

Missing Minimum-Security inmate Found

RAPID CITY (AP) — A state prison inmate who walked away from a minimum-security prison in Rapid City last October is back in custody. The state Department of Corrections says Jay Dooley was arrested by federal authorities earlier this week. Dooley walked away from the Rapid City Minimum Unit on Oct. 22, 2014. He had been serving a three-year sentence for damaging property in Pennington County. He is currently in custody in the Pennington County Jail.

Board Decides On Uranium License

RAPID CITY (AP) — A federal board has revised a license granted to a company that wants to mine for uranium in western South Dakota. The Atomic Safety and Licensing Board of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission a year ago issued a license to Powertech Uranium Corp. for the proposed Dewey-Burdock mine near Edgemont. Powertech is now Azarga Uranium. The license was put on hold when mine opponents including the Oglala Sioux raised questions about possible damage to aquifers and cultural sites. The *Rapid City Journal* reports that the board has ruled in Azarga's favor on five challenges relating to water quality and quantity. But it also instructed the company to make more efforts to locate existing drill holes at the site to prevent contamination, and it said the mine could threaten cultural sites.

Simulator Gives Students New Training

KEARNEY, Neb. (AP) — A new flight simulator purchased by the University of Nebraska at Kearney will give students a chance to train in the fundamentals of aviation in a safer and more affordable manner. The *Kearney Hub* reports that the \$130,000 simulator will allow the aviation program's 60 students to attempt more maneuvers in a shorter amount of time than in a real aircraft. Flight instructor Holly Michael says students will be able to attempt 8-10 maneuvers per hour in a simulator, rather than 4-5 in a real plane. Students also will be able to practice emergency maneuvers otherwise dangerous to attempt in the real world, Michael says. "The emergency procedures are the hardest things to train for because we have to put ourselves in bad situations to learn how to get out of them," Michael said. Training in the new flight simulator is expected to cost \$60 an hour. By contrast, Michael says training in a real aircraft costs more than \$145 an hour. Because of a severe pilot shortage, Gibbs said job placement is about 100 percent. He added that students graduate with about 250 flight hours. Because there is a hiring threshold of 1,500 hours for airlines, students often begin their careers as flight instructors.

State Car Crash Records Now Online

PIERRE (AP) — South Dakotans wanting to get copies of car crash reports can now find those records online. The state Department of Public Safety says the new online system for state-reportable crash records went live this week. The new system allows users to search the state database for crash records. There is a flat \$10 fee to purchase each record online. Crash records are typically sought by insurance companies, law firms and individuals involved in state-reportable vehicle crashes. A state-reportable crash is currently for those resulting in \$1,000 of damage per vehicle or more than \$2,000 in damage for all of the vehicles involved. Those limits will increase later this year.

Neb. To Debate New Leaders For DHHS

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — The Nebraska Legislature will debate Gov. Pete Ricketts' choices to revamp the leadership in the struggling Department of Health and Human Services. The Health and Human Services Committee advanced four appointments for consideration on Friday. Members voted 7-0 on the new appointments of Courtney Phillips as CEO and Calder Lynch as Nebraska's Medicaid director. The committee also unanimously recommended John Hilgert as director of Nebraska's Department of Veterans' Affairs and voted 5-0 on Joseph Acierno as the state's chief medical officer. Sen. Sue Crawford of Bellevue and Sara Howard of Omaha did not vote on Acierno's appointment, saying Nebraska has fallen short on measures to improve residents' health. Other committee members say they expect Phillips and Ricketts will improve the department.

Woman Charged With Animal Neglect

SPEARFISH (AP) — A Wisconsin woman is facing an animal neglect charge in South Dakota for allegedly having 42 dogs and cats in a sport utility vehicle. Spearfish police officers responding to an animal welfare call last weekend found the 36 toy-breed dogs and six cats inside the vehicle. The *Black Hills Pioneer* reports most of the animals were housed in what police said were cramped, dirty kennels with no food or water. Fifty-four-year-old Lisa Dietzel of Shullsburg, Wisconsin, was arrested. She faces a misdemeanor charge that carries a maximum punishment of a year in jail and a \$2,000 fine. It was not immediately clear if she had an attorney. Police say Dietzel was traveling back home from Washington state when she stopped in Spearfish. Police took the animals to a shelter.

State Seeking Roy Lake Resort Operator

ROY LAKE (AP) — The state Department of Game, Fish and Parks is looking for someone to operate the Roy Lake Resort in northeastern South Dakota. The operation on Roy Lake State Park offers year-round outdoor recreation, including camping, fishing and boating in the summer and ice fishing, waterfowl hunting and snowmobiling in the winter. State park director Doug Hofer says the resort is one of the most popular destinations in the Glacial Lakes region for families and people who love the outdoors. The park is about 10 miles southeast of Lake City and roughly 25 miles north of Webster. Entrepreneurs interested in operating the resort have until Aug. 15 to submit their proposals. Details of the operation and a prospectus are available at <http://gfp.sd.gov/state-parks/directory/roy-lake>.

