

Ex-S.D. Teacher Pleads Not Guilty To Raping Girl

RAPID CITY (AP) — A former South Dakota high school teacher pleaded not guilty to having had sex with a 15-year-old female student. Kyle Keegan, who was also a guidance counselor at his New Underwood school, pleaded not guilty in Pennington County court to charges of fourth-degree rape and having had sexual contact with a child younger than 16, the *Rapid City Journal* reported. Keegan, 26, is free on \$50,000 bond and living with a parent in Madison. He is forbidden to have contact with anyone younger than 18, but Judge Janine Kern granted his request to allow him to attend holiday family gatherings where children will be present, but under his mother's supervision. Defense attorney Tim Rensch asked Kern to waive the age restriction outright to make it easier for Keegan to find work. "He needs to be employed," Rensch said, adding that "this is not a pedophilia case." But Kern denied the request, saying he must first find a job before she will consider the request. Pennington County Deputy State's Attorney Josh Zellmer objected to any relaxation of the bond conditions because of the nature of the alleged crime. Prosecutors contend that Keegan had sex with the student last month.

S.D. Legislative Leaders Chosen For 2013

PIERRE (AP) — Rapid City Republican lawmaker David Lust has been re-elected majority leader in the South Dakota House. Lust's re-election Saturday follows the earlier re-election of Wentworth Republican Russell Olson as Senate majority leader. Members of the minority Democrats also have re-elected leaders, for both chambers. Bernie Hunhoff of Yankton was re-elected House minority leader, and Jason Frerichs of Wilmot was chosen the Democratic leader in the Senate. The 2013 session opens at noon on Jan. 8.

Mitchell Leaders Don't Want 'Historic' City Hall

MITCHELL (AP) — The Mitchell City Council is arguing against designating City Hall as being historic, fearing that could affect plans to improve the adjacent Corn Palace tourist attraction. The *Daily Republic* reports that the council on Monday night voted 6-1 to urge the South Dakota Historic Preservation Office not to recommend the building for the National Register of Historic Places. The city has planned to relocate city offices to a new City Hall and incorporate the existing City Hall into the Corn Palace expansion or tear it down.

Pipeline Manufacturer Breaks Ground In S.D.

BELLE FOURCHE (AP) — A Texas-based company is starting construction this week on a new pipeline manufacturing facility in western South Dakota. Pipeline Plastics held a ground-breaking ceremony on Monday for the new plant, which is expected to employ up to 40 people. The plant will make high-density polyethylene pipe for the oil industry in North Dakota and Montana. It also plans to sell pipes to cities for domestic water supplies. South Dakota Gov. Dennis Daugaard says he is proud to welcome the company to the state. He says the company will have a "tangible economic impact" to South Dakota.

Fischer Names 2 Nebraskans To Senate Staff

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — U.S. Senator-elect Deb Fischer has chosen two Nebraskans to lead her staffs in Nebraska and Washington. Fischer has chosen Mike Hybl as her chief of staff and Dustin Vaughan as her office's state director. Hybl has served as executive director of the Nebraska Public Service Commission since 2007. He also was a shareholder in an Omaha telecommunications consulting firm, and a past president of the Nebraska Trucking Association. Vaughan has worked as legal counsel to the Legislature's Transportation and Telecommunications Committee, of which Fischer was the chairwoman. He also served as Fischer's legislative aide while she was a state senator.

Judge In Beef Products Suit Recuses Himself

SIOUX FALLS (AP) — A federal judge overseeing a \$1.2 billion defamation lawsuit filed by a South Dakota beef processing company against ABC News has recused himself from the case. Judge Lawrence L. Piersol recused himself from the case that is being heard in U.S. District Court for the District of South Dakota. The case has been reassigned to Chief Judge Karen Schreiber. Dakota Dunes, S.D.-based Beef Products Inc. sued ABC News Inc. in September for defamation over its coverage of a meat product called lean, finely textured beef that critics dub "pink slime." The meat processor claims the network damaged the company by misleading consumers into believing the product is unhealthy and unsafe. It's seeking \$1.2 billion in damages. Piersol did not immediately respond to a phone call seeking comment.

