesman for Gov. Dennis Daugaard.

The state agencies repeatedly granted extensions on the loan commitments.

"The (Board of Economic

Development) typically commits loan funds to projects for a 12 month period, but may be more or less time depending on various project factors," Venhuizen said.

"Extensions are not uncommon due to construction delays, as the loans cannot fund until the project is complete and all the conditions in the commitment letter have been satisfied.

"The (board) continued to extend their funding commitment to the project, as the project continued to make progress towards completion each time an extension was requested," he said.

Two reviews of the Governor's Office of Economic Development are under way by outside accounting firms and the state Department of Legislative Audit is conducting a

financial audit starting with 2009 records.

GOED Commissioner Pat Costello asked in November that they be performed. His action came after a state investigation discovered \$550,000 was redirected from a \$1 million grant that Gov. Mike Rounds had approved for Northern Beef during his final month in office.

Costello gave the EDFa members a brief progress update Thursday. "We're fairly far along in the process, at least for two of them," he said, explaining that two should be wrapped up next week and the third in the following weeks.

He praised the GOED staff for its work during "a difficult couple of months."

You can follow Nathan Johnson on Twitter at twitter.com/AnlnlandVoyage. Discuss this story at www.yankton.net/.

Neb. Lawmakers Eye \$9 Minimum Wage

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Nebraska lawmakers will consider a proposal this year to increase the state's minimum wage to \$9 an hour by 2017.

The measure was introduced on Thursday by state Sen. Jeremy Nordquist of Omaha and 13 other lawmakers. Nordquist said the state has one of the nation's highest rates of working parents, but 18 percent of children in Nebraska lived in poverty in 2012, according to U.S. census data.

"Raising the minimum wage is about Nebraska values and about valuing work," Nordquist said. "Working hard and providing for our families is a core Nebraska value, and the ability to earn a decent living should be obtainable for all Nebraskans."

The bill was unveiled along with two other measures aimed at working- and middle-class Nebraska residents. Lawmakers also announced proposals to expand the state's earned income tax credit and to require paid family medical and sick leave.

President Barack Obama and congressional Democrats are pushing legislation this year to raise the federal minimum wage to \$10.10 per hour over two years.

Nebraska's current minimum wage is \$7.25 per hour, which matches the federal rate. Twenty-one states have higher minimum wages, according to the U.S. Department of Labor. The last federal rate increase was approved by President George W. Bush in 2007 and went into effect two years later.

Nebraska's rate is the same as neighboring Iowa, South Dakota and Kansas, but lower than Colorado's \$8 hourly wage and the \$7.50 wage in Missouri. Wyoming's state minimum wage is \$5.15.

Creighton University economist Ernie Goss said increasing Nebraska's minimum wage would likely result in job losses, although the impact in Nebraska might not be as great as in states with higher unemployment. Nebraska has the nation's third-lowest unemployment rate — behind North and South Dakota — and Goss said Nebraska's worker shortage encourages businesses to pay higher wages.

Goss said raising the minimum wage would likely hurt young and inexperienced workers, along with those in highly competitive industries such as fast food and retail. Goss said it also can drive businesses to states with lower minimum wages, or to other countries.

Family Of Slain Neb. Girl Call For Justice

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — The family of a 5-year-old girl killed by a stray bullet that entered her Omaha home says they do not want retaliation for her death.

Tabatha Manning says she wants justice for her daughter Payton Benson's death. She asked the public to let police handle the investigation.

Manning and other family members made comments Thursday. Payton was fatally shot Wednesday morning as she ate breakfast in her north Omaha home. She was pronounced dead at a hospital.

Authorities say the stray bullet was connected to a nearby shooting that involved multiple people, weapons and gunfire.

Manning encouraged people involved in the shooting to come forward. Police made the same plea during a press conference Wednesday night. Authorities are trying to identify several possible suspects, but no arrests have been made.

