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**PRESS & DAKOTAN**



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75¢



**Coyotes Move On**



**Two young University of South Dakota fans strike up a conversation with Charlie Coyote courtside at the DakotaDome in Vermillion Thursday prior to USD's game against Creighton in the first round of the WNIT. The Coyotes won the game 68-58 and move on to second-round action against former North Central Conference rival Northern Colorado. For more details, see page 6A.**

JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D

**For DMV, County Treasurers, Two Weeks To Prepare For Increases**

**BY BOB MERCER**  
State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE — The state Revenue Department found this week some traditions in South Dakota are best left untouched, such as charging current prices for early renewals of license plates by motorists before price increases take effect.

The department's Division of Motor Vehicles director sent an email to county treasurers Monday about the many changes contained in the highway and bridge funding package that won approval Friday from the Legislature.

One of the changes is a 20 percent increase in license plate prices for most non-commercial vehicles that takes effect April 1.

The email sent at mid-afternoon Monday and signed by director Peggy Laurenz

included three sentences that triggered a backlash in many courthouses:

"We will not be allowing discounted 'early' renewals as have been done in the past. If a customer's renewal date is after April 1, the rate is the same whether they renew in March or on April 1st.

"Any renewal done on April 1 or later pays the April 1st price even if they are renewing late (eg. had a February renewal date but are driving on expired tags)."

However by late Wednesday afternoon Laurenz and her superior, state Revenue Secretary Andy Gerlach, made a 180-degree change of that policy.

"April 1 is the date when the fee switches according to the new Highway Funding Bill,"

**TAX | PAGE 11A**

**Yankton County Re-Institutes Burn Ban**

From P&D Staff Reports

Yankton County has re-instituted a burn ban effective today (Friday).

In a press release issued Thursday, Yankton County Emergency Management Director Paul Scherschligt noted that Grassland Fire Danger Index is expected to reach the Very High Category beginning today. The burn ban will take effect at 7 a.m. and remain in effect until further notice.

The forecast for the next five days shows

temperatures and relative humidity in the low 20 percent range.

"With concerns from the local fire departments within the county about the favorable conditions of major grass fire, and the general public calling in to the office with the same concerns, they have asked that the burn ban be put back in place," Scherschligt said in the press release.

The county issues a burn ban last week, but it was removed Monday when weather conditions eased.

**Dry Weather Pattern Raises Drought Issues**

**BY JORDYNNE HART**

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With little precipitation expected for South Dakota, climatologists worry that conditions will dry out further as spring begins.

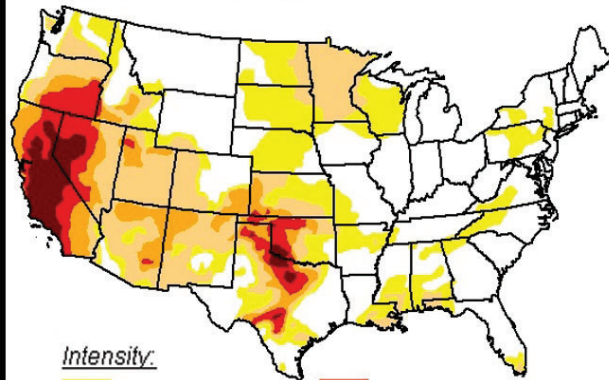
According to Wendy Ryan, assistant state climatologist of Colorado, the lack of snow on the ground has caused a rapid warm-up over portions of the region.

"Some of the regional impact that we have been experiencing is dry, warm and windy weather that has dried out some soils and grasses," she said during the Great Plains and Midwest Climate and Drought Update Webinar. "This is causing some grass fires that we will continue to see until those grasses start to green up."

Relief in the form of early-spring precipitation does not look promising.

"According to the March 19 outlook, much of eastern South Dakota is shown to be in an area that will likely have an expansion of drought at some point between now and the end of

**U.S. Drought Monitor**



Intensity:

D0 Abnormally Dry  
D1 Moderate Drought  
D2 Severe Drought  
D3 Extreme Drought  
D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

June," said Laura Edwards, SDSU Extension climate field specialist, in a press release.

This seasonal drought outlook comes the same time as the weekly U.S. Drought Monitor map showing an expansion of moderate drought in the

northeastern South Dakota counties of Brown, Day, Clark, Codington and Deuel.

"The area has experienced more than just abnormally dry conditions since last fall, as deficits in precipitation

**WEATHER | PAGE 5A**



**RANDY DOCKENDORF/P&D**  
Lyle Stork with the South Dakota Department of Corrections (DOC) listens during Thursday's planning meeting for Missouri River events scheduled in early May around Yankton. The DOC provides inmates from the Yankton Minimum Unit to assist with the events.

**New Nebraska, S.D. Laws Bolster Efforts Against Invasive Fish Species**

**BY RANDY DOCKENDORF**

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New laws in South Dakota and Nebraska should bolster efforts to keep Asian carp and zebra mussels out of Lewis and Clark Lake, says the organizer of a local outreach event.

"Both South Dakota and Nebraska have enacted stricter regulations when it comes to invasive species," said Paul Lepisto, regional conservation coordinator with the Izaak Walton League of America.

Lepisto works with the annual Clean Boat Event, during which volunteers inform Yankton area boaters about ways to

**also**

■ Inmates To Help With Missouri River Clean Up Events.  
**PAGE 3A**

"The issue has taken on new urgency with last year's discovery of one adult zebra mussel at the Midway boat ramp on Lewis and Clark Lake," Lepisto said. "It's one of the busiest places on the lake. It looks like a craft (that carried the zebra mussel)

prevent the spread of invasive species. This year's event runs May 2-9 and covers nine ramps from Weigand to Riverside Park.

was put in and then taken out of the water."

Nebraska and South Dakota officials took different approaches toward invasive species, which take over local waterways and other habitat, Lepisto said.

"The Nebraska Legislature passed LB 142, which created a statewide aquatic invasive species (AIS) prevention program," he said. "South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) passed stricter regulations at its March meeting to prevent the spread of invasive species."

Nebraska Gov. Pete Ricketts

**SPECIES | PAGE 3A**

**Inside**



**American Profile**

**IT'S SPRING**  
EQUINOX: 5:45 p.m. TODAY

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