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# Teacher Bonus Plan Targeted For Referral

S.D. Teachers Union Submits Signatures To Force Vote On Bonus Bill

BY CHET BROKAW  
Associated Press

PIERRE — Members of South Dakota's main teachers union submitted petition signatures Monday seeking a public vote aimed at blocking Gov. Dennis Daugaard's plan to give bonuses to top teachers, phase out tenure and recruit candidates for critical teaching jobs.

About two dozen teachers and staff of the South Dakota Education Association turned in what they estimate to be 30,000 signatures, nearly double the number needed to refer the measure passed this year in the Legislature to a statewide public vote in the November election.

Daugaard has said the measure will improve student

achievement, but teachers argue it would instead hurt the quality of education because teachers might stop collaborating as they compete for bonus money. The law also ignores the need to boost general state aid to schools, teachers said.

"We just feel strongly that it doesn't do what we all would like it to do, which is to improve student achievement," SDEA President Sandy Arseneault said.

Daugaard said he was not surprised that the measure would be referred to a public vote because the teachers union worked hard to collect signatures.

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## Mount Marty Officials Happy With Accreditation

BY ANDREW ATWAL  
[andrew.atwal@yankton.net](mailto:andrew.atwal@yankton.net)

Officials at Mount Marty College are pleased that the nursing program recently received a new 10-year accreditation from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). The last time the program was accredited, it was only given a five-year accreditation in 2007.



Benoit

Dr. Joseph Benoit, president of Mount Marty, was happy when he heard the news about the new accreditation.

"A 10-year accreditation is incredible for us," he said. "It is nice when accreditors come to town and affirm the program."

He added that the faculty in the nursing department have been unusually busy this past year—not only did they gain accreditation, they also began the licensed practical nurse program and the masters program.

The Commission reviewed the nursing bachelors program over a three-day period in November 2011.

However, college officials began preparing for the CCNE's arrival in fall 2010. Faculty in the nursing program conducted a year-long self-study of the program and made sure all the documents were in place for when they arrived.

As part of the three-day process, the commission interviewed all department administrators and Dr. Benoit, toured facilities available to students, looked at the library, spent time with the MMC advisory committee, talked to faculty members and also toured the clinical facilities.

Accreditation is based on the standards set

MMC | PAGE 13

## BACK UNDER CONTROL



KELLY HERTZ/P&D

Yankton firefighters were summoned to a controlled burn that got out of control on the east edge of Yankton at approximately 2:10 p.m. Monday. The burn began spreading and briefly threatened the property of a nearby business. While red-flag warnings have not been issued, the combination of temperatures in the low to mid 90s and the recent lack of rain is creating very dry conditions. Hot weather is expected again today (Tuesday), but with strong winds returning. There is a change for showers and thunderstorms tonight into Wednesday. For details, see page 2.

## Norman Brings Faith Message To Town

BY ANDREW ATWAL  
[andrew.atwal@yankton.net](mailto:andrew.atwal@yankton.net)

Growing up, Les Norman did not have a normal childhood—not even close.

He grew up in a home that had poverty and a father who was abusive, angry and alcoholic.

"I struggled with anger growing up because I didn't have a father," Norman said.

His way of escaping the realities back home was by playing baseball. After he graduated from high school in Braidwood, Ill., he earned a gold medal with the Junior Olympic North baseball team and received a scholarship to play football and baseball at the University of St. Francis.

He was drafted by the Kansas City Royals in 1991,



Norman

and earned the Royals' minor league player of the year honor in 1993. He made his major league debut with the Royals in 1995.

Norman will speak at Mount Marty College tonight at 7 p.m. (Tuesday) in the Marian Auditorium in Yankton.

In an event called "Putting Faith In Your Family," Norman will speak about how you can use your faith in God to create a better relationship with your family.

One of the topics that he will address at the event

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## A Wet Idea For Westside

KYB Raising Money To Purchase Fountain For Pond

BY NATHAN JOHNSON  
[nathan.johnson@yankton.net](mailto:nathan.johnson@yankton.net)

Citing aesthetic and practical reasons, Keep Yankton Beautiful (KYB) is proposing a floating fountain for the Westside Park pond.

However, the group needs to raise \$5,000 to make the project a reality.

"If we raise \$5,000, the city will cover the (remaining \$3,000)," said Julie Perakslis, director of the nonprofit organization that aims to improve the community environment through litter prevention, recycling, waste reduction and beautification projects. "They'll also handle the installation and ongoing maintenance."

KYB would like to find an entity that can be a sole sponsor and have its name attached to the fountain, but other options will also be considered.

The fountain will be lighted at night and removed from the pond during the winter months.

Perakslis said the fountain will add to the already attractive Westside Park.

"These kinds of things are very soothing and peaceful," she stated. "It will be a nice view for the people in the hospital across the street or those who have lunch in the park."

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IMAGE: KEEP YANKTON BEAUTIFUL

This rendering shows how a fountain being proposed by Keep Yankton Beautiful for the pond at Westside Park might look. The fountain would be lighted at night.

## Authorities Sure Body Found In River Was Potts

BY NATHAN JOHNSON  
[nathan.johnson@yankton.net](mailto:nathan.johnson@yankton.net)

A Yankton Police Department official said Monday he is "relatively certain" that a body discovered in the Missouri River Saturday is Jeffrey Potts.

While positive identification through fingerprinting and possibly DNA testing remains to be done, Police Chief Brian Paulsen said a checkbook and photo ID belonging to Potts was found in blue jeans on the body.

"We're relatively certain it is him," Paulsen said Monday. "We just want to confirm it, because we don't want someone 10 years down the road saying, 'That wasn't Jeffrey Potts. I've seen him since then.' His checkbook was there. His photo ID was there. His mustache was there. We just want to confirm it and be 100 percent sure."

"We're releasing the body back to the family today," he added, indicating just



Potts

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## Prison Guard Killing

# Prisoner Pushes For His Own Execution

BY KRISTI EATON  
Associated Press

SIoux FALLS — A convicted murderer said in a letter written from death row that the South Dakota Supreme Court owes it not only to him but to the family of the prison guard he killed to allow his execution to take place in a timely manner. It's the only way, he said, the guard's family can get justice.

Eric Robert, 50, pleaded guilty to killing Ron Johnson during a botched prison escape at the South Dakota State Penitentiary and asked to be put to death. A judge determined in October that the crime merited the death sentence, and Robert was scheduled for execution the week of May 13.

But the state Supreme Court postponed the date in February to allow more time for a mandatory review to make sure the death penalty was proper, even though Robert hadn't appealed the conviction or sentence. The review could take up to two years.

In a three-page letter to the Associated Press, Robert detailed why he believes the death sentence is appropriate in his case and described his aggravation with the delay. The letter represented Robert's first public comments since his October sentencing.

He said justice works differently in death penalty cases than in others.

"Victims of non-capital offenses receive their justice when the perpetrator is placed in custody. Victims in capital cases receive their justice when the perpetrator is executed. Give the Ron Johnson family their justice, they have been forced to wait too long. I finish where I started—I deserve to die," he said, alluding to a statement he read during his trial that started with "I deserve to die."

Robert, a chemist who worked for the Environmental Protection Agency before overseeing a city water treatment department, was serving an 80-year-sentence on a kidnapping conviction when he attempted to escape April 12, 2011, with inmate Rodney Berget.

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