

**Beatrice Biodiesel Plant To Be Retrofitted**

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — A biodiesel plant in southeast Nebraska is going to be retrofitted to use inedible plant and animal material for feedstock. The *Lincoln Journal Star* reports Kansas-based Flint Hills Resources Renewables and Texas-based Benefuel Inc. are creating a joint venture for the 50-million-gallon-per-year Beatrice Biodiesel plant. Flint Hills, a subsidiary of Koch Industries Inc., bought the plant for \$5 million in 2011 through a bankruptcy auction. The \$52.5 million plant was built in 2008 but it was never operated. Benefuel officials say the Beatrice plant is important to the bio-fuel industry. Itochu Corp., a Japan-based company and Benefuel shareholder, says the plant's projected production volume corresponds to 5 percent of the current biodiesel production in the U.S.

**Shark Disappears From RC Mini Golf Course**

RAPID CITY (AP) — Police in the Black Hills tourist destination of Rapid City are on the lookout for a 12-foot shark. The *Rapid City Journal* reports that the sculptured sea creature that typically hangs over Pirate's Cove Adventure Golf had been removed for repair last week. It was being stored behind the business when it disappeared. It's valued at about \$6,000. Police are asking anyone with information on the shark to call the station.

**Activist Arrested While Filing Complaint**

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — A group that opposes alcohol sales in Whiteclay is alleging that one of its beer store owners gave baseball bats and a stick to men who frequent the town, and told them to attack the protesters' encampment on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. One of those activists was arrested Friday in Lincoln on charges that he vandalized a beer truck in the Nebraska border town. Authorities say 33-year-old Timothy R. McKenzie Jr., of Jefferson, S.D., was arrested on a warrant out of Sheridan County, Neb. McKenzie alleges in a letter to the Nebraska Liquor Control Commission that Jason Schwarting, owner of the Arrowhead Inn, told men in Whiteclay to attack the nearby encampment. An Arrowhead Inn employee disputed the allegations, but says Schwarting was not immediately available for comment.

**DOT Worker Accused Of Stealing Gas**

MITCHELL (AP) — A 60-year-old man is accused of taking more than \$1,000 in gasoline while employed as a state highway maintenance worker. The *Daily Republic* reports that Gary Lee Trabling was arrested Thursday on one count of grand theft. Mitchell police say Trabling is accused of stealing more than \$1,000 in gasoline for use in his personal vehicles from the South Dakota Department of Transportation office in Mitchell. Police say that Trabling was arrested after officers received information that he allegedly acted suspiciously at his workplace. Attorney information for Trabling was not provided and there was no answer Friday at a listed telephone number.

**City Of Huron Opens \$12.5M Water Park**

HURON (AP) — The city of Huron on Friday opened its new \$12.5 million Splash Central Water Park on the former campus of Huron University. Mayor Paul Aylward tells KOKK radio that the water park is a great facility to enhance the quality of life in the city, and it will be something that draws people to Huron. The park features pools, slides, a water coaster, an obstacle course and a lazy river. Former Huron Mayor Dave McGirr, who had the idea for Splash Central come to him in a dream, emceed Friday's ribbon cutting.

**Neb. Student Loan Company To Fill 300 Jobs**

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Student loan company Nelnet says it will seek to fill more than 300 jobs in Lincoln over the next three months. The *Lincoln Journal Star* reports that the company made the announcement Thursday during its annual shareholders' meeting. Nelnet President Jeff Noordhoek says the company is "in an absolute rapid growth, rapid hiring mode." Company spokesman Ben Kiser says Nelnet's soaring growth in the federal student loan servicing business is the reason behind the new hiring. Nelnet's share of federal student loan servicing went from 16 percent in the 2011-12 academic year to 30 percent in the 2012-13 academic year. The company says it also has been growing its fee-based businesses, including enrollment services and tuition processing.

**Man Sentenced For Assault On Boy**

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — A 58-year-old Lincoln man has been sentenced to 10 years in prison for sexually assaulting a boy he befriended at an arcade in the 1990s. The *Lincoln Journal Star* reports that Michael Miller was sentenced Thursday in Lancaster County District Court.



