

Warm, Dry Conditions Boost SD Crops

SIOUX FALLS (AP) — Dry conditions and above normal temperatures across most of the state are helping to advance crop development in South Dakota.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture says in its weekly crop report that farmers and ranchers had on average 5.7 days suitable for fieldwork.

Winter wheat is jointed at 99 percent and headed at 93 percent. Turning color was at 3 percent, well behind last year's 95 percent and the 46 percent average. Winter wheat conditions are rated 28 percent very poor, 27 percent poor, 30 percent fair, 14 percent good and 1 percent excellent.

The state's corn crop is rated 1 percent very poor, 2 percent poor, 27 percent fair, 57 percent good and 13 percent excellent.

Soybeans are 96 percent emerged, rated primarily fair and good.

Authorities ID Remains As Missing Man

RAPID CITY (AP) — The Pennington County Sheriff's Office has identified badly decomposed human remains found northwest of Pactola Reservoir as a 53-year-old man missing since June 2012 from Seattle.

The sheriff's office says no foul play is suspected in the death of Reginald E. Henrickson. Henrickson is originally from Minnesota with last known residences in Alaska and the Philippines.

The remains had been spotted near Kelly Gulch by an ATV driver last Tuesday, but searchers could not find the exact location that night. Crews returned the next morning and found the remains. An autopsy found no signs of trauma but could not determine a cause of death.

Other evidence on scene led investigators to contact Seattle authorities, and dental records were examined. The investigation is ongoing.

Omaha Paramedic Injured In Shooting

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Omaha police say a paramedic and a patient have been injured after a gun discharged inside an ambulance.

Lt. Darci Tierney says the shooting happened Monday afternoon as a female patient was transported to a hospital. Tierney says a gun discharged inside the ambulance at some point during the ride. The paramedic and the patient, who was being treated for a seizure, were injured. Tierney says additional information about the circumstances of the shooting is unclear.

The paramedic was taken to Nebraska Medical Center in serious condition. The patient was taken to Creighton University Medical Center in critical condition. Tierney says both have non-life-threatening injuries.

The names of the paramedic and the woman have not been released.

Teen Accused Of Racing Before Crash

FREMONT, Neb. (AP) — A Fremont teenager has been accused of drag racing with other teenagers before a fatal crash in June.

Court records show 16-year-old Quinton Amundson has been charged with willful reckless driving, racing on the highway and driving left of the center line. Amundson has been charged as an adult.

Three 16-year-old students were killed and another seriously hurt in the June 3 crash southeast of Fremont.

Dodge County Attorney Oliver Glass says Amundson was driving a Camaro and racing a Ford Mustang driven by one of the victims. The Mustang lost control and crashed.

Amundson is scheduled for a July 23 arraignment in Dodge County Court. Records do not list an attorney.

Woman Escaped Handcuffs, Took Car

WAHOO, Neb. (AP) — An eastern Nebraska woman arrested over the weekend has been accused of slipping out of her handcuffs and taking off in a deputy's cruiser.

Authorities in Saunders County say 23-year-old Jessica Lewin, of Ashland, was arrested Sunday night following a disturbance report.

Omaha television station KETV reports Lewin is accused of slipping out of her handcuffs as a deputy gathered information from witnesses. Levin also is accused of getting into the patrol car and driving away.

Authorities say Lewin later jumped out of the car following a short pursuit and was found inside a van at a nearby farmstead.

The station reports Lewin faces several charges, including theft, possession of a controlled substance and driving under suspension. Court records do not list an attorney.

2 Children Rescued From Creek At Park

GARRETSON (AP) — Two children had to be rescued when the canoe they were in tipped in a creek at Palisades State Park and they became stranded on rocks.

The Minnehaha County Sheriff's Department says an adult male was able to get to shore on his own during the Sunday afternoon incident, but a boy and girl had to be rescued. The boy suffered an ankle injury.

The rescue operation northeast of Sioux Falls took about an hour.

SD Hog, Pig Inventory Down From 2012

SIOUX FALLS (AP) — The number of hogs and pigs in South Dakota on June 1 totaled 1.18 million head, up 1 percent from the previous quarter but down 10 percent over the year.

The Agriculture Department says in a new report that the breeding hog inventory of 180,000 head was up 3 percent from the previous quarter and unchanged from 2012.

Market hogs in the state totaled 1 million head, up 1 percent from the first quarter and down 12 percent from last year.

