

## MIDWEST DIGEST

### Cropland Rents Top \$100

SIoux FALLS (AP) — A government report shows cash rental rates average more than \$100 an acre for cropland in east-central and southeast South Dakota.

The Agricultural Statistics Service says the highest rates are \$150 an acre in Moody County, followed by Union County at \$144 an acre and Minnehaha County at \$136 an acre. Ten years ago, rental rates in the three counties were \$73 to \$88 per acre.

Statewide, the average cash rent for cropland is \$71.50. Rental rates on pastureland average \$16 an acre statewide.

### Biologist: Weather Causing Deer Decline

SPEARFISH (AP) — A biologist says weather patterns, not mountain lions, are responsible for the recent decline in the number of deer in the Black Hills.

John Laundre, who appeared Saturday at Black Hills State University in Spearfish, said lower winter temperatures and more snow since 2007 have increased stress on deer and lowered their numbers.

According to Rapid City television station KEVN, Laundre said mild winters during an eight-year drought from 2000-2007 accounted for an increased deer population.

Laundre lectured at the invitation of the Black Hills Mountain Lion Foundation, which is trying to counter a movement calling for a reduction in the number of mountain lions.

Laundre said far more humans are killed each year in deer-automobile collisions than are killed by mountain lions.

### 2 Officers Assaulted In Bellevue Brawl

BELLEVUE, Neb. (AP) — Bellevue police say eight people were arrested after a 15-year-old girl's birthday celebration turned raucous.

Police Chief John Stacey said in a news release Sunday that one officer was kicked in the face and another was hit in the face during a disturbance at a rental hall about 10:30 p.m. Saturday. Both suffered minor injuries.

Private security officers summoned police when a fight began to escalate. In addition to two officers being struck, beer bottles were thrown at a third officer, but that officer wasn't struck.

Seven adults and one juvenile were arrested, including two for assault on an officer.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement have detained five of the eight people arrested.

■ Get Updates At Yankton Online (www.yankton.net)

## Optimism, Worries Amid Rush To Tap Oil In West

BY MEAD GRUVER  
Associated Press Writer

CHEYENNE, Wyo. — A well named Jake and a controversial drilling technique are fueling a Western oil rush, raising hopes for economic revival and questions about the environment — and who's going to share in the wealth.

Not many wells have been drilled yet, but just about everything else is in place for an oil boom in eastern Wyoming, northern Colorado and western Nebraska, where the Niobrara Shale and its hard-to-tap crude lay nearly two miles underground.

Preliminary work is under way to map underground geological formations to figure out the best places to drill. Oil prospectors are poring over courthouse records to see who holds mineral rights so they can negotiate deals.

Companies large and small are betting millions that the Niobrara holds gobs of recoverable oil like the Bakken Shale field in western North Dakota. With oil money leading the way, North Dakota has coasted through the recession with 3.6 percent unemployment, lowest of any state, and a budget surplus of over \$500 million.

Wealth like that could transform Cheyenne, a wind-swept state capital with too many vacant old buildings, and other parts of the exploration area with more jobs, more tax revenue and bustling support businesses.

Surely everyone is excited, right?

Not exactly, not with so many questions still to be answered.

"I've got mixed emotions about it, really. In the past, it's just been a farmer community," farmer Todd Martin said as he unloaded wheat from a truck to a bin in Carpenter, a town with dirt streets and maybe 100 people 25 miles southeast of Cheyenne. "It's going to change some people's lives, if they hit."

Hardly anyone outside the industry talks about the oil rush for long without mentioning, apprehensively, the Gulf of Mexico catastrophe. Such a difficult-to-end spill would be hard to imagine happening here.

That doesn't mean an oil boom couldn't create a booming headache.

Even minor spills would be a very up-close-and-personal problem for homeowners, particularly in the wide ring of fairly new homes on 5- to 40-acre lots surrounding Cheyenne.

"That Gulf deal makes you a little uneasy," said Paul Terry, a former Oregon logger who moved to his house on 10 acres north of Cheyenne a couple years ago. "If I had them messing with my stuff, I'd want some ground rules. I'm not against it, but I'm not saying give them a free hand."

