

Missing SD Inmate Being Sought

SIoux FALLS (AP) — South Dakota prison officials are looking for an inmate who failed to return to a work release center in Sioux Falls.

Officials say 33-year-old Jovan Prince was due to return to the Minnehaha County Correction Center Sunday morning following her shift at a work release job.

Prince is serving a five-year prison sentence for forgery out of Pennington County. The sentence is scheduled to be followed by a two-year term in April 2015 for a fourth offense drunken driving conviction.

Heineman: GI Must Accept Home Loss

GRAND ISLAND, Neb. (AP) — Gov. Dave Heineman says he understands Grand Island's disappointment over the loss of its veterans home — but that the city needs to accept it.

The *Grand Island Independent* reports that Heineman responded to questions last week during Husker Harvest Days about how Kearney was awarded a new \$121 million veterans home that will replace the outdated facility in Grand Island.

Heineman says bids of the four cities that sought the project can be found online.

But some say scoring on the bids doesn't make sense. Grand Island state Sen. Mike Gloor said he was shocked to see that Grand Island and Kearney had the same score for available workforce. He says Grand Island should have scored higher since it already has a veterans home workforce.

Report: Neb. Pickup Driver Did Not Stop

POTTER, Neb. (AP) — An accident reports say a 58-year-old driver of a pickup failed to stop at a stop sign when his truck crashed into a school bus crash that injured seven students.

Scottsbluff radio station KNEB reports that the Cheyenne County accident report says Robert Hilpert was eastbound on a county road in far west Nebraska when he missed the stop sign and plowed into the rear passenger side of the Potter-Dix school bus Thursday.

All seven students on the bus and its driver, as well as Hilpert, were injured and taken to a nearby hospital. At least two people were then flown to a Scottsbluff hospital, including Hilpert, who remains in critical condition.

SF Looking To Sell Off Some Of Its Land

SIoux FALLS (AP) — South Dakota's largest city might start selling off some its land.

Sioux Falls internal audit manager Rich Oksol says the city could be losing property tax revenue unless it unloads some of the \$134 million in property it owns.

The *Argus Leader* reports that the recommendation comes after an audit into city policies on property acquisitions and sales.

Oksol says the city should review its property holdings on a regular basis to determine if the city still needs the land, whether it's being used for its intended purpose, and whether there's an opportunity to sell.

SD Quintuplets Turn 50 In Aberdeen

ABERDEEN, (AP) — The first known surviving quintuplets in the United States were born on Sept. 14, 1963 in Aberdeen.

The *Aberdeen American News* reports that the quintuplets, four boys and a girl, were slated to celebrate their 50th birthdays Saturday in Aberdeen.

Mary Ann, Mary Catherine, Mary Magdalene and James Andrew also were slated to attend the wedding Saturday of their sister, Mary Margaret.

The quintuplets' mother, Mary Ann Fischer, died in December at age 79. The 1963 event brought intense media interest in the family.

James Fischer of Fargo, N.D., says it's the quint's first birthday without their mother. He says the time since her death has been difficult.

Insurance For Laptop Computers Lags

SIoux FALLS (AP) — Fewer than a quarter of the parents of children in the Sioux Falls school district who have received laptop computers have bought insurance, though officials say a change in the policy might prompt more to sign up.

The insurance policy is \$40 per year and covers all accidental damage to the Chromebook devices. The policy initially required the parent to pay the first \$75 each time a repair is needed.

The *Sioux Falls Argus Leader* reports that the policy was changed last week to make the parent pickup up only 50 percent of the each repair up to \$75, with the rest covered by the insurance plan.

The district has handed out about 10,000 Chromebooks to high schools, middle schools and some elementary schools so far this year.

Man Nears 1,000th Consecutive Service

RAPID CITY (AP) — A South Dakota man who promised his dying mother to find a church and attend it regularly is closing in on 1,000 consecutive Sunday services.

Kenneth Lee Ashmore of Rapid City made that vow in 1993, and on Sunday attended his 999th straight service at Cross-roads Wesleyan Church.

The *Rapid City Journal* reports that even a battle with cancer didn't stop the 78-year-old Ashmore from attending church.

On one occasion when Ashmore was confined to a hospital bed, the church pastor brought the service to him.

The church plans a celebration in his honor next Sunday.

Deadline Looms For Neb. Insurance Marketplace

BY GRANT SCHULTE
Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — Community groups are hustling to meet an Oct. 1 deadline to launch a new health insurance marketplace in Nebraska, a key piece of the federal health care law designed to steer users toward a coverage plan.

Nebraska state officials have maintained a hands-off approach to the marketplace, which requires hiring and training a small army of experts to guide newcomers through the process. Gov. Dave Heineman rejected a state-run option in November, saying it was too expensive for Nebraska taxpayers, so the federal government took charge of setting it up.

The responsibility for training the insurance "navigators" has fallen to two groups: Community Action of Nebraska, a nonprofit that has local offices in all 93 counties, and the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska, which will offer services primarily to American Indians. Both have received one-year federal grants to hire navigators. Nationally, the effort to establish navigator services includes more than 100 nonprofits and other organizations, which specialize in everything from running soup kitchens to organizing farm workers.

Officials with Community Action of Nebraska said they're confident they'll meet the deadline, but caution that early kinks could slow the service during the first days.

"Our biggest concern is there are so many pieces," said Roger Furrer, executive director of Community Action of Nebraska. "The car is being built as it goes down the road. Everyone has to get all of the pieces in line, all at the same time,

for this to work really well."

