# PRESS 87 DAKOTAN

THURSDAY OCTOBER 18, 2012





VOLUME 138 NUMBER 148

The Dakotas' Oldest Newspaper | 12 PAGES | www.yankton.net

**Wagner Child Death** 

## **Man Enters Guilty Plea To Drug Charges**

#### Charges Against Woman Still Pending

From P&D Staff Reports

 $\begin{array}{l} {\rm PIERRE-A\,Wagner\,man\,facing} \\ {\rm charges\,in\,connection\,with\,the\,\,death\,\,of} \end{array}$ a child on July 4 has pleaded guilty to

drug charges. A press release from the South Dakota attorney general's office said Taylor Cournoyer, 21, entered a plea of guilty Wednesday to one count of possession of a controlled substance, methamphetamine, a class 4 felony punishable by up to 10 years imprisonment and/or a \$20,000 fine; and one count of keeping a place for use or sale of controlled substances, a class 5 felony punishable by up to 5 years imprisonment and/or \$10,000.

Cournoyer also admitted to a Part II Information for Habitual Offender exposing him to an elevated sentence of 25 years incarceration and a \$50,000 fine. Charges stem from an incident that occurred on July 4, 2012, involving the death of a 2 year-old child, RieLee

Charges against Laurie Cournoyer, 28, Wagner, are still pending. She has been charged with one count of abuse or cruelty to a minor as a felony, a class 3 felony punishable by up to 15 years imprisonment and/or a \$30,000 fine and failure to notify law enforcement of the death of a child, a class 5 felony punishable by up to five years and/or a \$10,000

According to court papers, Laurie Cournoyer provided information to law enforcement that she and Taylor Cournoyer had used methamphetamine and marijuana on July 3. Based on interviews and other information gathered throughout the investigation, authorities determined the incident leading to RieLee Lovell's death may have occurred in the early morning hours of

Laurie Cournoyer called 911 concerning the child, according to court papers.

A search warrant was issued, and items collected as evidence included a marijuana pipe, a pill bottle containing white pills with no prescription label, and two hypodermic needs located in the trash can, according to court records. Authorities noted Laurie Cournoyer suffers from diabetes and may use the needles for insulin purposes. The exact content of the pill bottle and two needles had not yet been determined.

Both Cournoyers indicated they had difficulty remembering the last time they had seen the toddler alive, according to court records.

Five other children in the Cournoyers' care at the house were taken to the Wagner Police Department.

According to Charles Mix County court records, the Cournoyers faced numerous charges, including five counts of abuse of or cruelty to a minor, with four of the counts a Class 3 felony and one count a Class 4 felony; three drug-related charges and one count of keeping a place for the use or sale of controlled substances, a Class 5 felony.

In August, the couple pleaded not

guilty to the charges. Sentencing for Taylor Cournover is scheduled for Nov. 29 in Charles Mix

#### **A LIMEY SITUATION**



The intersection of 21st and Broadway turned into a quagmire early Wednesday when a side-dump trailer lost a load of agricultural lime it was carrying. The incident occurred at approximately 12:30 p.m. The cleanup required city crews to bring in tractors and sweepers to remove the doughy substance. The accident and cleanup snarled traffic in the area early in the afternoon.

## Whooping Cough Cases On The Rise

**BY ANDREW ATWAL** 

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As the number of whooping cough cases continue to increase, officials across the region are urging parents to make sure they are immunized and that their children are immunized as well.

So far, there have been more than 50 cases of the whooping cough reported in South Dakota as of Oct. 3. However, neighboring states have experienced outbreaks far worse than South Dakota has

So far this year there have been more than 4,000 cases of the cough in Min-

nesota and Iowa has seen around 1,000 cases. As of late August there were about 120 confirmed cases in Nebraska.

"Based on these numbers, we know we're seeing a lot of the disease across the region," said Colleen Winter, director of Health and Medical Services for the South Dakota Department of Health (DOH). "There are a variety of reasons we've seen an outbreak. There is more awareness and better testing, more circulation of the disease and some people are building up an immunity to the vaccine."

The whooping cough vaccine, which is recommended for children, is said to be about 90 percent effective for those

that get all the required doses. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is working to discover why the protection seems to decline over time.

We want to make sure that people get the full course of the vaccine to make sure they are adequately protected," Winter said. "We want to protect our most vulnerable population, which are babies and infants."

