

The Press & Dakotan

THE DAKOTAS' OLDEST NEWSPAPER | FOUNDED 1861

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Published Daily

Monday-Saturday

Periodicals postage

paid at Yankton, South

Dakota, under the act of

March 3, 1979.

Weekly Dakotan

established June 6, 1861.

Yankton Daily Press and

Dakotan established April

26, 1875.

Postmaster: Send

address changes to Yankton

Daily Press & Dakotan,

319 Walnut, Yankton, SD

57078.

MEMBERSHIPS

The Yankton Daily

Press & Dakotan is a

member of the Associ-

ated Press, the Inland

Daily Press Association

and the South Dakota

Newspaper Association.

The Associated Press

is entitled exclusively

to use of all the local

news printed in this

newspaper.

SUBSCRIPTION

RATES*

(Payable in advance)

CARRIER DELIVERY

1-month.....\$12.09

3 months.....\$36.27

6 months.....\$72.53

1-year.....\$135.09

MOTOR ROUTE

(where available)

1 month.....\$14.51

3 months.....\$43.53

6 months.....\$87.05

1 year.....\$139.14

MAIL IN RETAIL

Trade Zone

1-month.....\$16.93

3 months.....\$50.79

6 months.....\$101.57

1-year.....\$148.82

MAIL OUTSIDE

RETAIL TRADE ZONE

1 month.....\$19.35

3 months.....\$58.05

6 months.....\$116.09

1-year.....\$186.33

* Plus applicable sales tax

for all rates

OPINION OTHER VIEWS

SD Must Take Water Rights Seriously

RAPID CITY JOURNAL (May 3): Thanks to neighbors of the super-secret compound near Pringle, state officials are preparing to do what should have been done in the first place — holding a public hearing on a request for a significant expansion of water rights.

If it weren't for the efforts of those private citizens and National Park and Forest Service officials, the Fundamental Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints would have had its request to triple water rights from 94 to 300 gallons per minute granted after essentially an administrative review by analysts at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Fortunately, state law requires that water permit applications be filed as legal notices in local newspapers, which in this case were the *Custer County Chronicle* and *Rapid City Journal*.

So why was it so easy for them to get state approval to draw so much more water from the Madison Aquifer? The answer can be found in state law.

In reviewing the request, DENR considers:

"If there is reasonable probability that there is unappropriated water available for the applicant's proposed use; that the proposed diversion can be developed without unlawful impairment of existing rights; that the proposed use is a beneficial use and in the public interest."

In this case, the department felt that the compound satisfied the criteria, which is mind-boggling for those familiar with the group and its connection to Warren Jeffs, their religious leader who now serves a life sentence in a Texas prison for aggravated sexual assault of young girls amid allegations he took child brides.

So how could this project be deemed to be in the public interest?

The members of the group, who live on a 140-acre compound in remote Custer County, are not even seen by their neighbors much less contributing to the public good. The compound is essentially a fortress that has a guard tower. No visitors are allowed and its neighbors live in a state of perpetual concern.

In fact, the group's leader, Seth Jeffs, will not even disclose the compound's population — estimated to be between 75 and 300 people — nor specifically outline why the additional water is needed except to say they want it for gardening, landscaping and to fill a 250,000-gallon above-ground storage tank.

But even Jeffs has seen the error of his ways since neighbors registered their concerns with the state and reduced the request to 200 gallons of water per minute while acknowledging that the initial request of 300 gallons was made "to be safe."

Opponents are also concerned the increased water usage will affect neighboring properties, including Wind Cave National Park.

Water is a resource that never should be taken for granted. In California, for example, state officials are now scrambling to avert a water crisis that has developed over four years of drought. Our dry spring in South Dakota has ranchers and farmers casting hopeful glances to the sky.

The state of South Dakota needs to raise the bar before it grants more precious water rights to any entity, and they can start when it conducts the public hearing on the compound's request.

