

Omaha Police Make Rescue At Carter Lake

CARTER LAKE, Iowa (AP) — Omaha police officers rescued two people and a dog from Carter Lake after their boat capsized. An officer spotted the overturned boat in Carter Lake, Iowa, Sunday and called for help. Paramedics were worried that 55-year-old Kay Dunn and her 32-year-old son, Nathaniel Nelson, could develop hypothermia if they were in the water too long. Four other Omaha police officers responded and helped get the two people and their dog out of the water. The two people who were rescued and one officer were taken to the hospital to be checked for hypothermia after being in the water for about 20 minutes. The dog, Buster, was taken to the Nebraska Humane Society to get checked out.

More Celebs Help Tribes Trying To Buy Land

SIOUX FALLS (AP) — An online campaign to raise money so Native American tribes in South Dakota can purchase land they consider sacred has gained steam with a growing list of celebrities backing the effort. P Diddy and Bette Midler have tweeted their support for the effort to purchase nearly 2,000 acres in the Black Hills of South Dakota. They join actor Ezra Miller and hip-hop producer Sol Guy, who appeared in a recent video online with drawing attention to the effort. Tribes of the Great Sioux Nation must raise \$9 million by the end of the month to buy the land in the Black Hills. They have raised \$7 million so far. The land the tribes call Pe' Sla is important to their creation story.

Pedestrian Hurt While Crossing Omaha Street

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — A 29-year-old man suffered serious head injuries when he was hit by an SUV while crossing an Omaha street. Police say the crash happened early Sunday morning near the intersection of 33rd and L streets. Police say Marvin Hernandez wasn't crossing in a crosswalk, and witnesses say him standing in the middle of L Street before the crash. Authorities found Hernandez unconscious at the scene of the crash. He was taken to the hospital, but his injuries are not believed to be life-threatening. The SUV driven by 49-year-old Michael Shada wasn't speeding, and police say the accident wasn't his fault. But officers ticketed Shada for driving on a suspended license and without proof of insurance.

Sturgis Looks For New Sponsor Agent For Rally

STURGIS (AP) — Officials in Sturgis are hoping to bring in more money for the annual motorcycle rally with a new agent handling official sponsorships. The *Rapid City Journal* reports that the city of Sturgis has severed ties with its old agent, Motoring USA, and issued a new request for proposals for a new sponsorship agent. While the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally is a boon for the local economy, city officials hope to expand it even more with a new agent. The city earned a net profit of nearly \$400,000 during this year's rally. In addition to overseeing vendors, marketing and advertising, Sturgis leaders hope to find an agent with a global reach to expand the Sturgis brand. Proposals are due to the city by Nov. 30.

Park Set To Showcase Tiny Things In Nature

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — The University of Nebraska-Lincoln is opening a display to showcase some of the tiniest things in nature and their real-world applications. The "Nano to Nature" display at Pioneers Park Nature Center opens on Monday and will stay available for public viewing through January. It will explore the science behind the tiny structures of snowflakes, lotus leaves, butterflies and minerals. Researchers have used nanoscience to develop stain-resistant clothing, kitchen countertops and computer screens. Pioneers Park Nature Center has helped children and families learn about nature for more than 50 years. The Nature Center is open Monday through Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sundays from noon to 5 p.m., excluding holidays Admission is free.

Salvation Army To Hold Christmas Toy Lift Again

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — The Salvation Army's Christmas Toy Lift is looking to deliver cheer to the children of people who are serving time in jail or prison this holiday season. Under the program, gifts purchased by The Salvation Army are shown to inmates, who selected one gift per child. The children receive a card, handwritten by their incarcerated parent, and the gift. The Christmas Toy Lift is supported in part by donations to the Tree of Lights campaign. For the past 10 years, it has provided jailed family members of Sarpy and Douglas County Correctional Centers the chance to give their children Christmas gifts. What started as a program for approximately 600 children grew to more than 1,500 last year.

Neb. Hunters Bag Record Number Of Bull Elk

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Nebraska hunters bagged a record 105 bull elk this fall. The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission says 91 percent of hunters with valid permits for the hunt shot a bull — also a record. That compares with 90 bulls harvested and a 79 percent success rate last year.

More Than 200 Bison Purchased At Auction

CUSTER (AP) — More than 75 bidders traveled to Custer State Park in South Dakota to bring home one or more of the park's beloved bison during the annual auction. Hundreds more watched Saturday as park officials auctioned off 256 bison and 17 burros. The goal of the auction is to thin the park's herd, which officials say is especially important after a mild winter and dry summer left the grassland parched and at risk for over-grazing. The auction follows September's buffalo stampede that draws thousands of spectators. This year, the average price of heifer calves jumped almost \$250 over last year's \$904, and mature cows were up almost \$75 over last year's \$1,595. The average price of 2-year-old bred heifers, however, dropped about \$275 from last year's \$2,740. The average prices for bull calves and 2-year-old bred heifers were also down. Chad Kraemer, the park's bison herd manager, said below-average precipitation in Custer State Park also meant more of the park's animals were on the auction block this year. "We decided to sell about 40 head of additional animals over what we usually do," Kraemer said. "It's a bigger surplus." Marielle Graese and her sister Lexi traveled from Rice Lake, Wis., to purchase a trailer full of 2-year-old heifers, 2-year-old bulls and a few mature cows for the family business, NorthStar Bison, which has been buying livestock at the Custer State Park auc-

tion for the past 15 years. Today, Graese's family runs between 600 and 900 bison in an all-grass-fed operation. They not only manage the herd, but they also process, package and sell the meat, said Graese, who sits on the Dakota Territory Buffalo Association's board of directors. Since Custer State Park also runs an entirely grass-fed herd, the park's bison fit well with NorthStar Bison's business model, she said. "We like to say that we take it from birth to plate," Graese told The *Rapid City Journal*. "It's great for the land, great for the animal and great for the people consuming the product."

