

Neb. Gets Online Background Checks

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — The Nebraska State Patrol and Gov. Dave Heineman announced Monday the launch of a new website that allows Nebraska residents to do name-only criminal background checks.

Nebraska State Patrol Superintendent David Sankey said the website will help people, such as employers, obtain these records more quickly. Previously, state residents could only request such records by mail, fax or in person, and receiving them would take three to 10 days.

“This is just one more example of how state government is providing more efficient, faster services for our citizens,” Heineman said.

Sankey said more than 75 percent of the people being checked for a criminal history do not have one. The website will immediately show if a person doesn't have a criminal background, Sankey said, and requests for checks on people who do have a criminal background or need more research can be processed more efficiently.

Each request will cost \$18, a \$3 increase from in-person, mail or fax requests.

Liquor License Sells For More Than \$25K

RAPID CITY (AP) — Liquor licenses for Rapid City package stores that used to go for \$500 are now topping \$25,000.

The *Rapid City Journal* reports that the most recent license sold to Fresh Start Convenience Stores for \$25,500 under a new competitive sealed bid process. The regional chain beat out Target stores chain for the city's 47th and final license.

Some local retailers say the system will give chain stores an advantage and hurt entrepreneurs and mom-and-pop store operators who can't afford that kind of investment.

If someone in the city now wants to open a liquor store, they would need to approach a current license owner negotiate a purchase price. In that case, the city collects a nominal transfer fee of \$150 but there's no limit on the negotiated price.

Woman Injured In Home Explosion Recovering

EAGLE BUTTE (AP) — A woman injured in last week's home explosion in Eagle Butte remains hospitalized in North Dakota as the investigation continues, though officials say it appears to have been an accident.

Cheyenne River Tribal Police Chief Chad Olson tells KGFX radio that an officer and two civilians went into the home Wednesday afternoon and were able to pull the woman to safety. The house was destroyed in the explosion and fire.

Olson says the woman suffered two broken legs and lacerations and remains in a Bismarck, N.D., hospital. She is expected to fully recover from her injuries.

Olson did not release the woman's name.

Investigators with the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives visited the site of the explosion and say the cause appears to be accidental.

Neb. Wildfire Control Bill Wins Initial Approval

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — A measure to help fight wildfires in rural Nebraska has won initial approval from lawmakers.

Lawmakers voted 36-0 on Monday to advance the bill, in response to summer blazes that scorched massive areas of rural Nebraska.

The bill would place aerial tankers in Valentine and Chadron during fire season, require the state to thin forests, and offer new training to emergency responders, in addition to other steps.

Nebraska experienced 1,570 wildfires last year that burned a total of 786 square miles. Many of the fires are blamed on eastern red cedar trees, which are invasive and highly flammable.

The bill was sponsored by Sen. Al Davis of Hyannis.

Rapid City Hotel Drowning Likely Accidental

RAPID CITY (AP) — The mother of an 8-year-old girl who drowned at a Rapid City hotel says the family was on a vacation that turned tragic.

Authorities on Monday identified the victim of the Saturday morning drowning as Jasann Dubray, of Parmalee. They say in a statement that the preliminary investigation indicates the death was accidental but an autopsy is planned Tuesday.

Mother Lisa TwoEagles tells KEVN-TV that her two older daughters, ages 10 and 13, were with Jasann at the Econo Lodge pool while she was in her room getting ready to check out Saturday. She says her older daughters found Jasann at the bottom of the pool.

TwoEagles says Jasann suffered from a brain disorder but had been swimming for two years and could swim an Olympic-size pool.

Construction Could Start Soon On Hospital

MADISON (AP) — Construction of a \$34 million hospital in Madison could start as early as May.

The *Madison Daily Leader* reports that officials recently unveiled the plans for the 104,000-square-foot facility. Hospital CEO Tammy Miller says the start of the project is contingent upon approval by the federal Agriculture Department's Rural Development agency, which is financing much of the project.

Miller says planning for the new hospital started three years ago. Officials hope it will be operating by early 2015.

Neb. Woman Charged With Welfare Fraud

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — A 53-year-old Waverly woman has been charged with welfare fraud.

The *Lincoln Journal Star* says Lisa Trevena was arrested on a warrant last week.

Court documents say that between July 1, 2009, and Dec. 31, 2012, Trevena received nearly \$12,000 in food stamps and \$9,400 in Aid to Dependent Children.

A state investigator says in the documents that Trevena's two daughters had been living with their grandmother in Lincoln for about five years and that Trevena hadn't provided any support for them.

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Lawmakers Uphold Veto On Final Day

BY CHET BROKAW  
Associated Press

PIERRE (AP) — South Dakota lawmakers ended their session Monday after failing to override Gov. Dennis Daugaard's veto of a measure that would have increased a fee imposed to fund the state's inspection of commercial fertilizer.

Supporters said the bill was needed to provide extra money for research into when, how much and what kind of fertilizer should be applied to the state's farmland. Opponents agreed with the governor's argument that the fee increase was an unneeded tax in disguise.

The Senate voted 22-13 in favor of the bill, falling two votes short of the two-thirds majority needed to override the governor's veto. Both chambers adjourned at about 12:45 p.m. CDT after taking care of some other minor business.

The bill would have raised an estimated \$300,000 a year by doubling the 15-cent-a-ton fertilizer inspection fee, with the

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SEN. MARK JOHNSTON

money going to finance research into commercial fertilizer and manure at the Agricultural Research Station at South Dakota State University.

But Sen. Corey Brown, R-Gettysburg, said the fee is supposed to be used only to ensure the quality and safety of fertilizer sold in the state. The fee increase would have acted like a tax because the money would have been collected from one group and then given to another program, he said.

The fertilizer companies that backed the fee increase would have passed on the added cost to farmers who bought their products, he said.

The measure's main sponsor, Sen. Shantel Krebs, R-Renner, said agricultural organizations

and farmers supported the fee increase to support research on the use of fertilizer in the state. It would have raised fertilizer costs by only 2 cents to 4 cents an acre, she said.

Supporters of the measure said environmental groups have filed a lawsuit seeking to have the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency regulate fertilizer use and runoff in the entire Mississippi River drainage area. Independent research is needed to find out what standards fit South Dakota's soil so the state is not subject to national standards tailored to different kinds of soils, they said.

“Our producers, our growers, need to know what the standards should be,” Krebs said.

Sen. Bill Van Gerpen, R-Tyn-

dall, a farmer, said he sees no reason for state government to duplicate research already being done by the fertilizer industry.

Krebs countered that the research should be done by an independent group attached to a university because research done by fertilizer companies would be seen as biased.

Sen. Mark Johnston, R-Sioux Falls, said he supported the fee increase because research is needed to make sure South Dakota farmers can boost grain production safely.

“With the world's population growing as fast as it is, we're going to have to produce more food on less acres with less water in an environmentally sustainable way,” Johnston said.

The House on Monday failed to override the governor's vetoes of a few lines in some spending bills. The governor did not block any spending, but instead asked the Legislature to use more recent enrollment figures when dividing some money among schools.

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