

MIDWEST DIGEST

6 Schools Mistakenly Left Off Progress List

PIERRE (AP) — The South Dakota Education Department says six high schools were left off the list for meeting adequate yearly progress goals under the federal No Child Left Behind law because of a computer error.

The department issued its report on school progress for 2009-10 earlier this week. The mistake was corrected on Wednesday. The department says the mistake didn't affect the percentage of districts that made adequate yearly progress, which remains at 95 percent.

But, the department says, one of the schools left off the progress list — Chamberlain High School — met the goal for math for a second consecutive year and will be taken off the "school improvement" list. Eight schools remain on that list.

Man Sentenced For BB Gun Assault

ABERDEEN (AP) — A Sisseton man has been ordered to serve to more than seven years in prison in a BB gun shooting that cost the victim an eye.

The U.S. attorney's office says Deserick Bird was sentenced last week to 87 months for an assault charge. The 22-year-old had pleaded guilty in March.

The U.S. attorney's office says Bird shot a BB gun at an April 2009 house party, hitting another person in the face. That person lost the use of his left eye.

Omaha Man Arrested In Stabbing Death

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — An Omaha man has been arrested on suspicion of fatally stabbing his stepmother and wounding his father.

Omaha police say 21-year-old David Brannan was being held Wednesday in the Douglas County jail for second-degree murder, second-degree felony assault and two weapons counts.

Police say Brannan is suspected of stabbing his stepmother, 33-year-old Tracy Brannan, and his father, 60-year-old Harold Brannan, early Saturday morning. Tracy Brannan died at a hospital.

The men suffered non-life-threatening injuries in the incident. Police had said David Brannan would be charged upon his release from the hospital.

There was no number listed for David Brannan.

Search For Man Who Flew From Hospital

LEXINGTON, Neb. (AP) — Authorities in eastern Wyoming have joined the search for a man who fled custody while at a Nebraska hospital.

Don Murphy, sheriff in Goshen County, Wyo., says there's evidence 26-year-old Jacob Wolsleben, also known as Jake Larson, was in Wellington and an area north of Cheyenne. Searches were conducted Tuesday, but Wolsleben wasn't found.

Wolsleben escaped a Lexington hospital on Saturday and took off in his girlfriend's pickup.

Dawson County sheriff Gary Reiber says the truck was abandoned in Bonesteel, S.D., and another truck was stolen there. That truck was abandoned in Ravenna, and an SUV was reported stolen.

Wolsleben was being held on several charges out of Buffalo, Dawson and Lincoln counties, including burglary and writing bad checks.

Omaha Hotel Plans 150-Room Addition

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — The city of Omaha is planning to add 150 rooms to its downtown Hilton Hotel.

The City Council recently approved issuing \$35 million in bonds to pay for the project, which will also add more meeting rooms and another ballroom to the hotel.

The city owns the hotel across the street from Qwest Center Omaha arena, and contracts with Hilton to manage the property.

After the expansion, the Hilton will have 600 rooms. The project is expected to be complete in 2012.

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Many Neb. Workers Won't Take Furloughs

BY NATE JENKINS
Associated Press Writer

LINCOLN, Neb. — Nebraska government workers won't all be forced to stay home, unpaid, to help ease budget pressures that threaten to cause layoffs and reductions in state services.

While roughly 11,000 union workers who earlier declined a pay freeze requested by Gov. Dave Heineman will be forced to take two furlough days under orders he issued about two weeks ago, two state departments he doesn't directly control recently decided against furloughs for their union employees.

Those more than 900 employees, who are in the Department of Education and State College System, will also get raises, unlike most nonunion employees across all sectors of state government.

Heineman couldn't order employees in the two agencies to take furlough days like he could in other departments because the two agencies have some autonomy under the state Constitution.

While not explicitly criticizing the decisions by the two departments, Heineman suggested that the decision by the Department of Education — which employs more than 400 of the workers not being required to take furlough days — be reconsidered.

Department management decided not to order furloughs; Heineman wants the department's board, the State Board of Education, to vote on the matter.

"The governor's opinion is that this is an issue of equity and fairness that deserves to be reviewed and acted upon by the elected board at their next meeting," Jen Rae Hein, Heineman's spokeswoman, said about the Department of Education. "The governor hopes the state board ... will follow his lead."

Nebraska Education Commissioner Roger Breed, who heads the education department, said the board might discuss the furlough issue at its next meeting in August, but that any vote to reverse or oppose the decision wouldn't happen until September.

Breed said one of the main reasons the department decided against furloughs was because it wouldn't save much state money — about \$40,000 — because the department gets most of its money

from the federal government.

"We're mostly federally funded, well over 70 percent, so the impact would be minimal," Breed said.

Union members will get a 2.5 percent raise this fiscal year, which began July 1, as will nonunion members.

