

MIDWEST DIGEST

Eight Kids Hurt At Day Camp In Sioux Falls

SIoux FALLS (AP) — A Sioux Falls fire official says eight children have been hurt while horseback riding at the Leif Ericson Day Camp. Acting battalion chief Mark Bukovich says rescuers were called to the camp about 1 p.m. Thursday after spooked horses bucked the children. They were taken to local hospitals for treatment. Bukovich says he doesn't know the extent of the children's injuries or their ages, but thought some were about 12 years old. He also says one may have been a counselor in the teens. Bukovich says it was hard for rescuers to get to the children because recent rain made the terrain muddy. Staff members had to help shuttle the children to rescue crews.

Old Flood Measures Protect Most Of Norfolk

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — The type of flood that struck Norfolk comes along once every century — and maybe even once every 500 years. In a note to city officials read to The Associated Press on Thursday, Norfolk Public Works Director Dennis Smith said the flood may have been in the category of a 100-to-500-year flood. The river flow for the type of flooding considered possible once every century is about 30,000 cubic feet per second. On Tuesday night when the Elkhorn crested, it was flowing at about 38,800 cubic feet per second. A flood-control system constructed decades ago — which includes a diversion channel and a 17-foot-high levy that the river came within 2 inches of spilling over late Tuesday — protected the city from widespread harm. Damage has mostly been confined to the southern edge of town, a largely industrial area with some homes. Officials said it was too early for a damage estimate.

The river may have exacted a tragic human toll. Late Thursday afternoon, a railroad worker who fell into the Elkhorn on Tuesday after a railroad bridge collapsed still had not been found. Two other workers who fell into the river were rescued.

The river was receding Thursday after cresting late Tuesday, but heavy rains possible over the next few days could cause it to swell again.

SD Man Sentenced In Iowa Burglary, Chase

SIoux CITY, Iowa (AP) — A South Dakota man has been sentenced to up to 15 years in prison in a burglary in Iowa and police chase into Nebraska.

Court documents say 44-year-old Todd Gravning of Tea, S.D., was sentenced last week on charges of second-degree burglary and flight to avoid prosecution. He earlier pleaded guilty to the charges.

The charges stemmed from a June 2009 burglary at Standard Bearings, a U-Haul dealer in Sioux City.

Police have said Gravning was inside the building with a truck he stole in South Dakota when he drove through a garage door while trying to escape and hit one of the officers, who received a minor injury.

Officers chased Gravning and arrested him in South Sioux City, Neb.

Divers Rescue Neb. Man, Toddler From River

NORTH PLATTE, Neb. (AP) — Divers located a North Platte man and his 3-year-old son who were reported missing on the North Platte River during a rafting trip.

The Lincoln County sheriff's office says 26-year-old Michael Grooms and the boy entered their raft in the flooded river north of Sutherland late Tuesday afternoon. They were reported missing at 1 a.m. Wednesday, when they didn't arrive in North Platte.

The state patrol did an aerial search, and dive teams from North Platte were called in.

The sheriff's office says the father and son were found just west of North Platte about 5 a.m. Wednesday. Chief deputy sheriff Dean Sparks says the pair were on land, and Grooms had lost his bearings.

Grooms and his son were treated at a local hospital and released.

USD Law School Alum Honored In Missouri

ST. JOSEPH, Mo. (AP) — One of the oldest practicing female lawyers in the state of Missouri is being honored this week. Grace Day is 83 and is marking her 60th year of practicing law this year. She specializes in family law and handles cases such as divorces, annulments and adoptions.

The YWCA in St. Joseph will give her a Lifetime Achievement Workplace Award on Thursday at the Civic Center.

The Missouri Bar does not keep records by age. But her firm, Poinelli Shughart, says Day is believed to be the state's oldest female attorney who is still practicing.

Day was an anomaly when she entered law school in the 1940s at University of South Dakota.

She says the professors and students made it difficult for her because they felt she was "intruding on their male turf."

Neb. Spraying Goof Not As Big As Feared

CHADRON, Neb. (AP) — A weed-spraying mistake wasn't as big a goof as first feared, but it still will cost Dawes County some money to make it up to the landowner.

Last month county weed superintendent Becky Paulsen told county commissioners that a two-member county crew had sprayed herbicide on what they thought were weeds. Turns out they had sprayed an alfalfa crop.

At the commissioners' meeting Wednesday, Paulsen said she and an insurance adjuster who checked the field determined that only 2 1/2 acres of alfalfa was damaged, not 20 acres as initially reported.

Paulsen says she's working with the landowner on compensation and that he's responded favorably.

A final dollar amount isn't available yet.

Aberdeen-Based Soldiers Heading Overseas

ABERDEEN (AP) — Two platoons of the Army Reserve's 452nd Ordinance Company in Aberdeen are heading overseas this summer. Commander Aaron Donat says about 50 soldiers will leave for Afghanistan next month. Another 50 will leave for Kuwait in late August.

