

# **The Business Of 'Back To School'**



**IMAGE: METRO GRAPHICS** 

## 'Back To School' Sales Begin Well Before The First Bell Rings

# Keystone **XL Hearings** Set To Start Monday

Ten Things To Know About The PUC Pipeline Fight

BY BOB MERCER State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE — Starting Monday morning, the state Public Utilities Commission plans to spend seven days during the next weeks deciding whether TransCanada can still meet the permit conditions set five years ago for its pro-

posed Keystone XL oil pipeline. The pipeline would haul oil product mined from bitumen sands in Alberta, Canada, through Montana and South Dakota into Nebraska, where it would connect with the existing distribution network.

The PUC will again consider the South Dakota segment of the route through Harding, Butte, Perkins, Meade, Pennington, Haakon, Jones, Lyman and Tripp counties.

The PUC granted the permit for the Keystone XL pro-ject on June 29, 2010. The Calgary-based company didn't start construction, however, because President Obama's administration hasn't given its approval yet for the pipeline to pierce the U.S. border.

State law requires that in such instances, where the project hasn't begun within four years, the permit holder can ask the commission to certify the permit conditions can still be met. That is the purpose of the current hearing.

The Republican majorities in Congress attempted this rear to give TransCanada permission to enter the United States, but President Obama vetoed the legislation.

TransCanada wants to keep its South Dakota permit valid in hope the company will eventually win the U.S. government's approval. Opponents of the project see the potential for more global pollution if the bitumen-based oil reaches world markets.

For the opponents, who are more organized and more numerous this time, the certification hearing is a rare

#### **BY ALISSA WOOCKMAN**

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he Yankton back-toschool shopping is in session this week. Parents can get a head start on the new school vear and kids can pick out that perfect firstday outfit with deals that might just be too good to pass up.

Historically, most consumers begin shopping for back-to-school supplies three weeks before school starts. And retailers have typically followed their lead, beginning promotions in mid-to-late July.

But in recent years, the increasingly earlier promotions have caused other retailers to follow suit and consumers are forced to consider a new school year much sooner than usual.

Back-to-school and back-to-college spending accounts for \$84 billion in sales, making it the second-biggest season for retailers. Mother's Day is considered the third biggest holiday-shopping period, with \$21 billion in consumer spending. Christmas still reigns supreme at \$580 billion.

According to the National Retail Federation (NRF), more than 45 percent of people plan on back-to-school shopping one month before school starts. You might wonder what sparks that early interest.

The NRF has found a pattern in customer spending habits when it comes to seasonal shopping. Some shopping is done exceedingly early. Then there's a lull, followed by a big push as the season approaches and discounts peak. This explains why some shoppers stock up early

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TransCanada already operates another pipeline known

as the Keystone — without the XL - down the James River valley through South Dakota.

Here are 10 big things to know about the Keystone XL fight:

• One — The commission's membership has changed since the 2009-2010 proceedings. Gary Hanson remains, but chairman Chris Nelson and Kristie Fiegen came aboard in 2011 as successors to Dusty Johnson and Steve Kolbeck, who each resigned.

• Two — The opposition has deepened and broadened.

There were 15 interveners in the 2009-2010 proceedings, with Paul Blackburn from Plains Justice in Vermillion as the one attorney for the opponents who included Dakota Rural Action.

This time, there are approximately 40 interveners, including the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, the Yankton Sioux Tribe, Bold Nebraska, Dakota Rural Action and several other organizations opposed. • Three — Global warming won't be a consideration

at the hearing. Nor will tribal treaty claims to the nowprivate lands the pipeline would cross. Those have been

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### Yankton Co. Will Not Join **Radio Study**

### **BY ROB NIELSEN** Rob.nielsen@yankton.net

Between coverage issues and the progress of technology, many Yankton County emergency responders are between a rock and a hard place when it comes to the current radio system.

Currently ambulance services and the Yankton County Sheriff's Department use the digital state radio system while other entities in the county, including the Yankton Police Department, are on RAYCOM's analog system.

During Tuesday's meeting of the Yankton County Commission, Yankton County emergency management director Paul Scherschligt said his office has stuck with the analog system primarily because other departments in the area are still using it.

### Gayville Hay! Field Classroom Offers Insights



RANDY DOCKENDORF/P&D

Members of the South Dakota Agricultural and Rural Leadership (SDARL) class check out the Freeburg Hay crop near Gayville and Volin. Gary and Amy Freeburg operate their business in one of the prime hay production areas in the nation. Amy led this week's tour for the SDARL visitors and is herself a graduate of the SDARL program.

#### **BY RANDY DOCKENDORF** randy.dockendorf@yankton.net

GAYVILLE – Amy Freeburg made sure her guests had a real "hay day" at her family farm.

Freeburg and her husband, Gary, run a hay operation in some of the nation's prime territory near Gayville and Volin. The business offices and storage site are located along S.D. Highway 50 near Meckling.

This week, Amy Freeburg hosted members from the South Dakota Agricultural and Rural Leadership (SDARL) program. The 32 "classmates" and two staff members are learning more about the state's ag economy while building leadership skills.

Freeburg is no stranger to the SDARL, founded in 2000 and now in its eighth "class." She took part in the second class and is considered an alumnus of

the program. "Professionals have continuing education," she said. "I con-sider this (SDARL) as continuing education.'

The current participants, ranging in age from 25-50 years old, will attend 12 seminars during the 18-month program, according to SDARL executive director Lori Cope.

"The SDARL has an extensive application process to be selected. We average 25 to 30 class members. This class is the exception because we have 32," she said. "Our goal is to have two-thirds production agriculture and one-third agri-business. We are looking for a cross section so they can learn from one another. A lot of the selfeducation can take place when

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**MONDAY:** Yankton County Gears Up For 4-H Achievement Days