

Mountain Lion Killed At Neb. Ranch

CHADRON, Neb. (AP) — Authorities say a young female mountain lion has been killed on a ranch south of Chadron in the Nebraska Panhandle. The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission said in a news release Friday that the animal was shot in the ranch's yard near the landowner's house and chicken coop. The animal's age was estimated at 18 months, and it weighed about 63 pounds.

German Balloonists Land In Nebraska

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — A pair of Germans forced to land a gas air balloon in a Nebraska soybean field because of bad weather have learned why Nebraskans are considered nice.

Heinz-Otto and Marion Lausch were one of seven teams participating in an international ballooning competition earlier this month, the *Lincoln Journal Star* reported. They departed from New Mexico, traveling for more than 45 hours and 675 miles until thunderstorms forced them to land in a soybean field near Alvo, Nebraska.

Marion Lausch went looking for help, but couldn't find anyone at a nearby farmhouse. The crew following them was 100 miles away.

Soon, deputies with the Cass County sheriff's office arrived. The field's owner had called police after spotting the balloon dropping onto her land around midnight. The next morning, she came out and apologized, inviting the couple and their crew in for coffee and homemade cookies.

The couple ended up placing fourth in the 19th America's Challenge, part of the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta. Competitors travel as far as they can with a fixed amount of gas. The top honors went to a Spanish team that flew more than 53 hours and nearly 1,200 to Campbellsville, Kentucky.

"Now we can say: There are very friendly people living in Nebraska," Heinz-Otto Lausch said.

In the competition, the only items participants can have on board are navigation instruments, weights such as sandbags, food, water and clothing.

Dakotas Power Line Decision Appealed

ABERDEEN (AP) — A South Dakota man is appealing a decision to allow construction of a 160-mile electrical transmission line from southeastern North Dakota to northeastern South Dakota.

The *Aberdeen American News* reports that court papers show Gerald Pessal of Lily is appealing the decision by the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission. His attorney declined to comment on the appeal.

The proposed line is a joint venture of Montana-Dakota Utilities and Otter Tail Power. It would stretch from a Big Stone power plant substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota, to a substation near Ellendale, North Dakota, and would cost up to \$370 million. The utilities hope to begin construction in 2016 and complete it in 2019.

South Dakota regulators approved a permit for the project in August.

SD Teacher Wins Award, \$25,000 Prize

SIOUX FALLS (AP) — A Sioux Falls kindergarten teacher has been honored for her work in the classroom.

Hawthorne Elementary teacher LeeAnna Rabine was honored Friday with a Milken Educator Award, and the \$25,000 cash prize that comes with it. She was presented the award during a surprise school assembly in her honor.

Rabine has taught for 10 years at Hawthorne, where a large proportion of her students are learning the English language.

The Milken Family Foundation honors dozens of teachers around the country each year. Rabine is the 17th South Dakota educator to win the award since 2002.

Report: Weiland Outraised Rounds

PIERRE (AP) — Campaign finance reports show Democrat Rick Weiland has outraised Republican Mike Rounds by more than \$60,000 in South Dakota's tight U.S. Senate race.

The race until recently had been considered a GOP lock.

Weiland's report released Friday show the Democrat has raised about \$330,000 between Oct. 1 and Oct. 15, compared to Rounds' roughly \$269,000 haul. Rounds holds a bank advantage as of Oct. 15, the last day reported before the election. Rounds has about \$667,000, while Weiland is sitting on \$334,000. Independent Larry Pressler has raised roughly \$54,000 during that period and has about \$169,000.

Daugaard Has Huge Cash Edge

BY BOB MERCER
State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE — The three candidates for governor filed their campaign finance reports Friday at the deadline for the Nov. 4 general election.

The Republican candidate, Gov. Dennis Daugaard, held a giant advantage over the Democratic nominee, state Rep. Susan Wismer of Britton.

The independent candidate, Michael Myers of Centerville, lagged by a enormous margin.

The reports were for fundraising and spending since the June primary.

Daugaard reported raising \$692,826.67 and spending \$878,672.73, including \$624,891.67 for advertising.

His campaign's largest donations to other causes were \$100,000 to the South Dakota Republican Party and \$10,000 to state Sen. Shantel Krebs, the Republican candidate for secretary of state.

He also gave money to a long list of other candidates and political organizations including many running for the Legislature. None of those contributions was for more than \$1,000.

Daugaard had \$1,460,323.18 cash on hand.

Daugaard received more contributions and larger contributions than did Wismer. Daugaard's list of individual contributors ran more than 11 pages, while Wismer's list ran more than five pages.

Wismer reported raising \$194,202.50 and spending \$238,716.93, including \$126,708.08 for advertising.

