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S. Dakota Workers 'Hi-Rail' For Safety

BY JAMES NORD
Associated Press

CHAMBERLAIN — Record crop yields and the North Dakota oil boom have led to a significant resurgence of rail transit in South Dakota, and it's Lynn Kennison's job to make sure the tracks are safe.

Kennison, a transportation specialist at the state Department of Transportation, inspects the rail lines using a road-rail, or "hi-rail," vehicle, a specialized truck that can ride on the road and on the tracks. His job will only get more important as the state continues investing in rail infrastructure.

The latest is a \$28 million project — backed in part by federal grants — to repair a roughly 42-mile section of mostly derelict track from Chamberlain to Presho, which has spurred tens of millions of dollars in agricultural development.

Kennison and Bruce Lindholm, project manager for the department's Office of Air, Rail and Transit, showed off the project this month to Gov. Dennis Daugaard, U.S. Sen. John Thune and U.S. Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx using hi-rail trucks. Kennison and Lindholm have been riding the tracks for at least a decade, searching for missing anchors, loose bolts and broken ties.

On occasion, the state's hi-rail truck shares the tracks with trains but more frequently with other road-rail vehicles owned by railroad companies doing their own inspections. The state currently has one of the

trucks, but Lindholm hopes to get another for the rail rehab project.

The specialized vehicles, which look like modified pickup trucks, are necessary because large sections of the railroad aren't accessible by car, Lindholm said. They're also useful for transporting people who are walking down the tracks and inspecting them.

"They're very important. We have to have (hi-rail vehicles)," Lindholm said. "It doesn't sound like that much, but when you have to walk 40 miles, it's quite a ways."

On top of spotting degrading or broken segments of track, "hi-railing," as it's called, affords Kennison and Lindholm a view of South Dakota and its neighboring states typically only available by air.

"I get to see areas of those states that nobody else gets to see," Kennison said. "The thing that always amazes me is the wildlife that you see and the reaction they have."

Deer frequently bound alongside the trundling hi-rail truck, which can max out at about 40 mph but typically goes slower. Kennison said ranchers' herds often follow behind the vehicle because the cattle think they're about to get fed. Both men list seeing foxes as a gem of riding the rails that doesn't happen anywhere else.

Shortly before the state and federal officials viewed the rail project, Kennison took the hi-rail truck past a small lake as he headed toward Chamberlain.

"This is by far the best part of the job," Kennison said. "I don't care where I hi-rail, as long as I get to hi-rail."

"They're very important. We have to have (hi-rail vehicles)," Lindholm said. "It doesn't sound like that much, but when you have to walk 40 miles, it's quite a ways."

BRUCE LINDHOLM

Nebraska

'Shared Parenting' Bills Loom In Lincoln

BY GRANT SCHULTE
Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — A coalition of fathers and family-law attorneys will once again ask lawmakers to change Nebraska's parental custody laws, which they argue are unfair to men.

Lawmakers have introduced bills several times in recent years, but none have made it out of committee. With 18 new senators taking office in January due to term limits, supporters are hopeful they can win enough support to change the law.

Noncustodial parents in Nebraska — usually fathers — are given an average of five days a month with their children, according to a decade-long analysis by the State Court Administrator's office. The state reviewed divorce and child custody cases between 2002 and 2012.

The December report found disparities in how custody was divided in different parts of the state. In District 8 — the Nebraska Panhandle — mothers were granted sole custody 75 percent of the time. In District 4, encompassing Omaha, fathers were given sole custody less than 3 percent of the time.

Statewide, mothers received sole custody about half the time. Joint custody was granted in about one-third of the cases, and fathers were granted sole custody about 9 percent of the time.

Nebraska remains "behind the curve" with its current child custody laws, said Sen. Russ Karpisek of Wilber, who has tried for years to change them.

Karpisek, a divorced parent, said he and his ex-wife split time equally with

their children and it has served them well. Barring issues such as domestic abuse, mental health problems and geographic distance, he said, both parents should have a chance to see their children regularly.

"I just think kids should be able to spend as much time as possible with each parent, as long they're fit," said Karpisek, who leaves office in January.

