

President OKs Disaster Declaration In S.D.

PIERRE (AP) — The governor said a disaster designation signed Friday by President Obama will provide federal money to help 28 South Dakota counties recover from spring flooding.

Gov. Dennis Daugaard's office said preliminary assessments show the flooding caused an estimated \$7.1 million in damage to roads, culverts, bridges and other public infrastructure in the affected counties.

A disaster declaration authorizes the federal government to provide relief and recovery assistance for up to 75 percent of the eligible damage to public infrastructure.

Counties covered by the declaration are Aurora, Beadle, Brookings, Brown, Buffalo, Clark, Codington, Day, Edmunds, Faulk, Grant, Hamlin, Hand, Hughes, Hyde, Jackson, Jerauld, Kingsbury, Lake, Marshall, Miner, Moody, Perkins, Potter, Roberts, Sanborn, Spink and Sully.

2 Arrested After Breaking Into S.D. Church

RAPID CITY (AP) — Rapid city police say they've arrested two people who broke into a church.

Authorities say a neighbor of the YMCA Church reported seeing people entering the building late Thursday. Officers with the help of a police dog found one man hiding under a table in a storage room and another hiding under a pew in the sanctuary.

The 28-year-old Black Hawk man and 27-year-old Rapid City man were arrested on burglary and other charges.

Planned Parenthood To Consolidate Clinics

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Planned Parenthood of the Heartland will consolidate its two Lincoln facilities into a new health center.

The organization announced Friday that it had completed the purchase of a building to house the center. It's expected to open in late fall.

CEO Jill June says the facility will allow the Planned Parenthood to expand its services in Lincoln. Among the services offered will be abortions, birth control and cancer screenings.

In addition to the Lincoln facilities, Planned Parenthood has two clinics in Omaha. It announced plans last month to open six clinics in other parts of Nebraska over the next five years. They would be located in Grand Island, Fremont, North Platte, Hastings, Norfolk and Kearney in Nebraska.

Fallen S.D. Peace Officer Being Honored

ABERDEEN (AP) — A Campbell County sheriff who died in the line of duty more than 60 years ago is being honored Friday along with other fallen peace officers at an annual service in the nation's capital.

Walter Salzsiedler died of a heart attack on April 25, 1949, while trying to rescue a man involved in a car accident. Daughter Jean Weber tells The American News that she still remembers the details of that day. She was 16 at the time.

Weber and other family members have traveled to Washington, D.C., to attend the candlelight vigil Friday night at the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial.

She says she's grateful to everyone who helped get her father honored, including current Campbell County Sheriff Lacey Perman.

S.D. Tops Nation In Bison; N.D. Ranks Third

RAPID CITY (AP) — South Dakota is the nation's top producer of buffalo, with North Dakota not far behind.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture says South Dakota accounted for nearly 20 percent of the nation's bison herd in 2010.

KOTA television cites a USDA report showing South Dakota had 38,700 bison. Nebraska ranked second with 17,900 head and North Dakota third with 15,900.

Regulators Examine Backups At OPPD Plant

BLAIR, Neb. (AP) — Omaha Public Power District officials are working with regulators to address concerns about last June's failure of an electrical part in the reactor shutdown system during a test at the Fort Calhoun nuclear plant.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission says it believes the component's failure may represent a significant safety concern.

OPPD spokesman Mike Jones said Friday the utility doesn't agree that the part's failure represented a serious safety risk because three other backup electrical contactors worked fine, and the shutdown system needs only one contactor to work. Plus, he says there are other ways to shut down the reactor.

Jones said the utility is weighing how to respond to the commission's letter.

Fort Calhoun sits about 20 miles north of Omaha, on the west bank of the Missouri River.

Original Sheriff's Reservists Honored

CUSTER, S.D. (AP) — The 13 remaining members of South Dakota's first sheriff's reserves force are being honored in Custer on Saturday.

Then-Chief Deputy John Evans got the idea for the group while dressed in riot gear in the Custer County Courthouse on Feb. 6, 1973. A meeting that day between American Indian Movement activists and county prosecutors turned into a riot, with people burning the Chamber of Commerce building, vandalizing the courthouse and sacking police cars.

The riot preceded by a few weeks AIM's occupation of Wounded Knee on the Pine Ridge Reservation.

The Rapid City Journal reports that today, there are 16 active members of the Custer County Sheriff Reserves.