He said three companies have approached him in the last few months about possibly drilling beneath his property.

As in the Bakken, drilling in the Niobrara wouldn't be profitable without hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, which some have blamed for groundwater contamination. It involves pumping a pressurized mix of water, sand and chemicals underground to crack open fis-

tures and improve the flow of oil or gas.

The Wyoming Oil and Gas Conservation Commission in June passed a range of tougher state rules for oil and gas drilling, including fracking.

Martin said he researched fracking online and believes it's probably safe enough for his farm on the Colorado-Wyoming line.

"If they cut corners, then sure, it can contaminate the groundwater," he said. "You hope they do it the way they're supposed to."

The situation is complicated by the fact that many people don't own the rights to minerals beneath their land. Whoever does has a right to put an oil well in your yard, with or without your permission, and doesn't have to share the profits — just the pollution.

Even among those who own their minerals, not all are daydreaming much about getting rich.

"Beverly Hillbillies, rags to riches, we've got oil? Not necessarily," said Diane Bishop, who owns 70 acres near Cheyenne. She and her husband, Rick, who are moving here from Texas and plan to build a log home on their land later this year, own the mineral rights beneath half of their property.

"We'll be lucky to get enough money to pay the taxes on our property out there," Bishop said.

Companies intend to drill not only downward to the Niobrara but also horizontally, sometimes half a mile or more, after reaching the formation. That means one well could cross beneath several properties. Anyone who owned less than a substantial chunk of land — upward of a

square mile — would have to divvy up royalties with at least one and possibly several neighbors.

Big-time landowners, mainly cattle ranchers who own their minerals, would be in the best position to strike it rich.

All of this speculation began with Jake. The well in far northern Colorado was yielding 1,770 barrels of oil a day — eye-popping production for this region — after it was drilled and tracked for Houston-based EOG Resources last fall. Jake's production has tapered off significantly, as usually happens, but not before other companies took notice.

An old-fashioned land rush was on.

So far this year, more than 100 drilling permits have been granted in southeast Wyoming, far surpassing all previous activity in the area.

Meanwhile, Wyoming has reaped a record \$101 million since May by auctioning off rights to drill on state land, the vast majority of it in the eastern part of the state. Nebraska and Colorado have set similar records.

The big question is how much oil is down there, and all eyes are on the next wells to be drilled. As soon as this fall, they could show whether a wide swath of the Niobrara covering hundreds of square miles is likely to be as productive as the Bakken, said Bruce Hinchey, president of Petroleum Association of Wyoming.

"If they come in pretty good, I think next year is going to be a barn-burner," he said.

## OBITUARIES

### Nicholas (Nick) LaCroix

Nicholas (Nick) Ray LaCroix, age 21, of Yankton passed away on Saturday, September 18, 2010 in Crofton, NE due to injuries sustained from a vehicle accident.

Funeral services will be held at 1:00 p.m. Wednesday, September 22, 2010 at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Yankton with Rev. Timothy Learman officiating. Burial will be in the Yankton Cemetery.

Visitations will be from 4-9 p.m. Tuesday, September 21, 2010 at the Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Home and Crematory, Yankton with a 7 p.m. prayer service. Visitations will resume one hour prior to the service at the church.

Pallbearers will be Tanner Olson, Bobby Adams, Jr., Mark LaCroix, Mitch LaCroix, Matt



LaCroix

LaCroix, and Merlin LaCroix, Jr. Nick was born on October 4, 1988 to Marlin and Laurie (Yun) LaCroix in Sioux Valley Hospital in Sioux Falls, SD. He was baptized on October 23, 1988 at Good Shepherd

Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, SD and confirmed on April 27, 2003 in St. John's Lutheran Church in Yankton, SD. Nick attended grade school and graduated from Yankton High School. Nick was employed by his father's construction company, LaCroix Construction and worked week-ends at 81 Seafood and Chophouse. He enjoyed all things but especially sports and NFL games. Nick loved everyone but his family and friends always came first. Nick was known for his big heart and caring attitude.

