

## MIDWEST DIGEST

### Neb. Community College Reach Financial Deal

SCOTTSBLUFF, Neb. (AP) — Nebraska's six community colleges have reached an agreement on a new funding formula. Nebraska Community College Association director Dennis Baack told Scottsbluff radio station KNEB that the agreement was reached Tuesday. Baack says he can't discuss details of the agreement until it is approved by each of the community colleges' boards, expected to happen over the next two months. The plan would then need to go to the Legislature, charged with setting the state's two-year budget starting in July.

The colleges had long battled over funding when the issue came to a head last year. Omaha-based Metro Community College dropped out of the association and sued the other colleges. Metro dropped that lawsuit after the colleges agreed last spring to give Metro an additional \$1.8 million.

### Iowa Voters Receiving Robocalls On Judges

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Efforts to oust three Iowa Supreme Court justices now include automated phone calls to voters. The Des Moines Register reports Wednesday that Iowa For Freedom spokesman Bob Vander Plaats confirmed that his campaign is behind the statewide calls. Gay rights opponents announced this summer that they are seeking to unseat the justices for supporting last year's unanimous decision legalizing gay marriage.

The calls tell Iowa voters that choosing not to retain the justices on the Nov. 2 general election ballot "will send a clear message that we are taking back control of our government from political activist judges."

Iowa Supreme Court Chief Justice Marsha Ternus has said she and justices David Baker and Michael Streit don't want to launch a counter-campaign.

### Trail King Industries Sold To Chicago Parent

MITCHELL (AP) — A trailer manufacturing company with plants in the Dakotas has been sold to a new parent company.

Mitchell-based Trail King Industries says it has been sold from Charlotte, N.C.-based Carlisle Companies Inc. to CC Industries Inc., the holding and management firm of Chicago-based Henry Crown and Company. The sales price was not immediately disclosed.

Trail King President Carol Lowe tells *The Daily Republic* she will remain in her position, and plants in Mitchell and West Fargo, N.D., will remain open. A third plant in Pennsylvania was closed and sold last year.

There are 324 employees in Mitchell, 225 in West Fargo and another 19 regional sales managers and support staff. Lowe says all will be retained as the company rebuilds its work force in the wake of layoffs last year tied to the economic recession.

### Nebraska Man Killed In Bus Crash Identified

SCOTTSBLUFF, Neb. (AP) — Western Nebraska authorities have identified the 92-year-old man killed when his car slammed into the back of a Scottsbluff school bus.

KNEB-AM reports that Allan Martin, who lived north of Scottsbluff, was killed in the Tuesday accident.

None of the students or the bus driver were injured in the accident.

Officials say the crash happened while the bus was stopped and unloading along Nebraska Highway 71 about four miles north of Scottsbluff.

Deputy County Attorney Doug Warner says all the bus' emergency lights were on at the time of the crash.

Several witnesses reported that it didn't appear that Martin braked before the crash.

Warner says he's not planning to conduct an autopsy because it's clear the collision killed Martin.

### National American U. Expansion Plan Denied

RAPID CITY (AP) — The Rapid City Council has denied an expansion plan of National American University after opposition from homeowners in the area who feared an increase in traffic.

The school was seeking to have part of a residential area rezoned for commercial use so it could build a 12,000-square-foot center for its distance learning program.

NAU real estate operations president Mike Buckingham says he wants to find a site in Rapid City for the center. He says another option is empty space the university has leased in Mesquite, Texas.

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## Nebraska Legislature Considers Job Cuts

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Nebraska lawmakers indicated Wednesday that they could cut jobs within their own branch of government if the state gets hit with a large budget shortfall.

Ideally, the Legislative Council would like to boost the current budget of \$17.6 million to roughly \$19.3 million in fiscal year 2011-2012, and to almost \$19.5 million in 2012-13 to help replenish reserve funds that were used to help balance the budget last year.

But the latest projections from the Nebraska Department of Revenue show the state facing a possible two-year budget shortfall of \$757 million, and the council has identified \$2.8 million in cuts — including some full-time jobs.

The Legislature's Executive Committee indicated during its hearing Wednesday that it may need to cut half of the Legislature's administrative assistants, or about 20 positions. A final decision next year would have to be approved by lawmakers and the governor.

"We're not eliminating anybody," Speaker of the Legislature Mike Flood, of Norfolk, cautioned during the hearing. "This is one of the things we're saying may happen."

Legislative committees are in the process of identifying possible cuts totaling 10 percent of state general-fund appropriations for all agencies under their purview. The \$2.8 million in cuts identified by the Legislative Council account for its 10 percent.

Clerk of the Legislature Patrick O'Connell, who oversees legislative operations, told the Executive Committee that possible job cuts should come as no surprise to staff.

"If you don't think you're vulnerable, you're crazy," he said.

Of the 265 employees in the legislative branch, about 150 are senators and their staff. The rest help analyze state finances and programs, research state laws, perform audits and draft bills. It also includes the Office of the Clerk of the Legislature and the Ombudsman's Office.

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