

MIDWEST DIGEST

S.D. Makes Final Payment For Water System

PIERRE. (AP) — South Dakota's Board of Water and Natural Resources has approved more than \$15.2 million in grants and loans for water, solid waste and recycling projects. Gov. Mike Rounds says the money includes a \$6.3 million grant for ongoing construction of the Lewis & Clark Regional Water System. The \$550 million water system will provide treated Missouri River water to 20 communities and rural water systems in three states. An estimated 300,000 people in South Dakota, Minnesota, and Iowa will be served. The grant announced Friday is the final payment of South Dakota's cost-share commitment to the water system, bringing the total state funds to \$31.9 million.

Schools To Help Adults Complete Degrees

PIERRE. (AP) — South Dakota's public university system has developed a new program aimed at helping students who have already earned a lot of college credits resume their studies and get a degree. The new bachelor of general studies degree is available starting this summer at Black Hills State University, Dakota State University, Northern State University and the University of South Dakota. It also is available at off-campus centers in Sioux Falls, Pierre and Rapid City. Board of Regents director Jack Warner says the new degree program can help increase the number of college graduates in South Dakota. He says many adults have earned a significant number of college credits but never finished their degrees.

Neb. Dairy Shows Year-To-Year Growth

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Nebraska dairy production increased last year despite widespread economic woes. The state Department of Agriculture reported that milk production increased by more than 8 percent from 2008 to 2009. Kelsey Pope of the Nebraska Corn Board said few states have seen growth in their dairy industries, and dairy cow herds have declined in many states. The herd increased in Nebraska. The corn board noted the statistics because June is considered "dairy month" in the industry. Dairy cattle consume a lot of feed, and corn and distillers' grains are part of their ration, along with many other locally produced feedstuff including forages.

Retired Dean Takes Over At Neb. School

WAYNE, Neb. (AP) — A retired Wayne State College dean has been named interim president of the school in northeast Nebraska. Curt Frye retired last June as vice president and dean of students at Wayne State. He's taking over for President Rick Collings, who's taken a job as president at Southwestern Community College in Sylva, N.C. Chancellor Stan Carpenter of the Nebraska State College System is recommending Frye to the system board of trustees for its approval in September. Carpenter says Frye was interim president at Wayne State in 2003, which makes him the top choice to serve as interim president again. Frye began working at Wayne State in 1985.

Health Alert Posted For Algae At Neb. Lake

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Nebraska authorities have posted a health alert for toxic blue-green algae at Swan Creek 5A Lake near Tobias in Saline County. Signs are being posted, and the swimming beach will remain closed. The algae, which scientists say are plantlike bacteria, are common in freshwater. Some types can produce dangerous toxins. People can still camp, fish and boat on lakes under the alert but should not have full-body contact. Drinking toxin-tainted water can cause vomiting, diarrhea, respiratory failure and, rarely, death.

Group From School To Sing With Foreigner

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — A vocal group from Omaha Central High School has won a chance to perform with rock band Foreigner at a free concert in the city. The group, Omaha Jazz Central Station, was the winner of a contest sponsored by Bank of the West Celebrates America and VH1 Save the Music. Vocal groups from public high schools in the Omaha metro area were invited to compete. Omaha Jazz Central Station will perform "I Want to Know What Love Is" with Foreigner at the Bank of the West Celebrates America's free concert on July 2 in Omaha's Memorial Park. The group also gets \$1,000 for the high school's music program. Also scheduled to perform at the concert are music groups Styx and Kansas.

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GOP Nominates Michels For Lieutenant Governor

HURON (AP) — South Dakota Republicans have endorsed former state House Speaker Matt Michels as the party's candidate for lieutenant governor. Delegates to the Republican State Convention in Huron unanimously nominated Michels, who is a Yankton lawyer. The Republican candidate for governor, Lt. Gov. Dennis Daugaard chose Michels to be his running mate. Michels told GOP delegates he believes in hard work, personal responsibility and limited government. Michels was born in Pierre in 1960 and grew up in Vermillion. The Democratic candidate for governor is state Senate Democratic leader Scott Heidepriem. Meanwhile, Republican delegates endorsed state Attorney General Marty Jackley to seek a new four-year term. Jackley was appointed by Gov. Mike Rounds last year to fill a vacancy left when former Attorney General Larry Long was named a circuit judge. Jackley had been U.S. attorney for South Dakota since 2006. He told delegates at the GOP convention in Huron that the job of attorney general mostly involves keeping South Dakotans and their businesses safe. Public Utilities Commission Chairman Dusty Johnson has won his party's nomination to run for a second 6-year term on the panel that regulates utilities. Johnson was unopposed for the Republican nomination at the party's state convention in Huron. He says the commission has held down electric rates and promoted wind power in recent years. Republicans also endorsed School and Public Lands Commissioner Jarrod Johnson to run for a second 4-year term. That office manages land, oil and gas leases and a trust fund for education. Also Friday, Republican House candidate Kristi Noem addressed delegates, saying she wants to become South Dakota's lone member of the U.S. House to help cut federal spending and repeal the health care reform measure recently passed by Congress.

Neb. Group Plans Tan Tax Protest

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — The Nebraska Indoor Tanning Association is planning to protest at the Capitol in Lincoln next week against a new federal tax on tanning beds. The 10 percent tax on tanning bed use starts nationwide on Thursday, part of the federal health care overhaul. A news release from association says the so-called "tan tax" is part of an ongoing scare campaign, "orchestrated by dermatologists and cosmetic companies, that exploits inaccurate fears of the sun" and ultraviolet light. The World Health Organization lists tanning beds as confirmed cancer-causers, particularly for young people. The association says the tax is unfair because fitness clubs that offer indoor tanning are exempt from the tax. The rally is set to begin at 10 a.m. Thursday at the Capitol.

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