

Drought Leads To More Irrigation Permits

PIERRE (AP) — The number of irrigation permits being issued in South Dakota this year is at a level not seen since the mid-1970s, and drought is a common factor.

As of Monday, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources had issued 113 irrigation permits and 91 applications were pending, agency spokesman Kim Smith told the *Capital Journal* newspaper. That compared with 62 permits issued last year and 43 in 2010.

"We've got a stack of groundwater irrigation applications about a foot high," agency engineer Lynn Beck said at a Monday meeting in Pierre of the Governor's Drought Taskforce. "Everyone is covering the bases. I'm sure the drought has a lot to do with it."

The U.S. Drought Monitor map shows all of South Dakota in some form of drought, with more than half of the state in the two worst categories, extreme and exceptional. All but the very northeast tip of South Dakota is in with a group of other Plains and Western states where the drought is expected to intensify at least through next February, according to State Climatologist Dennis Today.

Drought also hit in 1976 and 1977. South Dakota issued more than 500 irrigation permits in each of those years.

Survey: S.D.'s Homeless Population Decreases

PIERRE (AP) — A state organization has found that the number of homeless people in South Dakota has decreased more than 25 percent from last year.

The South Dakota Housing for the Homeless Consortium performed a one-day survey in September to identify homeless families and individuals in the state. The survey found that 1,166 people are without a home. This is a 26 percent decline from last year when 1,452 identified as homeless. This year's number includes 336 children.

The survey found that the majority of the families and individuals without a home stay in emergency shelters, transitional housing or motels. The main reason for homelessness is unemployment and substance abuse issues.

The survey information will be used to create the state's 10-year plan to end homelessness, which is currently being created.

South Dakota, Inmates Far Apart On Ceremonial Tobacco

BY DIRK LAMMERS
Associated Press

SIoux FALLS — South Dakota corrections officials and an organization of Native American inmates are far apart on their suggested revisions to a prison policy regulating the use of tobacco in religious ceremonies.

Chief Judge Karen Schreier ruled in September that the prison system's ban on tobacco in religious ceremonies substantially burdens Native American inmates' religious rights. The state had argued that ceremonial tobacco inside the state penitentiary was increasingly abused.

Schreier ordered the groups to meet and propose revisions to the tobacco policy for inmates

practicing the Lakota religion. If they couldn't reach a consensus, they were asked to submit individual written proposals.

The South Dakota prison system went tobacco-free in 2000 but made an exception for tobacco used in Native American ceremonies. Officials in October 2009 eliminated that exemption, saying tobacco was being sold or bartered and inmates had been caught separating it from their pipe mixtures and tobacco ties.

The state in its brief is agreeing to allow tobacco at pipe ceremonies but wants the right to prohibit its use in tobacco ties — which embody a small amount of tobacco in cloth — in prayer flags and inside the prison's sweat lodge. It also wants to cap the tobacco mix at 1 percent and require that prisoners use only finely ground cherry-blend

tobacco.

The inmates group wants tobacco allowed at all four of those circumstances. It is agreeing to limit the mix to 10 percent, but says it should not be ground, as that makes the mixtures almost impossible to smoke.

The group agrees to have pipe ceremonies in locations that are under video surveillance, but wants an exception for pipe ceremonies inside the sweat lodge, which has surveillance outside.

The inmates' attorney, Pamela Bollweg, said Tuesday that she'd wait to comment until Schreier issues her final ruling.

James Moore, the officials' attorney, did not return a telephone call seeking comment.

The parties have until Dec. 4 to file objections to the other group's proposal.

Watchdog Group's Complaint Says Omaha Voters Denied Ballots

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — A state elections watchdog group filed a complaint Tuesday against the embattled Douglas County Election Commissioner's office, alleging it violated election laws by requiring some voters in Omaha to provide voter identification numbers before issuing them provisional ballots on Election Day.