3 Appear In Court For Double Homicide

PIERRE (AP) — Two brothers and a woman are in jail on charges they killed two men near St. Francis on the Rosebud Indian Reservation.

Twenty-three-year-old BillyRay McCloskey and 20-year-old Riley McCloskey pleaded not guilty to two counts of second-degree murder.

They're accused of killing 76-year-old Benjamin Clifford and 33-year-old Calvin Kills In Water Jr. on Dec. 23.

According to the indictment, the McCloskeys strangled Clifford and assaulted Kills In Water with their hands and feet and stabbed him in the chest with a screwdriver.

Crystal Red Hawk pleaded not guilty to accessory after the fact.

The full indictment was sealed.

OBITUARIES

Pearl Christensen

Pearl Christensen, age 80, died Tuesday, January 14, 2013 at Sunset Manor Avera Nursing Home, Irene, SD.

Funeral Service will be 11:00 a.m. Saturday, January 18, 2013 at Sunset Manor Avera Nursing Home, Irene, SD with Rev. Mark Ostrem officiating. Burial will be in the Volin Cemetery, Volin, SD.

Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Home & Crematory, Yankton, is in charge of arrangements.

Pearl was born February 16, 1933 to Fred and Caroline (Ackerman) Christensen in Yankton County. She was baptized in the Methodist faith and lived most of her life in Redfield, SD, until moving to Irene in 1997, when she became a resident of Sunset Manor Avera. She most enjoyed attending church services, listening to music on the TV or radio, and rarely



Christensen

missed the Lawrence Welk show.

Those who will cherish her memory include her sister-in-law, Vlasta (Roy) Christensen of Yankton, SD, brother-in-law, Jerry Wawrzyniakowski of Shawano, WI; and many nephews, nieces, and their children.

Pearl was preceded in death by her parents, brothers, Robert (Margaret), Roy, and Henry, sisters, Ellen, Florence, Betty Kosbab-Wawrzyniakowski and two infants, and brother-in-law, Fred Kosbab.

Yankton Press & Dakotan
January 17, 2014

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FUNERAL HOME & CREMATORY INC.
Online condolences at:
www.opsahl-kostelfuneralhome.com

Rudy Becker

Rudy Becker, 63, of Marion died Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2014, at the Freeman Hospital.

Funeral services are at 10:30 a.m. Monday at the Salem-Zion Mennonite (North) Church of Freeman.

Visitation will begin at noon on Sunday with the family present from 6-8 p.m. at the Walter Funeral Home in Freeman.

THANK YOU!
THANK YOU!
To all of you who made my 85th birthday a WOW couple of weeks! It was so much fun.
Jacie Green

Drought

From Page 1A

Snowpack is normal to good in most areas feeding rivers in the Great Plains."

South Dakota just experienced its 15th coldest December on record, and Nebraska endured its 26th coldest December. Looking at October through December, it was the 14th coldest last quarter of the year in South Dakota and 19th coldest in Nebraska.

Meanwhile, South Dakota

had above-normal precipitation in December and experienced its 19th wettest on record. Nebraska was the opposite, having its 21st driest December.

From October to December, it was South Dakota's second wettest final quarter on record and the 28th wettest for Nebraska.

The U.S. Drought Monitor released Thursday showed little has changed in the last month. Almost all of South Dakota is free of drought conditions, but much of Nebraska is in various stages of drought.

"You can see drought persisting in Nebraska, western

Kansas and Colorado," Foster said. "It's not surprising. We're at a time of year when there's generally not a large amount of precipitation."

In Loving Memory of...

Allen Andersh
who passed away on January 17, 2010
God's finger touched him
And he slipped away
From earth's dark shadow
To a brighter day
God saw the road was getting rough
The hills were hard to climb
He gently closed his weary eyes
And whispered "Peace be thine."
To a beautiful garden
He has gone but our memory of him still lives on
Sadly missed by your family

IN REMEMBRANCE

James "Chubby" Orton
10:30 AM, Monday
Gayville Lutheran Church
Gayville

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