The cost of those raises, he said, will be offset by savings such as not giving raises to top administrators, including himself. Heineman declined to comment through his spokeswoman on the decision by the State College System, which oversees Chadron, Peru and Wayne State Colleges, to not order furloughs.

College support staff who belong to the large state union that represents most of the 11,000 employees who will have to take furlough days will receive a pay increase of about 3 percent this year.

Another union that represents professional staff will get a 3.5 percent raise, and nonunion administrators will get the same percentage bump in pay. The faculty union's request for a combined, 11 percent pay hike for last fiscal year and the current fiscal year that began July 1 is tied up in the courts.

Kristin Petersen, vice chancellor for employee relations, said furloughs aren't necessary because layoffs and other steps will help the college system trim its budget. She added that furloughs aren't an attractive way to decrease spending because the impact is temporary.

Heineman ordered furloughs earlier this month after an end-of-fiscal year revenue report showed the state brought in \$76 million less than what was officially projected. He also worried revenues may fall short again this year.

Judge Delays Neb. Immigration Ruling

BY MARGERY A. BECK
Associated Press Writer

OMAHA, Neb. — A judge said Wednesday she's not sure whether lawsuits challenging a Nebraska city's ban on hiring and renting to illegal immigrants should be heard in federal or state court, delaying any ruling on blocking the voter-approved ordinance.

U.S. District Judge Laurie Smith Camp said during a hearing that she wasn't sure whether she had jurisdiction over the lawsuits filed by the American Civil Liberties Union of Nebraska and the Mexican American Legal Defense & Educational Fund, also known as MALDEF.

Both civil rights groups sued the city of Fremont, saying the ordinance is discriminatory, and sought preliminary injunctions to keep the ban from being enforced while the lawsuits proceed. Smith Camp consolidated the lawsuits, but said she did not want to rule on any motions until satisfied the challenge should be heard in federal court.

The ban still won't go into effect as planned this week because the Fremont City Council voted to temporarily suspend the ordinance until the lawsuits are resolved.

Smith Camp noted both lawsuits claim the ordinance violates Nebraska law because Fremont exceeded its municipal powers under state law by adopting the ordinance.

"At this time, it seems to me this case needs to be argued in state court, not federal court," Smith Camp said. "I don't have subject-matter jurisdiction if the claim can be resolved in state court."

Smith Camp gave attorneys until Aug. 16 to file briefs arguing why the case should be heard in federal court. She will decide whether the case will continue in federal court after reviewing the briefs.

Attorneys for the groups declined to comment following the Wednesday hearing.

The attorney Fremont council members voted to hire to defend the ordinance, Kansas-based law professor Kris Kobach, said via

teleconference with the court Wednesday that the city would not take any action to reverse the suspension while the court decides whether it has jurisdiction.

Kobach drafted the Fremont ordinance and offered to represent the city for free to fight the lawsuits. He also helped write Arizona's new controversial immigration law.

Fremont, a city of 25,000 west of Omaha, is among a handful of Nebraska cities that have seen marked demographic changes primarily because of an influx of Hispanic workers at meatpacking plants. The ordinance has divided the community between those who say it makes up for what they call lax federal law enforcement and others who argue it could fuel discrimination.

Fremont's ordinance would require employers to use a federal online system that checks whether a person is permitted to work in the U.S.

It also would require people seeking to rent property to apply for a \$5 permit at City Hall.

Those who said they were citizens would receive a permit and would not have to provide documents proving legal status.

Those who said they weren't citizens would receive permits, but their legal status would be checked. If they're found to be in the country illegally and are unable to resolve their status, they would be forced to leave the property.

Landlords who knowingly rent to illegal immigrants could be subject to \$100 fines.

The ordinance has put Fremont on the list with Arizona and other places in the national debate over immigration regulations.

Arizona's sweeping new law takes effect Thursday, but a federal judge blocked the most controversial sections Wednesday.

Arizona's overall law still will be enacted Thursday, but without certain provisions, including a requirement that officers check a person's immigration status while enforcing other laws.

Study Says Amish Expanding Westward

BY MARK SCOLFORD
Associated Press Writer

HARRISBURG, Pa. — The search by the booming North American population of Amish for affordable, fertile farmland has produced settlements in 28 states and Ontario — and has even led parties to scout recently for suitable properties in Alaska and Mexico.

A new study estimates the number of Amish has increased nearly 10 percent in the past two years alone, to a total population of 249,000, compared with about 227,000 in 2008. That figure was just 124,000 in 1992. Nearly all Amish descended from a group of about 5,000 in the early 20th century.

The study by the Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies at Elizabethtown College in Elizabethtown, Pa., found that about two-thirds of Amish still live in the traditional strongholds of Pennsylvania, Ohio and Indiana, but that they continue to spread west, particularly into the Midwestern corn belt.

