

Drought-Related Shutoff Orders Issued In S.D.

PIERRE (AP) — South Dakota officials have issued shutoff orders to 50 junior water right holders along the Cheyenne River and tributaries upstream of the Angostura Reservoir.

The state Department of Environment and Natural Resources cites lingering drought and what is expected to be another year of below normal runoff on the Cheyenne River. The reservoir is at 65 percent of storage.

The federal Bureau of Reclamation holds senior water rights for the Angostura Reservoir, having a 1941 priority date. Those water rights provide for an annual fill of the reservoir for supplying irrigation water to Angostura Irrigation District.

State officials say the bureau asked for the shutoff orders to the junior priority water right holders in order to protect the more senior rights of the irrigation district.

Neb. Tax Receipts Lower Than Expected In Feb.

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Nebraska’s net tax receipts in the month of February dipped below projections.

The state tax commissioner’s office reported Monday that net receipts came in at \$216 million, or more than 2 percent below the certified forecast of \$221 million.

The report shows that net sales-and-use taxes were above projections. But corporate and individual income taxes and miscellaneous taxes all came in lower than expected.

The comparisons are based on a February 2012 forecast made by the Nebraska Economic Forecasting Advisory Board. The forecast was adjusted for legislation passed in 2012, divided into monthly estimates and certified in the Legislature.

The board met again last month, and revised its forecast upward by nearly \$111 million. Only downward revisions to the forecast are certified.

Daugaard Signs Funding Bill For Beetle Fight

PIERRE (AP) — South Dakota Gov. Dennis Daugaard has signed into law a bill that provides an additional \$2 million in state funding to help counties fight mountain pine beetles.

The Legislature recently passed Daugaard’s request for the additional funding to continue a three-year effort that began in 2011.

The \$2 million will be available immediately to help counties fight the insects that have devastated pine forests in parts of the Black Hills. The state will provide \$2 for every \$1 in new county spending in the battle against mountain pine beetles.

Daugaard says the state, local governments and private landowners have worked for several years to suppress the pine beetle epidemic. He says he is pleased state lawmakers supported the plan to provide more money for the battle.

Former S.D. Teacher Sentenced In Rape Case

RAPID CITY (AP) — A former South Dakota teacher who pleaded guilty to having sex with a 15-year-old student is headed to prison.

Circuit Judge Janine Kern on Monday sentenced 26-year-old Kyle Keegan, of Rapid City, to seven years in prison, with four years suspended.

Keegan must serve at least 18 months of the sentence.

Defense attorney Tim Rensch tells KOTA-TV that Keegan expressed deep remorse for his actions, but believes the ruling is fair.

Keegan, who taught social studies and was a guidance counselor at New Underwood High School, pleaded guilty in January to sexual contact with a child under 16.

Keegan was arrested in October.

School Bus With 11 Kids Crashes Into Home

WEST DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — A school bus carrying 11 children has crashed into a house in central Iowa, though no injuries are being reported.

The crash happened Monday while the bus was on its way to Crestview Elementary school in West Des Moines.

Police say the bus veered off the road, went through several yards and hit a truck parked in a driveway before stopping when it crashed into the side of a home.

The *Des Moines Register* reports the home’s garage door was torn off and a front wall had extensive damage. Police say the crash caused about \$95,000 in property damage.

Lt. Jim Barrett says the investigation is ongoing but that charges are possible.

Police say slick roads, the result of about 2 inches of new snow, caused several accidents Monday.

Dog Sitter Arrested After Refusing To Return Pet

RAPID CITY (AP) — Rapid City police say a dog sitter was arrested after he refused to return the woman’s pet and threatened law enforcement officers.

The Rapid City Journal says the dog owner called police after she went to retrieve her pet from Brian Jack late Friday evening.

The 32-year-old Jack allegedly argued with police officers who arrived at the residence.

Jack was charged with five counts of threatening law enforcement. Each count carries a maximum penalty of a year in jail.

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Nebraska

Heineman Taking His Time On Senate Bid

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Nebraska Gov. Dave Heineman said Monday that he will likely take a month or more to decide whether to jump into the 2014 U.S. Senate race.

Heineman said that the gridlock in Congress is holding him back. The question weighing on Heineman’s decision is whether Congress is willing to work with Democrat President Barack Obama and “is the president willing to work with Congress.”

He said he is concerned about transitioning from a statewide office where he can make an impact every day to a slow-moving Congress.

“I think if you talk to governors across the country, the thing that we do is lead and bring people together and make sure that we pass the appropriate legislation, particularly as it relates to the budget and other key issues,” he said.



Heineman

He also said he also prefers the comforts of the Nebraska lifestyle. He and his wife, Sally Ganem, are carefully considering if they want to live in Washington.

The Senate seat opened up after Nebraska Sen. Mike Johanns announced last month that he would not seek re-election in 2014. After serving 32 years of public service, Johanns said it’s time for his family to start a new phase of their lives out of the public eye.

Many GOP strategists have looked to Heineman to fill Johanns’ shoes because Heineman’s consistent high approval ratings show he would likely be the favorite.

