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THE REGION DIGEST

Rodeo Center Assembling Advisory Board

The Casey Tibbs SD Rodeo Center is assembling a team of rodeo enthusiasts and ranch owners to assist in the growth and ongoing success of the rodeo center. The team's challenge will require innovative and creative ideas, enthusiasm, and vision as to what the center can provide to all of South Dakota residents.

If you or someone you know has an interest in serving on an advisory board for a one year term, contact Janice Bartels at the rodeo center for further details at 605-494-1094 or janicebar@qwestoffice.net. The next meeting of this advisory board will be held in September.

Zumba Classes Offered At Wellness Center

Avera Sacred Heart Wellness Center now offers Zumba group exercise classes every week on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 5:15-6:15 p.m. at the ASHWC Aerobics Balcony. Licensed instructor Jennifer Cull leads the classes. Zumba classes are included in a membership or a class only punch card may be purchased.

The Zumba program fuses hypnotic Latin rhythms and easy-to-follow moves to create a fitness program. The routines feature interval training sessions where fast and slow rhythms and resistance training are combined to tone and sculpt your body while burning fat.

If you have questions about Zumba or other offerings at Avera Sacred Heart Wellness Center, call 605-668-8357.

S.D. Rules Review Committee To Meet

PIERRE — The interim Rules Review Committee, chaired by Representative Roger Hunt (R-Brandon), will meet at 10:15 a.m. Tuesday, July 20, in Room 414 of the State Capitol in Pierre. It will be broadcast via the Dakota Digital Network at the following locations: Northern State University, 1200 S. Jay St., Room LIB 117, Aberdeen; Department of Transportation, 901 Dakota St., Huron; Mitchell Technical Institute, 1800 E. Spruce, Room TC 155, Mitchell; SD School of Mines and Technology, 501 E. St. Joseph St., Room CB 108, Rapid City; University Center, 2205 Career Ave., Room 282 S, Sioux Falls; and Department of Transportation, 1306 W. 31st St., Yankton.

The committee will review the rules proposed by the Department of Agriculture; Agronomy Services; Department of Education; South Dakota Professional Teachers Practices and Standards Commission; Department of Game, Fish and Parks; Department of Health; Board of Massage Therapy; Department of Revenue and Regulation; Division of Insurance; and Department of Transportation. The agenda is available on the South Dakota Legislature's website at <http://legis.state.sd.us/interim/2010/meetings.aspx>.

In addition to Rep. Hunt, committee members are Sen. Jean Hunhoff, Vice Chair (R-Yankton); Sens. Jim Hundstad (D-Bath) and Mike Vehle (R-Mitchell); and Reps. Peggy Gibson (D-Huron) and David Lust (R-Rapid City).

The public is invited to attend.

Parker Awarded \$309,000 For Water

PIERRE — The city of Parker has been awarded a \$309,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to assist with the fifth phase of its water systems' improvement project, Gov. Mike Rounds has announced.

"This multi-phase project will provide safe and clean drinking water for the residents of Parker," Rounds said.

Improvements will include the addition of a new water tower and using PVC piping to replace a 500-foot segment of cast-iron pipe that ties into the main water line. Parker's current drinking water storage capacity needs to be increased to meet future water-use projections, Rounds said.

"Projects like this move South Dakota closer to achieving the goals of the 2010 Initiative to improve the quality of life in our state," Rounds said. "I'm pleased to allocate funds for such a worthwhile endeavor."

CDBG is a reimbursement program, and the community will receive the funds as work is completed. The CDBG program provides communities with financial resources to address a wide range of unique community development needs.

Past grants have been used for improvements and construction of community buildings, fire halls, fresh water systems, and sewer systems. The federal Department of Housing and Urban Development funds the CDBG program, and the Governor's Office of Economic Development administers it.

■ Get Updates At Yankton Online (www.yankton.net)

OBITUARIES

Marian Wiedmeier

Marian J. Wiedmeier, 86, of Yankton died Thursday (July 15, 2010) at Avera Sister James Care Center, Yankton.

Funeral services are 10:30 a.m. Monday at Trinity Lutheran Church, Yankton, with the Rev. David Lund officiating. Entombment will be in the Garden of Memories Cemetery,

Yankton.