Those who will always cherish his memory are his parents, Marlin and Laurie LaCroix of Yankton, SD; his brothers, Neal LaCroix and his fiancée, Christina Kaiser and Nathan LaCroix, all of Yankton; his sisters, Amy (Bobby, Jr.) Adams of Bristow, VA and Lisa (Tanner) Olson of Tea, SD and his grandmothers, Harriet Yun of Yankton, SD and Delores LaCroix of Crofton, NE and one nephew, Porter Olson.

Those who preceded him in death are his grandfathers, Edward Yun and Merlin LaCroix, his uncle, Mervin LaCroix, and cousin, Aaron Mutchler.

Yankton Press & Dakotan  
September 20, 2010

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Online condolences at:  
www.opsahl-kostelfuneralhome.com

### Tracy Arens

Tracy Marie Arens, age 27 of Yankton, South Dakota and formerly of Crofton, Nebraska, died in a one-vehicle accident southwest of Crofton on Saturday, September 18, 2010.

Mass of Christian Burial will be on Tuesday, September 21, 2010 at 10:30 a.m. at St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church in Crofton with Rev. Michael Schmitz officiating. Burial will be in the St. Rose of Lima Cemetery in Crofton.

Visitation will be on Monday from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. with a Vigil Service and Video Tribute at 7:00 p.m. at the church. Visitation will begin one hour prior to services on Tuesday at the church.

The Wintz Funeral Home in Crofton is in charge of arrangements. To send online condolences or to view the video tribute, please visit www.wintzrayfuneralhome.com.



Arens

grew up in Crofton and graduated from Crofton High School in 2001. For the past year she has lived in Yankton where she worked at the Stepping Stones Day Care Center.

Tracy is survived by her 3 children, Makenzie Sassaman, Cody Sassaman and Elyse Larson all of Yankton; her parents, Bill and Vicki Arens of Crofton; a brother, Ben "B.J." Arens and his fiancée Sarah Paulsen of Yankton, maternal grandparents, Charles and Mariellen Maly of Crofton; paternal grandmother, Lucille Arens of

Yankton; maternal great grandmother, Clara Jilg of Yankton; aunts and uncles, Kay and Rocky Wampol of Yankton; Russ and Jenny Maly of Sumner, Washington; Tim and Cherie Maly of Norfolk, Virginia; Lori and Gordy Mueller of Crofton; John and Beverly Maly of Augusta, Kansas; and Amy and Pete Bramschreiber of Crofton.

She was preceded in death by her paternal grandfather, Gilbert Arens and an uncle, Rick Maly.

Yankton Press & Dakotan  
September 20, 2010

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### Rob Frei

WAGNER — Funeral services for Robert "Rob" L. Frei, 62 of Wagner will be 1:00 p.m. Tuesday, September 21, 2010 at the United Methodist Church in Wagner, with Pastor R. Duane Coates officiating.

Visitation will be at Crosby-Jaeger Funeral Home in Wagner from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. Monday, with the family present. Memorials will be directed to the Wagner Foundation.

Robert "Rob" Laird Frei, son of Robert H. and Betty (Laird) Frei, was born June 24, 1948 in Yankton, SD. He died Friday, September 17, 2010 at the Community Memorial Hospital in Wagner, after a valiant fight with cancer. Rob attained the age of 62 years, two months and 25 days.

Rob graduated from Wagner Community School, USD/Springfield, and Graduate School of Banking in Madison, WI. After his schooling, he worked for a short time in Stouffville, SD, then returned to Wagner and worked at the Commercial State Bank all of his life, where he eventually became the President and CEO. The bank and its employees were a second family to Rob.

Childhood friends having met on Pike Bay, Rob married Jill Erickson on June 11, 1971 at Hartford, SD. Three children were blessed to their union.

Rob's life was about family, his job and community service. He was an active member of the Wagner Jaycees, Wagner Rotary Club, Wagner Chamber Commerce, where he served as secretary for 25 years, Director of Wagner Memorial Hospital, United Methodist Church, where he served on the board of directors and Sunday School teacher, 25 year board member of Duck's Unlimited, Wagner Area Growth, Wagner Foundation, Fort Randall Boat Club, and Pike Bay Cottagers League. Rob was a former member of the Wagner Labor Day Committee and also had served as a Little League coach.

