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DAKOTA DAYS: ROYALLY COOL!



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D

ABOVE: Yankton native Alyssa Van Meeteren was announced as Miss Dakota 2012 at halftime of the University of South Dakota's homecoming football game with Western Illinois, Saturday. Sharing royalty honors as Mister Dakota was Brennan Tjelmeland of Blair, Neb. **LEFT:** The glow of the faces of students from St. Agnes Elementary School lit up the 98th annual Dakota Days parade as they rode in their school's float as it traveled down Vermillion's Main Street Saturday morning. Warm scenes like this were welcomed by the parade audience, which had to endure temperatures in the low 30s to participate in this annual tradition of the USD's Dakota Days.



DAVID LIAS/VERMILLION PLAIN TALK

Planning For The Future

USD To Submit Plans For Athletic Building Projects This Week

BY JEREMY HOECK
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VERMILLION — Will a slight change in athletic facility plans have the same end result? The University of South Dakota will find out this week.

Instead of submitting one large \$58 million project to the state Board of Regents during their monthly meeting in Vermillion this week, USD is hoping a separation into two projects results in the approval necessary to move forward.

The end goal, USD athletic director David Saylor said, is to be allowed to essentially build as the money for each segment is available.

"All we want is some flexibility to do the projects in phases, instead of waiting for all the money together," Saylor said, pointing out that South Dakota State University will ask for the same thing during its presentation Wednesday afternoon to the Regents.

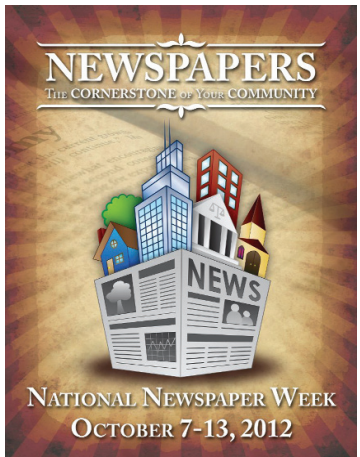
"It's certainly my hope that if one of us is allowed to proceed, the other should be," he added. "It's a fair way to look at this. We're both approaching what we want to do in the same way."

In the case of USD, however, its plans over the last month have changed.

The initial cost estimate for the projects included \$40.3 million for a new 6,000-seat basketball and volleyball arena, \$10.6 million for a connector building from the DakotaDome, and a combined \$7.9 million for an outdoor track and soccer complex.



Saylor



INSIDE TODAY



USD Falls To Western Ill. in Day Battle ■ 8

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Forester Says Logging Could Have Eased Nebraska Fires

BY GRANT SCHULTE
Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — Forest fires that swept through northwest Nebraska last month would have caused less damage and threatened less property if the region's trees had been more aggressively managed, a state forestry official says.

Nebraska District Forester Doak Nickerson said the forest was overgrown in many places, giving the flames more fuel and triggering dangerous canopy-level fires that might have been avoided.

Nickerson said the massive and unusually intense fires illustrate the need for better maintenance of forestland. The fires burned more than 100 feet high in some places, complicating efforts to contain the flames. Other blazes ran downhill, contrary to normal fire movement.

"It was some of the worst and most dangerous fire behavior I've ever seen in my life," said Nickerson, who is based out of a University of Nebraska extension office in Chadron. "It still scares me. Those are the kind of fire conditions where you hope and pray that no one gets hurt."

Fires in the Nebraska Panhandle, including Pine Ridge timber country, burned about 258 square miles across a three-county area in late August and early September. The fires were the latest in a summer marked by dry lightning, fierce winds, and extreme heat and drought.

Nickerson said slightly less than half of the area burned in the Panhandle fires was forest land. Of that forested area, less than 15 percent was actively managed, a term that includes activities such as logging, grazing, thinning out diseased and insect-infested trees, and purposely setting controlled fires to clear brush that can feed a fire.

"I hate to tell anyone after this disaster that I told you so, because no one takes that well, and that's not what I want to do," Nickerson said. "But from a

LOGGING | PAGE 12

Turkey, Syria Trade Fire; Border Tensions Mount

BY MEHMET GUZEL AND ZEINA KARAM
Associated Press

AKCAKALE, Turkey — Turkey and Syria fired artillery and mortars across their volatile border for a fifth consecutive day on Sunday, in one of the most serious and prolonged flare-ups of violence along the frontier.