Cattle In Neb. Feedlots The Highest Since 1994

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Nebraska feedlots contained 2.48 million cattle as of Nov. 1, a slight increase over the previous year and the largest inventory for the month since 1994. The U.S. Department of Agriculture reports that cattle placements during October totaled 590,000 head, down 11 percent from 2011. Fed cattle that were marketed in October totaled 425,000 head, up 9 percent from last year. This is the largest number since the federal government started gathering data in 1994. Cattle and calves in feedlots nationwide totaled 11.3 million as of Nov. 1, about 5 percent lower than in the previous November. Feedlots have capacities of 1,000 or more head.

Tea Seeks Guidance In Hiring New Police Chief

TEA (AP) — The Tea City Council is turning to the South Dakota Police Chiefs' Association for guidance in determining the best way to go about hiring a new police chief. Former chief Brian Ketterhagen resigned about two weeks ago, along with an officer. Both are being investigated by the state Attorney General's Office, and Ketterhagen is a defendant in a federal lawsuit in Wyoming alleging a cover-up in a murder investigation. He has denied withholding evidence in that case. Ketterhagen's predecessor in Tea, Ken Haugen, was fired and later sued the city unsuccessfully. Mayor John Lawler says the city exceeds minimum standards set by the state in terms of such measures as background checks for potential police hires.

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Dark Matter Detector Nearing Activation In South Dakota Mine

BY AMBER HUNT
Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS — Scientists hoping to detect dark matter deep in a former South Dakota gold mine have taken the last major step before flipping the switch on their delicate experiment and say they may be ready to begin collecting data as early as February. What's regarded as the world's most sensitive dark matter detector was lowered earlier this month into a 70,000-gallon water tank nearly a mile beneath the earth's surface, shrouding it in enough insulation to hopefully isolate dark matter from the cosmic radiation that makes it impossible to detect above ground. And if all goes as planned, the data that begins flowing could answer age-old questions about the universe and its origins, scientists said Monday. "We might well uncover something fantastic," said Harry Nelson, a professor of physics at University of California, Santa Barbara and a principal investigator on the Large Underground Xenon experiment. "One thing about our field is that it's kind of brutal in that we know it's expensive and we work hard to only do experiments that are really important." This one hasn't been cheap, at about \$10 million, but like the discovery of the Higgs

boson — dubbed the "God particle" by some — earlier this year in Switzerland, the detection of dark matter would be a seismic occurrence in the scientific community. Scientists know dark matter exists by its gravitational pull but, unlike regular matter and antimatter, it's so far been undetectable. Regular matter accounts for about 4 percent of the universe's mass, and dark matter makes up about 25 percent. The rest is dark energy, which is also a mystery. The search in South Dakota began in 2003 after the Homestake Gold Mine in the Black Hills' Lead, S.D., shuttered for good. Scientists called dibs on the site, and in July, after years of fundraising and planning, the LUX detector moved into the Sanford Underground Research Facility, 4,850 feet below the earth's surface. It took two days to ease the phone booth-sized detector down the once-filthy shaft and walkways that originally opened for mining in 1876 during the Black Hills Gold Rush. There, the device was further insulated from cosmic radiation by being submerged in water that's run through reverse osmosis filters to deionize and clean it. "The construction phase is winding down, and now we're starting the commissioning phase, meaning we start to operate the systems underground," said Jeremy Mock, a

graduate student at the University of California, Davis who has worked on the LUX experiment for five years. Carefully submerging the delicate detector into its final home — a water-filled vat that's 20 feet tall and 25 feet in diameter — took more than two months, Mock said. Scientists are currently working to finish the plumbing needed to keep the xenon as clean as possible. The xenon, in both liquid and gas form, will fill the detector and be continuously circulated through a purifier that works much like a dialysis machine, pulling the substance out to remove impurities before pushing it back into the detector. Keeping the water and xenon pristine will help remove what Nelson called "fake sources" — or stuff that scientists have seen before, such as radiation, that could serve as false alarms in their efforts to detect dark matter. Nelson likens the experiment to Sherlock Holmes' approach to discovering the unknown by eliminating the known. Once the data starts to flow, it'll take a month or two before the detector is sensitive enough to claim the "most-sensitive" title, Nelson said. After that, the scientists involved hope to start seeing what they covet most: something they've never seen before.

