

# PRESS & DAKOTAN

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## Library To Host Stories On Demand

The Yankton Community Library, 515 Walnut, is hosting "Christmas Stories on Demand" Dec. 1-23.

If the staff sees children in the library, the kids will be asked if they'd like to hear a Christmas story. If you come in and would like a story read to your children or grandchildren, just ask at the desk. The staff is prepared to read and would love to do so. You'll hear some new stories and old favorites.

## Tour Of Homes Set For Dec. 1

Yankton Area Arts will hold its annual Tour of Homes fundraising event at 1-4 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 1.

Stops featured include the historic Christ Episcopal Church and the festively decorated homes of Jeff and Marti Dayhuff, Jake and Sandy Hoffner, Dave and Bonnie Hubbs, and David and Sally Vinson.

A dessert reception at the G.A.R. Hall and discount shopping at the Crimson Door Holiday Show is included in the tour. Tour of Homes tickets can be purchased from YAA Board members and at Rexall Drug and Hy-Vee this week. Tickets can also be purchased the day of the tour at any of the featured properties or at the G.A.R. Hall (508 Douglas Avenue, Yankton).

All proceeds go toward arts education and community arts programming.

For more information, visit [www.YanktonAreaArts.org](http://www.YanktonAreaArts.org).

## Watershed Task Force To Meet Dec. 2

PIERRE — The Regional Watershed Advisory Task Force, created by the 2012 Legislature, will hold its fourth meeting of the 2013 Interim on Monday, Dec. 2, in Room LCR 1-2 of the Capitol in Pierre. The meeting will begin at 1 p.m. (CT).

The task force was created to study drainage, watershed management, flood control, erosion, and related issues, as well as studies of alternative organizational structures and entities to address such issues. The task force will operate until January 2015.

At the Dec. 2 meeting, the task force will review and discuss issues, proposals, and future direction for the task force in 2014, its final year of operation. An opportunity for public testimony will be provided, and the public is urged to attend.

The Regional Watershed Advisory Task Force consists of 14 members: Rep. Brian Gosch, Chair (R-Rapid City); Sen. Mike Vehle, Vice Chair (R-Mitchell); Sens. Jason Frerichs (D-Wilmot), Tom Jones (D-Viborg), and Jim White (R-Huron); Representatives Dennis Feickert (D-Aberdeen), Spencer Hawley (D-Brookings), and Leslie Heinemann (R-Flandreau); and Dennis Duncan (Parker), Mike Jaspers (Sioux Falls), Rick Sommers (Aberdeen), Paul Symens (Amherst), George Vandel (Pierre), and Kim Vanneman (Ideal).

## Appropriations Comm. To Meet Dec. 3

PIERRE — The Legislative Research Council's Joint Committee on Appropriations will meet on Dec. 3 in Pierre. The meeting will be held in LCR 1 & 2 of the State Capitol, beginning at 2 p.m. or 15 minutes after the Governor's budget address. The public is invited to attend.

The committee, Co-Chaired by Rep. Fred Romkema (R-Spearfish) and Sen. Deb Peters (R-Hartford), will discuss the Governor's budget recommendations, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) structural deficit and the Letter of Intent regarding the Law Enforcement Officers Training Fund (LEOTF).

In addition to co-chairs Romkema and Peters, committee members include, Reps. Jim Bolin (R-Canton), Lance Carson (R-Mitchell), Dan Dryden (R-Rapid City), Don Hagar (R-Sioux Falls), Spence Hawley (D-Brookings), Mark Mickelson (R-Sioux Falls), Dick Werner (R-Huron) and Susan Wismer (D-Britton); and Sens. Stan Adelstein (R-Rapid City), Phyllis Heineman (R-Sioux Falls), Tom Jones (D-Viborg), Al Novstrup (R-Aberdeen), Billie Sutton (D-Burke), Larry Tidemann (R-Brookings), Bill Van Gerpen (R-Tyndall) and Jim White (R-Huron).

## Housing Study Presentation Planned

The Dec. 9 City Commission meeting will include a presentation of the draft Yankton Housing Study.

