

Shorma Appointed To S.D. Senate

PIERRE (AP) — Gov. Dennis Daugaard has appointed Dakota Dunes businessman William Shorma to a vacant seat in the South Dakota Senate.

Shorma will succeed Dan Lederman, who resigned earlier this year in District 16. Shorma will serve the remainder of Lederman's term, which expires after the 2016 general election.

Shorma grew up farming and ranching and working in his family's businesses in Wahpeton, North Dakota. He has worked at family businesses in Yankton and currently is CEO of one in Springfield.

Daugaard says Shorma learned the value of hard work from an entrepreneurial family, and also has given back to his community.

Shorma also is a former director of the Board of the Minneapolis Federal Reserve Bank, and has served as chairman of the South Dakota Chamber of Commerce and Industry.



Shorma

Platte Rolls The Dice To Decide Mayor

PLATTE (AP) — As luck would have it, Platte has a new mayor.

Steve Christensen became the south central South Dakota town's next mayor Thursday after it solved its too-close-to-call race with a game of chance.

Christensen and Incumbent Mayor Rick Gustad split the vote in the April 14 election. An old state statute says certain elections can be determined by a high card draw or a roll of the dice.

Gustad picked the dice as his game of choice. KSFY-TV reports that Christensen rolled a seven and officially became Platte's next mayor for the next two years.

The two ran against one another for mayor in 2013, with Gustad winning by just six votes.

Christensen is a former police chief. Gustad serves as Platte's fire chief.

USD's Nepalese Students Raise Money

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — A group of students from Nepal at the University of South Dakota is raising money for victims of the recent earthquake that has killed more than 6,000 and injured almost 14,000 people.

The Nepalese students at the Vermillion school sent out an announcement Thursday notifying the public that they're collecting money to give to the Red Cross.

The students have set up donation boxes at the school and partnered with a school coffee shop to donate 50 cents for every large espresso drink it sells. They will also be holding bake sales until next Tuesday.

People from around the country have been stepping to help the people of Nepal, which has been overwhelmed by death and destruction since the 7.8-magnitude earthquake hit Saturday.

Neb. Revenue Forecast: \$9.7M

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Nebraska lawmakers will have another \$9.7 million at their disposal for legislation in this year's session.

The revenue estimates approved Thursday came despite predictions that the state would collect less money than expected for its two-year budget. If the new estimates hold, lawmakers will have a total of \$58.7 million available.

The Nebraska Economic Forecasting Advisory Board projected that state revenue will grow 5 percent during the fiscal year that starts on July 1, and 4.3 percent in the following year. Board members said Nebraska's unemployment remains low and the state economy appears to be holding strong.

The state is expected to collect an additional \$12 million in the current fiscal year, which will go to the cash reserve.

Ex-Player Accused Of Robbing Casino

STIOUX FALLS (AP) — A former running back for the Sioux Falls Storm has been charged with second-degree robbery for allegedly trying to rob a Sioux Falls casino.

Thirty-five-year-old Florencell James Jones was taken into custody after police received a flood of tips from the public.

Jones allegedly demanded money from a clerk at the Rice Street Casino Monday night wearing a mask, but left empty-handed after a clerk told him he was being taped.

Captain Blaine Larsen says police released the surveillance video of the robbery attempt and received more than a dozen tips.

Jones was a popular player on Storm, which is part of the professional Indoor Football League. He was let go in 2012 after he was accused of assaulting his ex-girlfriend. He eventually pleaded guilty to disorderly conduct.

Arguments Made In License Lawsuit

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — A judge has heard arguments in a lawsuit brought by several young immigrants brought to the U.S. illegally as children because Nebraska refuses to issue them driver's licenses.

The Lincoln Journal Star says (<http://bit.ly/1FAlzNv>) an attorney for the immigrants argued Wednesday that the Department of Motor Vehicles has been unlawfully denying licenses to immigrants authorized to live and work in Nebraska under a federal program.

But the Nebraska Attorney General's Office defended the practice, saying that while those young immigrants might have a lawful presence, "they lack lawful status."

Both sides rested Wednesday and agreed to submit closing arguments in writing within two weeks.

Nebraska is the only state in the nation that continues to deny licenses to youths who qualify for the Obama administration's deferred-action policy.

CEO Promises Greater Accountability

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — The new CEO of Nebraska's Department of Health and Human Services is promising to hold the department accountable to state lawmakers and the public.

Courtney Phillips said Thursday that she plans to dig into the specific causes of problems with services such as ACCESSNebraska, the system that Nebraskans use to apply for and renew their public benefits. Phillips told a legislative committee that a new performance-tracking system will help the department make improvements.

Gov. Pete Ricketts appointed Phillips to the job in February, but she has to be confirmed by lawmakers. She previously worked as deputy secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals.

