

Neb. Jobless Rate Remained At 4 Percent

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — The Nebraska Labor Department says the state's August unemployment rate matched July's figure and remained 4 percent. A department report released Friday says the figure was a half percentage point lower than the 4.5 percent of August 2011 and less than half the national rate of 8.1 percent for August. The national rate was 8.3 percent in July. Only North Dakota's August rate of 3 percent was lower than Nebraska's.

Red Meat Production Up In South Dakota

SIOUX FALLS (AP) — The U.S. Department of Agriculture says commercial red meat production in South Dakota totaled 85.8 million pounds during August. The figure is up 3 percent from a year ago and up 21 percent from July. Commercial hog slaughter for South Dakota totaled 390,900 head during August, compared to 382,900 head the year before. The average live weight was 263 pounds, up 6 pounds from a year earlier. Commercial sheep and lamb slaughter for South Dakota remained unchanged in August from last year at 300 head. Average live weight was 119 pounds, up 2 pounds from August 2011.

3 Fallen Firefighters To Be Honored Nationally

RAPID CITY (AP) — Three South Dakota firefighters killed in the line of duty last year will be honored at a national ceremony next month. Trampus Haskvitz, Jacob Waldner and William Waldner will be remembered during the 31st annual National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service in Emmitsburg, Md., on Oct. 7. The 23-year-old Haskvitz, of Buffalo Gap, died while fighting a forest fire in the Black Hills last August. Twenty-year-old Jacob Waldner and 22-year-old William Waldner with the Sunset Fire Department died in an explosion last September while they were helping fight a coal bin fire at the Sunset Hutterite Colony. The three are among 80 firefighters being honored during the memorial service on the grounds of the National Fire Academy.

S.D. Insurance Company Liquidated By State

WATERTOWN (AP) — The South Dakota Division of Insurance is liquidating a Watertown company because it is insolvent. Officials say a circuit court judge approved the liquidation order for Northern Plains Insurance Co., which is described as a company that specializes in offering high-risk auto insurance. State Insurance Director Merle Scheiber says the liquidation order enables his agency to protect policy-holders, including paying any valid claims.

Proposal Takes Aim At Tribal Teacher Shortages

SIOUX FALLS (AP) — South Dakota's Board of Regents thinks one answer to solving teacher shortages at tribal schools might exist right on the reservations. The board will ask state lawmakers for about \$447,000 for a program to train tribal members with bachelor's degrees to become educators in their communities, either as a main career or a secondary career. While they are teaching they would take coursework to earn a teaching license, with instructors coming to them from public universities or tribal colleges. The *Argus Leader* reports (http://argusne.ws/QGIpHb) the proposal is modeled after an effort at Black Hills State University. Supporters say it could benefit tribal schools that have trouble recruiting teachers. One supporter is Rosebud Sioux member Keith Moore, who just finished a two-year stint as director of the Bureau of Indian Education.

Neb. High Court Says Inmate Can Seek Divorce

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — The Nebraska Supreme Court is giving a state inmate another shot at divorce from behind bars. Javis Jones, acting as his own attorney, filed for divorce in 2010 after being sentenced to 22 to 34 years for child sex assault. The high court noted that after several follow-up letters from Jones asking about the case and requesting teleconference hearings, a Douglas County District judge dismissed the case without explanation. The Nebraska Court of Appeals upheld the dismissal, saying the prison likely would have denied Jones access to teleconference hearings. In an opinion released Friday, the Nebraska Supreme Court reversed those decisions, saying the district court abused its discretion in dismissing the inmate's complaint without explanation, and the lower appeals court erred in basing its decision on predictions of future events.

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New NASA Photo Satellite To Join 40-Year Mission

BY DIRK LAMMERS
Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS — A fleet of picture-snapping NASA satellites that for 40 years has documented forest fires, tsunamis and everyday changes in the Earth's geography will soon get a new member. With Landsat 8 set for a February launch, nearly 140 scientists and engineers from more than 25 countries are scheduled to gather in South Dakota next week to discuss how to best download, process and distribute the millions of data-rich images used in agriculture, education, business and government. Since 1972, Landsat satellites have been continuously snapping pictures across the globe as part of a 40-year mission to document the planet. But with Landsat 7 aging and its older sibling Landsat 5 failing, a new orbiter is needed to continue the long-term data record, said Jenn Sabers, remote sensing branch chief at the U.S. Geological Survey Center for Earth Resources Observations and Science. "One of the things we want to do is preserve that legacy by ensuring that we collect consistent data with the prior missions," Sabers said. "Although we have that consistency, we also want to make improvements."

