

### S.D. Among Tops For Deer-Vehicle Collisions

SIoux FALLS (AP) — Drivers in the Dakotas are among the most likely in the nation to hit a deer. The State Farm insurance company's annual ranking of states in terms of the risks of deer-vehicle collisions puts South Dakota third and North Dakota ninth. West Virginia topped the list for the fifth year in a row. Motorists in Hawaii are least likely to run into a deer. State Farm uses its claims data and licensed driver counts from the Federal Highway Administration to compile its annual report. The company's data shows that November is the month during which deer-vehicle collisions are most likely.

### Report: Neb. Child Services Privatization Flawed

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — A legislative review has found that Nebraska's child services privatization effort lacked clear goals and failed to consider the realistic cost of reforms that are now \$30 million beyond what was expected. The Legislature's Performance Audit Committee released its report Friday. The report found that Nebraska Children and Family Services failed to conduct a cost-benefit analysis or set clear goals. The report also concluded that the division has made only "modest progress" in areas it cited to justify privatization. Kerry Winterer, chief executive of the Department of Health and Human Services, says the department is creating an operational plan that will establish precise goals and timetables for privatization. Winterer says the \$30 million was the amount spent since 2009. He says that money had already been appropriated to the division.

### Company Closing Its Rapid City Office Location

RAPID CITY (AP) — A health benefits administration company in Rapid City will be closing its doors next year, leaving its 45 employees to transfer to new locations or find other jobs. The *Rapid City Journal* reports that First Administrators will be consolidating its Rapid City operations with its Sioux City, Iowa, location in an effort to save money. Tracy Smith with Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield says a key factor in the decision was the fact that the company owns the Sioux City office space but rents in Rapid City. Wellmark owns First Administrators. All Rapid City employees are being offered jobs in Sioux Falls, Sioux City or Des Moines, Iowa.

### Jan. Trial Set For Accused S.D. Sheriff's Deputy

SIoux FALLS (AP) — Trial has been set the week of Jan. 23 for a South Dakota sheriff's deputy accused of theft during a previous job. Douglas County Deputy Rob Hotchkiss is accused of submitting fraudulent insurance applications to obtain commissions while working for a Sioux Falls insurance company in 2008. The *Daily Republic* reports that the 41-year-old Delmont man has been relieved of his deputy duties until the case is resolved. He faces four counts of felony grand theft by deception. If he's convicted he could face up to 40 years in prison.

### \$15K Found In Car At Huron Chevy Dealer

HURON (AP) — Three workers at a Huron Chevy dealer have been honored by General Motors for their honesty after they found \$15,000 in a newly acquired sport utility vehicle and turned it over to authorities. Prostrollo Motors employee Shaun Songer recently was cleaning the Traverse bought at a Dallas auction when she flipped the seat up and found a wad of hundred dollar bills totaling \$10,000. After turning over the money to management, Songer went back to cleaning and found \$5,500 more, along with two passports. Authorities say a man had been selling cars on Craigslist and taking deposits, but never delivering the cars. KÖKK radio reports that Songer, Paul Hetle and Doug Chilson were awarded the Everyday Hero award for their honesty.

# Neb. Democrat Mulling Retirement

HENRY C. JACKSON  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — All the pieces are in place for a re-election bid, but Nebraska Sen. Ben Nelson is wavering on whether he'll seek a third term in 2012 or retire — a decision that could have a big effect on Democrats' chances of holding their Senate majority. Nelson told The Associated Press on Thursday that he'll make a decision over the holiday season. In the meantime, he's piled up campaign cash, hired a campaign manager and watched his party spend more than \$1 million on ads supporting him. But Nelson, a conservative Democrat, has told friends and supporters he's not a lock for another run and has expressed frustration with the inability of a divided Congress to pass meaningful legislation. "He's alluded to a lot of frustration back in Washington," said former Omaha Mayor Mike Fahey, a Nelson supporter. "There's a lot of frustration with him and independent-minded senators about the ability to get things done."

