

Nebraska Ends TransCanada Sponsorship

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — The University of Nebraska-Lincoln athletic department is ending its sponsorship agreement with TransCanada. Athletic director Tom Osborne said Wednesday that his department has taken no position on TransCanada's proposed Keystone XL pipeline that would run through the state. Osborne said the pipeline has become "increasingly politicized" and that the athletic department avoids advertisements of a political nature. TransCanada is seeking a federal permit for a pipeline that would carry Canadian oil over an aquifer that supplies drinking and irrigation water to parts of several states, including Nebraska. TransCanada spokesman Jeff Rauh said the company is disappointed in Osborne's decision. Rauh said the company would now look for other "community investment opportunities" in the state. Rauh didn't know how much TransCanada paid the athletic department since becoming a sponsor in April.

Sturgis City Council Hires New City Manager

STRURGIS (AP) — The Sturgis City Council has hired a new city manager. KOTA reports that Daniel Ainslie will assume the position on Nov. 1. Ainslie was previously the development manager for the city of Merced, Calif., where he was involved in many capital projects.

Sentencing Delayed Again For Ex-NU Regent

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — The sentencing date for former University of Nebraska Regent David Hergert has been delayed again. Hergert had been scheduled to be sentenced Wednesday, but a federal judge approved delaying that until Dec. 14. Hergert has admitted inflating the assets of Hergert Milling so he could keep a \$3 million loan from First National Bank of Omaha. Hergert pleaded guilty in March to one count of submitting a false document to a bank in a deal that is expected to get him probation. Hergert was removed from the university's board of regents in 2006 after the Nebraska Supreme Court ruled he broke campaign finance laws during his 2004 regent campaign and lied to conceal that. The Mitchell businessman lost his grain storage operation after officials discovered a grain shortage there.

Bachmann Vaccine Shot At Perry Stings Her

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) — Republican Michele Bachmann is feeling the sting of a presidential campaign jab gone awry. In a GOP debate this week, the Minnesota congresswoman criticized frontrunner Rick Perry over a controversial vaccination directive he signed as Texas governor. The executive order upset social conservatives and drew accusations of cronyism because the drug's maker donated to Perry's campaign. Bachmann went further after the debate and linked the human papillomavirus vaccine to mental retardation. The claim was roundly disputed by medical experts, who called it irresponsible and dangerous. Political observers say it muddied Bachmann's shot at Perry. Bachmann is trying to regain her footing in the race after a late-summer slide. She hopes to raise doubts about Perry among conservatives and both candidates.

S.D. Woman Sentenced For Vehicular Homicide

PARKER (AP) — A 29-year-old Parker woman has been sentenced to 15 years in prison for hitting and killing a woman while driving under the influence. KELO reports that Christina Clemens had ingested cocaine, an opiate and marijuana when she hit 44-year-old Tamera Sanner with her Ford Expedition on Oct. 7. Sanner died from her injuries three days later. Clemens had faced more than a dozen charges, including manslaughter and pleaded not guilty. But, through a plea deal, she pleaded guilty to lesser charges of vehicular homicide and hit and run.

Neb. Lawmakers To Tackle Population Loss

BY GRANT SCHULTE
Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — A Kansas program that offers tax breaks and college-loan payments to people who move to rural parts of the state could be on its way to Nebraska. State Sen. Galen Hadley of Kearney said a legislative panel will consider the program as a way to address population losses to urban areas. Hadley said an official from the Kansas Department of Commerce will testify about the program, which targets 50 counties as "rural opportunity zones."

The Legislature's Revenue Committee will hear public input on the idea at a hearing Thursday in Kearney. "If we don't do something, there's just going to be this continual movement east," Hadley said Wednesday. "Agriculture is still our biggest economic driver, and we've got to make sure we can do something to help our farmers and ranchers."

The program waives state income taxes — roughly \$1,800 annually for the average taxpayer — for up to five years if a person moves to one of the rural counties from out-of-state. Residents must not have lived in Kansas

within the last five years or earned more than \$10,000 from an in-state source, and the program sunsets in 2017.

The student loan forgiveness program will pay up to \$3,000 annually for up to five years for college graduates who move to one of the counties. The loan program applies to Kansas and out-of-state residents, but counties must agree to participate and share part of the cost.

Population experts have said the Kansas program is innovative, but question whether it can reverse a trend affecting much of the Midwest. Some demographers have said the tax breaks are better suited for companies to create jobs that will attract newcomers. And some Kansas counties have said the program has not yet proven its worth.

One group that has pushed for rural development strongly supports the idea and will ask lawmakers to act.

"We think it's a good idea," said Tom Jordison, executive director of Nebraska Renaissance, a group that seeks to revive the state's rural economy. "We have the opportunity to really address population decreases head-on here — to look at ways to incentivize people to move back to rural Nebraska."

Jordison said expanding computer technology gives potential employees an opportunity to work from home, without the traditional brick-and-mortar offices in urban settings.

"People do make decisions based on their economic well-being," said David Drozd, research coordinator at the University of Nebraska Omaha's Center for Public Research Affairs.

Drozd said Nebraska has lost more residents to Wyoming and South Dakota, which don't impose income taxes, than the state

has gained in each of the last 10 years. Drozd said other states, like Iowa, have created programs that encourage native residents to return home. Local governments in North Dakota have offered free land to attract people, he said, but the incentive sometimes created culture clashes when people from different parts of the country arrived.

Drozd said Nebraska's rural areas have seen small gains with the recession and rising commodity prices that make farming more profitable.

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