

Literacy Draws Linda Daugaard's Interest

PIERRE (AP) — Linda Daugaard plans to promote youth literacy during her time as South Dakota's first lady. The wife of Gov. Dennis Daugaard said reading is the basis for all learning and can never begin too soon. She plans to be involved in a program that provides age-appropriate books for infants through 5-year-olds. The former teacher and school librarian will visit classrooms to read to elementary students and wants to collect and donate used books to them.

Gov Lifts Recreational Ban on Big Sioux

PIERRE (AP) — The Big Sioux River in eastern South Dakota is open for boating and other recreational uses again. The governor signed an order in mid-March putting it off limits because of dangers from its rapid flow and flooding. He's lifted the ban because flooding has subsided. Still, the Game, Fish and Parks Department said people using the river should watch for logs and other debris and be especially careful below dams where swirling water can trap boats and canoes.

Nebraska County Looking To Ditch Jail

FREMONT, Neb. (AP) — Dodge County board supervisors are looking to ditch the county's aging jail and send all of the county's inmates to a jail in neighboring Saunders County. If an agreement is reached, Dodge County would continue to operate a booking facility and house prisoners until they are taken to Saunders County. Dodge County jail employees would be offered a severance package.

Supervisor Rob George told the *Fremont Tribune* that a final agreement could come as quickly as May 18, the next regularly scheduled board meeting.

He says Saunders County supervisors likely will vote on the agreement at their May 17 meeting.

George says as soon as an agreement is signed, moving the inmates to Saunders County would probably happen within a week. Budget concerns are driving the move.

Nebraska Lawmakers Approve Truancy Bill

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Lawmakers have given final approval to a bill designed to reduce unexcused student absences in Nebraska's public schools.

The measure advanced Thursday through its third and final vote, 46-2.

It has been sent to Gov. Dave Heineman, who identified the bill as one of his legislative priorities.

Omaha Sen. Brad Ashford has said that his proposal (LB463) seeks to address truancy that has reached a crisis level, with 23,000 students statewide who missed more than 20 school days last year. Roughly 82,000 have missed more than 10 days.

The bill would require school districts to create policies for excessive absences caused by illness, and mandate information sharing among child welfare officials, courts and other groups.

Police Say Terrorism Email Is Fake

SIoux FALLS (AP) — Sioux Falls police say an email that urges readers to beware of terrorists posing as UPS employees is fake.

The email about a supposed large UPS uniform purchase through an online auction site tells the reader that terrorists could use the outfits as disguises. It urges people who encounter a UPS employee to ask for identification.

The email appears to come from the Sioux Falls Police Department, but officials there say that isn't the case and the information in the email is not true. Police in Yankton also have issued a statement alerting people about the bogus email.

Redistricting Debate Continues

BY GRANT SCHULTE
Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — Nebraska's great redistricting debate is expected to intensify next week when a legislative panel opens its plans to public input, and opponents craft amendments to redraw the lines.

The Legislature's Redistricting Committee approved a proposed Congressional map Thursday that political observers say will likely favor the GOP. The 5-4 vote fell on party lines on the majority-Republican panel.

Northwest Sarpy County would undergo one of the greatest changes, with voters in Bellevue and Offutt Air Force Base shifting away from Omaha and into the more rural, eastern Congressional District represented by Republican U.S. Rep. Jeff Fortenberry of Lincoln. The area had occupied part of the Omaha-based 2nd Congressional District.

The plan would keep Republican-friendly towns like La Vista

and Papillion in the district, represented by Republican U.S. Rep. Lee Terry. It also could dilute the modest Democratic presence that helped Barack Obama win one of Nebraska's electoral votes, said Creighton University political science professor Sue Crawford.

Crawford said eastern Sarpy County includes a greater mix of incomes that has led some Democrats to believe it's winnable. The proposed map, she said, boosts Terry's re-election odds.

The section of Sarpy County within the 2nd District holds nearly 22,000 registered Democrats, nearly 32,000 Republicans and about 17,000 independent voters. Douglas County has more than 125,000 registered Democrats and nearly 65,787 independent voters.

The issue of redistricting has historically contentious throughout the country, and Nebraska is no exception. In 2001, Saline County Democrats unsuccessfully sued to challenge their county's

move into the Republican-dominated 3rd Congressional District. That same year, then-Douglas County Election Commissioner Scott Lautenbaugh sued the state to challenge the constitutionality of redrawn political boundary lines for state senators. Lautenbaugh, who is now a state senator, alleged that newly drawn districts in Douglas County violated the Nebraska Constitution because they did not follow county lines.

Lawmakers have also advanced a legislative map that is likely to ignite debate. The proposed legislative map set for debate would continue a split in two south Omaha districts with heavy Hispanic populations. It would move Custer County in central Nebraska out of the northern-central, ranch-heavy Sand Hills counties that fill Valentine Sen. Deb Fischer's district. That district would absorb Sheridan, Dawes, Grant and part of Box Butte counties in the northwest, which are represented by Ellsworth Sen. LeRoy Louden.

S.D. Court Upholds Conviction For Basement Repair Deception

CHET BROKAW
Associated Press

PIERRE — The South Dakota Supreme Court upheld for the second time on Thursday a man's conviction for deceiving an older woman into hiring him to do work he said would stop a leak in her basement.

James Douglas Lawrence, 49, argued that he was unfairly convicted of theft by deception because evidence at his trial failed to show he specifically intended to defraud the Hutchinson County woman.

However, the Supreme Court ruled unanimously that evidence clearly showed Lawrence intended to deceive the woman by doing work he knew would not stop the leak and by telling her she would be reimbursed by a federal agency.

Lawrence was convicted in 2003 of theft by deception and

sentenced to 25 years in prison. He persuaded the woman to let him waterproof her basement in 1996 after fraudulently telling her that the Federal Emergency Management Agency would reimburse her for the \$5,000 cost, according to court documents. "Lawrence's work was utterly deficient," Justice John K. Konenkamp wrote for the Supreme Court.

While Lawrence applied a water sealant to the basement wall, it was not an effective waterproofing material, the high court said. He also drilled several holes in the basement walls and filled them with concrete, but expert witnesses said that did not strengthen the walls.


Lawrence told the woman that FEMA would reimburse her for the cost of the work, but agency officials later told her the reimbursement program had ended about two years before Lawrence did the work.

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- '04 Chrysler PT Cruiser Touring 1877A, maroon, 59,xxx miles, sharp, local new Equinox trade with nice miles and equipment... **\$7,990**
- '03 Dodge Ram Quad Cab 4x4 SLT 2027A, blue, 71,xxx miles, clean, local new truck trade with HEMI... **\$14,990**
- '02 Toyota Highlander Limited 4x4 1886A, black, 109,xxx miles, local **ONE-OWNER** trade, loaded with leather and sunroof... **\$13,990**
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