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Huron Mayor Could Face Recall

BY JON WALKER
The Argus Leader

HURON — The mayor of Huron faces a possible recall election as the latest fallout from the sudden retirement of the city's longtime police chief.

David McGirr, mayor since 2007, could be fighting for his job in a summer election if opponents succeed in a petition drive to let voters decide whether he should stay in office.

The controversy relates to how McGirr and the City Commission handled the departure of Doug Schmitt, a Huron police officer since 1978 and chief since 1999. It also touches a nerve in a long-running dispute over immigrant workers while posing the question of whether a public servant is free to speak his mind on his own time.

An election to see whether McGirr continues as mayor could come by July or August. But the issue already has divided Huron, a city of 12,600 in east-central South Dakota.

J.C. Palmer, 60, who owns a hearing aid service, said he has gathered 100 signatures on a petition to remove McGirr, most from residents he's passed on the street.

"I think it's overdue. I think he's a runaway train," Palmer said.

Ron Volesky, a Huron lawyer and former legislator, said several residents are collecting signatures. They need 1,276 in 60 days.

"We have close to 600 to 800," Volesky said. But other residents are saying not so fast.

"Most of the people I've talked to — they want to sign the petition. I'm not ready to do

that," said Harold Owens, 91, a World War II veteran who ran a restaurant in town for 36 years.

"He's done a pretty good job," Owens said of McGirr. "He can't please everybody."

The dispute rises from events of March 7. Schmitt took time off that Monday to testify in Pierre for a bill that would make it a crime for South Dakota employers to knowingly hire illegal immigrants. The bill had passed the Senate and moved to the House, where it failed 35-33.

The immigration issue has dogged Huron for years. Last year, Huron police arrested 79 people for other crimes who turned out to be illegal immigrants, Schmitt said.

"Illegal immigrants create problems, he said, but in his testimony, he did not name employers. Nor did he speak, he said, for the city of Huron. He said two legislators invited him to come.

"They didn't call the chief of police in Watertown or Aberdeen. They called the chief in Huron knowing the illegal alien issue is already present in the community," Schmitt said. "I took a vacation day and drove my own vehicle and wore civilian clothes. I registered my name and said I was representing myself."

Despite such precautions, however, his situation raised the question of whether it's possible for anyone, let alone a chief of police, to speak without representing his employer.

Schmitt said being chief gave him credibility on the topic and that his method of doing it made it a matter of free speech.

"I'm Doug Schmitt the police chief, but I'm also Doug Schmitt the citizen and Doug Schmitt the taxpayer. I should be able to testify," he said.

City officials thought Schmitt crossed the line. A commissioner was on the phone with him before he left the Capitol that day. He returned to his desk that afternoon but was told to go home. That night, commissioners put him on paid leave. Within a few days, he decided to retire rather than go into a disciplinary process he was sure would end in dismissal.

Schmitt, 55, married and the father of two, was making \$77,000 a year as chief and was happy with the retirement package. But he didn't like how it came down.

"They put me on administrative leave and banned me from my office. I never worked another hour," he said.

McGirr said Schmitt might have put the city at risk.

"The city was concerned about some potential liability we may incur because of (his) comments," McGirr said. "So we put him on administrative leave while we investigated."

Commissioners discussed the issue with Gerry Kaufman, the city attorney, and with Lisa Marso, a Sioux Falls lawyer who specializes in labor issues.

"He submitted his letter of retirement before the process was completed," McGirr said. "It never reached the point of a disciplinary hearing. He was not fired."

Still, Schmitt's exit, effective March 31, has put the heat on the mayor. McGirr, 52, and his wife, Linda, run a printing business. He became mayor in 2007 by winning 50 percent of the vote in a three-way race. He won a second three-year term last year with no opponent.

Redistricting Map Draws Fire In Neb.

BY GRANT SCHULTE
Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — A proposed congressional map that would move Nebraska's Offutt Air Force Base and the city of Bellevue out of the Omaha-centric 2nd District drew fire Friday from residents who said the move was political.