Officials from Community Partners, LLC, and city staff have worked on the study through the summer and fall. The study is being presented as a draft at this time with discussion from the meeting on Dec. 9 helping to provide the basis for completion of the final analysis.

The City Commission meeting will begin at 7 p.m. and is held in the Community Meeting Room at the Technical Education Center, 1200 W. 21st Street. If you have questions prior to the meeting, call Community Development Director Dave Mingo at (605) 668-5252.

## OBITUARIES

### Marilyn Voudry

Marilyn Voudry, 74, of Vermillion died Friday, Nov. 29, 2013, at Sanford USD

Medical Center, Sioux Falls. Funeral arrangements are pending with Kober Funeral Home in Vermillion.

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# Select The Perfect Christmas Tree

BROOKINGS — About 36 million Christmas trees are sold between Thanksgiving and Christmas. While artificial trees enjoyed increased sales for the past decade, those sales have stagnated as buyers opt for a fresh, traditional tree, said John Ball, SDSU Extension Forestry Specialist.

"A traditional Christmas tree is also the environmentally friendly way to celebrate the holidays. The average artificial Christmas tree has a life span of five years before it ends up in a landfill. The traditional Christmas tree, while used only one season, can become valuable mulch, a winter bird feeder or even used as a fish habitat after the holidays," Ball said.

Here are some tips on picking out the perfect tree.

The way to obtain the freshest tree is to harvest it yourself at a choose-and-cut Christmas tree farm, Ball says.

"This way you are guaranteed a "fresh" tree rather than one that may have been harvested several weeks earlier," he said.

If cutting your own tree is not possible, Ball said to use these tips to check for freshness at a Christmas tree sales lot.

First, give the tree a light but vigorous shake. Only a few interior needles should fall out of the tree if it is fresh.

If a pile of brown needles appears on the ground below the tree, particularly from the branch tips, it is not a fresh tree.

Next, reach into a branch and pull the needles gently through your hand as you move out towards the tip. The needles should bend, not break, as your fingers run across them and the branch should only slightly bend.

Regardless of whether you buy a tree from a lot or cut it yourself, once you get the tree home, leave it outside while you set the stand up.

Ball said the choice of a stand is probably the most critical factor in maintaining the freshness of the tree once in the home.

"The stand should be able to hold one-half to one-gallon of water as the

new Christmas tree may absorb up to this amount in the first day," Ball said.

A good rule-of-thumb he shared is a tree will use 1 quart of water per day for every inch trunk diameter at the base. If you have a tree with a 3-inch base, it may use 3 quarts of water per day.

Just before you bring the tree in the house cut the base about one-inch from the bottom. Ball says this will open the sap-filled tracheids — the pores responsible for transporting water — and allow water to be absorbed into the tree. The base cut does not have to be slanted; the angle makes little difference in the amount of water absorbed.

Once the tree is in the stand add water and then, Ball said to never let the stand become empty.

"If the stand becomes empty for more than six hours, the tree's pores plug up. Water uptake will then be significantly reduced, the tree will dry out and the needles will soon begin to fall," he said. "If the tree stand does dry up for half a day or more there is nothing that can be done other than pull the tree out of the stand and recut the base — not a pleasant task once the lights and ornaments are already up."

Ball also said that nothing needs to be added to the water in the stand to improve needle retention.

"The commercial "tree fresher" products do not significantly increase the life of the tree and the home remedies such as aspirin, sugar, soft drinks and vodka do not work and may be harmful to pets that may drink from the stand," he said.

Place the stand in a spot that receives only indirect light from the windows and not near any heat duct. Ball said this will reduce water loss from the tree and prolong its freshness.

"Another tip to prolonging freshness is to start out with a clean stand. Before setting up the tree wash the stand out with a solution of about a capful of bleach to a cup of water, to reduce the growth of microorganisms that may also plug up the tree's pores."

Which is the best tree? Ball said

each species has its good points, but the Fraser fir is probably one of the favorites.