Party officials have said Heineman’s deci-

sion to run would prevent other GOP challengers from entering the race. Heineman’s name recognition and support allow him to take the extra time to think about what the next phase in his life will be without worrying about who else might jump into the race. No candidates have joined the race yet, a signal they’re all waiting to see what Heineman will do.

“It’s March 11,” Heineman said. “The election is not until 2014. You know, there’s no rush on this one yet.”

Heineman said Monday that the Republican Party has a good shot at the seat even if he isn’t the nominee.

“Whether I run or someone else, I feel very good about our chances from the Republican prospective,” he said.

Late-Winter Storm Leaving Iowa, Nebraska

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Authorities discouraged travel Monday in eastern Nebraska and much of western Iowa as crews reopened roadways and cleared away remnants of a late-winter storm that was headed east.

Workers cleared portions of Iowa Highway 141 and U.S. highways 59, 30 and 20 in western Iowa that were reported impassable earlier on Monday, and Interstates 80 and 29 were open for traffic.

Sections of both interstates were temporarily closed on Sunday as blowing snow created whiteout in many spots. Officials

reported several multiple-car accidents Sunday along a 200-mile stretch of Interstate 80 that runs east and west through the two states.

The storm came from the southwest and dumped 10 inches on Ogallala as it moved east across Nebraska late Saturday into Sunday. Its course surprised forecasters because it remained farther south than expected and persisted through early Monday morning before leaving eastern Nebraska and western Iowa, said National Weather Service meteorologist Becky Kern.

Snowplows have been clearing roads and parking lots in the storm’s wake while snow removal teams doggedly cleared away the heavy accumulations on sidewalks and driveways.

Kat Thompson, dispatcher for Snow Removal, of Omaha, said her two three-member crews had been maneuvering their snow throwers and hefting shovels full of snow since about 10 p.m. Sunday.

“It was worse than what we thought,” Thompson said, explaining that the snow was heavier and deeper than expected.

“We normally do a driveway

every 30 to 45 minutes,” she said. On Monday, Thompson said, it was running 60 to 75 minutes per driveway.

Storm totals ranged up to 11 inches in David City, Neb., and to 12 inches in Little Sioux, Iowa. The Omaha total was 9 inches at Eppley Airfield.

Authorities in Nebraska blamed the weather for at least one fatality. The Lancaster County Sheriff’s Office said 22-year-old Justin Muhm lost control of his south-bound vehicle Sunday on icy Nebraska Highway 43 near Bennet.

Nebraska

Digital Grave Directory Proposed For Columbus

COLUMBUS, Neb. (AP) — The city of Columbus and a board that oversees local Catholic cemeteries have discussed a plan to install at least one digital directory that would provide a location and other information for every grave in four cemeteries.

City public property manager Doug Moore said at a recent Columbus Cemetery Board meeting that he supports the idea. It would cut the hours that city staffers spend on providing gravesite information, Moore said.

The four cemeteries are Columbus, All Saints, Roselawn and St. Bonaventure.

The city and the Catholic cemeteries board must work out some specifics before the cost-sharing proposal can move forward.

Among the questions remaining is which type of outdoor kiosk to buy and how many.

The less expensive Windy Prairie Systems models can store all the information for the four cemeteries for a little more than \$20,000 per kiosk. A costlier kiosk model that costs closer to \$50,000 can print maps, photos, memorials and other information from the directory.

Each of the kiosks has a digital touch screen, audio and video capabilities and can provide directions to within 15 feet of a grave.

Steve Richman, of Windy Prairie Systems, said directory information can be added to a website for \$300 a year.

Buying more than one kiosk would ease the debate over where they should be located, officials said.

Moore said the Catholic cemeteries board has started raising money. The city board backed the idea of seeking local donations for the project, too.

“I’m thinking we could get probably half of it out of donations,” said city cemetery board member Shirley Martys.

Sioux Tribes Forming Coalition To Act As 1 Nation

RAPID CITY (AP) — Several Sioux tribes have begun laying the groundwork for working as one nation on issues they deem important.

The Oglala Sioux Tribe hosted officials from the Standing Rock Sioux, Rosebud Sioux and Crow Creek Sioux in Rapid City for three days of meetings late last week. Such a meeting has not happened in more than a century, Oglala Sioux President Bryan Brewer told the *Rapid City Journal*.

“This has been something the tribes have talked about for years,” he said. “It has always been a dream of our tribes, but it actually happened now. This is a historic event for us all to pull together again.”

About 60 people took part in the meetings and signed a procla-

mation declaring their intent to work together as the Oceti Sakowin, or the seven council fires of the great Lakota-Dakota-Nakota people. They also produced a set of bylaws and a mission statement and will be preparing position papers.

“We identified some areas that have the most need, including our land issues, environmental issues like with the oil pipelines, economic, education and child welfare,” Brewer said.

There are 22 Sioux tribes eligible to join the organization, Brewer said. The next meeting will be hosted by the Rosebud Sioux in early April.

“Individually we are not very strong, but together we are hoping to be a pretty strong organization,” Brewer said.

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