

Neb. Gov. Seeks Federal Aid For Flood Fight

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — The Nebraska governor has asked President Barack Obama to issue a federal disaster declaration for flooding along the Missouri and Platte rivers. The request sent Friday by Dave Heineman includes 17 counties affected by the flooding since May 24. It asks for federal funding and other assistance. The Missouri flows along the state's eastern border. The Platte flows from the North Platte and South Platte rivers at the city of North Platte, cutting through central Nebraska and to the southeast. Both rivers are swollen because of spring rains and snowpack that have filled upstream reservoirs. They're expected to reach record levels this month and remain high into fall.

Sioux City Mail Processing Moving To S.D.

SIoux CITY, Iowa (AP) — The U.S. Postal Service is moving all mail processing operations from Sioux City to 75 miles north in Sioux Falls, S.D. The postal service says Friday the decision is based on a study done earlier this year on consolidating the operations to cut its staggering losses. Once the transfer is completed, which is expected to happen in October, the processing center in Sioux City will be closed. Affected employees will be reassigned to the Sioux Falls operation or to other vacant positions. Hawkeye District Manager Gail Duba says in a statement that mail volume handled by the postal service has dropped 20 percent since 2007, and it must take action if it is to remain viable. Local mail delivery will not be affected by the move.

New Cameras In Court Rules Tested In S.D.

HURON (AP) — A judge has denied the use of a still camera during a trial in what might be the first attempt to use South Dakota's new rules for cameras in the courtroom. KOKK radio reports that Judge David Gienapp (GEE'-nap) rejected the station's request for a camera for the trial of a high school student accused of making threats on Facebook. Gienapp is to rule next week on the use of an audio recorder. If one is allowed, it will happen only if the trial that begins June 29 lasts until July 1, the day the new rules take effect. The rules approved by the state Supreme Court allow cameras in a courtroom if a judge and all parties agree. Gienapp said that didn't happen in the Melissa Kruger case.

EcoSun Prairie Farms Offering Tour

COLMAN (AP) — EcoSun Prairie Farms near Colman is offering a public tour next month. The 650-acre farm is associated with the North Central Sun Grant Center and South Dakota State University. It was established four years ago to study ways to make a living by managing restored native prairie on former cropland for specific uses. Visitors on the July 15 tour will get to see diverse mixtures of grassland species that can be marketed as forage, seed, grass-finished beef and potentially as cellulosic biofuels. The tour will also showcase environmental improvements in soil and water quality, wildlife populations and overall ecosystem health.

Man Pleads Guilty To Having 30 Pounds Of Pot

RAPID CITY (AP) — A Rapid City man has pleaded guilty to possessing 30 pounds of marijuana. Twenty-six-year-old Jaret Hagar could face 30 years in prison and a \$2 million fine when he's sentenced Sept. 19. KOTA-TV reports that a Highway Patrol trooper found the drugs during a 2008 traffic stop, and authorities later determined that Hagar was involved in transporting marijuana from Denver to South Dakota's Black Hills.

Pierre Bug Spraying Could End Up In Court

PIERRE (AP) — Some property owners in Pierre are considering a lawsuit over the city's decision to abolish its do-not-fog policy for mosquito spraying. In the past, if a property was on the do-not-fog list, the entire block would not get treated for mosquitoes. The City Commission this week abolished the list. Resident Mary Troutman Gates tells KCCR radio that a group of property owners who oppose citywide spraying are talking with a lawyer. They believe spraying without consent is a violation of their property rights. Supporters of citywide spraying say it's a safety issue because mosquitoes can transmit West Nile virus. State health officials also say the chemical used is safe for people.

S.D. Museum Preserves Black Hills History

DEADWOOD (AP) — A new museum and cultural center filled with documents, maps and other artifacts dating back to the 1870s gold rush in South Dakota's Black Hills will help preserve the area's history and provide meeting space for residents.

Mary Kopco, director of the \$3.7 million Homestake Adams Research and Cultural Center in Deadwood, said it's the "repository of the finest collection of Black Hills historical documents in the world." "The HARCC is a research center where anyone interested in Black Hills history, genealogy, legal cases, the Homestake gold mine, geology, natural history and much more can explore this vast resource of information," Kopco told the *Rapid City Journal*. Located in the former F.L. Thorpe jewelry manufacturing building, the museum that opened Thursday boasts 10,000 cubic feet of paper records from the Homestake Gold Mine, 800,000 photographs from the Fassbender Photographic Collection and the extensive archives of pioneer lawyer Henry Frawley of Lawrence County. The bulk of the museum's vast archival collection was donated in 2005 by Barrick Gold Corp., the last owner of Homestake. The company's Karl Burke said it took a Herculean effort by Kopco and other civic leaders to keep the mining records in South Dakota. He called the protection and preservation of the Homestake mining archives "one of the most important tasks I had" when he oversaw the closure of Homestake. Deadwood resident Barb Mike Larson said she's grateful that the mine's history, at least, would remain in the area. "We never dreamed that in our lifetimes Homestake would close down," she said. The mine closed in 2003.