Farmland in Lancaster County, Pa., can cost \$15,000 an acre, compared with \$2,000 or \$3,000 per acre elsewhere.

"They are sort of challenging some of the mainstream assumptions about progress and how you achieve the good life and happiness," said Elizabethtown professor Don Kraybill, the

study's director. "They're not merely surviving; they're thriving, and growing at this very rapid rate."

The highest rates of growth over the past year were recorded in New York (19 percent), Minnesota (9 percent), Missouri (8 percent), Wisconsin (7 percent) and Illinois (7 percent). High-growth areas for Amish in the past five years also include Kentucky, Kansas and Iowa.

The newest state to get an Amish settlement is South Dakota, after a group of at least six families bought several farms near Tripp in the southeastern part of the state. They have planted forage for their cows, built barns and established a weekly bake sale.

Myra Weber, co-owner of Weber's Grocery, said they've patronized her store for baking supplies and ice cream.

"We put it in paper sacks for them, wrap it up really well," Weber said. "They say they have to get it home right away and eat this."

The study focused on all Amish groups that use horse-and-buggy transportation, so it excluded such automobile-driving groups as the Beachy Amish and Mennonites.

The Amish are a devout Christian faith dating to the 1500s, and their ancestors began arriving in eastern Pennsylvania around 1730. They generally eschew modern

conveniences such as motorized vehicles, instead relying on horse-drawn carriages and permitting only limited use of telephones and electricity. Practices can vary from group to group, but their plain dress and use of the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect make them distinct in modern society.

The remarkable growth is almost entirely due to the Amish birth rate — many Amish families have five or more children. Kraybill said the Amish retain about 85 percent of the young adults who have to decide whether to remain in the church. The Amish marry within the community, and the total number of converts nationwide is believed to be less than 100, he said.

About half the Amish are under 18 years old, meaning the community tends to focus much of its energy on young people and schools, Kraybill said.

Earlier this summer, a van of Amish land scouts from Prattsburg, N.Y., visited Alaska to seek a site for a new settlement but were unable to find anything suitable. Another group, from Illinois and Missouri, just made a return trip to Mexico on a similar mission.

Kraybill said there are no Amish congregations in Alaska or Mexico, although small numbers of Amish schoolteachers from Pennsylvania and Ohio have been helping improve education within an Old Colony

Mennonite community in Mexico. That conservative Mennonite group has roots in Russia, rather than Switzerland and southern Germany, like the Amish.

The teachers' supporters produced a newsletter describing their experiences in Mexico, in an effort to raise money for the project.

In the new population study, Pennsylvania passed Ohio as the state with the largest Amish population, in part because the authors employed a more precise method to estimate the number, one that takes into account the different average size of an Amish district, or congregation, depending on the state.

The study says the Amish have targeted areas for new settlements judging by the quality and cost of farmland, the potential for nonfarm employment, a rural lifestyle, other factors conducive to their values and proximity to other Amish communities.

Their decisions to leave are often prompted by suburban sprawl, land costs, tourism and other intrusive activities, zoning or similar governmental disputes, the local business climate, employment needs and church-related conflict.

The Amish account for less than one-tenth of a percent of the U.S. population of 310 million.

OBITUARIES

Phillip Larson

VOLIN — Phillip L. Larson, age 65, of rural Volin, passed away Wednesday (July 28, 2010) at Mercy Medical Center, Sioux City, Iowa, from injuries sustained in an automobile accident.

Funeral services will be 10 a.m. Saturday at Vangen Lutheran Church, Mission Hill, with Rev. Lance Lingren officiating.

Burial will be in the parish cemetery. Visitations will be 6-9 p.m., Friday, at the Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Home & Crematory,

Yankton, with a prayer service and video tribute at 7 p.m. Visitations will resume one hour prior to the service at the church.

Christina Bell

VERMILLION — Christina Bell, 98, of Vermillion, passed away, Wednesday, July 28, 2010 at Sanford Vermillion Care Center, Vermillion.

Funeral arrangements are pending with Iverson-Sieck-Kober Funeral Home, Vermillion.

Thune: Fall Election Is Critical For GOP

SIoux FALLS (AP) — Sen. John Thune says he's not thinking beyond the November election, even though he has no opponent and received media attention in Washington this week as a possible GOP candidate for president in 2012.

The South Dakota Republican says the GOP needs to win House and Senate seats

this year to restore the balance of power in Congress. He plans to campaign for GOP candidates in other states.

Thune says he's received some encouragement about running for president but his response has been to focus on November and let 2012 take care of itself.

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2	9		7	4	3	5		
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EASY EA BOOK 9 #6

Yesterday's Solution

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4	2	8	5	9	7	6	1	3
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su | do | ku
Check tomorrow's paper for the solution to today's puzzle.
CH BOOK 9 #5