Rob was an avid outdoorsman. He enjoyed hunting, fishing, boating, golfing and cooking. Rob loved to spend time at the cabin in Minnesota with his family and was blessed to go there in August. He loved his hunting dogs and they reciprocated. Rob's main love in life was always his family and grandchildren. He will be remembered for always going the extra mile for his family and others, but never asking for anything in return.

Thankful for having shared his life are his wife Jill and their children: Ericka and husband Dave Kotab and their son Radek; Bill and wife Patty and their children Colton and Callie, all of Wagner; and Michael and wife Kara and

their son Robert Laird of Pickstown; two sisters: Barbara and husband LaVerne Hrdlicka of York, NE and Bonnie and husband Dave Birger of Sioux Falls; and many friends.

Rob was preceded in death by his parents; his brother Bill; and grandson Logan Theodore Frei.

Yankton Press & Dakotan  
September 20, 2010

### Norma Trandahl

Norma Jean Trandahl was born July 31, 1928 near Alcester,



Trandahl

SD to Kenneth and Henrietta "Etta" (Nunsen) Jenkins. She died Saturday, September 18, 2010 at Morningside Care Center in Alcester at the age of 82 years, one month and 17 days.

Norma was raised in the Alcester area and graduated from Alcester High School. She worked in Omaha, NE

for a year before returning to Alcester to work as a dental assistant.

On June 4, 1948 Norma married Allen D. Trandahl and they moved to Winner, SD. She was a homemaker until Allen's death in 1974. She later worked for the school district as a cook and as a teacher's aid until her retirement. She enjoyed going out to eat with a group of ladies known as the "Lunch Bunch" in Winner, reading and spending time with her grandsons.

She is survived by her son, Mark (Linda) Trandahl of Winner, SD; daughters, Pat (Rick) Merkel of Crofton, NE and Pam Skovlund of Aurora, SD; seven grandchildren, Kelli (Jason) Reeves, Brett Skovlund, Ben (Ashley) Merkel, Chris Merkel, Sarah Merkel, Nick Trandahl and Ryan Trandahl; two great-grandchildren, Brooke and Landon and sister-in-law, Shirlee

Jenkins of Alcester. Norma was preceded in death by her parents, husband, Allen and brother, Clifton Jenkins.

Funeral services for Norma will be a.m. Tuesday, Sept. 21st at Wass Funeral Home in Alcester. Visitation will be Monday from 3-8 p.m. at Wass Funeral Home with the family present from 6-8 p.m.

Yankton Press & Dakotan  
September 20, 2010

### Harvery Gevens

Harvery E. Gevens, 80, of Yankton died Sunday (Sept. 19, 2010) at Avera Sacred Heart Hospital, Yankton.

Funeral services are at 10 a.m. Wednesday at Calvary Baptist Church, Yankton, with the Rev. Jon Cooke officiating. Burial will be in the Yankton Cemetery.

## Mom's Funeral Was Meaningful To Us, Which Was Just What She Wanted.

"From her favorite songs to her special prayers and the clergyman whom she respected, Mom's funeral was an important way for our family to share just how wonderful she was. It was a meaningful tribute that celebrated her life and the things she loved. Arranging many of the details ahead of time with Mom and the Wintz's helped make sure of that. When Mom died, the Wintz family took care of everything, providing us with comfort and peace of mind. Together, we created a meaningful funeral that was just the way Mom wanted it.

We know the value of creating a meaningful funeral service. Please contact us for more information.

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Our care and concern does not end with the funeral service. This week we remember with family and friends the anniversary of the deaths of:

**Sylvester Schaefer**  
who passed away on  
September 20, 2009

**Valeria Shade**  
who passed away on  
September 22, 2009

This remembrance is brought to you free of charge. If you have a loved one you would like remembered, contact us at Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Home & Crematory. *Guiding and serving families with compassion and trust.*

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