Phone messages left Thursday and Friday with three groups that opposed a bill during the last legislative session weren't returned. Opponents said at a February hearing that they were willing to work toward a compromise, but they argued the measures proposed didn't include adequate protections for women in cases that involved domestic violence.

"Provisions may encourage the court to misread true allegations of intimate partner abuse as unfriendly false allegations and to rationalize unworkable and even dangerous contact between the parties in the spirit of forced cooperation," Tara Muir, executive director of the Domestic Violence Council, said at the hearing.

Karpisek also acknowledged at the time that the bill still needed work, and said he still hoped the groups could reach a compromise.

Currently, advocates are considering two bills. One would either encourage or require judges to "maximize" the time that each parent gets with children, while still letting the judge decide the exact split. The proposal is modeled after a similar law in Arizona that went into effect last year.

Attorneys who are pushing for the

change say many judges are older and defer to the way things have always been done. And traditionally, they argue, judges have favored women in their rulings.

"It's been an unwritten standard for a long time — not because it's good, but because things are slow to change," said Chris Johnson, a family-law attorney in Hastings. "There hasn't been a real hard push to bring our parenting plans into conformance with what research shows is the right thing to do."

Opponents argue that such bills could create more family fighting and a one-size-fits-all approach that ties a judge's hands. Advocates for victims of domestic violence worry that women would have a harder time protecting themselves and their children if a judge forces them to work out a custody deal.

"This is not a solution in relationships where domestic violence is present, as it can create an unsafe situation for the victimized parent," Robert Sanford, of the Nebraska Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Coalition, said in the February hearing.

A second proposal would require courts to track how custody is awarded in different parts of the state. Advocates believe the tracking would highlight disparities in how parental time is divided and support their effort to change the system. Voters could also use the information in elections when deciding whether to retain a judge.

"If one court consistently goes 80-20 and others are closer to a 45-55 split, we would know," Johnson said. "Right now, that information is very hard to procure, because no one tracks it."

Research Says Regulations Helping Small Hog Farms

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Researchers say environmental regulations have slowed the growth of large hog farms and helped some smaller ones survive.

Two agricultural economists at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln looked at how environmental regulations have shaped the industry in the top ten hog-producing states.

Several federal and state laws allow small hog farms with fewer than 2,500 animals to be exempt from rules that require manure storage plans and permits.

Also, zoning restrictions won't allow large hog farms in many locations where small hog farms can operate.

One of the researchers, Azzeddine Azzam, said the smaller hog farms benefit by not having the expenses of all those restrictions.

"For regulators who are concerned about both environmental quality and the protection of small family farms, environmental regulation does not seem to adversely affect the viability of such operations," Azzam and the other researchers wrote.

Azzam and Karina Schoen-gold both work at UNL, and a third author, Gibson Nene of the University of Minnesota-Duluth, helped with the article.

The researchers said the number of small hog farms has declined 61 percent between 1976 and 2005, but without those kind of rules, the decline would have been greater.

N O M I N A T E T H E 2 0 1 4

Yankton Citizen Of The Year

NOMINATION DEADLINE: FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 28

Please Mail Your Nominations To:

Citizen Of The Year, Yankton Press & Dakotan

319 Walnut, Yankton, SD 57078

or visit www.yankton.net/coy

My nomination for the 2014 Yankton Citizen of the Year is:

This person should be the Citizen of the Year because:

MY NAME: _____

MY ADDRESS: _____

MY PHONE NUMBER: _____

PRESS & DAKOTAN

Prosecutors Add Video To Evidence

RAPID CITY (AP) — Prosecutors in the case of a Box Elder woman charged with second-degree murder in the slaying of a 49-year-old man say they have a videotape that shows not only the four hours before the crime happened, but also the exact moment the killing occurred.

Authorities accuse 23-year-old Kelly Croyle of shooting and killing Dick Mashek. The *Rapid City Journal* reports prosecutors say the video remains intact even though Croyle shot at the cameras after the incident.

Police found Dick Mashek dead at a mobile home in September. Authorities say Croyle at the time of her arrest was carrying the handgun police believe was used in the slaying.

Croyle, who has said the killing was in self-defense, remains in custody. Her attorney was unsuccessful Friday at lowering her bond.