Kerrey Joins Board Of Exploration Firm

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Bob Kerrey has joined the board of a rare-earths exploration company.

U.S. Rare Earths, Inc., announced Monday that Kerrey, a former Nebraska governor and U.S. senator, will sit on its board of directors. The Arkansas-based company holds mining claims in Idaho, Montana and Colorado.

The company seeks rare elements that are used in new, clean-energy technologies, such as hybrid cars and electric vehicles. The elements also have applications in computer hard drives, fiber optics, lasers, cellphones and digital music players.

The company is seeking to create a domestic U.S. supply for the materials to reduce the world's current dependence on China.

‘Tis The Season For New Laws To Hit The Books

S.D. Laws Impact Guns, Prison And Drivers

By The Associated Press

PIERRE — This part of summer is a time for patriotism. It's also the time new state laws go into effect across the nation.

Fiscal years begin July 1 on most financial calendars, and a slew of state government spending regulations kick in each year on that date. Policy laws also hit the books in a wave, though states often mark their independence by enacting such legislation on their own time.

Among the laws set to take effect this year around the U.S. are new abortion limits, gun laws and technology rules. And one state, Wyoming, will start setting up a lottery Monday, leaving only a handful of states without a jackpot drawing.

So as you get ready for Fourth of July cookouts and family gatherings, consider this roundup of South Dakota laws set to go into effect:

— **GUNS:** A new law taking effect July 1 allows South Dakota's school districts to arm teachers, other school staff and volunteers. Local law enforcement officials would have to approve a school's program, and those taking

part would have to undergo training by the same state commission that oversees the training of law enforcement officers. Associations representing school officials say they do not know of any school districts that have taken steps to put armed teachers or volunteers in their schools.

— **PRISONS:** Another new law seeks to cut South Dakota's prison costs by treating more nonviolent offenders through intensive probation, parole and other programs outside prison walls. The new law will use expanded probation and parole, along with other programs that treat drug and alcohol offenders, as part of an effort to divert offenders from prison and prevent them from committing future crimes. Officials said if nothing is done to curb a rapid increase in adult inmates, the state would have to build a new men's prison and a new women's prison in the next decade.

— **DRIVING:** Starting July 1, beginning drivers will be banned from using cellphones behind the wheel. Young drivers cannot use cellphones or other electronic devices until they get unrestricted licenses at age 16.

S.D. Task Force Will Study Election Emergencies

SIOUX FALLS (AP) — South Dakota Secretary of State Jason Gant is forming a task force to address election options during emergencies, such as the three-day snow and ice storm that hit the state in April and postponed 30 local elections.

The task force will evaluate the decisions made by governing bodies that either postponed or continued with those April 9 elections.

"In the conversations I have had with folks who have worked elections, no one could remember a time when 30 elections were postponed," Gant said during a recent Downtown Rotary Club meeting in Sioux Falls, the *Argus Leader* newspaper reported. "We need to be proactive in dealing with issues. We need to see what worked, what didn't work."

Gant also wants to see if state law can be made more specific on how to deal with



Gant

"different types of emergencies that might occur during an election, everything from a water-pipe break to a debilitating storm."

"If we can put more guidance in the state law on how to handle these kind of emergencies, local polling stations could be in a better situation to resolve them," Gant said.

The task force will begin meeting late this summer. If the group thinks there is a need to change state law, it will present its findings to the Legislature in January.

Some county auditors will welcome the task force, but it probably is not an immediate need, Minnehaha County Auditor Bob Litz said.

"I'm not saying a task force wouldn't hurt, because sooner

or later, things happen, and it is better to be prepared," Litz said. "But say a pipe breaks in a school that serves as a polling station: I assume the responsibility and make the decision to move it or fix it or do what needs to be done."

Bridgewater was hit hard by the April ice storm, but voting still occurred because of planning to have emergency generators available, McCook County Auditor GERALYN Sherman said.

"I'd be interested to see what (the task force) comes up with to help, because I don't really know what else needs to be done," Sherman said.

Elkton School District Business Manager Moe Bruns said she would like more guidance on community outreach.

"If the task force did anything, I would want them to focus on how to better reach people when elections are postponed," Bruns said.

Nebraska

Road Funding Law Goes Into Effect

BY GRANT SCHULTE
Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — A new Nebraska law that sets aside an estimated \$65 million a year in sales tax revenue for roads went into effect on Monday, clearing the way for at least 17 major projects over the next decade.

