

# Nebraska Public Advocacy Attorney Fired

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — A longtime attorney with the Nebraska Commission on Public Advocacy has been fired after testifying in a criminal case involving his stepson. Jerry Soucie, who has represented death row inmates in some of Nebraska's most notorious cases, was fired by the commission on Wednesday, the *Lincoln Journal Star* reported. Jim Mowbray, chief counsel with the commission, confirmed for the newspaper that Soucie's last day was Wednesday, but declined further comment. Soucie told the newspaper he was fired because of a perceived conflict concerning his testimony in the case of his stepson, 22-year-old Armani Flood, who has been charged in a drive-by shooting. Flood is not being represented by the commission. Soucie worked with the commission for 16 years, representing numerous death row inmates. They have included Michael Ryan, sentenced to death for cult-related killings in

1985; Carey Dean Moore, condemned for killing two Omaha cab drivers in 1979; and Raymond Mata Jr., sentenced to death for the 1999 kidnapping and killing of 3-year-old Adam Gomez of Scottsbluff, whose remains were fed to a dog. Soucie also represented Thomas Winslow, one of the so-called Beatrice Six who were wrongly convicted in the 1985 killing of a Beatrice woman. Winslow spent 20 years in prison for the murder, which DNA evidence later showed was committed by an Oklahoma man. In the case involving his stepson charged in the drive-by shooting, Soucie said he conducted legal research on his own time. He said he looked into the constitutionality of one of the charges, discharging a firearm near a vehicle or building. The charge carries significantly tougher penalties in Lincoln and Nebraska's 30 other largest cities than it does in the state's smaller towns.

Soucie testified at a hearing for Flood on Monday, calling the tougher penalties unconstitutional for treating identical conduct differently because of location. Soucie said his bosses at the commission confronted him Wednesday and showed him a copy of a newspaper article on the hearing. He said then they fired him. He declined to provide further details. The Nebraska Commission on Public Advocacy was created in 1995 to help counties represent indigent defendants charged with serious crimes. Soucie was one of six attorneys in the office. "My tenure at the commission has been a great ride," Soucie told the *Journal Star*. "I have no regrets about having the opportunity to work at the commission. They are great lawyers, and I hope this doesn't serve as a distraction for them to continue to do the sometimes thankless job of representing people charged with very serious crimes."

## One Injured When Car Crashes Into Restaurant

ALEXANDRIA (AP) — Authorities say a customer inside a South Dakota restaurant was injured when a car crashed into the front wall of the building. The accident happened Saturday afternoon at Joe's Cafe in Alexandria. Hanson County Sheriff Randy Bartlett says the driver of the vehicle was attempting to park and mistakenly hit the accelerator instead of the brake. The extent of the person's injuries is not known. Authorities have not identified the driver or customer. Lori Lanners, who was working at the restaurant, tells *The Daily Republic* that the customer had just been served when the crash occurred. There were no other diners inside the restaurant.

## Company Rejects Billboard Plea By S.D. Group

RAPID CITY (AP) — A company that plans to place six digital billboards in Rapid City has rejected a plea by citizens who believe the lighted signs will be an eyesore. Lamar Advertising says it plans to convert the six traditional billboards to digital signs, following a ruling by the South Dakota Supreme Court that the company does not have to get a conditional use permit. Members of Scenic Rapid City say the company could show they are good neighbors by following lead of city residents who voted for digital billboard limitations in last year's election. Hal Kilshaw, spokesman for the Baton Rouge, La.-based company, says Lamar will meet those obligations by providing high-quality billboards that benefit local advertisers.

# 1st Movie Theatre Opens On Pine Ridge Reservation

BY KRISTI EATON  
Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS — Members of the Oglala Sioux Tribe will finally be able to see the latest Hollywood blockbuster without leaving the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. The reservation's first movie theater opened Friday after three years of planning and construction. Previously, residents of the reservation who wanted to see a movie in the theater had to travel to nearby towns like Martin or Gordon, Neb., a difficult endeavor for those who don't have reliable transportation. This week, residents will be

able to travel to Nunpa Theatre in Kyle to see two first-run flicks — "Pitch Perfect" and "Paranormal Activity 4." The word "nunpa" means "two" in Lakota. Owners say the theater will offer some much-needed source of entertainment on the rural reservation that spans about 4,000 square miles in southwestern South Dakota. "I love going to movies and I see a lot of Native Americans at movies. We just need some sort of entertainment instead of basketball and sports, a place to spend the evening," said Angel Reddest, who opened the theater with her mom, Monna Paton, with a loan from the South Dakota Office of