"The tree is very fragrant, has excellent needle retention and the branches are stiff enough to hold ornaments. Balsam fir is another good choice though the needles do not last as long and the branches are not quite as stiff. Canaan fir, another popular fir appears to have qualities similar to Fraser fir and is also becoming a popular Christmas tree," he said.

Pines are very popular with Scotch pine probably the most popular tree in the country. It also is very fragrant, has excellent needle retention and the branches are stiff.

"White pine is another pine commonly sold at Christmas tree stands and has a fair fragrance, but the needle retention is not quite as good as Scotch pine and the branches are very flexible meaning heavy ornaments may fall off," he said. "White pines do have very soft needles and if you are going to run into the tree in the middle of the night this is the one."

Spruces are not as popular of Christmas trees, said Ball, primarily due to their poor needle retention.

"If you want to have a blue spruce as your Christmas tree, you probably should wait until a couple of weeks before Christmas as the needles may only last that long. Once the needles begin to fall, blue spruce are about the worst tree to have as the fallen needles are sharp and seem to find their way into socks and slippers," he said.

Blue spruce has the best needle retention of the spruces, but does not have much of a fragrance. The branches are very stiff, however, and can support the heaviest ornaments. White spruce, or Black Hills spruce is not commonly available though is used in the Black Hills.

"It does make a nice tree, particularly when cut fresh but it does not have much of a fragrance and occasionally Black Hills spruce trees can have a slight musky odor," he said.

To learn more, visit [www.igrow.org/](http://www.igrow.org/).

## Shopping

From Page 1

originally named Black Friday because it was when retailers turned a profit, or moved out of the red and into the black. Retailers opened early and offered deep discounts.

But in the past few years, store chains have been opening on Thanksgiving.

This year, several welcomed shoppers for the first time on Thanksgiving night, while Gap Inc., which owns Banana Republic, Gap and Old Navy, opened half its stores earlier on the holiday.

Wal-Mart stores, most of which stay open 24 hours, has for the past several years offered doorbusters that had been reserved for Black Friday. And Kmart planned to stay open 41 hours starting at 6 a.m. on Thanksgiving.

That has led some to question how much further Black Friday will creep into Thanksgiving, which along with Christmas is one of only two days a year that most stores are closed.

"Black Friday is now Gray Friday," said Craig Johnson, president of Customer Growth Partners, a retail consultancy.

The earlier openings have met with some resistance.

Workers' rights groups and some shoppers had planned protests on Thanksgiving and Black Friday to decry the way some

store employees were forced to miss holiday meals at home. But as of Thursday afternoon, there were no reports of widespread protests.

Judy Espey ducked out of a Thanksgiving family dinner to buy a 50-inch flat-screen TV at Wal-Mart near Clifton Park, N.Y., for \$288. But "I don't really dig the Thanksgiving night thing," she confessed. "I feel bad for the workers."

Vinnie Gopalakrishnan pledged not to hit the stores after seeing TV footage of people shopping on Thanksgiving. But he flip-flopped after his cousin told him about a deal on a big-screen TV.

"I said, 'I'm not going to do it. Those people are crazy,'" Gopalakrishnan said before heading to a Wal-Mart on Friday.

It's unclear whether the early openings will lead shoppers to spend more over the two days or simply spread sales out.

Last year, sales on Thanksgiving rose 55 percent from the previous year to \$810 million, as more stores opened on the holiday, according to research firm ShopperTrak. But sales dropped 1.8 percent to \$11.2 billion on Black Friday, though it still was the biggest shopping day last year.

Store sales numbers won't be available until Saturday. The National Retail Federation said 140 million people planned to shop during the four-day holiday weekend.

IBM Benchmark, which tracks e-commerce for 800

retailers, said online sales on Thanksgiving were up 19.7 percent from last year. Online sales on Black Friday rose 9 percent, based on preliminary data.

There are signs that stores fared well, too.

