

MIDWEST

\$1.1M To Modernize Health Records

SIoux FALLS (AP) — A nonprofit that works with community health centers in North Dakota and South Dakota will receive a \$1.1 million grant to help pay for the switch to electronic health records.

U.S. Sen. Tim Johnson announced the federal stimulus grant for the Community HealthCare Association of the Dakotas on Tuesday.

Johnson says the grant should help small, rural health centers shift from paper to electronic records.

The nonprofit helps more than 30 community health centers in the two states that serve all patients even if they cannot pay for the service.

Motorcyclist Dies In 4-Vehicle Crash

MITCHELL (AP) — The South Dakota Highway Patrol says a man was killed after being thrown from his motorcycle in a four-vehicle crash near Mitchell.

Troopers say 44-year-old Jon Christensen of Mitchell was stopped behind two other vehicles at a road-construction site Monday night when pickup collided with his motorcycle. The impact caused a chain-reaction.

The pickup's driver, 20-year-old Justin Brian Iburg of Mitchell, told authorities he was distracted by his cell phone prior to the crash.

The patrol says Christensen was wearing a helmet but died while being transported to a Sioux Falls hospital. No one else was injured in the crash.

Neb. Landowner Kills Cougar

CHADRON, Neb. (AP) — A cougar has been killed in the Nebraska Panhandle for the second time this month.

The state Game and Parks Department said Tuesday a landowner killed a cougar last Friday about five miles southeast of Chadron.

Officials determined the shooting was justified because the landowner was protecting herself and her livestock from the 82-pound female cougar.

At the time of the shooting, the landowner was trying to free a goat that was stuck in a fence.

State officials shot a different cougar on a ranch about six miles north of Hemingford on Sept. 14.

Cougars, which also are called mountain lions, were shot in October 2006 west of Scottsbluff High School, in February 2008 near Scotts Bluff Country Club and in January 2009 east of the high school.

Dirty Dancing Leads To New School Rules

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — A Lincoln high school says students from other schools may not attend its school-sponsored dances, except for prom, under a new policy aimed at cleaning up what administrators consider dirty dancing.

Southwest High School administrators say they've been struggling to maintain decorum at the dances, where grinding and other sexually suggestive moves have become common. The Lincoln district lets schools set their own dance policies.

Southwest principal Rob Slauson told the Lincoln Journal Star that last year's homecoming dance was unacceptable.

"It was a really large crowd, and many students were reluctant to modify the way they were dancing," Slauson said.

Chaperones would tell dancers to clean up their moves, but some didn't pay any attention. Reprimanding someone who doesn't attend Southwest compounds the problem for chaperones and administrators, Slauson said.

Hence the new policy.

Student Katie Maude doesn't like it. Now she can't go to her senior homecoming dance with her boyfriend, who is not a student at Southwest.

"I'm just not really sure what Southwest is trying to accomplish," she said. "But if they're trying to make people mad, then they got the job done."

The principal said he understands the anger.

"I understand they'd like it to be different," Slauson said. "But we're going to keep working on this until our students meet the standard of acceptable behavior."

Man Goes To Prison For Sexual Assault

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — A 22-year-old Omaha man who admitted molesting a 6-year-old boy in Lincoln has been sentenced to 3- to 10 years in prison.

Court records say Shad Jenkins had pleaded no contest to attempted sexual assault of a child, after prosecutors lowered the charge and dismissed another in exchange for the plea.

Jenkins was sentenced Monday by Judge Steve Burns in Lancaster County District Court.

A Lincoln Police affidavit says Jenkins admitted molesting the boy in September and December of last year.

According to the Lincoln Journal Star, Jenkins' lawyer, Scott Helvie, said Jenkins was physically and sexually abused as a boy and was under state care until he turned 19.

Prof. Firing Draws Response From Faculty Group

BY WAYNE ORTMAN
Associated Press Writer

SIoux FALLS — A tenured professor dismissed by South Dakota State University said Tuesday he planned to meet privately with the executive committee of the Faculty Senate amid concerns that his firing could lead to another censure by a national group of scholars.

