



Recruiting: Starting
From Scratch • **8**

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Wagner Death

Charges Filed Against Couple

Accused Could Face Up To 90 Years In Prison

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF
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LAKE ANDES — A Wagner man and woman each face nine charges — ranging from child abuse to drug use or possession to failure to notify authorities — in the death of 2-year-old RieLee Lovell earlier this month in a rural Wagner home.

A Charles Mix County grand jury indicted 28-year-old Laurie Ellen Cournoyer and 21-year-old Taylor Lawrence Cournoyer in the toddler's

death. Authorities say the child was found dead in a closet, and it was several hours before the Cournoyers — who were caregivers at the time — reported the child's death to law enforcement.

The Cournoyers will be arraigned on the nine charges Aug. 13 at the Charles Mix County courthouse in Lake Andes, according to Charles Mix County state's attorney Pam Hein. She was unsure which judge will preside over the arraignment, saying the scheduling remained to be finalized.

In separate court action, a delinquency petition

has been filed against the 11-year-old boy held in custody in connection with RieLee's death, Hein said.

The petition has been filed with Charles Mix County, Hein said. However, she said she could not discuss the number or nature of the charges against the boy.

Hein was not aware if the autopsy was completed on RieLee. The South Dakota attorney general's office was working with the autopsy and has said the results might not be back for a month, Hein said.

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RANDY DOCKENDORF/P&D

Yankton County 4-H administrative assistant Danielle McFarland (right) assists Michele Lindner and her daughter, Shelbi, as they purchase photo boards Monday at the 4-H office. Yankton County 4-Hers are hitting the home stretch as they prepare exhibits for Achievement Days beginning later this week. Watch the Press & Dakotan for coverage and photos.

Mead Project Looking Up

The Work Officially
Begins To Resurrect
Structure As Cultural
Center And Museum

BY NATHAN JOHNSON
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The historic Mead Building had a roof-raising experience Monday morning.

For long-time supporters of the effort to renovate the 103-year-old structure, the groundbreaking ceremony was likely a hair-raising moment.

A crowd gathered in front of the Mead Building to celebrate the beginning of what will be a multi-year renovation of the building

“We’re looking at this as economic development. It’s not just going to be a museum. I look at it as a gift to the whole state. I don’t think this is just a Yankton project. I think that’s how we got (Gov. Dennis Daugaard) on board.”

KATHIE GERSTNER

Building Committee. “To get this started is pretty exciting.”

Stonebrook Roofing will begin work today (Tuesday) to restore the roof and thus stabilize the building for future phases of the renovation.

“The state is going to do a lot of the asbestos removal because they would have to do it under any circumstances,” added Means.

Today is also when fundraising for the project will also begin in earnest.

“This is a big capital campaign, and it will be done in stages because it will be difficult to raise \$4 million up front,” acknowledged Kathie Gerstner, who is heading up the effort. “We hope that when people hear from us, they will be generous.”

She expects a lot of community members to get behind the project.

“We’re looking at this as economic development. It’s not just going to be a museum,” Gerstner said. “I look at it as a gift to the whole state. I don’t think this is just a Yankton project. I think that’s how we got (Gov. Dennis Daugaard) on board.”

Daugaard, Lt. Gov. Matt Michels and other



ABOVE: Gerald Armstrong of Stonebrook Roofing removes the first tiles from the Mead Building during a groundbreaking ceremony Monday morning to mark the official beginning of work to renovate the historic structure. RIGHT: Larry Ness, pictured with his wife Diane, was recognized Monday by the Mead Committee for his contributions to the roof restoration. He gave \$250,000, as did First Dakota National Bank of Yankton, for which Ness is the CEO and chairman of the board. (Kelly Hertz/P&D)

state officials visited with local organizers at the Mead Building earlier this month to discuss its future. Last week, the state agreed to give YCHS a 20-year lease on the building with an option to buy it if the renovation is successful.

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Yankton County Achievement Days To Feature Some New Looks

BY EMILY NIEBRUGGE
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Yankton County's Achievement Days are getting some new looks this year by broadening the types of events to be held at the annual 4-H festival.

To involve more community members, Yankton County 4-H/youth development assistant Lauren Fosheim and administrative assistant Danielle McFarland are working hard to bring in different types of events for Yankton County's 4-H Achievement Days later this week.

While the 4-H dog show was already held on July 21, the rest of the events will kick off Thursday, Aug. 2, and runs through the weekend.

“Looking at the scheduling in the past, we saw that there was a lack of things for the 4-H members to do after their shows were done,” Fosheim said. “They work really hard and they’re here for the entire weekend. They deserve to have a little bit of fun, too.”

With a national push to focus more on science, technology and engineering, there will also be new projects, McFarland said.



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Climatologist Says Drought Worsening, Will Likely Persist

BY CHET BROKAW
Associated Press

PIERRE — Drought conditions are intensifying in South Dakota and little relief is expected in the next three months, State Climatologist Dennis Today said Monday.

Isolated areas in western and north-eastern South Dakota got an inch or two of rain in the past week, but most of the rest of the state was sprinkled with less than a half inch, Today told the South Dakota Drought Task Force. The group of state and federal officials is working to help farmers, ranchers and others deal with the hot, dry conditions.

The forecast for the next five days indicates a chance of significant rain in the Sioux Falls area, but most of the rest of the state will likely not get enough rain to help crops and pastures, Today said.

“We’re going to have a continuation of what we’ve had so far,” Today said.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administra-



Today

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