Winter added that people who are most exposed to the unimmunized population should also be vaccinated. The

**COUGH** | PAGE 2

## **Black Friday For Hunters: Pheasant Numbers Up** In S. Dakota

BY DIRK LAMMERS **Associated Press** 

SIOUX FALLS — Consider it Black Friday for hunters.

Sure, the day before South Dakota's pheasant opener doesn't result in lines around the corner or incite customers to trample over each other to grab lowpriced orange vests, but it's still something of a shopping event for avid hunters.

"It's what I call our tan-andblaze Christmas," said Mike Fox, general manager of Cabela's in Mitchell. "Without doubt, it's the best day of the year for us."

South Dakota's pheasant season, which opens Saturday and runs through Jan. 6, is expected to draw thousands of hunters. Most are likely to have a good year, with an estimated 18 percent more birds than last year.

"Any time we have a mild winter, we almost always follow that up with an increase in population, just because we have better winter survivability by those hens," said Travis Runia, senior upland game biologist with the South

PHEASANT | PAGE 3



The North Dakota State defense celebrates a big play during a 2010 football game against the University of South Dakota in Fargo, N.D. The two teams will meet Saturday at Howard Wood Field for a 6 p.m. Missouri Valley Football Conference game, one that was moved from the DakotaDome in Vermillion.

## **A Moving Experience**

#### USD Ready To Face Off Against NDSU In Sioux Falls

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The prospect of moving a home football game 60 miles away has brought up predicted — and unforeseen — challenges for the University of South Dakota

With three days remaining before Saturday night's Missouri Valley football game between USD and defending national champion North Dakota State at Howard Wood Field in Sioux Falls, logistics are still being ironed out to move the game from Vermillion.

The process is new to everyone, according to David Herbster, USD senior associate athletic director for external relations.

The one thing about having a game in the Dome is that you're comfortable and you know where exactly

everything is," Herbster said Wednesday. "We know where the problem areas are and where bottle-necks

Howard Wood Field, on the other hand, is a different story. The last time USD played there was in 2007 against

Augustana, but the complex underwent \$6.5 million in renovations prior to this fall — complete with a new scoreboard, new bleachers, field turf and a new threelevel press box.

Those are only some of the details USD has been planning for, operations manager Gary Madsen said.

"It's actually going to be a road game for us, because everything is new," he said. "I've been up there for games and played up there before, but a lot of our

FOOTBALL | PAGE 7

### Smith Says Feds. Must Limit Depth Of Involvement

BY DEREK BARTOS

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CROFTON, Neb. — While the federal government plays a vital role in the nation's progress, it must be careful with the depth of its involvement, Nebraska District 3 Rep. Adrian Smith told Crofton High School students Wednesday afternoon.

Smith spoke with approximately 30 government students at the school about the government's involvement in a variety of issues, including health care, education and

Many of the students' questions centered around their concerns about Obamacare, which Smith said should be repealed.

"It's such a massive bill, that it creates

new layers of bureaucracy, and we already had enough before that," he said. "You look at the cost of health care, and the more the government has gotten involved, the more expensive it has become. That's why we need to take a step back and say, 'Let's make sure that the government doesn't come between the patient and their

The congressman said the country would be better off if it had consumerbased health care, where the government is more concerned about consumers than "controlling how things go."

"Getting more people to buy health insurance is what we want — not because of the heavy hand of government fining people ... but because it's a good idea," he said. Smith also expressed his concerns

about the federal government's involvement in education, particularly with testing.

'We have a pretty good system here in Nebraska, and I think we have a lot to be proud of, and we want to take advantage of that," he said. "I don't like it when the federal government meddles in a local district, in a local classroom — when the federal government says, 'Here's what the tests are going to be.'

"We want to entrust local school districts with their trained teachers to do what's best for their students, rather than the federal government constantly mandating this and mandating that."

Smith mentioned that he has also heard complaints from numerous students about

**SMITH** | PAGE 2



DEREK BARTOS/P&D Nebraska District 3 Rep. Adrian Smith

speaks to Crofton High School students Wednesday. Smith discussed a variety of topics, including health care, education and agriculture.



REGION 2 | OBITUARIES 3 | WORLD 3 | VIEWS 4 | LIFE 5 | SPORTS 8 | CLASSIFIEDS 11 | MIDWEST 12

