

Flooding Closes Highway 48 Near Iowa Border

PIERRE (AP) — The South Dakota Department of Transportation has again closed a one-mile section of S.D. Highway 48 at the Iowa State line due to flooding from the Big Sioux River. The stretch was closed for nearly two weeks in late March and for a day in June for the same reason. The DOT advises motorists to use caution when approaching sections where water is flowing adjacent to or over a road. Officials say drivers should not attempt to drive through water covering the road as it may be washed out underneath.

Trial Of Two Accused Of Killing Guard Delayed

SIOUX FALLS (AP) — A judge has delayed the trial of two inmates accused of killing a South Dakota State Penitentiary prison guard this spring. KDLT television reports that the trial of Rodney Berget and Eric Robert is now scheduled to begin on Jan. 30 to give both sides more time to prepare. Prosecutors say they expect it to last about six weeks. Prosecutors argued in a pretrial hearing Monday morning that Berget and Robert should be tried together. Defense attorneys say the two should be tried separately. A motions hearing has been scheduled for Sep. 16 to debate the issue. Officials say Berget and Robert killed 63-year-old Ronald Johnson in April during a failed escape attempt. Both men are charged with first-degree murder.

1 Killed, 1 Injured In Hot Springs Tower Fall

HOT SPRINGS (AP) — Officials say one Hot Springs man was killed and another was seriously injured when a communications tower they were dismantling fell on top of them. Fall River County Emergency Manager Frank Maynard says 54-year-old Tim Anderson died at Rapid City Regional Hospital shortly after arriving by helicopter Saturday evening. Anderson was a 33-year employee of Golden West, working as a special equipment technician. Tom Embree was flown to the hospital and treated for serious injuries. Officials tell the *Rapid City Journal* that the men were helping a local amateur radio club take down a 110-foot tower atop Gull Hill, along old Highway 18 between Minnekahta Junction and Edgemont. The tower was no longer in use, so the owner offered it to the club to be moved to another location.

Heineman: Economy Top Priority For Govs.

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Nebraska Gov. Dave Heineman said Monday that he wants to arm each of the nation's governors with an action plan to attract high-growth businesses and expand their economies. Heineman said he will use his new role as chairman of the National Governors Association to promote economic growth, drawing from his experience in Nebraska and borrowing from other state plans. He said the national effort, Growing State Economies, is aimed at small businesses with the potential to grow rapidly and transform state economies. The plan was unveiled one day after Heineman became the group's new chairman at its annual meeting in Salt Lake City. Heineman, who will serve a one-year term, is the first Nebraska governor to assume the title in 50 years. The job gives him a national pulpit to speak on behalf of the nation's governors.

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Bachmann Rips Black Farmer Settlement

BY MARGERY A. BECK
Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — Republican presidential candidate Michele Bachmann pointed to one program in particular Monday when talking about wasteful government spending: a multi-billion dollar settlement paid to black farmers, who claim the federal government discriminated against them for decades in awarding loans and other aid.

The issue came up after Bachmann and Republican Rep. Steve King of Iowa toured flooded areas along the Missouri River. During a news conference, they fielded a question about whether farmers affected by the flooding also should be worried by proposed U.S. Department of Agriculture cuts.

The two responded by criticizing a 1999 settlement in what is known as the Pigford case, after the original plaintiff, North Carolina farmer Timothy Pigford. Late last year, President Barack Obama signed legislation authorizing a new, nearly \$1.2 billion settlement for people who were denied payments in the earlier one because they missed deadlines for filing.

King has likened the Pigford settlement to "modern-day reparations" for African-Americans. He said Monday a large percentage of the settlement "was just paid out in fraudulent claims" and criticized the Obama administration's plan to resolve separate lawsuits filed by Hispanic and female farmers.

"That's another at least \$1.3 billion," King said "I'd like to apply that money to the people that are under water right now."

Bachmann seconded King's criticism, saying, "When money is diverted to inefficient projects, like the Pigford project, where there seems to be proof-positive of fraud, we can't afford \$2 billion in potentially fraudulent claims when that money can be used to benefit the people along the Mississippi River and the Missouri River."

John Boyd, president of the National Black Farmers Association, which represented black farmers in the Pigford settlement, called the criticism unfair.

"Why continue to take from those people who haven't taken part in federal programs equally and give to another group of farmers who have taken part in federal programs?" Boyd asked. "I think taking resources from a group of people who have been historically denied any relief at the Department of Agriculture is a bad idea. For the flood victims that deserve redress ... they should provide those people with relief, too."

Boyd said he and others worked to put anti-fraud provisions in the legislation signed last year. They require each claim of discrimination to be judged individually to determine its merit — a process that Boyd said has not

yet even begun. "We worked with Republicans ... to get those issues addressed," he said. "Even after we got them addressed, Ms. Bachmann and Mr. King have continued to look at black farmers in a very negative way."

"I think it's bad for the American people. I think if Ms. Bachmann wants to be president of the United States, she should treat all people fairly."

Bachmann's criticism wasn't limited to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Minnesota congresswoman also took a swipe at the president, who has not visited areas of Iowa, Nebraska or other states flooded by the river.

"The devastation is beyond what people can imagine," Bachmann said. "Surely this is worthy of a presidential visit to come see this level of devastation in western Iowa."

Heavy rain and a large snowmelt from the Rocky Mountains have poured water into the Missouri, flooding more than 500,000 acres in seven states. The high water is expected to linger through August, putting pressure on levees that protect homes, cities and farms.

"This flood that we have seems to have disappeared from the minds of people from across the country," King said. "If you're not here to see it ... you don't hear very much about it."

Attorney: Piper Sorry For Killing

RAPID CITY (AP) — The attorney for an Alaska man facing death for his role in the killing of a 19-year-old South Dakota man says his client's life should be spared because he is sorry.

Defense attorney Robert Van Norman told jurors Monday that Briley Piper is no longer the "lost boy" he once was. He says Piper while in prison has worked to overcome his learning disability and attention deficit disorder.

Piper is being resentenced for his admitted role in the 2000 killing of Chester Poage near Spearfish. A judge sentenced Piper to death, but the South Dakota Supreme Court ruled he should have been sentenced by a jury.

Lawrence County State's Attorney John Fitzgerald says Poage pleaded and begged for his life, and Fitzgerald urged jurors to sentence Piper to death.

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