**Mock Drill Riles Pipeline Opponents**

HOT SPRING (AP) — An emergency drill in Hot Springs has outraged opponents of the proposed Keystone XL pipeline and a proposed uranium mine in western South Dakota after it portrayed the groups as domestic terrorists. The Hot Springs School District on May 14 practiced a lockdown after pretending to receive a letter from a group that wrote "things dear to everyone will be destroyed unless continuation of the Keystone pipeline and uranium mining is stopped immediately." The school district and county have been bombarded with emails and calls about the drill from people who felt it unfairly demonized opponents of the proposed oil pipeline from Canada to Texas and a proposed uranium mine near Edgemont. Don Kelley, a farmer near Nemo who op-

poses both projects because he fears they might contaminate local groundwater supplies, told the *Rapid City Journal* that he and others want a formal apology. "The opponents are about as non-violent bunch of people as you can imagine," he said. "They are just plain concerned and have raised issues of the safety of both those projects." Kelley said it was particularly concerning that children in Hot Springs were being taught to fear people who raise environmental and land-use concerns. Liliias Jarding, a professor of environmental policy and a member of the Black Hills Clean Water Alliance, which opposes the proposed uranium mine, said no opposing group has ever threatened a school. "That's why this is so insulting to so many

people in South Dakota," she said. Fall River County Emergency Manager Frank Maynard said an outside group of people in South Dakota with a stake in emergency management issues devised the scenario and he did not know what was being used as the source of the threat for Tuesday's drill until after it was carried out. He declined to identify any members of the group or where they are based, saying, "I'm not throwing anyone under the bus." Maynard said the focus was on the drill itself, rather than on the fabricated threat, and organizers of the drill never intended to insult opponents of Keystone XL or uranium mining. "It's something that will never happen again, because we will be a lot more selective on what we use," he said.

**Neb. Student Writing Scores Show Improvement**

BY GRANT SCHULTE  
Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — Nebraska students showed improvement in this year's statewide writing test, even though one in three who took the new exam fell below proficiency standards, according to a report released Friday. More than 64,000 students in the 4th, 8th and 11th grades took this year's exam and showed progress despite a computer glitch that will prevent state education officials from using them for federal accountability purposes. Results from the Nebraska Department of Education show 66 percent of 8th graders met or exceeded state standards, a 2 percent increase over the previous year. Of 11th graders who took the exam, 68 percent met or exceeded proficiency levels — a 6 percent jump. This year marked the first time

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ROGER BREED

that 4th graders were given the test, which is more rigorous than previous versions, so no comparisons can be drawn. The results also showed that 68 percent of 4th graders met or exceeded the standards. "We know that schools are working hard to continue to improve writing instruction," said Nebraska Education Commissioner Roger Breed. "We know that we have set the bar high recently, and we have to give our schools and teachers and students time to ad-

just to that." Breed said school officials won't be satisfied until they see proficiency levels well above 85 percent. Breed said he expects that scores will continue to improve as teachers adjust their curriculum. The results came despite computer problems for students and teachers, which created uncertainty about the reliability of the scores. Breed said officials don't believe the problems influenced the results, but the department

can't guarantee they were unaffected. The formatting irregularities included lines text wrapping incorrectly, words breaking oddly and, in some cases, the essay appearing centered on the screen. The Nebraska Department of Education compiles test scores from each of the state's 249 public school districts, which oversee the education of 152,000 students. Test results released in November showed that more than 74 percent of students were at or above reading proficiency levels, compared with less than 72 percent in 2011. In math, more than 67 percent were proficient in 2012, compared to less than 63 percent the previous year. State officials will release data showing student performance by racial and ethnic groups in the fall, as part of the annual State of the Schools report.

**Neb. High Court Upholds New Trial**

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — The Nebraska Supreme Court says Nebraska's self-defense law, which says a person does not have to retreat from his home before using deadly force in self-defense, covers those fending off an attack from a roommate. The high court's ruling Friday came in the case of Darrell White, who is serving 60-to-90 years for the 2010 stabbing death of 45-year-old Todd Berg in the apartment they shared. On Friday, the high court upheld a Nebraska Court of Appeals ruling last year granting White a new trial. The high court agreed that a Sarpy County judge was wrong when he said the jury could only have been instructed that White had no duty to retreat if he had acted in self-defense against an intruder, not someone living with him.

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