Both deployments will last for one year. Soldiers will be managing ammunition stocks.

Mutual of Omaha Sells Unit To HM Insurance

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Mutual of Omaha is selling a line of insurance used by companies that fund their own health-insurance plans to HM Insurance Group for an undisclosed amount.

Mutual and HM said Thursday that the stop-loss insurance Mutual is selling generates about \$100 million in annual premiums. The insurance protects companies with self-funded insurance from catastrophic claims.

Mutual's Dan Martin says the deal will allow the Omaha insurance company to focus more on its core products and move away from health insurance.

Michael Sullivan, president of Pittsburgh-based HM, says the deal will strengthen his company's position in the stop-loss insurance market. HM already has a portfolio of stop-loss insurance policies that generate about \$420 million in annual premiums.

Man Disappears Swimming In Big Blue River

BEATRICE, Neb. (AP) — The search has resumed for a 23-year-old man who disappeared while swimming in the Big Blue River in Beatrice.

Fire Chief Brian Daake says Eric Pospichal had been swimming near a spillway below the West Court Street bridge. Firefighters were called for rescue aid around 6:45 p.m. Wednesday.

A dive team that responded from Fairbury on Wednesday night did not go in the water because of the fast current and peril posed by snags below the surface.

County emergency management coordinator Mark Meints said Thursday that a boat would be connected to ropes that have been strung across the river. He says that will let someone search the river without having to enter the water.

Dogs also may be called in to search the banks.

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Sanford Heath Considers New \$300 Million Fargo Hospital

SIoux FALLS (AP) — Sanford Health is exploring the idea of building a hospital in North Dakota's largest city that would cost as much as \$300 million. It would be the largest project in Fargo's history.

The plan being considered by the health system's board would put a new health center in Fargo between 2013 and 2016. It would be the largest single project for the network since a merger last year united Sanford Health of Sioux Falls and Fargo-based MeritCare.

"The new facility would take us into the 100-year future," said Dennis Millirons, president of MeritCare Medical Center in Fargo. Melissa Gaulrapp in Fargo's building inspections office said no other project in the city would rival the cost of the proposed hospital. As a comparison, the Fargo-based opened in 1992 for \$50 million.

Sanford-MeritCare has two hospitals in Fargo: a 380-bed down-

town center on 20 acres and a 200-bed unit on a smaller campus. The new hospital would be on 100 acres MeritCare bought in 2000 in south Fargo. Sanford's main hospital in Sioux Falls has 545 beds.

Millirons said health system board members plan to discuss the new hospital as a concept at a planning retreat.

The possible Fargo plans come on top of other expansions for Sanford-MeritCare, which in July will shorten its name to Sanford.

The new Sanford Center opened in Sioux Falls last week as a research and corporate headquarters. A \$73 million heart hospital will open next year in the city, and children's clinics are planned in Oregon and Ireland. A \$12 million fitness center is planned in Fargo that Sanford and the YMCA will operate together.

Sanford also is replacing a 25-bed hospital in Thief River Falls, Minn., and building a \$55 million hospital to open in 2012 in Aberdeen.

State Sen. Dines With Adult Film Star

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) — A two-term state senator facing a Republican primary challenger in his socially conservative Minnesota district said Thursday that he went on a date with an adult film star.

Sen. Paul Koering, R-Fort Ripley, who revealed to his constituents in 2005 that he is gay, confirmed a report in the Brainerd Dispatch that he dined with Brandon Wilde at a Brainerd restaurant on Sunday. Several websites reported on the date.

Wilde is described as a gay porn star in his Twitter profile and posted messages about the dinner on Twitter.

"What I find amazing is we've got 60,000 barrels of oil leaking in the Gulf and people are worried about me, who I go to dinner with," Koering said. "I think it's just ridiculous."

Koering is seeking re-election in the same district that sent him back to the Minnesota Senate in 2006. Koering battled for the Republican endorsement before defeating primary and general election opponents.

This year, Republicans in his district endorsed former state Rep. Paul Gazelka. GOP primary voters will make their choice on Aug. 10.

Wilde did not respond immediately to questions sent through his Facebook account, which says he is from Minneapolis and lives in West Hollywood, Calif.

On Sunday, Wilde posted on Twitter: "lol so funny!! in 45 min's im going 2 dinner with the senator :)"

Koering, 45, said he met Wilde at a diversity picnic in his district. He said Wilde's mother is a constituent.

"I guess I just don't feel the need to continue talking about it because there's no story," Koering said.

GOP Chairman Tony Sutton said Koering showed "incredibly poor judgment" by spending time with Wilde.

Gazelka said he was surprised by the news about Koering, while Democratic candidate Taylor Stevenson said he wouldn't comment on other candidates' personal lives.

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