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P&D Offers Full Coverage Of USD Game Tonight

The Press & Dakotan will have full coverage of tonight's WNIT second-round game between the University of South Dakota and Colorado.

Tip-off is set for 7 p.m. from Vermillion.

Assistant sports editor Jeremy Hoeck will be hosting a live chat during the game, where you can follow along and ask questions. After the game, he will also have post-game press conference videos.

Links to both can be found at www.yankton.net/coyotegameday.

For more, go online to www.yankton.net or read Tuesday's edition of the Press & Dakotan.

Report Says State Gov'ts At Risk For Corruption

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. (AP) — State governments lack transparency and accountability to citizens, and remain at high risk for corruption, according to a new study of all 50 statehouses.

Not a single state received an A in the State Integrity Investigation ranking, a product of the Center for Public Integrity, Public Radio International and Global Integrity.

"It's telling that no state received an overall grade of A," said Caitlin Ginley, a staff writer for the Center for Public Integrity and a project manager on the study. "In every state, there's room to improve the ethics laws, the level of transparency on government proceedings, the disclosure of information, and — most importantly — the oversight of these laws."

"One of the major findings was that even when ethics laws are passed, they are difficult to enforce and lack meaningful consequences for violators."

Only five states got rankings of B, led by a surprising recipient: New Jersey. It got a B-plus, with an overall score of 87 out of a possible 100.

Despite — or perhaps because of — recent corruption scandals, New Jersey got the top ranking because of steps it took to combat corruption, including tough ethics and anti-corruption laws it adopted in response.

Rounding out the top five states were: Connecticut (B, 86), Washington state (B-minus, 83), California (B-minus, 81) and Nebraska (B-minus, 80).

Nineteen states got grades of C, and 18 got a D. Eight states got an 'F,' with grades of 59 or lower: North Dakota, Michigan, South Carolina, Maine, Virginia, Wyoming, South Dakota and Georgia.

Warm Winter Wanes

But Dry Conditions Loom As Spring Season Starts

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF
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Tuesday marks the first day of spring, ending a record-setting warm, dry winter that has seen temperatures 40 degrees above normal at times.

In fact, the weekend saw numerous records fall by the wayside. The heat, combined with dry, windy conditions, launched southeast South Dakota and northeast Nebraska into the extreme and very-high fire danger categories.

Yankton set unofficial new high temperature records on Friday (82 degrees, topping the old mark of 79 last set in 1934), Saturday (82; previous: 79 set in 1901) and Sunday (84; previous: 80 set in 1918). The city also set records for warmest overnight lows on March 17 (61 degrees; previous: 50 in 1894) and May 18 (63; previous: 55 degrees in 1968). The May 17-18 readings are the warmest overnight lows ever recorded in Yankton during March.

The Yankton fire department, along with area units, have been kept busy responding to fires, according to Yankton fire chief Tom Kurtenbach.

"Right now, it's so dry that we're asking people to refrain from burning until there is significant moisture or green vegetation," he said. "I was just walking a field, and it's extremely dry even with the dew in the morning. It's going to take some time for conditions to change."

A burn ban hasn't been enacted yet, but the Yankton ordinance requires contacting the dispatch at 668-5210 prior to a controlled burn, Kurtenbach said. The ordinance also prohibits burning after dusk, he said.

The forecast calls for rain today (Monday), which should provide some relief. But the impact of the unseasonably hot, dry weather could continue in the coming months depending on weather patterns.

Despite the very dry conditions, Yankton actually didn't see one of its driest winters, according to South Dakota state climatologist Dennis Today.

He noted, for his work, winter consists of the months of December, January and February. Winter officially ended March 1, he said.

Rainfall of 1.5 inches in late February pushed Yankton to 2.28 inches of precipitation for the 20th wettest winter on record, Today said. On the other hand, Yankton recorded its fifth warmest winter with an average of 27.6 degrees, compared to the normal of 20.8 degrees.

The soil surface remains dry, which allows the region to heat up very quickly, Today said.

"This time of year, you can have a spike of one day, but we have had a run of numbers of days where it's been very warm," he said. "We have had record temperatures in the 80s. Our highs have been 30 to 40 degrees above normal, and we have set records for high minimum temperatures. It's windy enough, and there is enough moisture in the air, that the



A local firefighter works on a grass fire that burned northwest of Yankton Friday morning. The recent, warm, dry, windy conditions have primed the region for such blazes.

KELLY HERTZ/P&D

temperature doesn't drop off at night."

The region's LaNiña weather pattern produced typical fall weather but resulted in an unusually dry winter, according to Nebraska state climatologist Al Dutcher.

"During a La Niña, this region usually experiences normal to above-normal moisture and below-normal temperatures," he said in his weekly report. "This winter, the dominant jet stream split, with the polar jet remaining in the northern region and upper air lows moving through the southern Plains."

The split flow resulted in snowfall well below normal across the northern Plains, Dutcher said. Temperatures averaged at least 8 degrees above normal for much of the northern Corn Belt this past winter.

"The split flow pattern will likely continue with an occasional polar jet trough rolling through the northern Plains," he said.

The region appears headed for a combined La Niña and El Niño system for the next two months, Dutcher said. The El Niño would then dominate the summer growing season.

Without the recent precipitation, the soil surface would be dried out by now, Today said. Relief may be on the way, particularly if a large area of high pressure building in the southeastern United States combines with an area of low pressure developing in the western United States, he said.

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Local Artisan Garners 'Monumental' National Award



COURTESY PHOTO

Scott Luken of Luken Memorials, Inc., in Yankton receives his national award for a unique, detailed etched tombstone from 2011 MBNA Marketing Committee Chair Kay Stilson of Garlinghouse Memorials in Lewiston, Idaho.

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF
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BERESFORD — When Wayne Dullerud passed away, his family wanted a headstone signifying the man's love for nature.

Their choice proved both appropriate and intricate — the image of an elk, with the contour of the stone so the "antlers" protruded from the top.

Scott Luken of Yankton, art director for Luken Memorials, was contacted with the request. He took on the project, realizing the monumental challenge and everlasting aspect of the work.

"This is something that people will see for eternity," he said. "Some companies might not touch a memorial like this because of its delicate nature and how to go about designing it."

Luken said he has received praise from family members for the finished work. He has also earned national honors for the stone, which won the "Best Laser Etched Memorial" award in the Monument Builders of North America's (MBNA) 2012 Design Contest.

Luken recently accepted the award at the

national convention in San Diego. All designs originated from MBNA member firms and were judged on elements of proportion, balance and the story the monument conveys.

"As far as the award, I was surprised because I had only entered two different pieces before," he said. "There is a lot of competition, so we never hold our breaths. But it's nice to know other people appreciate your creativity and work."

Wayne Dullerud lived in the Sioux Falls area at the time of his death, but the stone was ordered for a rural Beresford cemetery.

The family approached Luken Memorial's office in Sioux Falls.

"Our manager and my cousin, Jon Luken, knew this (stone) was going to be something unique," Scott said. "Jon called me and asked if I had any concepts for the monument. This involved complicated laser etching."

The protruding antlers meant working with a larger stone and then creating the protruding antlers from it, Scott Luken said.

"The Dullerud family had a definite design

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COURTESY PHOTO

The special contour of the protruding elk's antlers provides one of the special features of the intricate memorial seen at a rural Beresford cemetery.



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