Voter ID numbers are used by election offices and typically aren't readily known by voters. The only way for the Omaha voters to get their number on Nov. 6 was to call the county elections office, said Adam Morfeld, director of Nebraska for Civic Reform.

"It was almost impossible for

them to get through to the Douglas County Election Commissioner's office on Election Day," said Morfeld, whose group filed the complaint with the state Secretary of State's office and asked for a public hearing.

Several of the group's election observers reported that they witnessed election officials in several north Omaha precincts on Nov. 6 requiring voter ID numbers from people who weren't listed on polling place rolls who wanted provisional ballots.

Such ballots aren't counted until the voter's registration can be verified. Federal and state law require only that a voter claims he or she is

at the correct precinct and registered to vote to receive a provisional ballot.

"We believe hundreds, and potentially thousands of voters were unlawfully denied the right to vote on Election Day because election officials in at least nine precincts that we observed required voters provide their voter identification number in order to cast a provisional ballot," Morfeld said.

Morfeld said he saw at least seven people denied provisional ballots at the north Omaha polling place he manned. Upon questioning the precinct inspector, Morfeld said, he was told a district supervisor had instructed poll workers not to issue provisional ballots unless the voter

provided his or her voter ID number.

Affidavits filed by other observers at other polling places estimated that up to two dozen voters were turned away.

But Douglas County Election Commissioner Dave Phipps said Tuesday he knew of only two voters asked to provide voter ID numbers before they could get a provisional ballot.

"That is contrary to the procedures set within our office," Phipps said. "Once we found out about it, we contacted those poll workers involved and corrected the situation and made sure they followed the correct procedures."

OBITUARIES

Charles Merkwan

WAGNER — Funeral Mass for Charles Merkwan, 85, of Wagner will be 10:30 a.m., Thursday, November 29, 2012 at Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Catholic Church in Dante. Burial is in St. John's Catholic Cemetery in Wagner.



Merkwan

Rosary/Wake services are 7 p.m., Wednesday at the church in Dante. Visitation is Wednesday from 1-5 p.m. at the Crosby-Jaeger Funeral Home in Wagner.

Charles "Charlie" A. Merkwan was born June 21, 1927 at Avon, SD, the son of Frank and Frances (Zacharias) Merkwan. He passed away Monday, November 26, 2012 at Avera McKennan Hospital in Sioux Falls.

Charles attended the Rouse Township Country School until the eighth grade. He then started farming with his dad south of Wagner.

Charlie married Valeria M. Kelly (whom he called his sweetie) at the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Catholic Church in Dante on June 12, 1950. Five children were blessed to their union.

Charlie will be remembered for his love of farming (with his "756" International tractor), listening to Polka music, fishing, looking for someone to speak the Czech language with, his word search puzzles and he would never pass up a cup of coffee and a cookie. Charlie kept up a daily journal of events for over 40 years. He loved spending time with his children, grandchildren and friends and he will always be remembered for his sense of humor.

Thankful for having shared his life are his wife, Valeria, of Wagner; children: Dennis and Mary Merkwan and their daughter Megan, of Wagner; Douglas and Jeanette Merkwan of Ft. Worth, TX; Debra Merkwan and Bob Cuka of Wagner; Denise and Mitch Hertz and their daughter Emma and son Alex, of Sioux Falls; and Donna and Shawn Smejkal and their sons, Cameron, Carter and Dashel and daughter, Sheridan, of Wagner.

Charles was preceded in death by his parents.

Yankton Press & Dakotan
November 28, 2012

Denny DeVos

Denny DeVos passed away suddenly Sunday, November 25, 2012 at Huron Regional Medical Center in Huron, South Dakota.



DeVos

Visitation will begin at 4 p.m. with the family present from 4-7 p.m. and a prayer service followed by a rosary beginning at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, November 28, 2012, at Miller Funeral Home, 13th & Main, Sioux Falls, South Dakota 57106.

