

Some S.D. Teacher Aides To Get Back Pay

SIoux FALLS (AP) — The South Dakota Supreme Court has ruled that a pay increase awarded three years ago by the Sioux Falls School District violated the terms of contracts with two unions. The justices unanimously confirmed a circuit judge's ruling that teacher aides and custodians deserved pay raises of 3 percent, not 2.5 percent. The dispute centered around wage hikes tied to increases in state education funding. Union attorney Linda Lea Viken tells the *Argus Leader* that the workers affected will get back pay. The amount wasn't immediately figured. She says it will not be a "tremendous" amount.

Another Man Sentenced In Arsons Case

MADISON (AP) — A man arrested in an incident in Madison in which authorities say two cars were stolen and later set ablaze has been sentenced to six years in prison. The *Madison Daily Leader* reports that 21-year-old Jonathan Christiansen pleaded guilty to arson, vandalism and theft, as well as to having sexual contact with a child under age 16. Christiansen also was ordered to pay about \$13,300 in restitution in the August arson incident, in which an abandoned farmhouse also was burned down. In October, 19-year-old Alan Olson was sentenced to prison and restitution for his role in the theft and arson case.

Pierre Car Theft Results In Kidnapping Arrest

PIERRE (AP) — Police in Pierre arrested a Kennebec man they say took a woman's car when she went inside a store and then crashed it with a 2-year-old girl in the back seat. Authorities say the suspect and the girl were taken to a hospital after the man flipped the vehicle and knocked down a light pole early Thursday, but neither was seriously hurt. The 35-year-old suspect was arrested on charges of kidnapping, theft, driving under the influence and driving recklessly. KCCR radio reports that he is scheduled to make his first court appearance Monday.

Much Of Dakotas Brace For Weekend Weather

SIoux FALLS (AP) — Much of South Dakota and southern North Dakota is bracing for a winter blast. The National Weather Service says a fast-moving system will cross the region Saturday, with the potential for nearly half a foot of snow and winds up to 35 mph. The combination would create hazardous conditions for motorists. The weather service has issued a winter storm watch for much of South Dakota late Friday through Saturday, and a winter weather advisory for parts of southern North Dakota.

UNL To Begin Building New Dorms Next Year

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Construction of a new housing complex at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln will begin at the end of this semester. The university says the two-building student residence complex will add 1,034 beds. One building will open for occupancy in August 2013 and the other in August 2014. UNL housing director Sue Gildersleeve says the new housing is expected to provide updated, modern and energy-efficient housing that will meet UNL students' expectations. The \$71 million project will be entirely paid for by student housing revenue.

Lincoln Police Charge 13-Year-Old With Meth

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Lincoln police say officers have arrested a 13-year-old boy on suspicion of selling methamphetamine in a parking lot. Police tell the *Lincoln Journal Star* that the boy sold two grams of meth Wednesday to an undercover officer for \$200 in a parking lot, and minutes later, bought more meth from a 19-year-old woman who pulled into the parking lot. The woman was arrested on suspicion of delivering a controlled substance, and a 43-year-old man who drove the boy to the parking lot was arrested on suspicion of aiding and abetting. Police say the boy faces a possession charge and is in a juvenile detention center. Police say the child's mother died in March and his father is out of state. The boy's grandmother is his legal guardian.

Ky. Man Arrested After Drugs Found In Stop

MILFORD, Neb. (AP) — A driver from Kentucky has been arrested in the seizure of more than 53 pounds of marijuana from a pickup on Interstate 80 in Nebraska. The Nebraska State Patrol says the 65-year-old man from Louisville, Ky., was stopped Thursday afternoon near the Milford interchange for following too closely and driving on the shoulder. A trooper was given consent to search the pickup and, the patrol says, the marijuana was found in two suitcases and two boxes in an enclosed area in the bed of the truck. The driver was placed in the Seward County jail on suspicion of

N.D. Analysis: 'Haze' Cost Impact Exaggerated

BY DALE WETZEL
Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. — North Dakota utilities are exaggerating the cost to consumers of proposed federal rules that would reduce pollution from two coal-fueled electric power plants, according to an analysis paid for by two environmental groups. The study is being used in an argument between the federal Environmental Protection Agency and North Dakota's Health Department about the most efficient way to reduce nitrogen oxide pollution from the two plants. The emissions contribute to haze that can reduce visibility in the Theodore Roosevelt National Park and the Lostwood National Wildlife Refuge in western North Dakota, which are some of the state's most environmentally pristine areas.

The utilities contend the EPA's preferred anti-pollution technology is much costlier, and potentially less effective, than the equipment favored by state health regulators. The Sierra Club and the National Parks Conservation Association support the EPA's proposals. The analysis they commissioned, done by Resource Insight Inc., an Arlington, Mass.-based consultancy, concludes the EPA's plan would not increase customer electric rates as much as the affected utilities have forecast.

