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YANKTON DAILY
**PRESS &
DAKOTAN**



Volume 141
Number 77

The Dakotas' Oldest Newspaper | **TWO SECTIONS** | www.yankton.net

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The Business Of ‘Back To School’



IMAGE: METRO GRAPHICS

‘Back To School’ Sales Begin Well Before The First Bell Rings

BY ALISSA WOOCKMAN
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The Yankton back-to-school shopping is in session this week. Parents can get a head start on the new school year and kids can pick out that perfect first-day 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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Annual ‘Back To
School’ Section

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Yankton Co. Will Not Join Radio Study

BY ROB NIELSEN
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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.

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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
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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 consider 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 self-education can take place when

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