Economic Development. Reddest declined to say how much the loan was for, and the Office of Economic Development did not respond to requests for comment. Besides entertainment, the theater is also bringing another thing lacking on the reservation: jobs. Six or seven people will be employed at the theater, Reddest said. The theater will be showing two movies each week Thursday through Monday. So far, the women have kept advertising to a minimum on purpose — "We were scared to do too much and be overwhelmed," Reddest said — but will pick up in the

future. She said she plans to eventually have a call-in number for moviegoers to learn what movies are playing at what time. For now, there is a sign out front of the theater and a Facebook group listing times. Ticket prices are \$6 for matinees, \$6.25 for children and seniors, and \$6.75 for adults. Concessions like nachos, hot dogs, cold sandwiches, candy and pop are for sale. Jason Brewer, who lives in Kyle, said he is excited about the opening of the theater because it will mean less travel. He previously traveled to Rapid City — about 90 miles away — every time he wanted to attend a showing.

## Building Permits On The Rise In Sioux Falls

SIOUX FALLS (AP) — Officials in South Dakota's largest city say a dramatic rise in building projects — large and small — is making it difficult for developers to keep up. Sioux Falls issued more than \$382 million in building permits through October, up from \$256 million at the same time last year. The city has issued 538 permits for single-family homes, up from 313 a year ago. Officials say pent-up demand, an improved economy and low interest rates are spurring people to buy. The growth includes public and private dollars, from new schools to \$23 million in construction at the Sanford Sports Complex. Sioux Falls construction company owner Slate Ronning tells the *Argus Leader* he has been so busy he hasn't had time to keep track of the statistics.

## Missing South Dakota Hunter Located

RAPID CITY (AP) — Authorities say a 16-year-old boy who went missing while hunting near Rapid City was found after he made contact with a resident staying at a cabin. Pennington County Sheriff's officials say Austin Duvall was reported missing at 7:01 p.m. Saturday. Authorities conducted a ground and helicopter search until about 3:30 a.m. Sunday. Authorities say the teenager was hunting in the Boulder Hill Road area with his father Saturday. The two separated with a plan to meet up at their vehicles, but Austin Duvall failed to arrive. Police say the missing hunter wound up at a cabin in the Strato Bowl Road area about 9 a.m. Sunday. No further information was available.

# Website

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content," Wilkinson said. "Many people who come to the website might not actually visit the park, so this is a different way of visiting through cyberspace." He said the park has also increased its signage up and down the river corridor and has been involved in more outreach programs with schools. "We're trying to just get our name out there as much as

possible, and make sure people know this is eastern South Dakota's only national park," he said. "I think when people think of the national parks in South Dakota, they definitely think of Mount Rushmore, and the Badlands, but they don't think of us over here. That's something we're hoping to change, because the Missouri River has everything to do with the settlement and the history of South Dakota." When tracking the MNRRL site's visitors, Wilkinson said "Photos and Multimedia" and the "Plan Your Visit" sections of the website are two of the most visited.

"Seven of the top nine pages viewed are in the 'Plan Your Visit' sections, whether its maps, canoeing and kayaking, directions, things to do, things such as that," he said. Also popular are the paddling guides to the 39- and 59-mile districts of the park, he said. Along with monitoring the website visits by section, the park has also taken note of the location of the site's visitors, Wilkinson said. The number of visitors ranked by state are Missouri, Nebraska, South Dakota, California and Illinois. "We're a little bit surprised about Missouri, but since we're

still trying to build awareness, a lot of people might think that, because of its name, the park is actually down in Missouri," he said. "The other surprising one is number four on the list is California. We don't know why that is." Wilkinson encourages everyone to visit the MNRRL website, as well as provide feedback through the site's "Contact Us" link. "We're going to continue to add content to it," he said. "Come check it out." You can follow Derek Bartos on Twitter at [twitter.com/d\\_bartos](http://twitter.com/d_bartos)

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