A Christian Mass of burial will be held Thursday, November 29, 2012 at 10:30 am at St. Michael's Church, 1600 South Marion Road, Sioux Falls, South Dakota 57106 with Rev. Chuck Cimpr as the officiate.

Denny was born on May 4, 1955 in Marshall, Minnesota to Roy and Pat DeVos. He graduated from Marshall High School in 1973. He was active in football, basketball, 4-H and FFA.

He attended South Dakota State University (SDSU) in Brookings, South Dakota from 1973 to 1977 obtaining degrees in Ag Economics and Business. Denny was an active member of Sigma Alpha Epsilon (SAE) Fraternity while at SDSU and served as Eminent Archon.

Out of college, Denny joined Farm Credit Services as a lending officer in Yankton, South Dakota. It was through his work at Production Credit Association (PCA) in Yankton he met the love of his life Sue Lange. Denny and Sue were married on June 21, 1980 in Crofton, Nebraska. Together they made a home in Yankton, South Dakota, Webster City, Iowa, Fargo, North Dakota and Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

Denny spent 31 years of his professional career at Farm Credit Services working his way from branch manager to regional manager to chief credit officer. He served PCA (Farm Credit) in Yankton, South Dakota, Webster City, Iowa and Fargo, North Dakota-Moorhead, Minnesota. Denny concluded his tenure leading a team at AgCountry that loaned money to large agricultural businesses across the Midwest and the U.S. In 2007, Denny became the Vice President of Corporate Finance for POET of Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Denny so loved the outdoors,

farming and his family. He spent many hours hunting and fishing with friends and family. A highlight was several Canadian fishing trips with son Scott. Scott and Denny hunted together whenever they could, creating many cherished memories. Hunting with his brothers Dave, Duane, Dale, Dean and Darrell was part of his enjoyment growing up. He continued hunting excursions with his brothers throughout his life including a memorable elk hunt with Dave and Dean. Denny enjoyed an annual pheasant hunting trip with his SAE fraternity brothers in Gregory, South Dakota.

Farming and a deep love for the land was part of Denny's heritage. He grew up on the DeVos family farm in Marshall, Minnesota. In 1983, he purchased the family farm with brother Dave. He devoted much of his free time tending to the farm, seeding and harvesting the crops. Farming absolutely guided his strong work ethic. He thoroughly enjoyed a good day's work on the farm.

Denny's family was his most profound love. He led his family to faith and joyful living not by words but by example. He was so honored to be a father and delighted in the accomplishments of Scott, Jenny and Kelsi. Denny loved traveling with Sue to visit the kids and do whatever was needed.

Denny is survived by his loving wife Sue; son Scott, Minneapolis, Minnesota; daughters Jenny, Houston, Texas; Kelsi, Kansas City, Missouri; five brothers Dave (Doreen) Spicer, Minnesota / Maricopa, Arizona; Duane (Denise) DeVos, Dell Rapids, South Dakota; Dale DeVos, Maple Lake, Minnesota; Dean (Barb) DeVos, Sioux Falls, South Dakota; Darrell (Emma) DeVos Salem, South Dakota; one sister Doreen (Ray) Gosmire, Mitchell, South Dakota; mother-in-law, Virginia Lange, Crofton, Nebraska; in-laws Kathy (Jay) Jorgenson, Gayville, South Dakota; Ruth (John) Seaman, Pacifica, California; Roger (Jeanine) Lange, Crofton, Nebraska; Doug (Laura) Lange, Leewood, Kansas; Pat (Tina) Lange, Crofton, Nebraska; Jeannie (Phil) Ruhlman, Omaha, Nebraska; Bill (Rhonda) Lange, Raymond, Nebraska; Peggy Jo Lange, Lincoln, Nebraska; and several nieces and nephews.

His parents and one brother, Tommy, preceded him in death.