Nebraska

Students Show Progress In Reading, Math

BY GRANT SCHULTE
Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — Nebraska students showed improvement this year on statewide reading and math tests, according to new results released Tuesday. More than 74 percent of students were at or above reading proficiency levels this year, compared with less than 72 percent in 2011. In math, more than 67 percent were proficient in 2012, compared to less than 63 percent the previous year. The Nebraska Department of Education report compiles test scores and demographic information from each of the state's 249 public school districts, which oversee the education of 152,000 students. Nebraska Education Commissioner Roger Breed said he believed many teachers last year were shocked when they saw 2011's test scores in math because they assumed math was a strong point for students. "I think what we've witnessed across the state was teachers got together, reordered their curriculum, improved instruction in areas where they found students to be lacking, and stepped it up a notch," Breed said. "I think we'll continue to see that type of improvement in math very clearly over the next few years." Breed said he expects that scores will con-

"I think what we've witnessed across the state was teachers got together, reordered their curriculum, improved instruction in areas where they found students to be lacking, and stepped it up a notch."

ROGER BREED

tinue to improve as teachers adjust their curriculum. Nearly 67 percent of students were proficient in science, and 73 percent were proficient in writing. This year marked the first time students were tested in those areas under new statewide standards, so there are no previous years to compare with those results. The results showed a continued achievement gap between Hispanic and African-American students and their peers, as they did last year. Students in high-poverty areas also generally scored lower than their peers. The results were the first-ever under the new Nebraska Performance Accountability System, which measures schools by their average scores in reading, math, writing and science.

Neb. Unemployment Improves To 3.8 Pct. In October

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Nebraska's unemployment rate declined to 3.8 percent in October to remain one of the lowest rates in the nation, the state Labor Department said in a report released Tuesday. The preliminary state rate for October was less than last year's 4.4 percent and lower than this September's 3.9 percent rate. The Nebraska Department of Labor says the state unemployment rate was less than half the national rate of 7.9 percent in October. The national rate is down from last October's 8.9 percent

but up slightly from September's 7.8 percent. Only North Dakota's September rate of 3.1 percent was lower than Nebraska's. "Good weather is keeping construction numbers up, and a variety of industries are showing growth," Labor Commissioner Catherine Lang said. The number of unemployed people in Nebraska was estimated at 38,229 in October. That's lower than the 39,854 in September and the 44,081 unemployed last October. In Nebraska's largest city, the unemployment rate increased

slightly to 3.9 percent in October from September's 3.8 percent. The rate remained below last October's 4.6 percent. In Lincoln, the unemployment rate also increased slightly in October to 3.2 percent over the previous month's 3.1 percent. A year ago, the Lincoln unemployment rate was 3.6 percent in October. The unemployment rates for Lincoln and Omaha are not seasonally adjusted, the department has said, so they cannot be directly compared to the state unemployment rate. Here are preliminary area labor market unemployment

rates for October, followed by the revised September rates:

- Beatrice: 4.3, 4.2
- Columbus: 3.0, 3.0
- Fremont: 3.8, 3.8
- Grand Island: 3.4, 3.2
- Hastings: 3.3, 3.1
- Kearney: 2.7, 2.6
- Lexington: 3.7, 3.8
- Norfolk: 3.1, 3.0
- North Platte: 3.0, 2.9
- Red Willow: 3.1, 2.9
- Scotts Bluff: 3.9, 3.8

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