



YHS Falls To Watertown In Semifinals • 8

YANKTON DAILY
**PRESS &
DAKOTAN**

Volume 139
Number 167

The Dakotas' Oldest Newspaper | 16 PAGES | www.yankton.net

75¢



Obama Signs Blizzard Disaster Declaration

PIERRE (AP) — Gov. Dennis Daugaard says President Barack Obama has signed a disaster declaration allowing 14 South Dakota counties and two American Indian reservations to get federal financial help to recover from the early October blizzard.

Preliminary estimates showed nearly \$38 million in damages to public and private non-profit property. Costs included debris removal, repair of rural electric cooperative power lines and repair of roads and other infrastructure damaged by storm-related flooding. Other costs include snow removal in six counties with record snowfalls.

The disaster declaration authorizes the federal government to cover up to 75 percent of eligible costs. Counties eligible for assistance are Butte, Corson, Custer, Dewey, Fall River, Haakon, Harding, Jackson, Lawrence, Meade, Pennington, Perkins, Shannon and Ziebach, as well as the Cheyenne River and Pine Ridge reservations.

Suspects Sought In Wagner Shooting

Authorities Suspect Homicide In Home Invasion

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF
randy.dockendorf@yankton.net

WAGNER — A 56-year-old man has died after two males allegedly invaded a house on the Yankton Sioux reservation, killed the man inside the home and stole items before fleeing, according to authorities.

The shooting, which occurred Thursday night east of Wagner, is being treated as a home invasion resulting in a homicide, according to Special Agent E.K. Wilson with

the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). The victim, whose name has not been released, was pronounced dead at approximately 11:10 p.m. Thursday, said Wilson, a public affairs officer with the FBI office in Minneapolis.

Charles Mix County deputy coroner Chad Peters confirmed Friday afternoon that the victim's family members were still being notified and that the deceased man's name wasn't being released.

The FBI is conducting an ongoing investigation in the Wagner case, Wilson said. The FBI is handling the matter because it occurred on an American Indian reservation, he said.

Wilson didn't have a physical description of the suspects, who were believed to be masked. The suspects apparently stole the victim's vehicle and used it to flee the scene. The vehicle was later abandoned and subsequently recovered.

SHOOTING | PAGE 2

A Decade Of New Life

Yankton Doctor Recalls Anniversary Of Near-Fatal Crash

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF
randy.dockendorf@yankton.net

With a busy day ahead of him, Dr. Don Swift was enjoying the commute from Yankton to his outreach clinic in Atkinson, Neb.

But for Swift, an orthopedic surgeon, the Nov. 3, 2003, trip literally turned his world upside down. He was driving a Ford Explorer, containing himself and two nurses, that tipped and rolled numerous times before landing on the roof.

He sustained extensive head, neck and left forearm injuries which required multiple surgeries and lengthy rehabilitation.

A decade later, he considers himself fortunate to be alive, let alone a practicing surgeon. "It was spooky," he said, recalling his brush with death.

On that fateful day, Swift and the two nurses were sharing the 120-mile ride between Yankton and Atkinson. They were enjoying the trip and anticipating the workload ahead of them.

"I had along Zita Hans, who normally accompanied me. It was scheduled to be a busy surgical day, so we took along another nurse, Lori Stottler," he said. "Zita sat in the front seat by me, and Lori sat in the back."

Swift vividly recalls details about the pleasant autumn weather.

"It was 33 degrees, sunny and no snow," he said "I had just commented to the nurses on what a beautiful day it was."

The trio were traveling southbound on a highway when they reached a spot north of O'Neill, Neb., between 8 and 9 a.m., the surgeon said.

"It was a bit of a hill, and we ran into black ice," he said. "We started spinning clockwise, and the car tipped into the east ditch. We flipped and rolled four or five times, end over end."

Swift recalls shouting a warning, laced with an expletive, as the vehicle careened out



Yankton surgeon Dr. Don Swift stands outside his office, a decade after a near-fatal traffic accident in northeast Nebraska. Swift required months of surgery and rehabilitation as part of his recovery but resumed his practice.

of control. "All I remember was yelling, 'Holy, s---, hold on Zita!'" he said. "I tried to protect her, and I tried holding the wheel and controlling it. I remember rolling and getting whacked with a blow on my head."

The trio wore seat belts, which likely saved their lives, but they sustained a variety of injuries.

Swift recalls his door flying open, with his arm thrust outside before the door came back shut. The accident's impact inflated his airbag.

The surgeon suffered a broken neck, collapsed lungs, a closed head injury, subdural bleeding and an open fracture on his arm.

"The roof collapsed, and I suffered a 'hangman's fracture' which resulted in severe neck injuries," he said. "It's called 'hangman's fracture' because it resembles the way a hangman's noose breaks the neck. I should have been dead."

The Explorer landed upside down, and Hans crawled out the passenger's window, Swift said. Stottler unbuckled her seat belt in trying to free herself from the accident, he added.

The Yankton team had brought along red, green and yellow sheets on the trip, Swift said.

SWIFT | PAGE 15

Officials Addressing Concerns After Drug Arrest

BY NATHAN JOHNSON
nathan.johnson@yankton.net

Officials say they are doing all they can to address concerns after a drug-related arrest at the Yankton High School (YHS) this week.

Local and state law enforcement agencies were involved with a K-9 drug sniff operation at YHS Tuesday.

As a result of the investigation, a 16-year-old Yankton male was arrested for possession with intent to distribute marijuana, possession of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia. The marijuana was found in a vehicle on campus, and authorities say the confiscated marijuana was unofficially less than an ounce.

The investigation was typical of those done periodically at the YHS and Yankton Middle School, according to Superintendent Wayne Kindle.

"It's something we're going to continue to do," he said. "We want — and we think our community wants — a drug-free school. Whatever we can do to prevent drugs at the school, we're going to take the steps to make sure we're doing everything we can."

Such an arrest stemming from a drug sniff operation is a large concern, Lt. Mike Burgeson of the Yankton Police Department said.

"Parents look at this and wonder what is going on," he stated. "We're working as hard as we can to get drugs off the street. Any time we arrest someone at the school, we're definitely talking to the principal and seeing what we can do to fix the problems."

Whenever an incident like this occurs, Kindle said, one of the school's biggest concerns is providing help for the student or students arrested.

"There is obviously going to be some consequence that comes along with it, but we're certainly going to work with parents to direct them and help get that student and anybody



Kindle

Michels Delivers Veterans Day Message To YMS Students

BY NATHAN JOHNSON
nathan.johnson@yankton.net

During a Veterans Day program speech at the Yankton Middle School Friday, Lt. Gov. Matt Michels not only encouraged those in attendance to thank soldiers for their service but also to accept the responsibilities of living in a democratic nation.

Michels was the keynote speaker for the 10th annual Veterans Day program at the school, which also featured musical performances, educational readings and veteran remembrances.

Although Michels did not come from a family with a military background, he said his mother instilled in her five children an

appreciation of public and military service. The result was three of them, including himself, entered the military, according to Michels.

He said it is incumbent upon Americans to teach their children that military is about family — as it is the families who support and, ultimately, mourn the nation's soldiers.

Michels marveled at the determination of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. "As I think about the Declaration of Independence, the last part of it really resonates with me today, and I hope it does for you," he said. "We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress,

VETS | PAGE 15



Lt. Gov. Matt Michels was the featured speaker Friday morning at the annual Yankton Middle School Veterans Day program in the YMS old gym.

ARREST | PAGE 15