Johnson Raises Adoption Awareness

SIoux FALLS (AP) — U.S. Sen. Tim Johnson is raising awareness about the importance of foster care adoption.

Johnson says every child deserves to be raised in an "environment that allows them to flourish." Johnson this month participated in the 10th annual Adoptive Family Portrait Project, which highlights the experiences and needs of families that have adopted children from foster care.

Johnson has worked to expand the adoption tax credit and was a founding member of the bipartisan Congressional Coalition on Adoption. He is also the grandfather of two adopted children.

More than 1,500 children live in foster homes in South Dakota. The state currently has more than 300 children in foster care waiting to be adopted.

Johnson will retire by the end of the year.

Young Zebra Dies At Western Neb. Zoo

SCOTTSBUFF, Neb. (AP) — A young zebra has died at a western Nebraska zoo because of an accident during castration.

The *Lincoln Journal Star* reports the Riverside Discovery Center in Scottsbluff says a catastrophic accident happened.

The zebra, named Olaf, was born earlier this year. He was getting ready to undergo the routine procedure of castration when the accident happened.

Zoo officials didn't provide details of the accident. Zoo Executive Director Anne James says the staff is overwhelmed with grief because of the animal's death.

The zebra's parents still live at the zoo.

Shopping Spree Winner Shares Prize

SCOTTSBUFF, Neb. (AP) — When the CEO of Scottsbluff's hospital won a grocery store shopping spree in a raffle, he decided to pass along the prize to a local charity.

John Mentgen told the *Scottsbluff Star-Herald* he never expected to win when he bought the United Way raffle tickets, so he and his wife decided that someone else could benefit more from the four-minute grocery grab.

The Mentgens donated their prize to the Pup and Cat Backpack program that provides backpacks of food to low-income families in Gering and Scottsbluff on the weekends.

"My wife volunteers in Scottsbluff at Longfellow Elementary and she was familiar with the program," said Mentgen, who leads Regional West Medical Center. "It was really an easy decision for us to make."

One of the food program's co-directors, Missi lasillo, said she was thrilled to learn about the prize. "His wife called to tell me and I was overjoyed at their generosity," she said.

After plotting out her shopping spree, lasillo grabbed \$716.28 worth of groceries on Saturday. lasillo took as many items as she could from the food program's list of needs during the allotted time in the aisles of the Main Street Market.

Tuna and soups were on her list because the program often sends those items home with low-income children to make sure they have some food for the weekend.

The raffle raised \$3,000 for the United Way of Western Nebraska. Some of the proceeds were used to cover half the cost of the \$716.28 shopping spree, and the store covered the other half.

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Light wood
6 Works the land
11 Even a little
12 Online messages
13 Neighbor of Tibet
14 German thanks
15 Magnet end
17 Baseball's Williams
18 Logging-on need
22 "Be that — may ..."
23 Parson's domain
27 On the up-and-up
29 Full of passion
30 Don Quixote's pal
32 Honeyed drink
33 Lamp liquid
35 Lupino of film
38 Butcher's wares
39 French thanks
41 "The Lion King" hero
45 Entreaties
46 Less cordial
47 Incline
48 Use the rink

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8 Crazy talk
9 Karaoke need
10 Winter glider
16 Cut off
18 Chums
19 On the ocean
20 Billboard, for example
21 Turkey choice
24 Words of under-standing
25 Baseball's Musial
26 Jekyll's alter ego
28 Stephen King novella
31 Mine rock
34 Caravan stop
35 Little rascals
36 Secluded valley
37 Region
40 Soda container
42 Farrow of film
43 Wager
44 Verb for you

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Saturday's answer

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11-24

A X Y D L B A A X R
is L O N G F E L L O W

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

11-24 CRYPTOQUOTE

V P W H R Q H N V C N X Z H Z T P Z S L P
V T P Y Z T P F H V P N H Q W H E P V S W W
N P F W C B P Z T P W H E P H Q F H V P N .
Z T P Y V S W W H G N V H N W X R Y H V
Z T P K W P A A S Y J A H Q F P C B P .

— V . P . J W C X A Z H Y P

Saturday's Cryptoquote: YOU CAN PRETEND TO BE SERIOUS; YOU CAN'T PRETEND TO BE WITTY. — SACHA GUITRY

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