

Hot, Humid Weather Helps South Dakota Crops

SIOUX FALLS (AP) — The Agriculture Department says hot, humid conditions are helping South Dakota crops develop. The agency says in its weekly crop and weather report that crop conditions in the state are rated mostly good to excellent. However, temperatures in many areas are rising to levels where crops might begin to be stressed. Extreme heat also is a concern for ranchers, though livestock are rated mostly in good to excellent condition. Ranchers are monitoring cattle and sheep to ensure they have adequate water. Pastures remain mainly in good to excellent condition.

NorthWestern Energy Surpasses Record

HURON (AP) — NorthWestern Energy says it has surpassed its all-time high for electricity demand. The South Dakota electric utility says cooling equipment and other electric demands on Monday pushed the system to a new peak of 331 megawatts, as heat indexes reached 112 degrees. The previous record was set at 315 megawatts in 2007. The company says there was a bit of relief in the form of wind generation on Tuesday, as the Titan 1 Wind Farm near Ree Heights added 15 megawatts of renewable energy around the noon hour. That steady wind that didn't exist in the area on Monday. NorthWestern Energy system is capacity rated at 352 megawatts.

Gov. Expects Meeting On Mo. River Flooding

PIERRE (AP) — South Dakota Gov. Dennis Daugaard says he expects the governors of Missouri River states to meet later this year to discuss flooding on the river. Daugaard says the meeting likely will be held this summer or fall in Nebraska, home to the Omaha District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Daugaard tells KCCR radio that he talked to the governors of Iowa, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota and Wyoming about river flooding during a weekend meeting in Salt Lake City of the National Governor's Association. He says states may differ on many of the river's priorities, but he senses that all support the idea of better flood control of the river.

Chief: Passer-By Saved 2 Kids From Fire

FREMONT, Neb. (AP) — Authorities say a passer-by saved two children from a mobile home fire on the south side of Fremont. Fremont Rural Fire Department officials told the Fremont Tribune that firetrucks were dispatched about 7:55 p.m. Monday but that the home was completely ablaze when the trucks arrived. Chief Carl Nielsen says a motorist on nearby U.S. Highway 77 noticed the smoke and went to investigate. Nielsen says that when the woman got to the home, she pulled a 1-year-old infant and a 3-year-old child from the burning home. Nielsen says the children likely would not have survived without the woman's help. Her name was not immediately available.

Tax Refund Program Likely Headed To Vote

PIERRE (AP) — A program that provides grants for large business projects in South Dakota is likely headed to a statewide vote in November 2012. Secretary of State Jason Gant says petitions calling for a vote have enough valid signatures to qualify the matter for the ballot. The Republican-controlled Legislature passed the bill this year at the urging of Republican Gov. Dennis Daugaard. It'll refund construction taxes to industrial projects that cost at least \$5 million. Supporters say the program set to take effect in 2013 will promote business expansion. Opponents say the money would be better spent on such things as education and Medicaid. The state Democratic Party circulated the petitions to bring the matter to a statewide vote. Anyone who wants to challenge Gant's ruling must do so within five days.

Midwest Heat Wave Expected To Persist This Week

BY TAMMY WEBBER
Associated Press

CHICAGO — Midwest residents woke Tuesday to the whir of fans and air conditioners, the soundtrack to an unusually intense heat wave enveloping most of middle America and slowly spreading eastward. From Texas to the Dakotas, and east to Illinois and Indiana, temperatures and humidity levels soared on Monday and were expected to remain high through at least the end of the week, by which time forecasters say the East Coast will get to share the misery. Seventeen states issued heat watches, warnings or advisories on Monday, when the heat index easily surpassed 100 degrees in many places, including 126 in Newton, Iowa, and 119 in Madison, Minn. Things were heating up on the East Coast on Tuesday, and the National Weather Service

said temperatures in New Jersey that were expected to be in the lower 90s and could reach 100 degrees by the end of the week. Cooling centers were set up in many cities to offer residents places to escape, and they were expected to remain open during the day until the heat abates. Chicago opened six centers and encouraged residents to go to hundreds of public buildings, including libraries and police stations. Anne Sheahan, spokeswoman for the city's Department of Family and Support Services, expected the number of people seeking refuge at the centers to climb in step with the temperatures, which were not expected to drop below the mid- to upper-90s throughout the week. The city was also offering rides to cooling centers. Chicago authorities stepped up their high-heat precautions after a 1995 heat wave killed

more than 700 people in less than a week. Now temperatures above 90 degrees trigger an emergency plan that includes city workers calling and visiting the frail and elderly. In East St. Louis, Ill., a mostly black city that's among the nation's poorest, 79-year-old Bernice Sykes spent Monday in a soup kitchen that had been pressed into service as a makeshift cooling center. Sykes, a retired restaurant worker living on Social Security income, figured she had little choice to seek relief: One of her two tiny fans failed Sunday in her \$500-a-month-efficiency apartment, which has no air conditioning. "I want to get out of there as quick as I can," she said Monday. "Right here, I feel good. But I've got to use that one fan when I get home. It's just so hot." As with any heat wave, electricity usage has spiked as homes and businesses cranked up their air conditioners.

Sister, Mother Testify At South Dakota Murder Resentencing

BY KRISTI EATON
Associated Press

RAPID CITY — The sister of a South Dakota man slain 11 years ago told jurors Tuesday that she will never get to know what kind of uncle her brother would be to her two young sons. Samantha Poage Kiria testified during the resentencing trial of Briley Piper, who admitted to his role in the March 2000 killing of 19-year-old Chester Poage near Spearfish. Kiria, 28, said she often thinks about how her brother would interact with her 5-year-old and 16-

month-old sons and whether he would have his own family. "I just wonder and I'll never know," she told jurors as she broke into tears. Piper, 30, and Elijah Page of Athens, Texas, pleaded guilty to the slaying, but their lawyers later said they believed Piper and Page had a better chance of avoiding the death penalty if the judge sentenced them because a jury would be swayed by the brutal nature of the killing. Piper appealed, and the state Supreme Court eventually overturned his death sentence by rul-

ing that a jury, not a judge, should decide his fate. Page voluntarily ended his appeals and was put to death in July 2007. It was South Dakota's first execution in 60 years. A third suspect, Darrell Hoadley, of Lead, pleaded not guilty but was convicted by a jury that sentenced him to life in prison without possibility of parole. Poage was a friend of the three men. When Poage's mother and sister flew to Florida for a vacation, the three decided to kidnap Poage and steal things from his mother's home.

After knocking Poage out and tying him up, they decided to kill him. He was taken to a gulch west of Spearfish where he was stripped naked and pushed into a stream, said John Fitzgerald, the Lawrence County state's attorney. Poage was severely beaten and stabbed. His killers later admitted taunting him and trying to drown him by stepping on his neck. They finally ended his life after more than two hours by dropping basketball-sized rocks on his head. Poage's body was found in the stream several weeks later.

Charges Dropped In Alleged Bribery Case

RAPID CITY (AP) — Prosecutors have dropped charges against a garbage company accused in an alleged scheme to cheat Rapid City out of dumping fees at the city landfill. Fish Garbage Service owners George and Clifford Fish still are charged with grand theft and conspiracy. They have pleaded not guilty and face an August trial. Prosecutors earlier dropped charges against three garbage truck drivers in the alleged conspiracy to cheat the landfill out of more than \$100,000 in tipping fees over seven years. The three were granted immunity and are expected to testify in the August trial. A jury in May found the landfill scale attendant not guilty in the case.

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