The exchange of fire stoked fears that Syria's civil war will escalate into a regional conflagration drawing in NATO member Turkey, once an ally of President Bashar Assad but now a key supporter of the rebels fighting to topple him.

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu had warned on Saturday that

Ankara would respond forcefully to each errant Syrian shell that lands on Turkish soil.

Ankara's warning was coupled by an apparent diplomatic push by the Turkish leadership to promote Syrian Vice President Farouk al-Sharaa as a possible figure to head a transitional administration to end the conflict in the country.

In an interview with Turkish state television TRT Saturday, Davutoglu said that al-Sharaa was a figure "whose hands are not contaminated in blood" and therefore acceptable to Syrian opposition groups.

It was not clear whether the Turkish stance was coordinated with other allies, but the candid remarks by Davutoglu suggested some consensus might be emerging over a future role for him.

Al-Sharaa, 73, a close associate and longtime loyalist to the Assad family, has been a controversial figure since the start of the uprising.

He appeared in public in late August for the first time in weeks, ending repeated rumors that he had defected. The regime has suffered a string of prominent defections in recent months, though Assad's inner circle and military have largely kept their cohesive stance behind him.

Early on in the uprising, the Syrian president delegated to al-Sharaa, a skilled diplomat, responsibility for holding a dia-

logue with the opposition. A Sunni from the southern town of Daraa, birthplace of the Syrian uprising, al-Sharaa's silence since the start of the uprising made him a prime candidate for rumors that he broke with the regime.

"No one knows the system better than Farouk al-Sharaa," said Davutoglu, adding that al-Sharaa has not been involved in the violence and massacres in Syria.

The Syrian opposition is deeply fragmented, and various factions would likely disagree on whether they would accept him to lead a transitional government.

Meanwhile, there was little sign that the

TENSIONS | PAGE 11

NDEAM Presents Robinson As Featured Speaker

BY JEREMY HOECK
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Though he routinely criss-crosses the globe making speeches at various locales, John Robinson is no stranger to South Dakota.

Two years ago, he made several stops in the state and last year spoke at West River locations. The congenital amputee and motivational speaker returns to South Dakota Tuesday to speak in Yankton as part of a National Disabilities Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) conference at the Human Services Center.

"I grew up on a dairy farm, so I know all about that lifestyle," Robinson said in a telephone interview last week prior to a trip to Venice, Italy, for a speech. "It's a part of who I am."

Robinson will speak from 8-9:45 a.m. at the South Training Center at HSC as part of the 2012 NDEAM theme "A Strong Workforce is an Inclusive Workforce: What Can YOU Do?"

Susan Schneider, an associate with Jackson Lewis' Omaha, Neb., office, will also speak from 10 a.m.-noon. Schneider's presentation is entitled "Navigating the Americans With Disabilities Act" and will include tips for evaluating ADA situations.

In the case of Robinson, he will use his personal obstacles to help spread a message of awareness and hope, he said.

As a congenital amputee, Robinson was born without the extension of all four limbs. His arms do not extend below his elbows and his legs are attached to his hips without knees.

At 3-foot-9, Robinson has not let his disability define him.

"I think it hits home when people are aware of it," he said. "We all need to educate more on workplace opportunities. Not everyone understand the issue yet."

The native of Albany, N.Y., and president and CEO of Our Ability, Inc. estimates that he makes five speeches a month, mostly during October. Among his other upcoming destinations are Columbus, Ohio; Montgomery, Ala.; Boston and Binghamton, N.Y. He has also made trips to Australia and once spoke at the White House.

Wherever he stops, Robinson said his main motivation is reaching the audience in any possible way.

"I hope people get some enjoyment out of the stories," he said. "You just hope that they see there can be an opportunity for success: That's the ultimate goal. I just try to live my daily life."

"When I get a chance to share my story, I do get emails from people around the country, and that's great."

Booking someone like Robinson to speak in Yankton should help bring the issue of workplace disability to the forefront, according to Jennifer Trenhaile, chairperson for the NDEAM committee.

"The way I look at it is, (for) people who are born with their disability, it can be very limiting," said Trenhaile, also a rehabilitation counselor with South Dakota Rehabilitation Services in Yankton. "This is John's reality. We shouldn't limit people based on our perception. John is a perfect story of adapting to what he was dealt with."

SPEAKER | PAGE 11