OUR LETTER POLICY

The **PRESS & DAKOTAN** invites its readers to write letters to the editor. We ask that a few simple guidelines be followed:

● Please limit letters to 300 words or less. Letters should deal with a single subject, be of general interest and state a specific point of view. Letters are edited with brevity, clarity and newspaper style in mind.

● In the sense of fairness and professionalism, the **PRESS & DAKOTAN** will accept no letters attacking private individuals or businesses.

● Specific individuals or entities addressed in letters may be given the opportunity to read the letter prior to publication and be allowed to answer the letter in the same issue.

● Only signed letters with writer's full name, address and daytime phone number for verification will be accepted. Please mail to: Letters, 319 Walnut, Yankton, SD 57078, drop off at 319 Walnut in Yankton, fax to 665-1721 or email us at kelly.hertz@yankton.net.

IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press

Today is Monday, May 11, the 131st day of 2015. There are 234 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On May 11, 1945, the aircraft carrier USS Bunker Hill was attacked and severely damaged by two kamikaze aircraft off Okinawa; according to the U.S. Navy's official website, 346 men were killed, 43 were left missing, and 264 were wounded.

On this date:

In 1647, Peter Stuyvesant arrived in New Amsterdam to become governor of New Netherland.

In 1858, Minnesota became the 32nd state of the Union.

In 1862, during the Civil War, the Confederate ironclad CSS Virginia was scuttled by its crew off Craney Island, Virginia, to prevent it from falling into Union hands.

In 1927, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences was founded during a banquet at the Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles.

In 1935, the Rural Electrification Administration was created as one of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal programs.

In 1944, during World War II, Allied forces launched a major offensive against Axis lines in Italy.

In 1953, a tornado devastated Waco, Texas, claiming 114 lives.

In 1960, Israeli agents captured Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

In 1973, the espionage trial of Daniel Ellsberg and Anthony Russo in the "Pentagon Papers" case came to an end as Judge William M. Byrne dismissed all charges, citing government misconduct.

In 1981, legendary reggae artist Bob Marley died in a Miami hospital at age 36.

In 1985, 56 people died when a flash fire swept a jam-packed soccer stadium in Bradford, England.

In 1996, an Atlanta-bound ValuJet DC-9 caught fire shortly after takeoff from Miami and crashed into the Florida Everglades, killing all 110 people on board.

Ten years ago: More than 1,000 demonstrators rioted and threw stones

at a U.S. military convoy in Afghanistan as protests spread over a Newsweek report that interrogators had desecrated Islam's holy book at the U.S. prison at Guantanamo Bay. (Newsweek later retracted the story.) Actor Macaulay Culkin took the stand at Michael Jackson's trial to denounce the molestation allegations against the pop star as "absolutely ridiculous." (Jackson was acquitted.)

Five years ago: Conservative leader David Cameron, at age 43, became Britain's youngest prime minister in almost 200 years after Gordon Brown stepped down and ended 13 years of Labour government. Italian designer Giuliana Coen Camerino, credited with making handbags a fashion item, died in Venice at age 89.

One year ago: Pro-Russian insurgents in eastern Ukraine said voters overwhelmingly favored sovereignty in balloting that the Ukraine central government and the West denounced as an illegal sham. Musa Dayib, a 15-month-old toddler, miraculously survived an 11-story fall from a Minneapolis high-rise apartment balcony. Jeb Stuart Magruder, 79, a Watergate conspirator-turned minister, died in Danbury, Connecticut.

Today's Birthdays: Comedian Mort Sahl is 88. Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan is 82. Rock singer Eric Burdon (The Animals; War) is 74. Actress Shohreh Aghdashloo is 63. Actress Frances Fisher is 63. Actor Boyd Gaines is 62. Country musician Mark Herndon (Alabama) is 60. Actress Martha Quinn is 58. Country singer-musician Tim Raybon (The Raybon Brothers) is 52. Actor Tim Blake Nelson is 51. Actor Jeffrey Donovan is 47. Country musician Keith West (Heartland) is 47. Actor Nicky Katt is 45. Actor Coby Bell is 40. Cellist Perttu Kivilaakso is 37. Actor-singer Jonathan Jackson is 33. Rapper Ace Hood is 27. Musician Howard Lawrence (Disclosure) is 21.