Republican River Water Users In Neb. Face Limits

HASTINGS, Neb. (AP) — Nebraska officials predict that many farmers along the Republican River will have to limit their water use more next year because of the dry conditions. The *Hastings Tribune* reports that the extra conservation measures are needed to make sure enough water flows downstream to Kansas. In the past, Nebraska residents have used more of the Republican River's water than they are entitled to. The issue has led to two lawsuits between Kansas and Nebraska, including one that's still pending before the U.S. Supreme Court. The Nebraska Department of Natural Resources says the Upper and Lower Republican River Natural Resource Districts will need to impose additional water conservation measures next year. The Middle Republican River NRD is expected to be OK without additional conservation. The state's announcement that additional conservation measures will likely be needed next year wasn't a surprise given that much of Nebraska remains in a drought. The final forecast for the river is due out at the end of the year. "It is unfortunate that these dry periods require these additional actions, but I am confident that we are now well prepared to proactively address the dry conditions that the basin is currently facing," said Brian Dunnigan, director of the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources. Since the last time Nebraska overused the Republican River, a number of measures have been taken to help reduce how much water the state uses. For instance, the three Republican River NRDs last month joined with the Twin Platte NRD to buy 15,800 acres. The groups plan to retire those acres from production and eliminate irrigation on the land to increase water flows in the Republican and Platte Rivers. And earlier this year, the Middle Republican Natural Resources District purchased surface water rights for 672 acres to help Nebraska stay comply with the Republican River compact. Officials said that purchase would allow 2,400 acre feet of surface water to flow downstream. Who gets to use the Republican River's water is spelled out in a three-state compact between Colorado, Nebraska and Kansas. The 1943 agreement allocates 49 percent of the river's water to Nebraska, 40 percent to Kansas and 11 percent to Colorado. Kansas and Nebraska reached a settlement over water in the Republican in 2003, but in its latest lawsuit, Kansas accused Nebraska of violating the terms of that settlement. Kansas claims Nebraska exceeded its allotment by more than 78,000 acre-feet of water from 2005 through 2006. Nebraska taxpayers could be liable for Kansas' economic losses if the lawsuit succeeds, and farmers might have to shut down irrigation along hundreds of thousands of acres near the river. Nebraska farmers could also be forced to stop irrigating 300,000 of the 1.2 million acres of the Republican River basin in the state if Kansas prevails in its lawsuit.

Exchange

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ating their own exchanges, five have said they will partner with the federal government, and seven were still pondering their decision. Twenty-one others have decided to let the federal government run the exchanges. Supporters of the health care law say the exchanges will work for consumers, regardless of who runs them. But the choice could determine how well they function, how competently they're managed, and how easy they are to access. For instance, will the federal government realize that Internet service is easier to find in Omaha than in rural, western Nebraska? And if that's the case, does western Nebraska need more brick-and-mortar facilities to help residents buy insurance? "This isn't a giant federal ex-

change — this is the feds coming in to set up a Nebraska exchange," said Jennifer Carter, a policy director for the public-interest group Nebraska Appleseed. "That may be why not doing a state option was a little bit of a missed opportunity. We can deal with the opportunities and challenges here in Nebraska. But I hope the federal government will be asking for local input, and that the state and others will cooperate so there won't be a really big difference for consumers." Heineman said he struggled to decide which approach was best, but concluded that a state exchange was too costly for Nebraska taxpayers. He said a state exchange would force the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services to tap into federal databases, which would require new software. The state Department of Insurance, meanwhile, would have to pay for a website, call centers, an insurance billing system, supplies and office space. Heineman said the state has

tried to exert control over different aspects of the health care law, but was thwarted by the federal government. He pointed to the state's efforts to set minimum coverage requirements for Nebraska residents, known as an "essential benefits plan." The health care law lists 10 broad categories of essential benefits, including preventative care, emergency services, prescription drugs and hospital services. But within those categories, states are allowed to tinker with the coverage levels they want to require when the "individual mandate" to buy health insurance takes effect in 2014. States that fail to establish bare-minimum coverage requirements for insurance plans will have them set by the federal government. In October, Heineman submitted a high-deductible plan for approval — dubbed the "Nebraska Option" — which mirrors a plan that is already used by 6 percent of Nebraska state employees. Critics said the plan's \$8,000 de-

ductible was too expensive for most Nebraskans, but the argument may now be moot: Heineman said federal regulators called the Nebraska Department of Insurance a few days ago and rejected his proposal. "If it was going to be a state exchange, we wanted to be able to run it, operate it, and make the key decisions here," Heineman said. "It was clear we couldn't do that. And a very important component to me was the cost." Omaha Sen. Jeremy Nordquist, a Democrat, said the governor's decision against a state exchange effectively "ceded power to federal bureaucrats, who will now design and control what our health insurance marketplace looks like." In Iowa, Branstad spokesman Tim Albrecht said the governor wants to avoid a federally run exchange, but unanswered questions about the cost of a state exchange may leave him no choice but to accept "a one-size-fits-all exchange that throws us in with other states."



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