

Woman Gets 6 Years For Drugs

SIoux FALLS (AP) — A Sioux Falls woman who used meth before her three children were killed in a house fire has been sentenced to six years in prison.

The Minnehaha County judge who sent Rhiannon White to the women's prison in Pierre says she'll be eligible for parole in 13 months.

She earlier pleaded guilty to felony drug possession.

The Dec. 22 fire killed 6-year-old Allivia Coon, 12-year-old Savannah Coon and 16-year-old Michael Hensley.

Authorities say White tested positive for methamphetamine, ecstasy and marijuana when she was taken to the emergency room after the fire.

Prosecutors say she was having an affair with her methamphetamine dealer and smoked the drug with him hours before the fire.

Gregory Voters Reject Opt-Out

GREGORY (AP) — Gregory School District voters rejected a proposed three-year, \$300,000 opt-out.

Election officials say the unofficial results from Tuesday were 331 votes against and 280 in favor.

The *Daily Republic* reports the opt-out would have allowed the district to collect an extra \$300,000 per year above the state property tax limits for three years.

An opt-out allows a local government to enact bigger annual increases in property-tax collections than state-imposed limits would otherwise allow.

Rapid City To Fund Arena Study

RAPID CITY (AP) — The Rapid City Council has agreed to spend up to half a million dollars to study how much it would cost to build a new arena at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center.

Civic Center officials had asked the city to fund the study earlier this month. Officials will now seek bids from companies interested in conducting the study.

Civic Center General Manager Brian Maliske says the study should determine what type of arena would be needed, how many seats it should have and what it would cost.

Officials have said that bringing the existing, 37-year-old Barnett Arena into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and building codes could cost \$70 million — money that might be better spent on a new facility.

Bennett County OKs Tax Increase

MARTIN (AP) — Voters in southern South Dakota's Bennett County have approved an opt out of state-imposed property tax limitations.

Tuesday's vote was 349 in favor and 168 opposed. Auditor Susan Williams says the cash-strapped county used paper ballots that were counted by hand to save money.

The opt-out is designed to generate an additional \$350,000 annually and save the county from the possibility of bankruptcy.

The county is surrounded on three sides by American Indian reservations, and about one-fourth of the land is tax-exempt Indian trust land. Officials also cite the recent bad economy and an increase in crime as reasons for the budget woes.

Consultant Recommends Changes In Video Lottery

BY BOB MERCER
State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE — The South Dakota Lottery Commission should consider changing the percentages of money taken by the state treasury from privately owned video lottery terminals, according to a report delivered Wednesday by a consultant.

Rich Baldwin of Las Vegas-based Union Gaming Analytics said the state should gradually increase its take from older "legacy" machines and temporarily decrease its take when new slot machine-style "line" games are installed. Currently state

government takes 50 percent of the money left in the machines after winnings are paid.

Baldwin suggested that legacy terminals be stair-stepped up to 60 percent and then 70 percent over a two-year period, while new line games be charged 30 percent in their first year, 40 percent their second year and 50 percent thereafter.

Those differing rates would be intended as incentives for more businesses to invest in the line games, which are attracting higher play. The commission is looking for ways to increase revenue to state government from video lottery, which produced.

Other suggestions among the 19 recommendations are raising or eliminating the state restrictions currently at \$2 on bets and \$2,000 maximum on payouts.

"It's a limitation the competitors simply don't have," Baldwin told the commission.

Another idea is allowing establishments to have 15 terminals if at least five are line games. The current limit is 10 per establishment.

Baldwin also discussed a tier system where establishments' numbers of terminals would depend on the level of play. The lowest one-third could have five terminals, the middle third 10 and the upper third 15.

Electronic table games are also recommended in the report.

Lottery director Norm Lingle said the commission will meet again sometime in the next five to six weeks to discuss which ideas to pursue and in what order, as well as what's necessary to accomplish them.

"In some respects the easy part is finished and the hard part begins," Lingle said.

Players lost \$176.6 million in video lottery terminals in South Dakota in 2012. There are more than 1,400 establishments and more than 9,100 terminals. Most of the terminals — 82 percent — were the old-style legacy games as of Aug. 31.

Head-On Crash South Of Mitchell Kills At Least Two

MITCHELL (AP) — The South Dakota Highway Patrol says at least two people were killed in a head-on collision about six miles south of Mitchell.

It happened after 4 p.m. Wednesday on state Highway 37.

A sheriff's deputy told *The Daily Republic* that a 3-year-old girl was taken to a hospital with injuries.

Shortly after the accident was reported, a pickup was on fire and a charred van was also on the scene. Traffic was being diverted and smoke could be seen from several miles away.

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