

Fire Danger Today



Increasing Clouds

9 a.m.: **27** | 3 p.m.: **46**  
FORECAST DETAILS: PAGE 2



**Lancers  
Split DSU  
Double  
Header  
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Verdigre

# Privett Takes Plea Deal

## Pleads No Contest To Second-Degree Murder In Death Of His Wife

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF  
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CENTER, Neb. — A Verdigre, Nebraska, man faces life in prison after pleading no contest to second-degree murder in his wife's death.

Phillip Privett, 66, entered the plea this week in Knox County District Court. He also pleaded no contest to felony weapons charges at the hearing held in the Knox County Courthouse in Center.

The pleas marked a sudden change in the proceedings that

have run since last fall. Tuesday's court date was scheduled as a motions hearing on a first-degree murder charge and a felony weapons charge.

Privett had pleaded not guilty to the first-degree murder charge in the shooting death of 66-year-old Linda Privett, his wife of 44 years. He faced life imprisonment if convicted on the first-degree murder charge and 5 to 50 years imprisonment on the felony weapons charge.

**DEAL** | PAGE 11

## Bon Homme Co. Declares Burn Ban

From P&D Staff Reports

TYNDALL — Bon Homme County has announced that it is imposing a burn ban effective today (Thursday).

According to the county's emergency management director, Scott Burgi, the ban will start at 8 a.m. It will stay in place until further notice. If there are any questions, contact Burgi at 605-589-4242.

Meanwhile, Union County officials announced Wednesday they are lifting the burn ban in that county due to recent moisture. Yankton County continues under its burn ban.

For weather details, see page 2.



PHOTO: TODD LANGE

Spring is here, but some memories from winter linger. Local photographer Todd Lange captured this image of a pair of bald eagles searching for food while steam rises from the waters of the Missouri River recently. The snow seen in the image are a reminder we are not too far removed from winter. Today's (Thursday) weather is expected to be on the crisp side, with temperatures in the mid 40s. For details, see page 2.

## Regents Say Minimum Wage Hike Forcing Cutbacks

BY JAMES NORD  
Associated Press

PIERRE — South Dakota's six public universities are grappling with about \$1 million in increased costs by reining in hiring and cutting back hours and services as a result of the \$8.50 minimum wage voters approved in November.

The universities will report the effects of the minimum wage increase at the South Dakota Board of Regents meeting next week, and the Regents have previously predicted that it would increase costs by about \$970,000 over a full year. Universities are living with current budgets, according to the report, and students are working fewer hours and unfilled positions are being tapped to fund the hike.

Northern State University President James Smith said his institution attempted to use funds from unfilled positions to meet the needs created by wage increase. The university has about \$100,000 in increased costs over the course of a year because of the hike, according to a December analysis for the Regents.

**REGENTS** | PAGE 11

## Neves Encourages Future Business Leaders

BY ROB NIELSEN  
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ROB NIELSEN/P&D

Business journalist and speaker Antonio Neves addresses the weekly meeting of Yankton's 1 Million Cups chapter. Neves spoke on how entrepreneurs and business leaders can achieve success.

Business journalist and speaker Antonio Neves attempted to drive home the point that there's virtue in starting from scratch to achieve business goals during Wednesday's meeting of the Yankton chapter of 1 Million Cups.

One way of doing this was to use mountain climbing as an example.

"What happens if someone airlifts you to the top of Mt. Kilimanjaro or Mt. Everest," Neves asked the audience. "You're going to take in that view for point-one second, next thing you know, you're going to pass out. Why? Because your lungs haven't acclimated to being at that level. Your lungs haven't earned that journey and acclimatized themselves to getting there."

During Wednesday morning's meeting, Neves drew from his experience in journalism and business reporting to speak about how people can be successful in business.

**I think there's a huge edge to being here. ... I've seen towns like this and I've been to the Omahas of the world — you can simultaneously build a business and have a great quality of life and not have to sacrifice some of those things that are important."**

**ANTONIO NEVES**

Neves' credits include being a business correspondent with NBC, PBS and BET as well as writing articles featured on Inc.com, Entrepreneur.com and in

**NEVES** | PAGE 11

## Brandner Takes Over Helm At FRHS

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF  
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FREEMAN — For Nick Brandner, taking the job of interim administrator at Freeman Regional Health Services (FRHS) fit his situation well at the time.

"We moved to this area because my wife took a nursing job in Sioux Falls and we were close to family and friends," he said. "When we decided to do this, I looked at the possibilities with temporary jobs. Then, this opportunity (at Freeman) came along."

Brandner started the job in January. Less than two months

### OUR TOWNS

Hutchinson

directors offered him a permanent job as chief executive officer (CEO).

He replaces Dan Gran, who previously held the position, and becomes the fourth FRHS administrator in 35 years.

Brandner said Wednesday he was ready for whatever the future held for the position. With his recent hiring, he is pleased to come aboard as the long-term leader for the health care system.

"I was willing to come on if they needed someone permanent," he said. "If they only needed someone temporarily, I was willing to do that, too."

Brandner believes his experience as interim administrator at FRHS benefited all parties. He learned a great deal about the 25-bed critical access hospital, rural medical clinic, 56-bed skilled nursing facility, two congregate independent living facilities and the satellite medical clinics in Marion, Bridgewater and Menno.

"The couple of months in the interim role gave me a real

**BRANDNER** | PAGE 12



COURTESY PHOTO

After serving less than two months in an interim role, Nick Brandner has settled in as the permanent administrator at Freeman Regional Health Services (FRHS).