For Minnkota Power Cooperative Inc., using the EPA's plan instead of the state proposal would raise rates an additional 10.3 percent, the analysis says. Basin Electric Power Cooperative ratepayers would see

their costs rise an extra 0.7 percent, the analysis estimates. Wayne Schafer, a Sierra Club regional representative in Bismarck, said the utilities "have been scaring the public and the ratepayers" with forecasts that rates could jump 30 percent or more because of federal rules. "The EPA plan cleans up the air much better than the state plan, and so since the cost to the ratepayers is going to be about the same, it seems like we might as well go with the cleaner plan," Schafer said. Spokesmen for the two utilities said Friday the study's conclusions were flawed. Minnkota, which is based in Grand Forks, and Basin Electric, which has its headquarters in Bismarck, sell electric power to rural cooperatives, which is then resold to customers. Minnkota believes it would cost \$500 million to install the EPA's preferred technology at its Milton R. Young electric power station, southeast of Center in west-central North Dakota, spokesman Kevin Fee said Friday. The cost of technology advocated by the North Dakota Health Department is about \$40 million.

Adopting the EPA plan would drive up ratepayers' costs between 20 and 30 percent, Fee said. Basin Electric Power Cooperative estimates it would spend \$700 million more to install the EPA's favored anti-pollution measures in its Leland Olds power station, southeast of Stanton. Daryl Hill, a Basin spokesman, said Friday the cooperative could not estimate the impact on individual electric customers.

"It's such a variable number for all of the different cooperatives that we serve," Hill said. "But, obviously, it is going to impact their rates." Steve Van Dyke, a spokesman for the Lignite Energy Council, an industry group based in Bismarck, said both utilities are practiced at estimating the effect of regulatory changes on their customers. "I feel confident they know what the cost of the EPA plan would be and how much it would impact their rates," Van Dyke said. "I don't ... believe that the Sierra Club has the same level of experience." A number of North Dakota officials, including U.S. Sens. Kent Conrad, D-N.D., and John Hoeven, R-N.D.; U.S. Rep. Rick Berg, R-N.D.; and GOP Gov. Jack Dalrymple are pressing the EPA to change its mind and adopt the state's favored pollution-control plan. Its crux is whether the plants must use a "selective non-catalytic reduction" process to remove nitrogen oxide emissions, as state health regulators prefer, or a "selective catalytic reduction" method favored by the EPA. The state's method involves spraying ammonia into the plants' exhaust, which converts some nitrogen oxide emissions into water and non-polluting gas. The technology preferred by the EPA would process the exhaust through a catalyst filter to remove more nitrogen oxides. North Dakota utilities say the catalytic process is much costlier and may not work for North Dakota lignite, which has high sodium content and low heating value. Even if it was successful, they say, the improvement in a person's view of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park would not be visible.

Satellite That Transmits To EROS Could Be Failing

DIRK LAMMERS
Associated Press

SIoux FALLS — One of the two main satellites transmitting images to the U.S. Geological Survey's EROS Data Center near Sioux Falls could be on its last legs, survey officials said Friday. The USGS in a statement said the 27-year-old Landsat 5 Earth observation satellite is no longer sending images due to a rapidly degrading electronic component, and there is now an increasing likelihood that the mission is nearing its end. Landsat 5 was launched in

1984 and designed to last three years, but the USGS assumed its operation in 2001 and has managed to bring it back from the brink of total failure on several occasions. Crews over the past several months have been monitoring the fluctuating performance of an amplifier essential for transmitting land-surface images. To prevent that amplifier from failing completely, survey engineers have suspended imaging activities for 90 days as they explore options. The satellite's younger sibling, Landsat 7, remains in orbit col-

lecting global imagery. A next generation satellite, currently called the Landsat Data Continuity Mission, is scheduled for launch in Jan. 2013. "This anticipated decline of Landsat 5 provides confirmation of the importance of the timely launch of the next Landsat mission and the need for an operational and reliable National Land Imaging System," Anne Castle, assistant secretary for water and science at the U.S. Department of the Interior, said in a statement. "The USGS is committed to maintaining the unique long term imaging database that the Landsat

program provides." The USGS Center for Earth Resources Observations and Science north of Sioux Falls is the main federal repository for satellite images. Landsat 5 and Landsat 7, launched in 1999, work in tandem to take mid-resolution pictures that help document forest fires, droughts, hurricanes, tsunamis and other calamities. Over the past 10 days, problems with Landsat 5's amplifier have led to drastically reduced image download capabilities, which officials say is a sign of impending failure.

NEA Would Like Stronger S.D. Presence

RAPID CITY — The chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts says art is the product of its place, and Red Cloud Indian School's Heritage Center on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation is one of the best examples in the country. The *Rapid City Journal* reports that Rocco Landesman stopped by the center this week as part of a three-state tour. Landesman hopes his visit spurs more Dakotans' interest in the NEA. The endowment's most recent grants were announced Thursday when it awarded 863 of them worth \$22.5 million to organizations and people in 47 states.



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