Visitation is 4-8 p.m. Monday, with a prayer service at 7 p.m., at Wintz & Ray Funeral Home and Cremation Service, Yankton. Visitation will also be one hour prior to services on Tuesday at the church.

To send online condolences, visit www.wintzrayfuneralhome.com.

Gavins Point Dam Releases To Increase

From P&D Staff Reports

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced Friday that releases from Gavins Point Dam will be gradually increased during the next two weeks.

Flooding conditions downstream have improved significantly, making this adjustment possible, the Corps said in a press release.

"The increased releases are necessary to

start the process of evacuating more than 9 million acre-feet of flood water stored in the Missouri River main stem reservoir system," said Jody Farhat, chief of the Missouri River Basin Water Management Office in Omaha.

"Our increases will be timed to match the declines in the James River, which enters the Missouri River just below the dam. This will prevent any increase in stages downstream where communities are still recovering from the flood," Farhat said.

The forecast calls for stepping up releases approximately 1,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) every other day from the current rate of 34,000 cfs to 40,000 cfs. Gavins Point releases have been held at the full power plant release rate of 34,000 cfs since June 27.

The spillway will be utilized for the additional releases beginning on Monday, July 19. Further release increases will likely be necessary in mid-August in order to evacuate the stored flood waters prior to next year's runoff season.

Library Summer Reading Program Offering Activities

The Yankton Community Library Summer Reading Program is offering fun-filled activities happening at the library, 515 Walnut, next week during its seventh week of "Make a Splash @ your library."

It's pirate week again at the library. Grab your hat and join us for story time at 6:30 p.m. Monday, July 19, to hear the stories "Don't Mention Pirates" and "Swamp Song" and make a craft.

On Tuesday morning, July 20, the 10:15 a.m. story time will include creating pirate telescopes and listening to the reading of "Pirate Bob" and "Edward and the Pirates."

The last pirate story hour of the week will be at 10:15 a.m. Thursday, July 22. Kids will read "Pirates Don't Change Diapers" and "I'm a Manatee," and create "Under the Sea" pictures.

Students in grades 4-6 are invited to attend a craft-making time at 1 p.m. Tuesday, July 20. Kids will be experimenting with bubbles and creating a bubble picture.

Students in grades 1-3 will meet for their craft time at 1 p.m. Wednesday, July 21, to cre-

ate CD fish.

The final craft-making time of the week will be for all ages at 1-2 p.m. Friday, June 23, when kids will make all kinds of creatures and objects with origami.

The highlight of the week for "kids" of all ages is the Great Plains Zoo Mobile which will arrive at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday, July 21. Passengers on the bus include: a green-winged Macaw parrot, giant millipedes, a chinchilla and a snake. People will be able to touch all of the live animals. Also on the bus will be specimens from sea animals. The Yankton Morning Optimists Club is sponsoring this event.

Twins and teens are invited for their own special event at 1-2 p.m. Thursday, July 22, when Shane Gerlach leads an interactive discussion entitled "Superhero Movies and You."

The Tuesday night family movie feature will be "Happy Feet," which begins at 6:45 p.m. Bring your own drink in a covered container. The popcorn will be provided.

For more information, please contact the library at 668-5275.

Yankton School Board Ready For New Look

From P&D Staff Reports

The Yankton School Board will take on a new look Monday when the board's annual reorganization takes place. Jim Fitzgerald and Chris Specht will both be issued certificates of election and take the oath of office, while, Doug Ekeren will be leaving the board.

Other business will include:

- conducting the 2010-2011 school district budget hearing;
- considering a property purchase;
- hearing a report on district-wide summer construction projects; and,
- appointing the standing committee assignments.

The board meets Monday at 5:30 p.m. at the Technical Education Center, located at 1200 West 21st Street, Yankton.

Farmers Urged To Open Lands Under Open Fields

BY THOM GABRUKIEWICZ
 The Argus Leader

SIoux FALLS — In wildlife-rich South Dakota, opening up more private land to public recreation — namely hunting and fishing — would seem to be a slam-dunk for attracting new tourism dollars to the state.

But while a new federal program hopes to encourage landowners to expand recreational opportunities, some balk, saying liability issues and non-competitive rental rates on existing conservation acres make opening up more lands less appealing.