S.D. BUSINESS OWNER:

Gov't Should Compensate For Flood

CHET BROKAW
Associated Press Writer

PIERRE — The owner of a central South Dakota business forced to close due to high water said Friday the federal government should compensate businesses for damage caused by Missouri River flooding because the operation of federal dams was responsible for the disaster. At a state forum held to provide information for flood-damaged businesses, Steve Rounds said existing federal low-interest loan programs for disaster areas won't help him recover from the shutdown of the marina just below Oahe Dam, which is a few miles upstream from Pierre and Fort Pierre. He said he will need a grant to survive because the restaurant, bait shop and cabins are surrounded by 4 feet of water and closed for the summer. Rounds, who recently took over the marina and extensively remodeled it, said he cannot borrow more than he already has. "A loan is not going to help. I'm wiped out," said Rounds, a brother of former Gov. Mike Rounds. "The federal government is the

one who screwed this up here. Come in here, help us." Homes and businesses in Pierre and Fort Pierre, the Dakota Dunes area in southeastern South Dakota, and areas farther downstream are threatened by rising water because the U.S. Army Corps is releasing record amounts of water from the Missouri River dams. Many flood-threatened residents believe the corps made a mistake by not releasing more water earlier in the year, but agency officials have blamed record rains in late May and a melting mountain snowpack. Most homes and businesses are protected by hastily built levees. Corps officials have said the agency has no program to reimburse those damaged by floods. Congress would likely have to approve any grants to those hurt by floods. State officials held Friday's forum to give business owners information on dealing with the flood and seeking possible help from government programs. About 60 people showed up, and some had to stand in the crowded room. Kim Olson, a policy advisor to Gov. Dennis

Daugaard, said the most important things businesses can do are to give local emergency managers an estimate of the physical damage to their premises and keep records of repair costs. That information can be used to seek a kind of disaster declaration that would allow the Small Business Administration to give low-interest loans to businesses, she said. Other officials said some state economic development programs also can provide loans to businesses hurt by flooding. South Dakota has already received a disaster declaration that allows the Federal Emergency Management Agency to reimburse the state and local governments for much of the cost of protecting or repairing roads, utilities and other public facilities. If enough damage to property is found, other disaster declarations could provide limited assistance to homeowners and loans to businesses. Some business owners have asked how to handle refunds for services that have been canceled due to flooding. Olson said state, federal and local governments do not handle such disputes, which must be settled by negotiations or the legal system.

Officials Say Neb. Nuke Plant Is Safe From Flood

BY JOSH FUNK
Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — The pictures of a Nebraska nuclear power plant were startling: Floodwaters from the swollen Missouri River had risen nearly to the reactor building, with the potential to climb even higher. Coming only a few months after Japan's nuclear disaster, the Associated Press images alarmed many people who saw them earlier this week. But nuclear regulators and the utility that runs the Fort Calhoun reactor say there is little cause for immediate concern. The plant, encircled by a giant rubber barrier against the water, has been shut down since April. The Omaha Public Power District says the complex will not be reactivated until the flooding subsides. And unlike Japan's infamous Fukushima Dai-ichi facility, the

entire plant in Nebraska still has full electrical power for safety systems, including those used to cool radioactive waste. It also has at least nine backup power sources. The Fort Calhoun complex "is safe and it will continue to be safe throughout this flooding situation," said Dave Bannister, chief nuclear officer for the power district. A spokesman for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission reinforced that view. "We think they've done everything that they need to do to respond to the current conditions," Victor Dricks said. Flooding remains a concern all along the river because of the massive amounts of water released by the Army Corps of Engineers. The river is expected to rise as much as 5 to 7 feet above flood stage in much of Nebraska and Iowa and as much as 10 feet over flood stage in parts of

Missouri. The corps expects the river to remain high at least into August because of heavy spring rains in the upper Plains and substantial Rocky Mountain snowpack melting into the river basin. After fielding many worried questions about the plant, utility officials held a news conference Friday to reassure the public. "We understand the deep responsibility we have in operating a nuclear power plant," CEO Gary Gates said. Edwin Lyman, a physicist with the Union of Concerned Scientists, said plants at risk from floodwaters must ensure their electrical supply and coolant pumps are protected. "There's no question that flooding can be an extremely serious concern," Lyman said. The pumps are a key piece of safety equipment because if pumping systems fail for several days and are not fixed, cooling

water could boil away and eventually cause radioactive releases. Workers at the facility 20 miles north of Omaha are still able to get inside the building without getting wet by using walkways that rise above the water. The river has risen 1.5 feet higher than Fort Calhoun's 1,004-foot elevation above sea level, but the water is being held back by a series of protective barriers, including an 8-foot rubber wall outside the reactor building. Fort Calhoun can be fortified to handle water up to 1,014 feet above sea level, Bannister said. In another contrast to the March 11 tsunami in Japan, the Missouri River flooding has been predicted for weeks, so there was plenty of time to prepare. But even if the river had risen in a flash flood, Fort Calhoun's reactor building is designed to handle water up to 1,007 feet above sea level before any additional floodgates or barriers are added.

UNL Approves Buffett Childhood Institute

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — University of Nebraska regents have approved the creation of the Buffett Early Childhood Institute. The center given approval Friday is named after Susie Buffett, daughter of billionaire investor Warren Buffett. The university announced in January that Susie Buffett had pledge money toward creation of a center focused on improving early childhood education. University officials have not disclosed how much Susie Buffett has pledged but say the university is matching the gift. The center is expected to cost \$829,000 its first year.

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