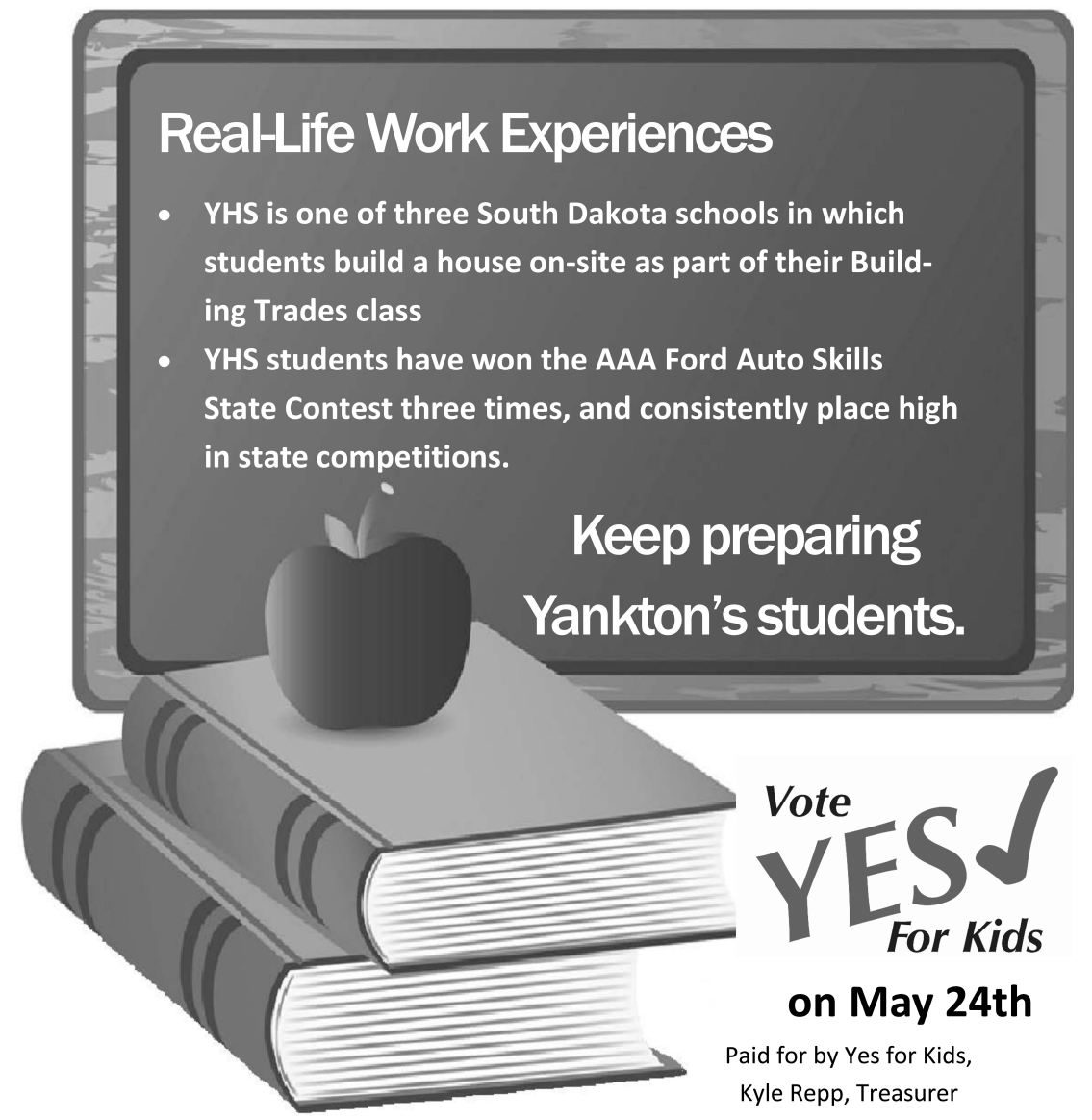
The map's opponents argued that the city and military base share more interests with Omaha than the 1st Congressional District that includes Lincoln, Fremont and Norfolk.

Several Bellevue residents urged the Legislature's Redistricting Committee to reconsider the map proposal during a public input hearing. Critics say the new proposed districts were designed to solidify Republican stronghold seats.

"It just smacks to me of classical gerrymandering," said Ellen Moore, a Democrat from eastern Sarpy County.

Omaha Sen. Scott Lautenbaugh, a committee member who submitted the map, said many of the critics were just as political because of ties to the Democratic Party.

"People's passion for not dividing communities waxes and wanes depending on whose district is being divided," said Lautenbaugh, a Republican.



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6. Your courage and bravery still inspire us all, and the memory of your smile fills us with joy and laughter.
7. Though out of sight, you'll forever be in my heart and mind.
8. May the light of peace shine on your face for eternity.
9. May God's angels guide you and protect you throughout time.
10. You were a light in our life that burns forever in our hearts.
11. May God's graces shine over you for all time.
12. You are in our thoughts and prayers from morning to night and from year to year.
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