Phillips says she also wants to recruit more department employees from Nebraska high schools, colleges and universities, and reduce turnover.

Nebraskan Gets 10 Years For Assault

SCHUYLER, Neb. (AP) — A 42-year-old Colfax County man has been given 10 years in prison for sexually assaulting his 12-year-old stepdaughter.

The *Columbus Telegram* reports that the man pleaded no contest and was convicted of three counts of sexual assault of a minor. On Wednesday he was given five years on each count. Two terms will served consecutively and the third term will be served at the same time as one of the others.

The Associated Press is not using the man's name in order to protect the privacy of the girl.

Court documents say the girl's mother contacted police in June 2014, after her daughter told her about being assaulted. The man later told an officer that he fondled the child on eight occasions.

Documentary On T-Rex Discovery Leads To Pardon Request

BY KEVIN BURBACH
Associated Press

PIERRE — Pete Larson has discovered thousands of fossils around the world, co-authored three books and led the team that unearthed the largest and most complete Tyrannosaurus rex ever found. But there's one black mark on his record: a federal conviction that landed him in prison almost 20 years ago.

His name could soon be cleared because of a documentary released last year at the Sundance Film Festival, which has brought his legal blemish back into the public eye and spurred South Dakota residents — and Larson himself — to push for President Barack Obama to give him a pardon.

"Dinosaur 13" details the discovery of "Sue," a Tyrannosaurus rex that was more than 90 percent complete when it was discovered in 1990 in South Dakota. Federal agents seized the fossil in 1992, alleging that Larson's Black Hills Institute of Geological Research and its employees took it from federal trust land.

While those charges never stuck, the federal government investigated the institute and brought more than 150 unrelated charges against its employees. Only Larson and two others were found guilty, and the paleontologist was sentenced to two years in federal prison for lying on customs documents about thousands of dollars used for fossil deals in Peru and Japan and illegally

taking fossils from a national forest in Montana.

Larson's backers have argued for more than two decades that he was overzealously prosecuted. The movie's release has reignited that conversation, leading his supporters to push for the president to correct what they see as the government's mistake.

The South Dakota Legislature overwhelmingly passed a resolution this session that's been sent to Obama requesting a pardon for Larson. And Larson is working with an attorney on a formal pardon request — a move he hopes could clear his name and also allow him to travel to Canada, where he said more fossil work is to be done.

"It's something very special for me personally to have this piece of paper that says I'm pardoned for these offenses," Larson said. "It's an important mile marker to reach. Like climbing Mt. Everest, or finding your first T-rex — or finding your 10th T-rex."

But not everyone thinks Larson's name should be cleared or that the documentary, which portrays the paleontologists in the mid-1990s trial in a fairly sympathetic light, should prompt a pardon.

The lone two lawmakers — out of 105 — who opposed the resolution said they personally know people who were involved in the investigation, believe Larson's crime was serious and that the conviction was justified.

"It's possible that he was overzealously prosecuted but yet guilty of the

crimes on which he was found guilty of," said Rep. Mark Mickelson, R-Sioux Falls.

Neither he nor fellow Republican Rep. Lee Schoenbeck, of Watertown, has seen the film.

"Unless it had a detailed review of the criminal investigation file, I probably wouldn't spend my time watching it," Schoenbeck said. "There is no chance that any legislators knew the details of that criminal case that would warrant them for voting for that resolution."

Rep. Mike Verchio, a Republican from Larson's home of Hill City, said he introduced the resolution after an outpouring of requests from constituents who had watched the documentary and thought Larson was unjustly imprisoned.

The film aired worldwide and played in tiny theaters across South Dakota last summer, from Mitchell to Hill City, where the geological institute is headquartered.

"There were people who really weren't aware of the background of the situation and how it happened and that seemed to be the catalyst right there," said Verchio, who has watched the film several times. "It built up a tremendous amount of support here."

It's unclear how Larson's pardon request and the support from the state of South Dakota will be received by the president. A White House spokesman said they don't usually comment on individual cases.

Violent Crimes Up In So. Dak. In 2014

BY REGINA GARCIA CANO
Associated Press

STIOUX FALLS — A shooting on the Lake Traverse Indian Reservation that left four people dead contributed to a significant spike in homicides last year in South Dakota, according to a report released Thursday by Attorney General Marty Jackley's office.

The report shows South Dakota saw 20 homicides in 2014, up from 12 the year before. The lowest homicide rate recorded in the state during the past decade was in 2010, when 11 people were slain.

"When people ask me:

'Does this concern you?'

Certainly. One murder or manslaughter would concern me as attorney general, but when you got this small of a calculation and you throw in Sisseton into the mix, that's what's really changed the number (of homicides)," Jackley said.