Last week, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced the Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program, which provides money to farmers and ranchers to provide recreation access. About \$50 million in grants is available for state and tribal governments. The so-called "Open Fields" program was created in the 2008 farm bill.

"It's something we're definitely looking into. We think it's a pretty good fit to the access programs we already have in South Dakota," said Mark Norton, the state Game, Fish and Parks Department's access and farm bill coordinator. "It's brand new, so we're still trying to figure out how best to apply for it. We're just going to look to use that money, if we get it, to increase access for the sportsman."

South Dakota already has about 4 million acres open to hunting. The acres are split between federal lands and property owned or managed by the GF&P.

One of the most popular private/public access programs is the Walk-In Program, which has 900,000 acres enrolled, according to GF&P figures. It would be the logical benefactor of Open Fields, Norton said.

The state pays landowners up to \$1 an acre a year for access, plus a bonus payment of up to \$5 an acre a year for permanent, undisturbed cover in the state's prime pheasant hunting areas. Landowners also can get an additional one-time bonus of up to \$1 an acre for each hunting season remaining on their federal Conservation Reserve Program contract if they enroll their CRP land as a Walk-In Area for the length of the CRP contract.

In those areas, liability isn't an issue, Norton said.

"There's a state statute that provides liability coverage to anybody who opens up their land to free public access," he said. "I guess it gives them enough liability protection as you can give on a state level."

"Yeah, but what happens if a guy wanders off those acres and gets hurt on private land?" said Paul Brandt of Clear Lake, who raises corn and soybeans and feeds cattle and hogs in Deuel County. "There's not a lot of clear boundaries. I have a hard time finding them, and that's a concern."

Existing conservation payments also are a concern, farmers and ranchers said. CRP pays a national average of \$53 an acre, but some South Dakota producers receive much less.

Combine that with higher commodity prices and a yearning for land among younger farmers, and many agribusinessmen are looking at their conservation acres with a new eye toward the bottom line — especially since GF&P officials are unsure what an Open Fields grant would pay landowners per acre for access rights.

Forest Offices Consider Bat Cave Closure

BY BOB MOEN
 Associated Press Writer

CHEYENNE, Wyo. — U.S. Forest Service regional offices in the West are considering whether to bar humans from bat caves to help prevent the spread of a disease that is fatal to the animals.

Officials with the agency's Rocky Mountain and Southwest region offices say they have been discussing the matter with other federal and state agencies.

Rocky Mountain region spokesman Dave Steinke said the office in Denver hopes to have a decision on the bat caves within a couple of weeks.

"The bats moved very quickly from the East to the Midwest and a lot faster than most people thought would happen, so we do feel a need to make a decision soon," Steinke said.

Forest Service regions in the East and South have already imposed bat cave closures, he said.

More than a million hibernating bats have died since white-nose syndrome was first documented in upstate New York in 2006. It has spread around the Northeast and has been detected as far west as Missouri.

The Rocky Mountain regional office consists of Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota and most of Wyoming. The Southwest Region includes New Mexico and Arizona.

Karen Carter, a spokeswoman for the Forest Service's Southwest Region, said forest officials are working with other federal and state agencies to address con-

cerns about the spread of white-nose syndrome.

"We want to make sure every agency doesn't do something different," she said. "We're trying to quickly develop what the next step will be. We don't want to be slow, but we don't want to overreact. We do want to do the right thing."

The Bureau of Land Management in New Mexico has already implemented procedures for visitors of caves under the agency's jurisdiction, including requirements that equipment, clothing and shoes be clean before entering caves.

The fungus linked to the syndrome appears to thrive in cold, moist caves and affects hibernating bats. It is transmitted bat-to-bat and it's believed it can be transported on the clothing and gear of people visiting or exploring caves. There have been no cases of the fungus affecting humans.

The fungus forms a white covering that irritates the bats' faces and wings, burns up the mammals' fat reserves and awakens them early from hibernation. Stricken bats exhibit unusual behavior, such as flying during the day, and eventually starve or freeze.

Multiple bat species have been infected so far.

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The public is invited to attend

You're Invited!

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SUMMER CRAZY DAYS
 Friday - Saturday - Sunday

Friday, July 16th
 10:00 am - 9:00 pm
 Saturday, July 17th
 10:00 am - 5:30 pm
 Sunday, July 18th
 Noon - 5:00 pm