The USGS Center for EROS, located in the middle of farmland north of Sioux Falls, is the main federal repository for satellite images. Officials wanted to locate the center in the middle of the U.S., and they chose South Dakota in 1970 over several other states, partly due to persistent campaigning by the late Sen. Karl Mundt. Members of the Landsat Technical Working Group will gather at the center next week to discuss how to best use the data-packed photos from the new orbiter, which will be known as Landsat 8 once it reaches space. The team, which provides scientific and technical input to the U.S. Geological Survey and NASA, will plan how to establish reception, processing and distribution capabilities from the new satellite. Landsat satellites help document calamities, such as forest fires and hurricanes, as well as mapping the world's mangrove forests and tracking ice in the Antarctic. The images differ from programs such as Google Earth, as you can't see individual homes, but are able to see larger things, such as highways, NASA says. Sabers said Landsat 8 will work harder, capturing at least 400 scenes a day instead of 250. It will also be able to point at angles not directly below the satellite, which can greatly assist gathering data during a disaster, she said. "Before where the satellite would see exactly below it in the track, we can actually point

the collection as well," Sabers said. "So we can get something next to where we would normally be collecting." Jim Irons, NASA's Landsat Data Continuity Mission project scientist, said Landsat 8's sensor will offer improved sensitivity and a higher signal-to-noise ratio for more accurate land cover maps. The new technology is like switching from a ruler marked every quarter of an inch to one marked every 1/64th or 1/128th of an inch, he said. Landsat 8 will also allow scientists to read ocean chlorophyll in coastal regions, detect cirrus clouds and correct for atmospheric effects. NASA launched the first Landsat satellite in 1972, and the orbiters have been sending images back to EROS ever since. Two are still orbiting the Earth. Landsat 7, launched in 1999, operates despite a faulty scan line corrector that leaves zig-zag gaps in some images. Landsat 5, which dates back to 1984, began showing signs of impending failure in November, prompting USGS to halt the downloading of images. Sabers said engineers resurrected an older sensor on Landsat 5 and it is sending data, but EROS is archiving the data it can't currently process. Landsat 6 never reached orbit after its 1993 launch because of a ruptured manifold.

Nebraska County Attorney's License Suspended For Year

BY MARGERY A. BECK
Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — The Deuel County attorney's law license was suspended for a year Friday by the Nebraska Supreme Court, raising questions about whether he'll continue as prosecutor for the western Nebraska county. Doug Palik's suspension was ordered for his mishandling of a woman's estate and for repeatedly lying to cover his incompetence and procrastination in the case, the state's high court said. Palik, who has been a licensed attorney since 1984, also will be subject to a year of supervisory probation following his suspension and must repay \$60,000 plus interest incurred by heirs of the estate to correct Palik's failings in the case. Palik declined to comment Friday on his suspension or his future as Deuel County's prosecutor. Messages left Friday for members of the Deuel County Board of Commissioners were not immediately returned. Palik's legal troubles began in March 2007, when Blanche Thompson died and left an estate of \$1.7 million, according to the Supreme Court's opinion. Her will named William Olson as her personal representative, and Olson hired Palik to help him administer the estate. The will named a woman who was to receive \$60,000 from Thompson's estate, and Olson

gave Palik a check to send on Nov. 9, 2007. Although Palik indicated to the court and Olson that he had sent the check on time, he didn't send it until June 25, 2008. After receiving the check, the woman indicated she wanted to renounce her share, so that the \$60,000 would pass directly to her son. Palik took back the check, drew up documents and had the woman sign them, but apparently did not realize that to renounce the money, the woman would have had to do so within nine months after the will went into effect. Nevertheless, when the son began to ask for the money in November 2009, Palik told the man that he had sent him a \$60,000 check and provided a shipment tracking number. The check never arrived, and the tracking number was invalid, the high court said. That scenario was repeated for months. "Obviously, all of Palik's claims that 'the check is in the mail' were lies," the state's high court wrote. The \$60,000 remained in the estate's bank account. When Olson distributed this account to the other beneficiaries of the will, this \$60,000 went to them instead of the woman or her son, according to the high court. The woman's son filed a grievance in November 2010 for the money, and when Olson learned of the malfeasance, he sent the woman's son \$60,000 of his own money to cover the error.

Atmosphere Different At Sioux Falls Salon

SIOUX FALLS (AP) — A Sioux Falls hair salon that was the site of a deadly hostage situation has taken steps to make employees feel more comfortable, and to remember the woman who was killed. A picture of former manager Amanda Connors now hangs in the back room of the Cost Cutters, and another picture of her is at her chair, surrounded by flowers. "If you ask (Connors' co-workers) they will all say they feel like they're a family here, and losing Amanda, they really felt like they lost a sister," Kaylee Spolum, the general manager of three Cost Cutters salons in Sioux Falls, told KDLT-TV (http://bit.ly/P5drYI). Police say Tyrone Smith shot and killed Connors Sept. 11 before locking himself in the store, ordering his girlfriend and her co-workers to the back and tying them up. Smith let the four workers go a half hour later, then shot and killed himself, according to authorities. Connors was killed trying to protect Smith's girlfriend, they said. "I didn't believe it, I didn't believe it. I mean, this is Sioux Falls

you know," Spolum said. "We really didn't know what to think. We didn't know if any of the girls would be willing to come back, and we didn't know if we would have a shop at all." Spolum said she made changes to the atmosphere inside the salon. "I actually changed the whole back room up and just did some things so it just felt different and looked different, and hung different pictures and different things just so it would feel different in there," she said. Employees are being offered counseling. They also will be meeting with police to learn about what to do if they ever are faced with another emergency situation. Hairstylist Alissa Doom said help also has come in another area. "Our customers have been really supportive and really amazing this past week, great," she said. "And we're just taking one day at a time." Spolum said there is only so much anyone can do. "It's sad," she said. "You know it will never be the same."

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