

Ex-USD Player Pleads Guilty To Tax Fraud

SIoux FALLS — A former University of South Dakota football player who recruited students and others to steal identities and fraudulently collect hundreds of thousands of dollars in tax refunds has pleaded guilty to two charges.

Alphonso "Rico" Valdez on Thursday appeared in federal court in Sioux Falls to enter his plea to charges of conspiracy to defraud the United States and aggravated identity theft.

The Tampa, Florida, man faces a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine for the conspiracy charge. The identity theft charge carries a mandatory punishment of two years in prison.

Prosecutors accuse Valdez and 10 other people of participating in a ring that filed bogus income tax returns showing about \$1.1 million in refunds due.

The group was indicted in 2012.

Teacher Of The Year To Be Announced

SIoux FALLS (AP) — The South Dakota teacher of the year will be announced Thursday at a state education conference in Pierre.

The teacher of the year will be selected from six finalists who have already been chosen to represent different areas of the state because of their outstanding work.

This year's finalists are Allen Hogue, of the Brandon Valley School District; Jennifer Larson, of the Sanborn Central School District; Ann Noyes of the Pierre School District; Justin Speck of the Rapid City Area School District; Lori Wagner of the Webster Area School District; and Pam Wells of the Mobridge-Pollock School District.

South Dakota's new teacher of the year will go on to compete for the title of national teacher of the year.

Wisner To Attend 'Women's Rally'

SIoux FALLS (AP) — Democratic candidate for governor Susan Wisner and her running mate Susy Blake are slated to attend a "Women's Rally" in Aberdeen.

The South Dakota Democratic Party is sponsoring the event Thursday night. Officials say the rally's primary focus is to get out the vote for Democratic candidates.

North Dakota U.S. Senator Heidi Heitkamp and former South Dakota U.S. Rep. Stephanie Herseht Sandlin are also slated to attend.

Wisner and Blake will face Republican Gov. Dennis Daugaard and Lt. Gov. Matt Michels in the November election. The last Democrat elected governor was Richard Kneip in 1974.

Wisner is the South Dakota's first female nominee for governor from a major party.

Rural Electric Co-ops Getting Fed Loan

SIoux FALLS (AP) — Four rural electrical cooperatives in South Dakota are getting large federal loan guarantees to help build or improve transmission and distribution lines.

The money is part of \$1.4 billion in U.S. Department of Agriculture loan guarantees for such projects nationwide. The agency says the goal is to improve the delivery of electric power to rural communities in 21 states.

East River Electric Power Co-op in South Dakota and Minnesota is getting a \$131.7 million loan guarantee for 445 miles of lines.

Loan guarantees also are going to three other South Dakota co-ops: \$3.3 million for Kingsbury Electric, \$6.1 million for Cam Wal Electric and \$6.7 million for Bon Homme Yankton Electric. Those projects encompass a total of 253 miles of line.

Ebola Patient Tweets About Hearing

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — The American video journalist being treated for Ebola in Nebraska spent part of Thursday watching a Congressional hearing on the deadly virus.

Ashoka Mukpo posted two tweets about the hearing Thursday after someone there asked a question about the potential for dogs to spread Ebola.

Mukpo says it's important to remember that health care workers and people in West Africa, where the outbreak is centered, are at the greatest risk.

The 33-year-old's father, Dr. Mitchell Levy, said earlier this week that Mukpo was feeling well enough to post on Twitter and Facebook.

Neb. Told To Prepare For Earthquakes

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Earthquakes are rare in Nebraska, but emergency officials say it's still a good idea to prepare for the possibility.

So the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency is encouraging people to participate in the Great Shakeout earthquake drill on Thursday.

NEMA assistant director Bryan Tuma says Nebraskans should take a minute during the day to practice dropping to the ground, seeking cover under a table and holding onto it.

More details about the drill and how to prepare for earthquakes is available online at www.shakeout.org.

Panel Votes To Subpoena Neb. Governor Heineman

BY GRANT SCHULTE
Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — Gov. Dave Heineman will appear before a legislative committee this month to answer questions about Nebraska's handling of prisoners, including one who later killed four people in Omaha and hundreds whose sentences were miscalculated.

The seven-member committee voted unanimously Thursday to subpoena the governor for a hearing on Oct. 29 at the Capitol.

Committee members are expected to ask Heineman about a variety of prison issues, including the legality of some steps that prison officials took while accounting for inmates who were released too early. The roundup came after news broke that state officials had calculated hundreds of inmate sentences in a way that ran afoul of previous Nebraska Supreme Court rulings.