Thought for Today: "No idea is so antiquated that it was not once modern. No idea is so modern that it will not someday be antiquated." — Ellen Glasgow, American author (1874-1945).

FROM THE BIBLE

The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance. Psalm 16:6. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Great Benefit!

Team Ethan Organizers

The Lenhoff family would like to thank everyone who attended or helped out with the benefit for Ethan Lenhoff in any way. There are too many names to mention individually but we want to say thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

The benefit was a huge success and they were able to raise more than \$60,000 on the benefit day and close to \$100,000 since Team Ethan started fundraising. Thank you all so much for everything you have done and all of the prayers, we would truly be lost without all of your amazing support!



Analysis

People, President Show One Another Respect

BY BOB MERCER

State Capitol Bureau

WATERTOWN — President Barack Obama showed respect for something South Dakota treasures — our people's work ethic — with his speech at the graduation ceremony Friday night for Lake Area Technical Institute.

In turn, his first visit to South Dakota as president forced many South Dakotans to show respect for him.

He is the president of our nation. We are nothing if not patriotic.

We proved we can be cordial when we should be — and when it doesn't involve politics.

The Democratic president learned in 2008, and again in 2012, and again in 2014, that he isn't a natural fit in South Dakota politics and that South Dakota politics isn't a natural fit for him.

He lost to Hillary Clinton in South Dakota's 2008 Democratic presidential primary, but he won his party's nomination.

He lost to Republican nominee John McCain in the 2008 general election, but he won the White House.

He lost to Republican nominee Mitt Romney in 2012 in South Dakota, but he won re-election to the White House.

And in 2014, the candidates for the Republican nomination to a South Dakota seat in the U.S. Senate focused their political derision upon him, vowing to overturn Obamacare and to authorize the Keystone XL pipeline.

It's now May. Obamacare remains the law of our land. He vetoed the Keystone XL pipeline authorization passed by the Republican majorities in Congress.

He indeed is still the president of our nation.

And when you look at the decisions made by South Dakota voters in the previous 10 years — moving aside the Democratic Senate leader Tom Daschle for Republican John

Thune, replacing Democratic U.S. Rep. Stephanie Herseth Sandlin with Republican Kristi Noem and seeing Democratic U.S. Sen. Tim Johnson retire with Republican former Gov. Mike Rounds taking the seat — there comes a question.

Is South Dakota out of step with the nation, or is the nation out of step with South Dakota?

President Barack Obama didn't spend much time on the ground Friday. A little more than two hours, from touchdown to takeoff. He didn't taste the food, breathe the air, touch the soil. He saw a regional airport and a high school gym.

But he also saw the small manufacturers clustered in the industrial development next to the airport, and he saw many of their employees, who stood in the parking lots and along the road ditches to watch him go by.

And as the motorcade made its way through Watertown's north side, with its working-class homes and student rental houses, he saw the roots of why Lake Area Technical Institute is so important to the city and the region.

President Obama found in Lake Area Technical Institute something truly important to respect about South Dakota: Our people want to work, and they want to succeed. They are willing to put in the time and pay the cost to learn how to do so better.

He referred to the "tiny" school in the "tiny" town. He did so twice. His point seemed that, in a place where it might not be expected, something very important has been happening, and continues to happen, something that is essential to the future of our country's It is good he respects that. It is good we respect that. It is good we maybe now respect each other a little more, and with better reason, than we had before.

Tiny? And so we are. Our president? And so he is.



Bob

MERCER

Christopher Speer Is Dead; Omar Khadr Is Free

BY MICHELLE MALKIN

Creators.com

A Canadian judge ruled this week that Omar Khadr poses no public safety threat. Tell that to the children of Sergeant First Class Christopher J. Speer and the surviving American soldiers who valiantly fought Khadr on the battlefield.

In 2012, Khadr pleaded guilty, guilty, guilty and guilty to five charges related to the killing of Speer, a 28-year-old medic with the U.S.