Officials had delayed work on several projects due to a lack of funding. But six Nebraska Department of Roads projects are now either under way or scheduled to start before July 2014, and 11 others will take place through 2023.

The law, which departs from Nebraska's decades-old practice of using revenue from gas taxes and motor vehicle fees to pay for roads, dedicates one-quarter of a cent out of the state's current 5.5-cent sales tax for 20 years for state road upgrades and maintenance for counties and cities.

A coalition of business, local government and economic development groups kicked off a three-city tour on Monday to promote the projects. Nebraska Highway Commissioner Rodney Vandenberg, who represents a southeast corner of the state, said the projects will improve public safety and promote economic development.

Without the law, Vandenberg

said the Nebraska Department of Roads lacked the money to move ahead with many of its high-priority projects.

"We would have soon suffered the nasty consequences of deteriorating roads and bridges, and I promise you that would have been devastating to our entire state," Vandenberg said.

Supporters had argued the law would spur economic growth, while opponents in the Legislature warned that it could prove unaffordable over the long term and draw money out of health care, education and public safety.

State officials are expected to spend about \$597.8 million over a 10-year period on the 17 projects, and if sales tax receipts surpass expectations, the department may start work on other projects.

Of the estimated \$65 million set aside for roads annually over 20 years, 60 percent will go toward capital improvement projects that the state designates as a high priority, 25 percent will go toward federally designated high-priority corridors and 15 percent will get distributed to cities and counties.

Three of the first six projects are taking place in Omaha, one is under way near Blair and two projects are slated to divert heavy truck

traffic around Kearney and Wahoo.

Future roads projects are planned for roads around Lincoln, Fremont, Plattsmouth, Bellevue, Nebraska City, Hastings, Alliance and Grand Island.

The department has started early work on the Lincoln South Beltway project, which will use \$158 million in state sales tax revenue plus \$40 million in local revenue. The south beltway will link U.S. Highway 77, southwest of Lincoln, with Nebraska Highway 2 on a route to the Iowa-Nebraska border.

Backers said the project will reroute an estimated 8,000 to 18,000 vehicles away from Nebraska Highway 2 through Lincoln, which in turn will improve road safety in town and reduce the need for maintenance.

Neb. Set For Two Rounds Of New Laws

By The Associated Press

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Among the laws set to take effect this year around the U.S. are new abortion limits, gun laws and technology rules. And one state, Wyoming, will start setting up a lottery Monday, leaving only a handful of states without a jackpot drawing.

New laws in Nebraska generally take effect three months after the Legislature adjourns, unless lawmakers specify otherwise.

This year the session ended June 5. So as you get ready for Fourth of July cookouts and family gatherings, consider this roundup of legislation from Lincoln:

LAWS SET TO TAKE EFFECT IN SEPTEMBER

— In Nebraska, juveniles who commit first-degree murder will no longer face mandatory life in prison without parole. Lawmakers and Gov. Dave Heineman approved a new sentencing range of 40 years to life, in response to a U.S. Supreme Court ruling that judges must consider mitigating factors when sentencing juveniles. The law will go into effect on Sept. 6.

— Nebraska lawmakers increased penalties for human traffickers who target minors. Takes effect Sept. 6.

— Nebraska lawmakers approved a law intended to prevent local governments from artificially increasing the cost of public records. The law says that public agencies and local governments can charge a fee for copies of public records, but it can't exceed the actual, reasonable cost of doing so. Takes effect Sept. 6.

LAWS THAT JUST WENT INTO EFFECT

— Nebraska also passed an overhaul of services for juveniles convicted of crimes, including \$14.5 million for juvenile services and a grant program to help counties treat young criminal offenders.

— Lawmakers agreed to Heineman's funding request for an increase in higher education funding that will allow for a tuition freeze at the University of Nebraska and state colleges. The law took effect when Heineman signed it May 29.

— Lawmakers extended new, voluntary services to children under state care who would otherwise age out of the system. The law took effect when Heineman signed it on June 4.

— Lawmakers paved the way for a massive wind farm project in northeast Nebraska. The law offers tax incentives that could lead to Nebraska getting a \$300 million to \$400 million wind farm project from TradeWind Energy, of Lenexa, Kan. The law took effect when Heineman signed it June 4.

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