Another concern is the effort to reach groups that typically haven't sought coverage: Low-income residents who don't qualify for Medicaid, and the so-called "young invincible" population of healthy males in their 20s and 30s, who don't believe they need coverage. Community Action of Nebraska is

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ROGER FURRER

training 52 navigators, and plans to have 62 in place once the marketplaces open, Furrer said. The agency's goal is to bring some 42,000 uninsured residents into the marketplaces, which allow consumers to comparison shop for health insurance and see whether they qualify for federal subsidies. The group has received a \$562,000 federal grant.

Furrer said the group also has concerns that people who might benefit from the marketplaces will wait until the last minute. Procrastination could lead to gaps in coverage, even for high-risk customers who are expected to lose state coverage because they will qualify for the federal exchange. The 15th of each month serves as a cutoff: A consumer who enrolls on Jan. 5 will receive coverage starting Feb. 1, but a person who enrolls on Jan. 16 will end up waiting until March 1.

The Nebraska Department of Insurance has deferred to the federal government when it comes to advertising the health insurance marketplace, said

Bruce Ramge, the agency's director.

Ramge said the department will have a limited role in the marketplaces but will keep a list of registered navigators to protect against fraud.

The navigators-in-training include case managers who already work for the nonprofit agency, in addition to new staff members hired in local offices, Furrer said. They receive 20 hours of training, then must pass an exam and register with the Nebraska Department of Insurance.

Nebraskans who receive coverage through the state's comprehensive, high-risk insurance pool are slated to lose their state coverage on Jan. 1. Furrer said the state has already notified those residents

that they'll need to enroll in the marketplaces by Dec. 7 at the latest to maintain continuous coverage. Shifting them into the exchange is expected to provide a net cost savings for the state.

The Ponca Tribe of Nebraska has received a \$37,500 federal grant to cover the cost of a single, part-time navigator. The tribe also plans to train between eight and 12 members of its regular staff to serve as navigators. Two have completed the training so far, and the tribe is on schedule and expects to meet the Oct. 1 deadline, said Tina Villalpando, a contract health specialist for the tribe in Norfolk.

Villalpando said the tribe's service area includes more than 14,000 American Indians and Alaska Natives, including about 4,500 who are uninsured. Those residents are scattered in 12 counties in Nebraska, two in Iowa and one in South Dakota. It also extends to other tribes whose members live in the service area.

Bridges

From Page 1

and heavy trucks. Nearly all are on county roads with little traffic in rural areas, and many have weight limits that prohibit heavy vehicles. While the risk is less than if the bridges were on heavily traveled roads, that means cash-strapped county and municipal governments struggle to address the bridges.

Kevin Goeden, the state Transportation Department's chief bridge engineer, said each bridge is inspected every year or two, so each bridge on the list is safe for travel by vehicles within the maximum weight limit.

"It doesn't mean it's unsafe. It may be posted, and it should be safe up to that posted load," Goeden said.

Brown County is responsible for four bridges on the list — all about a century old or older — and one has been closed. County Highway Superintendent Jan Weismantel said the other three are dying of old age, but should be safe as long as drivers don't exceed the load limits, 3 tons for one and 5 tons for the other two. Those restrictions basically limit traffic to a car or pickup.

"Who's to say that somebody's not taking something that weighs more than 6,000 pounds across a 3-ton max bridge?" Weismantel said. "It's kind of a gamble. It's also very dangerous. Somebody could get killed."

Weismantel is in the same situation as her colleagues in many other South Dakota

counties. Brown County has 152 bridges, and she has to use her \$9 million annual road and bridge budget to maintain the 42 bridges on heavily traveled county roads. The other 110, typically on less traveled township roads, are of lesser priority. Most can't be replaced because a new bridge would cost at least several hundred thousand dollars, she said.

Bridge 180, near the small town of Barnard, was recently closed because of holes and other problems that made it unsafe. It would have cost

\$500,000 to replace, Weismantel said.

"I don't have the extra money to do it," Weismantel said.

State Sen. Mike Vehle, R-Mitchell, has tried for years to get more money for state and local roads and bridges. The state highway system is in good shape because federal stimulus money was used to fix nearly all bad roads and bridges, but counties, townships and some cities still need more money, he said. The Legislature in 2011 raised annual registration fees for vehi-

cles to provide what now amounts to an extra \$30 million a year for local government roads and bridges, but that fell about \$50 million short of their estimated need of \$80 million a year, Vehle said.

"Everyone wants good roads and bridges. No one wants to pay for it," Vehle said.

The state bridge system, which carries most traffic, is in good shape. The DOT reports that just 79 of the state-owned 1,798 bridges, or 4.4 percent, were rated structurally deficient.

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Sena Ehrhardt • Oct. 12

expo for her • Oct. 18-19

Rascal Flatts & The Band Perry • Oct. 24

Autumn Arts & Crafts Festival • Oct. 25-27

Spank! The Fifty Shades Parody • Nov. 7

Abbey Road - Live Tribute to the Beatles Nov. 9

The Graduate • Nov. 12-13

Winter Wonderland Kickoff • Nov. 22

The Oak Ridge Boys • Nov. 29

Lorie Line Holiday Show • Dec. 1

Moscow Ballet's Great Russian Nutcracker • Dec. 5

Tonic Sol-fa • Dec. 6-7

*See website for more dates.

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