Wismer's report noted she contributed \$25,000 to her campaign and accepted a \$25,000 loan from her father, Maurice Jones. Wismer had \$18,391.64 cash on hand.

Among her contributors was U.S. Sen. Tim Johnson, who is retiring. His political committee gave \$5,000 to her campaign.

Myers reported raising \$325 and spending \$3,688.10. Myers' report noted he contributed \$3,440 to his campaign. He had \$156.07 cash on hand.

Feds Act To Protect Two Butterflies; Farmers Wary

PIERRE (AP) — The federal government has added two Upper Midwest butterfly species to its list of threatened and endangered species, pleasing conservationists but worrying farm groups who say it could make it harder for their members to earn a living off the land.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on Thursday named the Dakota skipper as threatened and the Poweshiek skipperling as endangered under the Endangered Species Act. Both of the inch-long, brown-and-orange butterflies were once found in eight Midwestern and Plains states, but their populations declined due to several reasons, including the loss of native prairie vegetation and agriculture, the agency said.

"We recognize the reason we still have any Dakota skippers or Poweshiek skipperlings on the landscape at all is the conservation ethic of ranchers who have had the foresight to conserve grasslands in the Upper Midwest," Tom Melius, Midwest regional director for Fish and Wildlife, said in a statement. "Our hope is to continue to work with landowners and partners to conserve these butterflies and the valuable habitat they depend upon."

Tierra Curry, a senior scientist at the Center for Biological Diversity, praised the listings. In a statement, she said that "protecting the last high-quality prairie habitats for the butterflies will keep these special places safe, along with all the other plants and animals that need them to survive."

But U.S. Rep. Kevin Cramer, R-N.D., said he wonders if the listings will even help the butterflies, and he worries the move will hurt the farming, ranching, energy and transportation industries.

"This is most alarming since no studies have been done to estimate the value the public places on preserving the two butterflies nor any examination of how their decline or extinction would affect our ecosystem," he said.

The North Dakota Stockmen's Association worries about harm to private property rights. Executive Vice President Julie Ellingson told *The Bismarck Tribune*.

"We think this will have implications for those who make their living on the land," she said.

The South Dakota Farmers Union and Farm Bureau both will be monitoring the upcoming designation of critical habitat for the butterflies, according to the *Argus Leader* newspaper.

"The devil is in the details with a recovery plan and a habitat area," Farm Bureau Executive Director Wayne Smith said. The Dakota skipper is found in western Minnesota, northeastern South Dakota and the eastern half of North Dakota. Small numbers of Poweshiek skipperlings survive Michigan and Wisconsin. It's been several years since the butterfly has been seen in Minnesota, Iowa and the Dakotas.

Nebraska Cigar Bars Given Temporary OK For Smoking

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Nebraska's Liquor Control Commission has decided to allow smoking at cigar bars, pending a Nebraska Supreme Court ruling.

The cigar bar owners will be able to renew their special licenses, which otherwise would have expired Oct. 31, the *Lincoln Journal Star* reported.

Commission executive director Hobert Rupe told the newspaper that he's been warning the bar owners that they might have only a few days to stop the smoking once the court rules. The underlying liquor licenses still would be good, Rupe said.

A ruling was not included among those issued by the state Supreme Court on Friday morning.

The court struck down exceptions to the state's public smoking ban for cigar bars and tobacco shops on Aug. 29, but it spared the exception for designated hotel guestrooms in which smoking was allowed.

The court said the hotel rooms were akin to private homes. But the court said exceptions for cigar bars and tobacco retailers amounted to unconstitutional special legislation. The ruling stated that allowing patrons to smoke in cigar bars and tobacco shops simply because it was convenient didn't conform to the purpose of the ban, "which is to protect the public and employees from the dangers of secondhand smoke."

The Nebraska Attorney General's Office subsequently asked the court to rehear the case, arguing in part that the judges failed to properly consider that lawmakers intended to protect cigar bars and tobacco shops from going out of business. The court agreed, and in late September, it decided to let a group of eight cigar bars and tobacco shops submit a brief laying out its arguments for keeping the exemptions.

A Yankton County Auditor Needs To Comprehend Computer Technology

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Source: South Dakota Legislative Audits

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Let's Tune Up South Dakota



Bernie, with grandkids Laura & Steven

We bought this old pickup in 1978 when we started *The Observer*, and we used it in the 1980s when we started *South Dakota Magazine*. It's old, but it gets better with age if you take care of it. The same is true of our state. South Dakota needs a tune-up here and there, and that's the duty of the legislature. Someday, I hope to show Laura and Steven and the other grandkids how to drive a pickup with a four-on-the-floor. And when they reach that age I hope their home state is running even better than it is today. I'll do my best to make that happen as your state senator.

Bernie Hunhoff

State Senator — for Yankton County!

(paid for by Bernie Hunhoff for State Senate)