Choir Offers Release For Disabled

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — A choir group for people with physical and cognitive disabilities has held its first performance on the University of Nebraska at Omaha campus. The Heartlight Choir made its public debut Thursday at the college's Community Engagement Center. Many of the two-dozen singers smiled as they did renditions of Louis Armstrong's "What a Wonderful World" and Adele's "Rolling in the Deep." Even though 21-year-old Cory Wernimont had mostly stopped speaking for the last year and a half, he joined his fellow singers by belting out lyrics in front of an audience of more than 200 people. The choir is the largest program organized by Gotta Be Me, a local nonprofit dedicated to the inclusion of people with disabilities.

April Economic Report Suggests Slow Growth Ahead

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — An April survey of supply managers suggests that slow economic growth remains ahead for nine Midwestern and Plains states, with a sagging energy sector acting as a brake, according to a report released Friday. "Firms linked to energy and agriculture are experiencing pullbacks in economic activity," said Creighton University economist Ernie Goss, who oversees the survey that comprises the Mid-America Business Conditions Index. "Growth in Oklahoma and North Dakota, two energy-producing states, is approximately one-third to one-half of what it was one year ago. That growth is likely to move even lower in the months ahead as the strong U.S. dollar slows growth even more," he said. But looking ahead six months, economic optimism, as reflected in the confidence portion of the index, rose to 61.5 from March's 55.7. "Improving economic expectations from nonenergy



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firms, resulting from lower energy prices, more than offset economic pessimism stemming from weakness in firms directly tied to energy," Goss said. The overall survey index

rose to 52.7 last month from 51.4 in March, the report said. The survey results from supply managers are compiled into a collection of indexes ranging from zero to

100. Survey organizers say any score above 50 suggests economic growth, while a score below that suggests decline. The survey covers Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma and South Dakota. The rising value of the U.S. dollar continues to affect companies that sell or buy on overseas markets, the report said. The new export orders index slid to 53.5 from 56.4 in March, and the import index for April fell to 46.8 from March's 53.5. "Over the past six months, the value of the U.S. dollar has risen dramatically against the currencies of our chief trading partners," Goss said, which has made U.S. goods less competitively priced abroad and foreign goods cheaper in the U.S. "Regional exports for 2014 were approximately \$90.5 billion," he said. "The strong U.S. dollar is likely push 2015 exports down by as much as 10 percent below 2014 levels."

Nebraska High Court: Judge OK Not To Recuse Self From Trial

BY MARGERY A. BECK
Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — A Nebraska farmer who dug around for information on the landowning business of the judge hearing his lawsuit had no right to then expect the judge to excuse himself from the case, the Nebraska Supreme Court said Friday. The decision came in the case of Thomas Kalkowski, who sued the Nebraska National Trails Museum Foundation over an irrigation issue. Kalkowski donated nearly 160 acres of land to the foundation in 2003, agreeing to pay the annual taxes on the property and \$500 per year in exchange for the right to farm the land. Shortly after donating the land and entering into the lease agreement, Kalkowski made upgrades to

the land that nearly doubled the number of acres that could be irrigated under local natural resource district rules. Kalkowski hoped to transfer those allowable irrigation acres to other nearby land he owned, and the foundation initially agreed to allow him to do so. But when the foundation's board balked, Kalkowski sued, claiming he was entitled to the irrigation rights because he had performed all the work for them. Allowing the foundation to keep the irrigation rights unjustly enriched the organization, his lawsuit said. While the lawsuit was pending before Keith County District Judge Donald Rowlands, Kalkowski contacted the general manager of a nearby natural resources district and asked about the water rights on property owned by the

judge. The manager, believing Kalkowski wanted to buy the property, contacted the judge, who indicated he did not want to sell. Kalkowski then sought to have the judge removed from the case, saying Rowlands should not have talked to the official, and that the judge's leasing of land to a farmer was similar enough to Kalkowski's situation as to create a conflict of interest. The judge denied Kalkowski's request, and Kalkowski appealed. On Friday, the Nebraska Supreme Court upheld the judge's decision, saying that the fact that judge owns and leases irrigated farmland in another natural resources district would not lead a reasonable person to question his impartiality. "In this case, the only reason the judge had any contact with the general

manager of the natural resources district was due to Kalkowski's own actions," Chief Justice Michael Heavican wrote. "Kalkowski could have avoided the entire situation by simply refraining from contacting the other natural resources district concerning the judge's property." The high court also rejected Kalkowski's argument that he was entitled to the irrigation rights, saying Kalkowski's sole reason in making the improvements was to benefit his farming operation and that, while the foundation benefited from the improvements, it did nothing to encourage Kalkowski to make them. Neither Kalkowski's attorney, Randy Fair, nor Judge Rowlands immediately returned messages left Friday seeking comment.

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