Heineman said Thursday that he welcomed the inquiry and would have appeared voluntarily, but was never asked. In a meeting with reporters at

the Capitol, the Republican governor and Attorney General Jon Bruning blamed former state prisons attorney George Green for most of the problems. Green retired in August under threat of being fired, and later admitted that he didn't read a Nebraska Supreme Court ruling that outlined the correct way to calculate sentences.

Bruning also disputed allegations that state officials ignored two Nebraska Supreme Court rulings that pertained to the prisoner roundup, and he defended embattled state corrections director Mike Kenney. Kenney acknowledged to the committee last week that he allowed more than half a dozen inmates to remain out of prison, despite legal advice from Green. Green, who retired shortly thereafter, warned that Kenney's proposed "temporary alternative placement" wasn't authorized in state law.

Bruning said Thursday that



Heineman

it still isn't clear whether Kenney had the power to let those inmates remain out of prison, but the law doesn't expressly forbid it. He also noted that the inmates were required to wear tracking bracelets on their ankles and report twice a week to parole officers.

Heineman said he was never made aware of the program, and has since told Kenney that he should have coordinated with the attorney general's office. Kenney said he created the program for seven inmates.

Kenney, who was appointed by Heineman, told the committee that he alone created and approved the temporary placement program. That statement drew skepticism from some lawmakers.

"Frankly, it defies logic for the director of the Department of Corrections to develop a plan, be told it's against the law and then go ahead with it," said Sen. Steve Lathrop of Omaha, the committee chairman. "At the same time, the governor is saying we will not tolerate anybody who is acting outside of the law. It is my belief that somebody authorized Kenney" to go forward

with the program, despite the warnings.

Lawmakers on the panel are also probing the state's handling of Nikko Jenkins, who was released from prison despite warnings from state ombudsmen and psychiatrists who examined him while he was incarcerated. Jenkins had pleaded for mental health treatment, but was released in July 2013 after spending 3 1/2 years in a segregated cell. He went on to kill four people in Omaha the following month.

The Oct. 29 hearing will take place less than a week before the Nov. 4 election for Nebraska governor. Heineman, a Republican, is not returning to office due to term limits. Republican Pete Ricketts of Omaha and Democrat Chuck Hassebrook of Lyons are vying for the seat in a state that generally favors the GOP.

Lathrop, a Democrat who is often at odds with the governor, noted that the prisons committee decision to subpoena Heineman was unanimous. The officially nonpartisan panel is comprised of three Democrats, three Republicans and state Sen. Ernie Chambers, a left-leaning independent.

Gay Marriage Ban Headed To Court

BY CARSON WALKER
Associated Press

SIoux FALLS — A federal judge could decide Friday whether to dismiss a lawsuit challenging South Dakota's ban on gay marriage, with attorneys for both sides expected to argue their case as similar fights play out across the nation.

The lawsuit, filed in May by six same-sex couples, challenges a 1996 state law and a voter-approved 2006 constitutional amendment that ban gay marriage. Attorney General Marty Jackley is defending the ban, saying it should be up to voters and state lawmakers — not a judge — to define marriage in South Dakota.

"That's what this case is about," Jackley reiterated Thursday in an inter-

view with The Associated Press.

Jackley has asked that the case be dismissed, and both sides will argue their case in Sioux Falls on Friday before U.S. District Court Judge Karen Schreier.

The couples are frustrated that the state is "trying to deny them their day in court," said their Minneapolis-based attorney, Josh Newville. But he said they remain steadfast in their fight to have the state grant them the right to marry and to recognize same-sex marriages legally performed in other states.

Schreier could rule Friday or file her decision later. If she immediately sides with Jackley, attorneys for the couples have vowed to appeal to the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, which also covers federal appeals from Arkansas, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska and

North Dakota.

The U.S. Supreme Court last week denied appeals from five states, but that decision legalized gay marriage in about 30 states because the cases were appealed from other federal appellate courts that had overturned the bans and have jurisdiction over several states.

The Supreme Court would likely agree to take a gay marriage case if a federal appeals court upholds a state's ban and thereby creates a split in federal appeals court rulings, Newville said.

Jackley said it was possible though unlikely that South Dakota's case would end up in the Supreme Court because cases in other states are further along in the courts. The Dakotas were the last states to see lawsuits challenging their gay marriage bans.