Fahey said he expected Nelson's happiness on the job, as well as family concerns, to factor heavily in his decision. Nelson's decision will have important consequences for Democratic hopes of maintaining control of the Senate. Republicans need to net four seats in 2012 to take back the upper chamber. Republicans see his seat as a pickup opportunity either way: They believe the state has tilted further to the right in recent years and think Nelson's vote for President Barack Obama's signature health care legislation will weigh him down. But Nelson, a two-term governor before winning a Senate seat, would give Democrats a fighting chance. Nelson dipped in polls after the health care debate, but he has shown an ability to rebound after being down in statewide races before. Guy Cecil, the executive director of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, said Thursday his organization is still planning for Nelson to run but will await his announcement. For his part, Nelson said he'll act as if he's

running until he decides he's not. "The campaign is moving as planned," Nelson said. "We are raising money, hiring staff." Nelson's preparation has left him with a healthy cash advantage should he decide to go for a third term. He has more than \$3 million cash on hand, about twice his nearest competitor, and has the luxury of stockpiling money while Republicans have a crowded primary that includes Don Stenberg, the state's treasurer, Jon Bruning, the attorney general, and Deb Fischer, a state senator. Nelson said he is not making his intentions clear, in part, because "campaigns are too long," he said. "I don't want everything I say or do viewed through the prism of re-election," he said. "Perhaps this is the norm for my colleagues, but it is not the way I have operated in the past." Fahey said Nelson's kept close counsel on his decision. But he said he believes Nelson is leaning more toward running than not and said Nelson is behaving the same way he has when he's run in past elections. "I think he's absolutely prepared himself to run," Fahey said.

## Scottsbluff Must Reimburse Police For Health Costs

BY MARGERY A. BECK  
Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — Scottsbluff must reimburse its police officers for health insurance benefits that were improperly administered, the Nebraska Supreme Court said Friday. The state's high court found the city was wrong in changing its employee health care insurance plan without negotiating the changes with the police union. The rift began in the summer of 2009, when members of the police union voted to ratify a contract with the city. Shortly after, members noticed a change had been made in the city's health care plan that excluded coverage for those who engaged in certain high-risk activities, such as mixed martial arts and cage fighting, use of all-terrain vehicles and traveling to countries with advisory warnings. The union complained to the city that the change had not been negotiated and asked the Scottsbluff City Council not vote on it until the two sides could discuss it. The City Council refused to wait and adopted the contract, but the union president refused to sign it.

The city implemented the contract anyway and, weeks later, told the union it planned to make changes to the next year's contract requiring employees to pay more for doctor's visits, out-of-pocket maximums and prescription medicine. The union claimed those changes were subject to negotiation and took its case to the Commission of Industrial Relations, an appointed body that resolves public sector wage and working condition disputes that have reached an impasse. The commission said in August that the city couldn't make those changes without negotiation, and the state supreme court upheld that decision Friday. However, the court said the commission was wrong in not finding the union president should have signed the contract. "It is not entirely clear to us, from the record, how the parties would propose to remedy the union's refusal to execute the agreement," the high court wrote. "So, rather than simply directing the agreement to be enforced, we remand the cause to the CIR to determine what, if any, remedies are available to the city for the union's violation."

## South Dakota Stores Report Ku Klux Klan Cards In Merchandise

RAPID CITY (AP) — Some stores in Rapid City are on alert for a return visit by whoever stuffed Ku Klux Klan literature into merchandise last month. Walmart, Scheels and Best Buy reported to police that they were targeted by what is believed to be a group of people slipping cards declaring South Dakota as "Klan country" into items on store shelves, the *Rapid City Journal* reported (<http://bit.ly/vHY5Ts>) Friday. Other stores apparently also were targeted but did not report the incidents, according to Best Buy General Manager Chris Hanes. The card offers greetings from an unidentified member of the Ku Klux Klan "realm of South Dakota" on one side. The other quotes a part of the Klan's statement of purpose and lists a pro-KKK website. Zac Stomelk, an assistant leader at Scheels, said workers found about 100 of the hidden cards after telling a group of suspicious men to leave one

evening in October. "Our biggest worry is that our customers would find it and think this is our stance on things like that," he said. Police spokeswoman Tarah Heupel said detectives are working with the stores and studying video surveillance tapes but that no formal case has been opened. Police are encouraging stores to pursue trespassing charges if they catch anyone because a trespass warning must be issued and then violated before officers can make an arrest, she said. Officials at Scheels, Best Buy and Walmart are watching for a return by the group. "We are checking merchandise on a daily basis and have also stepped up our already strong surveillance at the store," Walmart spokeswoman Kayla Whaling said. Information from: *Rapid City Journal*, <http://www.rapidcityjournal.com>