The fatal shooting in the Indian reservation town of Sisseton in northeast South Dakota that happened in November ended in four deaths after the 22-year-old shooter, Colter Arbach, killed three people before taking his own life. The incident was a result of domestic violence.

The report released Thursday also shows that

the total number of criminal offenses last year rose 1 percent from 2013, to more than 65,000. Law enforcement agencies during the same period reported a total of 37,857 arrests.

Jackley said the small percentage increase in offenses reflects that South Dakota overall "remains a very safe place to live." He added that his office has room for improvement in terms of public safety; two of those areas are financial crimes and sexual crimes against children.

Last year, 38 people were arrested for solicitation of a minor or enticement and 19 others for child pornogra-

phy, compared to 31 and 23 arrests respectively. Arrests for sex offenses that did not involve minors added up to 111, a 2 percent increase over the year.

Simultaneously, 441 were taken into custody on fraud charges, 79 for counterfeiting or forgery, and 36 for embezzlement. Thefts totaled over \$23 million worth of property loss.

Trending downward were the arrests of juvenile offenders. Law enforcement took into custody 4,888 minors in 2014, that's 695 fewer juvenile arrests compared to 2013.

NE Lawmakers Spar Over Spending In Budget Debate

BY GRANT SCHULTE
Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Nebraska lawmakers sparred Thursday over a budget package that includes new spending for property tax reductions, education, prison programs and dental services.

Debate over the \$8.6 billion, two-year budget began as lawmakers learned that they could have more money at their disposal than expected.

The budget package would increase annual state spending by an average of 3.1 percent — one of the lowest rates in three decades — although that percentage could increase if other spending bills pass.

"The decisions in this budget package recognize the priorities of this Legislature, reflect the values of Nebraskans and respond to

the needs of our communities across the state," said Sen. Heath Mello of Omaha, chairman of the Appropriations Committee.

The budget includes \$200 million a year in state money to help reduce local property taxes, matching the recommendations in Gov. Pete Ricketts' budget proposal.

If approved, owners of a \$100,000 home would receive a \$93.33 credit against their property tax bill — a \$28 increase over the current funding level. Farm- and ranchland owners would receive the largest share of the credits because of surging agricultural land values, resulting in higher taxes.

The budget also would boost funding for K-12 and higher education, with a 3 percent increase for the University of Nebraska, the state colleges and community colleges. Funding for

the K-12 state aid formula would grow by \$47.7 million over two years, and each school would receive more money for special education students.

Another committee member, Sen. Bill Kintner of Papillion, said the budget package reflects a compromise that gives no one everything that they wanted. Kintner said he was pleased with the additional millions to help lower property taxes.

"It's never an easy thing to do," Kintner said. "But I think on balance, this is probably a good budget."

Several senators criticized an \$8 million appropriation for services and equipment for training for dental students. Critics said the only group in Nebraska that could qualify is Creighton University, a Catholic university in Omaha.

Mello said the budget

item would help create a valuable public-private partnership.

Sen. Mike Groene of North Platte said the university should pay for its own projects and argued that lawmakers need to cut spending more aggressively.

Lawmakers will have roughly \$58.7 million available for spending beyond what's included in this year's budget.

The Nebraska Economic Forecasting Advisory Board projected Thursday that state revenue will grow 5 percent during the fiscal year that starts on July 1 and 4.3 percent in the following year.

Ricketts, a Republican, urged lawmakers to use the revenue on tax cuts.

"Today's forecast shows that property tax relief is well within reach for hard-working Nebraskans," Ricketts said.

Woman Charged In 2011 Killing


STIOUX FALLS (AP) — Sioux Falls police have arrested a woman in a homicide that occurred about 3 1/2 years ago.

Fifty-eight-year-old Daniel Eastman was beaten and stabbed in a downtown Sioux Falls alley in August 2011. He died in a hospital a few months later.

The killing went unsolved, but authorities have now arrested and charged 33-year-old Sadie Red Bear with manslaughter. It wasn't immediately clear if she had an attorney.

Police Capt. Blaine Larsen says both Eastman and Red Bear were homeless at the time of his death, and Red Bear was identified as a person of interest early in the investigation. He says she was arrested after investigators reopened the case and conducted further interviews.

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Thank you for letting us be part of your lives.

Home Care at Yankton Medical Clinic, P.C. is closing effective May 15, 2015.

The closure of Home Care is a reflection of our rapidly changing times in healthcare. Something that will never change is our commitment to placing the needs of patients first. YMC physicians will continue to partner with community agencies to ensure access to quality home health services.

Home Care has been in operation for 22 years. During this long tenure, it has consistently received high satisfaction ratings from its patients and met high standards from the SD Department of Health.

The YMC administration and physicians express deep appreciation to our current and past employees for their careful and caring efforts in assisting patients to remain in their home. We are also grateful to our patients and their families for the privilege of allowing our medical staff to care for them.



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