Thursday, 7.5.12

South Dakota

Enrollment Down At 2 Of 3 University Centers

Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS — Enrollment at two of South Dakota's three off-campus state University Centers fell in 2011, declines officials mainly attribute to spring flooding around Pierre and the relocation of a Sioux Falls nursing program.

Capital University Center in Pierre saw a 28 percent drop in credit hours last summer after the Missouri River swelled over its banks in early June 2011. The disruption also affected the subsequent fall and spring semesters at the center, which moved to its own \$3.5 million site in 2009, with credit hours down about 14 percent in each, said director Ron Woodburn.

"We saw some folks who had to withdraw from the summer session because of the flooding, just because they didn't know how they were going to be affected," Woodburn said. "With a non-traditional student base, something like that can be really disruptive to lives. So there was probably some carryover from that."

South Dakota's University Centers in Pierre, Sioux Falls and Rapid City, which deliver courses through the state's public higher education system, have shown steady growth over the past few years.

Nebraska

BY GRANT SCHULTE

Associated Press

said Wednesday.

Controlled

Burn Helped

Save Forest,

Ranger Says

LINCOLN, Neb. — A fire that

scorched more than 1,000 acres

of Nebraska's hand-planted na-

tional forest would have caused

more damage if not for a precau-

tionary controlled burn that re-

moved tinder-dry trees from the

path of the blaze, a forest ranger

overseeing firefighting efforts at

said the flames did not spread far

structures, outbuildings, or pri-

vate land. The fire is now nearly

burned an estimated 1,043 acres

of timber and grasslands, he said.

thinned, and recently done a pre-

which "stayed on the ground and

The fire started with a light-

ning strike Saturday at the fed-

Strong winds, triple-digit heat

eral forest and grasslands in the

north-central Nebraska Sandhills.

and rugged, sandy terrain compli-

cated efforts to contain the blaze

and temperatures were forecast

A lot of trees survived the fire,

"We were really lucky on this

95 percent contained, having

one," Buskirk said. "It burned

through an area that we had

out of the canopy in a lot of

scribed burn.

places," he said.

the Nebraska National Forest,

enough to damage any park

Tim Buskirk, a district ranger

But University Center-Sioux Falls served 270 fewer students this past fall, as the University of South Dakota's nursing program moved to the Sanford USD Medical Center campus, said executive dean Mark Lee.

The school in Vermillion is also transitioning its Sioux Falls nursing program from an associate's degree to a bachelor's degree, which is likely having a short-term effect on pre-nursing enrollments, he added.

Lee said if the center adjusted for the move, it would have shown an enrollment loss between 1 percent and 2 percent.

The dean says the school is looking into more education and science courses, as well as more undergraduate options.

University Center-Sioux Falls was created to serve residents of the state's largest city, who faced 60-mile drives on Interstate 29 to get to either South Dakota State University or University of South Dakota. People working in the city wanted a local site where they could work toward degrees, yet South Dakota was the only state whose largest city didn't have a public university presence, Lee said.

The center began offering classes on leased space on the Southeast Technical Institute campus.

"Clearly there was pent-up demand, because enrollment growth was really quite remarkable in those first four or five years," Lee said. "That really signaled to the regents that we were onto something."

In 2006, state legislators approved the establishment of a dedicated campus in northwestern Sioux Falls, which has grown to two classroom buildings with about 110,000 square feet of space and a 21,000-square-foot research center. The center still uses about 13,000 square feet of leased space at Southeast Tech for SDSU's nursing programs.

Rapid City's University Center, which moved into its own \$13.4 million facility in April 2011, added 49 students this past fall for an enrollment of 1,758, said dean Craig

More than half of the center's students take classes offered by Black Hills State University, also in Rapid City.

The new 59,000-square-foot building, which houses 21 classrooms, 2 science labs, two computer labs and a 100-seat lecture hall, is spurring growth, said Craig Johnson, the center's dean.

"Courses were a little spread out prior to the building opening up," Johnson said. "Stu-dents love having a place to call their own, to be able to come and study.

The heads of three centers made their annual reports to the state Board of Regents this past week.

Draw fire crashed, the military said

Tuesday. The tanker was based out

Rain was not in the forecast for the area Wednesday, and it appeared

the hot, dry weather would con-

tinue. Most communities in western

South Dakota had called off Fourth

of July fireworks displays, not only

because of the fire danger but also

because local firefighters were help-

Great Plains Fire Information

other fires in the region include the

Highlands Fire, which has scorched

about 400 acres between Newcastle,

Wyo., and Custer, S.D., and is 95 per-

cent contained; and the Soldier Fire

S.D., which had spread to about 5

making progress," French said.

near Beulah, Wyo., west of Spearfish,

acres and was 50 percent contained.

"In the Black Hills area, we are

spokeswoman Sheila French said

ing battle the wildfires.

of North Carolina.

Mayor Worried After Mountain Lion Reports

YORK, Neb. (AP) — A Nebraska mayor says he's concerned for the safety of his residents after several reported mountain lion sightings in

York Mayor Chuck Harris said Tuesday he contacted Nebraska Game and Parks to express concern after a woman reported seeing a mountain lion around 5:30 a.m.

The York News-Times says the sighting is consistent with the location of several other reports from citizens. York County Sheriff Dale Radcliff says he has absolutely no doubt he saw a mountain lion several days ago about two blocks from the middle school.

Mayor Harris says he's worried that someone might get hurt, and that the mountain lion or lions are getting "bolder because they are willing to walk right down the street."

Suspect In Rapid City Crime Spree Sentenced

RAPID CITY (AP) — A Rapid City man has been sentenced to 10 years in prison for his role in a crime spree.

The Rapid City Journal reports that 19-year-old Schauvon Tobacco was sentenced Tuesday for first-degree robbery in connection with a string of attempted convenience-store and home robberies in early March.