## Group

From Page 1

The Iowa Farm Bureau has estimated the flooding cost \$207 million in lost crop sales and related economic activity. Branstad said it covered more than 280,000 farm acres in Iowa and severely damaged or destroyed 380 homes. Albrecht said the state would continue to work with other agencies and governments on the problem but going through the Missouri River association didn't seem to be the best way to do it. Heineman also said the association didn't seem to be the best way to achieve his state's goals, given that "our highest priority is protecting our citizens' homes, farmers and ranchers, and businesses." The governors have said they want to avoid a repeat of summer flooding that submerged thousands of acres of farmland, forced residents from their homes and rerouted trains and motorists. Some cities, including Omaha, spent millions of dollars trying to protect airports, water treatment plants and other facilities from the rising waters. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers manages the more than 2,300-mile-long river, which flows from Montana through North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa and Missouri. Its basin also includes Wyoming. Except for Montana, the states have all said controlling flooding is their top river management priority. Heineman noted in a letter to the association. They are trying to make that the corps' priority as well.

Army Corps administrator Gen. John McMahon told the governors in October that it could cost \$500 million to a \$1 billion to repair the system of levees, dams and other flood control systems damaged in this year's flooding. He suggested the system could be modified greatly during repairs to allow more controlled flooding as a way of preventing future breakthroughs. Congress would have to approve the money.

Emergency management coordinators in flood-stricken counties said it's important for the states to work together to prevent flooding. "We just need them to work together in any way possible," said Woodbury County Emergency Management Coordinator Gary Brown, who responded to flooding in his northwest Iowa region. "The folks over here would just like to not go through this again."

## YHS

From Page 1

will exist after high school. According to the grant application, "The project will give the CTE students the tools to be more prepared for their careers in engineering, medical technology, telecommunications and many other career choices because they will have used the higher end hardware to meet their project goals." "These grants provide us with the opportunity to train students for real-life experiences, which are so important coming out of high school," said Kathy Wagner, YSD director of student services. "With the computers and multimedia components, our students will have that real-life experience to go out and work in multimedia

professions such as a television career." Because the funding from the grants was received by the school this summer, the first digital media class is already in session this semester. "We have about 24 students in the class," Mulhair said. "While we don't have all the equipment purchased yet, they are still getting the fundamentals. By second semester, we will be fully set up." Mulhair said, based on the comments she is hearing, the students are very excited about the class and what they are learning. "They are getting the opportunity to work with high-end equipment that without the grants we would not as a school district been able to afford to purchase," she said. "In addition, the equipment is able to be used for other classes, opening up other opportunities for them as well." Mulhair said the two grants,

in conjunction with a third Perkins Grant with which the district received \$16,000 to purchase 250 licenses of the Adobe Suite Software, will be utilized for classes throughout the high school. Specific to the digital media class, Mulhair said the students will also be required to create a SDMyLife video clip. SDMyLife is a program available to any student in South Dakota that informs them of careers, which classes are needed, the schools

which offer degrees in the career and much more, Mulhair said. "Through the project, we will be able to instruct the schools, students, parents and community about SDMyLife," she said. "The students will create public service announcements that will illustrate how the program works, how parents may access the program and how to use the web page for career development." Wagner said the opportunities the grants will offer the students

go hand in hand with the district's goal of preparing students to compete in a global marketplace upon graduation. "We are building the skills of our students to meet the challenges of an ever-changing digital world," she said. "This is a huge opportunity for our students and we need to thank the CTE instructors for working so hard to get these grants for our students."

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