

Gov. Daugaard Meets With Corps Of Engineers

PIERRE (AP) — Gov. Dennis Daugaard met with officials from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to discuss Missouri River flooding and the schedule of water releases. The Corps of Engineers is visiting with each governor along the Missouri River to announce the schedule of water releases through the end of September. The Corps will announce the schedule to the public on Friday. Daugaard in a news release says that he and the officials agreed that the most important thing is to not have a repeat flooding next year. They also agreed on a level that would get the river back within its banks, as well as ensuring the Corps takes into consideration forecasts for above-average rainfall in the next few months as it builds the release schedule for the dams.

S.D., N.D. Food Stamp Use Increases

MITCHELL (AP) — A new study shows more people in the Dakotas are enrolled in a federal program that provides food assistance. The Daily Republic newspaper reports that data from the Urban Institute shows enrollment in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program increased by 58 percent in South Dakota between 2007 and 2010. North Dakota had an increase of 33 percent during that period. Nationally, the number of people using food stamps increased 69 percent between from 2007 to 2010.

S.D. Board Of Education OKs New Program

PIERRE (AP) — Students at Southeast Technical Institute in Sioux Falls will soon be able to earn a registered nursing degree. The South Dakota State Board of Education approved the school's request to develop an RN program on Monday. The new program will start in spring 2012. Students who complete the program will earn an associate in applied science degree in registered nursing. Southeast Tech President Jeff Holcomb says in a news release that the addition is a natural fit. As health care becomes more specialized, he says employers often encounter a shortage of registered nurses. He says this will give students more opportunity to become marketable.

Nebraska City Owns Sandwich Record

FREMONT, Neb. (AP) — The eastern Nebraska city of Fremont now owns the Guinness World Record for the largest open-faced sandwich ever created. Earlier this month, a group of volunteers created a 1,652-pound Spamwich at the annual John C. Fremont Days festival on July 10. The Fremont group received official certification of their record not long after building the giant sandwich, which was 300 pounds bigger than the previous record. Organizer Don Cunningham told the Fremont Tribune the project helped bring the community together.

Troubled Childhood Outlined In Murder Case

RAPID CITY (AP) — At age 3, Briley Piper found a lighter and set his parents' bedroom on fire, but also climbed up to the kitchen sink to wash dishes to spare his 9-year-old sister a spanking. In kindergarten, Piper's behavior got him thrown off the school bus. Over the next 15 years, he tangled with school officials and the law until ultimately pleading guilty in 2001 to the murder of Chester Allan Poage. Piper now faces the death penalty. As Piper's sentencing hearing moves into its second week, his defense on Monday started exploring the 30-year-old's troubled past in an attempt to spare him the death penalty. A judge had sentenced Piper to death, but the state Supreme Court ruled that a jury, not a judge, should decide whether the Anchorage, Alaska, man should get death or life in prison. Two other men also were found guilty of Poage's murder. Darrell Hoadley was sentenced to life in prison by a jury. Elijah Page, who dropped his appeals, was executed after being sentenced to death by the same judge who sentenced Briley Piper.

Piper's mother, Linda Piper of Anchorage, Alaska, took the stand Monday afternoon, The Rapid City Journal reported. Family photos showing Briley Piper with his three siblings and his parents were passed among the jurors. They saw snapshots of him dressed for a tae kwon do competition, wearing a high school T-shirt and preparing for a Boy Scout outing. Under questioning from defense attorney Robert Van Norman, Linda Piper, who suffered a stroke two years ago, recalled her son's formative years. "At first I just thought he was active," Linda Piper said, referring to her son's first five years. Briley Piper was active enough for about a dozen kids, she said. Although he was born prematurely, Briley Piper walked and talked at 7 months, she said. He grew fast and by the time he started kindergarten he was far bigger than his classmates. By the seventh grade, 5-foot-1-inch Briley Piper weighed 155 pounds. Briley Piper's father worked in the oil fields and was absent for two-week stretches, but sometimes spent four to six weeks away from

the Pipers' Anchorage home. Briley grew so fast it was difficult to find clothes for him, Linda Piper said, adding that children teased him and teachers misinterpreted his behavior because of his size. But Lawrence County State's Attorney John Fitzgerald had another description for Briley Piper. "Your son has chosen to be a bully," Fitzgerald said when it was his turn to cross-examine Linda Piper. When Van Norman asked Linda Piper how she punished her four children, she said she had a belt, a switch and a piece of plastic race track. "The Hot Wheels track worked best," Linda Piper said. Linda Piper, who has one adopted child, said her natural children had behavior issues and were involved with alcohol and drugs in their early teens. Briley, the youngest, was the most loving of the four children, Linda Piper said. "He really is the best of any I've got," she said. "He's very loving."

Mountain Lion Killed In Conn. Traced To South Dakota

BY STEPHEN DOCKERY
Associated Press

HARTFORD, Conn. — A mountain lion killed on a Connecticut highway last month had apparently walked halfway across the country from South Dakota, according to Connecticut environmental officials who said Tuesday that the journey of roughly 2,000 miles was one of the longest ever recorded for a land mammal.

The animal originated in the Black Hills region of South Dakota and was tracked by DNA from its hair and droppings as it passed through Minnesota and Wisconsin in 2009 and 2010. Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Commissioner Daniel Esty said at

a news conference. Biologists estimate the size of the mountain lion population at about 100,000 in North America, mostly living in western regions and seldom traveling more than 100 miles. It was the first confirmed wild mountain lion in Connecticut in more than 100 years. "It is a testament to the adaptability of the species that it can travel so far from its original home in South Dakota to Connecticut," Esty said. The lean, 140-pound male was killed June 11 when it was hit by a sport utility vehicle at night on the Wilbur Cross Parkway in the New Haven suburb of Milford. Authorities initially believed it was a captive animal that escaped, but tests showed that it was not neutered or declawed

and it had no implanted microchips, which are commonly used in domestic animals. Tests also determined it was likely the same one that had been seen earlier in Greenwich, Conn., a New York City suburb 30 miles away. The death was followed by a flurry of big cat sightings in the suburbs of Connecticut, but experts dismissed most of them as unreliable. Government experts say no native mountain lions are believed to live in Connecticut. Although it was an anomaly, Esty said the presence of the wild mountain lion is a good sign of the ability of Connecticut's conserved land to sustain wildlife. He said the discovery is "a strong symbol of what we had all

hoped for who work in the conservation area, that wilderness areas and biological diversity can be preserved and protected." Genetic testing showed the cat had the same genetic structure of the mountain lion population in South Dakota's Black Hills region. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service Wildlife Genetics Laboratory in Missoula, Mont., matched the DNA with samples collected from a cat that was spotted in eastern Minnesota near Minneapolis and in northern Wisconsin from late 2009 through early 2010. It was unclear what route the animal took to Connecticut. Biologists said it could have traveled south near urban areas or north through Canada.

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