The Americans Association of University Professors (AAUP) maintains that Mike Catangui, as a tenured professor, was entitled to a hearing by a faculty review committee before he was fired for cause earlier this year. Officials with the Faculty Senate fear the AAUP could issue a censure over

the matter, as it did in 1962 over the dismissal of an agronomy professor who'd taught there 15 years.

"Censure is a black mark on the institution, it makes it hard to hire good faculty, and it's a major embarrassment in the academic world because it basically shows the institution is not living up to contractual standards," said Paul Johnson, chairman of the 36-member group.

Catangui, who had been Extension entomologist, is challenging the dismissal through a multistep grievance process that has concluded at the campus level and goes next to Jack Warner, executive director of the Board of

Regents that oversees higher education.

"It's a personnel matter, so I can't comment, but that is in the grievance process and it's proceeding along," Warner said.

The AAUP, founded in 1915 to preserve faculty academic freedom and due process, said Catangui was told he was dismissed for "performance deficiencies" and insubordination.

Catangui's predecessor as Extension entomologist, Ben Kantack, has said Catangui was let go because he refused to follow regional recommendations on when farmers should spray to prevent crop loss from soybean aphids.

Besides confirming his Tuesday meeting with Faculty Senate members, Catangui declined further comment about his case — as he has in the past — on the advice of his lawyer.

The Faculty Senate is gathering information and might adopt a resolution addressing academic freedom, contract violations, or unprofessional behavior, Johnson said.

"On personnel or employment issues such as this we really don't have anything beyond the moral and ethical position that we can present," he said.

The 1962 censure wasn't lifted until 1991, when the regents adopted policies on tenure and dismissal in agreement with the

Council of Higher Education, the union that represents university faculty.

"From our perspective it sets a bad precedent and if I were a faculty member at South Dakota State University I would be concerned," said Gregory Scholtz, director of AAUP's Department of Academic Freedom, Tenure and Governance in Washington, said of the process behind Catangui's dismissal.

Censure would be up to AAUP membership at its annual summer meeting following a lengthy process that includes an on-campus investigation and a recommendation from a Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure.

Neb. Jobless Rate Falls To 4.6 Percent

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Nebraska's unemployment rate improved for the second straight month in August, coming in at 4.6 percent and maintaining the third-lowest rate in the nation, state officials said Tuesday.

July's unemployment rate was 4.7 percent and the June rate was 4.9 percent, according to the state Labor Department.

Nebraska's rate is less than half the national rate of 9.6 percent, and two-tenths of a point lower than the state's August 2009 rate of 4.8 percent.

Only North Dakota's 3.7 percent and South Dakota's 4.5 percent unemployment rates are lower than Nebraska's.

Labor Commissioner Catherine Lang credited a rise in manufacturing jobs — 250 positions added in August — for

decreasing Nebraska's rate. She said the sector has seen growing employment in five of the past six months.

The state also said the leisure and hospitality sector saw job growth in August, adding 458 jobs.

The number of people employed in the state dropped to 930,426 in August from July's 932,330. The total labor force also declined, to 975,688 from 978,542 in July.

The unemployment rate continued to improve in Omaha, the state's largest city, and matched the August 2009 rate. The city's rate declined to 4.9 percent last month from July's 5.3 percent and June's 5.5 percent.

Unemployment improved to 3.9 percent in Lincoln in August, from July's 4.2 percent and

June's 4.7 percent. In July 2009, the rate in the capital city was 4.3 percent.

Unemployment rates for Omaha and Lincoln are not seasonally adjusted and cannot be compared to the state unemployment rate.

Here are the preliminary labor market rates for August, followed by the revised July rates:

- Beatrice: 6.3, 5.1
- Columbus: 3.7, 4.0
- Fremont: 4.6, 5.2
- Grand Island: 3.9, 4.3
- Hastings: 4.1, 4.3
- Kearney: 3.1, 3.2
- Lexington: 4.8, 5.2
- Norfolk: 3.7, 4.1
- North Platte: 3.8, 4.2
- Red Willow: 3.6, 3.9
- Scotts Bluff: 4.8, 5.2

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