Wal-Mart, the world's largest retailer, started its holiday sales events at 6 p.m. on Thanksgiving, two hours earlier than last year. Wal-Mart said customers bought at least 2.8 million towels, 2 million TVs, 1.4 million tablets, 300,000 bicycles and 1.9 million dolls.

Terry Lundgren, Macy's CEO, said the 15,000 people who showed up for the opening of the flagship store was the most ever, up from 11,000 last year. "Clearly people are in the shopping mood," he said.

Of course, not every retailer saw robust crowds.

At Woodland Hills mall in Tulsa, Okla., the owner of Bags and Bangle complained that he had to stay open from 8 p.m. on Thanksgiving to 10 p.m. on Friday. Suhail Zaidi, who was required by the mall to keep his booth open, said Thanksgiving was somewhat busy, but business had died down by 3 a.m. On Friday morning, he said he had seen only about 20 customers.

"We ruined the holiday," Zaidi said. "Black Friday is a good shopping day, but opening up on Thanksgiving is ridiculous."

## Holiday CookieWalk To Be Held Dec. 6

Tasty, decorative homemade holiday cookies and treats will be for sale Friday, Dec. 6 at the Dakota Theatre, 328 Walnut St.

The Holiday CookieWalk will raise funds for Yankton's RiverWalk project, which places sculptures in the downtown area. This year's goal is to raise enough money to purchase an additional granite pedestal for the sculptures.

Some of Yankton's best cookie-makers donate the holiday treats, which sell by the pound. The cookies will be for sale from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., but many varieties were sold by noon last year so come early.

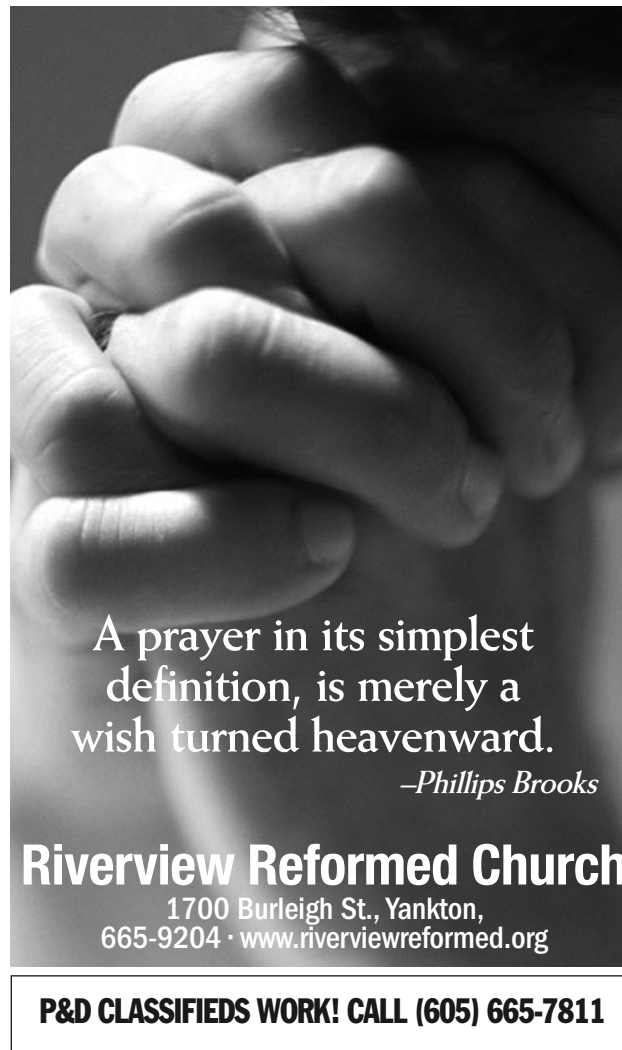
RiverWalk is in its fourth year in Yankton. The non-profit group's mission is to enhance the community's appearance and culture by featuring great outdoor art in the downtown district.

Selected sculptures are displayed on downtown streets and in Riverside Park for one year. Current sculptures will be replaced in May 2014.

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A prayer in its simplest definition, is merely a wish turned heavenward.  
—Phillips Brooks

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