Cassidy Grosz, Hebrew Audiss, Adam Poor Bear and Matthew Wright also are accused in the attempted robberies and pleaded not guilty. Wright also is accused of firing a BB gun at police and an officer returned fire. No one was hurt.

2 Men Burned In Neb. Fireworks Explosion

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Two men were expected to spend at least a couple of nights in a Lincoln hospital after they were burned when a device made out of fireworks exploded Tuesday night.

The Lincoln Journal Star says the two men, believed to be in their teens or early 20s, were taken to the burn unit at Saint Elizabeth Medical Center in Lincoln and apparently suffered second- and third-degree

The explosion was reported around 10:30 p.m. at a house party just west of Holmes Lake. The two men were behind a house, said Rick Campos, an investigator with the city's Bureau of Fire Prevention.

Campos said he isn't certain what type of explosive caused the injuries, and others at the party said they didn't know what the device

"Obviously, we did find some post-blast evidence that there were illegal fireworks there and that they were making fireworks," he said. We haven't been able to talk to the individuals yet."

Campos said he hoped to speak with the men, who were not identified, later Wednesday or Thursday.

Alcohol did not appear to be a factor in the explosion, Campos

The men might be hospitalized for a week. Campos said even one

night in a burn unit is a sign that the injuries are significant.

S.D. County May Evict Driver's License Bureau

SIOUX FALLS (AP) — The Minnehaha County Commission may evict the South Dakota Department of Public Safety's driver's license bureau from the county administration building in Sioux Falls.

The Argus Leader reports that commissioners are frustrated with the noise and commotion in the hallway outside its meeting chambers. The commission's building committee, which consists of all five commissioners, recommended Tuesday the county not renew the lease for the driver's license bureau when it expires in October.

The regular commission could vote on the matter next week. Driver licensing program director Cindy Gerber says she's aware of the commission's displeasure with noise outside its chambers. She says her agency will be looking at other options if the commission doesn't renew the lease.

Smokejumpers Help With Black Hills Wildfire

Officials hope to have the fire completely contained by Wednesday night, Buskirk said.

to reach 96 to 101 degrees on

firefighters.

Wednesday — cooler than previ-

ous days but still hazardous for

'We're just mopping up some hot spots right now, watching for flare-ups," he said.

Two engines remain on the scene, down from 25 when firefighting efforts began, along with two crews from the Soldier Creek Pine Ridge Jobs Corps in northwest Nebraska. Other crews have been sent to help fight the wildfires in South Dakota. At least 10 other central Nebraska fires that were sparked by lightning at the weekend have been contained.

Investigators will assess the damage to see whether the U.S. Forest Service needs to replant trees and an emergency response team will start tallying the damage to roads and trails on Thursday, Buskirk said.

The 142,000-acre national forest is divided into two ranger districts: The Bessey Ranger District in the rolling, prairie-grass-covered Sandhills in north-central Nebraska, and the Pine Ridge Ranger District in far northwest Nebraska. The 105-year-old, hand-planted forest was the largest of its kind in the nation, and second only to a manmade forest in South Africa.

Drought conditions in western central and southeast Nebraska prompted Gov. Dave Heineman to declare a state emergency on Monday, which frees up state workers and resources to help with the effort. The Nebraska Games and Parks Commission imposed a fireworks ban in state parks over the Fourth of July holiday, and fireworks are already banned in national forests.

RAPID CITY (AP) — Smokejumpers who parachuted into the Black Hills have helped douse a wildfire in near Edgemont, but a second fire continued to burn just a few

miles away Wednesday. The Parker Peak Fire was contained Tuesday night with the help of about a dozen smokejumpers from Rawlins, Wyo., fire spokesman Brian Scott said.

'Those smokejumpers are a pretty polished bunch," Scott said. The fire is 100 percent contained and now we're in the heavy mop-up mode."

The fire, located about five miles northeast of Edgemont, was sparked by lightning on Sunday and charred about 800 acres. It is one of several wildfires that have scorched thousands of acres in southwestern South Dakota and northeastern

About a dozen miles northeast of Edgemont, the White Draw fire was 60 percent contained Wednesday morning, Scott said. That fire has blackened about 7,800 acres, or about 8 square miles.

Some of the personnel on scene used bulldozers and other heavy equipment Tuesday to create a line to stop the blaze. Intentional fires were then set to burn back into the wildfire, he said.

The approach appeared to be working Wednesday, Scott said, and efforts included crews in tankers and helicopters, as well as more than 20 fire vehicles on the ground.

"We're having a good day," he

Scott also said the fire was ignited by a "malfunctioning motor

home." "It was human-caused. Their vehicle started a fire on grass along the highway and it was off to the races

after that," he said. Four people died and two were

injured Sunday when an Air Force tanker that was battling the White

Dr. Maska, Rheumatologist

YANKTON MEDICAL CLINIC, P.C. IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THE ASSOCIATION OF Leann Maska, M.D.

Board Certified in Internal Medicine and Board Eligible in Rheumatology

Dr. Maska is a graduate of Sanford School of Medicine of The University of South Dakota, Vermillion, SD. She completed her Internal Medicine residency training, at Sanford School of Medicine of The University of South Dakota, Sioux Falls, SD; and her Rheumatology Fellowship at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, Omaha, NE. Dr. Maska is Board Certified in Internal Medicine and Board Eligible in Rheumatology.

Dr. Maska will treat arthritis, including rheumatoid, osteoarthritis and complex forms such as gout; certain autoimmune diseases, such as lupus and vasculitis; as well as musculoskeletal pain disorders such as

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Dr. Maska began seeing patients at the Yankton Medical Clinic on July 2, 2012. For an appointment please call 605-665-1722.

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