Honor the memory of Denny DeVos.
For obituary and online registry please visit www.millerfh.com
Yankton Press & Dakotan
November 28, 2012

Agnes Gildersleeve

Agnes M. Gildersleeve, 95 of Hartington, Neb., died Tuesday, Nov. 27, 2012, at the Golden Living Center, Hartington.

Funeral services are at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 1, at First Congregational United Church of Christ, Hartington, with the Rev. Gary Kimm officiating. Burial will be at the Hartington City Cemetery.

Visitation is 4-8 p.m. Friday at Wintz Funeral Home, Hartington. Visitation will continue on Saturday at the church one hour prior to services.

To send an online sympathy message, visit wintzrayfuneralhome.com.

Earl Saugstad

Earl Milford Saugstad, 92, died Wednesday, Nov. 21, 2012, at Avera Yankton Care Center, Yankton.

Funeral services are at 10:30 a.m. today (Wednesday) at Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Home & Crematory, Yankton, with the Rev. Dave Lund officiating. Burial will be in Garden of Memories, Yankton, with Military Graveside Rites by Ernest-Bowyer VFW Post 791, Yankton, and SDARNG Honor Guard of Sioux Falls.

Visitations resume one hour prior to the service at the funeral home.

Franklin Petersen

Franklin D. Petersen, age 78, of Tabor, South Dakota and formerly of Yankton, South Dakota, died Monday, November 26, 2012, at the Southridge Health Care Center in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

A gathering of friends and family will be from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. on Thursday, November 29, 2012 at the Wintz & Ray Funeral Home in Yankton, South Dakota.

Franklin was born April 12, 1934, to Joseph and Florence (Pelton) Petersen, in the Avon/Dante, South Dakota area. He grew up on the family farm between Avon and Dante and attended country school. He worked on the farm until enlisting in the United States Army where he served as the mess cook for the army. After the war Franklin worked a few jobs including helping to build Fort Randall Dam. He worked at Morgan Manufacturing in Yankton for 30 years until his retirement.

Franklin loved to play cards, especially solitaire. He also enjoyed fishing, camping, and loved animals; raising pigeons, chickens, ducks, geese, and rabbits. He was a jolly, happy man who loved spending time with his children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren.

Survivors include his 6 chil-



Petersen

dren: Fran (Rick) Allen of Lead, South Dakota; Dale Tallmage of Lead; James (Kimberly) Petersen of Richmond, Virginia; Steven (Kristi) Petersen of Tabor, South Dakota; Sandra Bohy of Westminster, South Carolina; and Timothy (Stacey) Petersen of Yankton; 12 grandchildren, Nathan (Chelsea), Matthew (Adrianna), Kaitlyn, Alexis, Haley, Colton, Courtney (George), Chase, Dawn, Corey, Mandy and Clayton; 6 great grandchildren; and 3 great grandchildren on the way.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brother, Richard Petersen and sister, Wanda Petersen.

To send an online sympathy message, please visit wintzrayfuneralhome.com.

Yankton Press & Dakotan
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Online condolences at:
www.wintzrayfuneralhome.com

Sharon Allen

Sharon Ann Allen, 72, of Hayesville, N.C., died at her home surrounded by family Nov. 16, 2012, following an extended illness. She was born in Yankton to William and Helen Desmond in 1940.

A memorial service will be held at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, if you wish, the family requests that memorials may be made to the American Cancer Society in Mrs. Allen's name.

Arrangements entrusted to the care of Cochran Funeral Home and Crematory, Blairsville, N.C.

IN REMEMBRANCE

Terry J. Foxhoven
10:30 AM, Wednesday
Holy Family (Sts. Peter & Paul)
Catholic Church
Bow Valley

Franklin D. Petersen
Gathering of Friends and Family
5:00 to 8:00 PM, Thursday
Wintz & Ray Funeral Home
Yankton

Agnes M. Gildersleeve

10:30 AM, Saturday
First Congregational United Church of Christ, Hartington



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