Judge Asked To Toss Lawsuit Against Iowa Agency

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — The Attorney General's office has asked a judge to dismiss a wrongful-death lawsuit filed by the estate of an Omaha boy strangled by his mother in 2009.

On Wednesday, the office asked a judge to grant a motion for summary judgment, which would effectively throw out the lawsuit against the state's Health and Human Services Department. Douglas County judge Mark Ashford took the motion under advisement, the Omaha World-Her-

ald reported.

The suit claims the agency failed in acting on repeated warnings from the 12-year-old boy's mother and other family members about his welfare. It also claims the department was negligent in failing to properly investigate allegations of neglect and abuse of Michael Belitz.

Before Belitz's death, his mother left a voicemail for a health and human services caseworker asking to place her son in foster care.

"It feels like I'm spiraling

downward, so I'm concerned for him and me," Angela Manns told the caseworker in a message.

Department officials said the caseworker tried to return Manns' call, but that a voicemail wasn't available. Manns called the department back again days later, and the caseworker called back, saying in a voicemail to contact the agency's child abuse and neglect hotline.

The state argues it couldn't have known based on those phone calls that Manns

planned to kill her son. Authorities found her son's decomposed body in a bathtub of water and cat litter. Manns admitted to strangling him with a phone cord while he slept. She pleaded no contest to second-degree murder.

"Any reasonable reading of the transcript of that phone call does not give rise to a belief that physical abuse of any kind was imminent or even about to happen," Assistant Attorney General Dave Lopez said in court Wednesday.

YANKTON DAILY PRESS & DAKOTAN

MISSOURI VALLEY MV Shopper

Celebrate Veterans Day

Recognize a Veteran or Military Personnel in our November 11th issue of the Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan and Missouri Valley Shopper

November 11, 2014 Military Salute

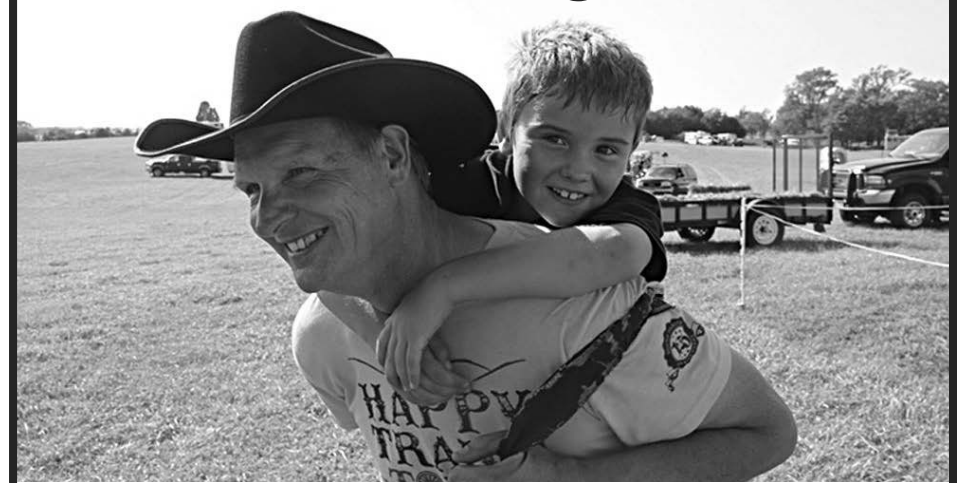
Deadline: Friday, October 31st

Mail to: "Military Salute", Yankton Media, 319 Walnut St., Yankton, SD 57078
Email to: classifieds@yankton.net and we will call for credit card payment

Submission Fee: \$20 Includes a photo and 20 words
Runs in the Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan and Missouri Valley Shopper

Veteran's Name _____
Branch _____
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SPECIAL MESSAGE (20 words or less)

COWBOY VALUES & the State Legislature



I'm not an actual cowboy. But I grew up on a Yankton County livestock farm, so I know something about cowboy (and farm) values. I try to teach them to the grandkids - when they're not treating me like an old horse. I also try to practice them in Pierre at the state legislature. Here are ten Cowboy Values that really fit our times:

- Stand Up For What You Believe
- Keep Your Word
- Protect the Young and the Weak
- Be Tough But Fair
- Persevere Despite the Odds
- Accept Responsibility
- Learn From Your Mistakes
- See the Good in All People
- Do What Has to be Done
- Talk Less & Say More (I'm working on that one)

HE'S PULLING FOR YOU
Bernie Hunhoff
STATE LEGISLATURE
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BERNIE HUNHOFF
STATE SENATE
- for Yankton County!