

Landowners Challenge Pipeline Route

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — An attorney for three landowners challenged the constitutionality of a law used to route the Keystone XL pipeline through Nebraska.

The Omaha World-Herald reports (<http://bit.ly/18w9TKr>) the lawyer argued at the hearing Friday in Lincoln that a 2012 law improperly gave Gov. Dave Heineman the right to approve the pipeline route, rather than leaving it to the Nebraska Public Service Commission.

A state attorney told Lancaster County District Judge Stephanie Stacy the law was constitutional and should be allowed to remain in place.

The 1,700-mile pipeline from Canada to the Texas coast has drawn intense opposition by landowners and environmental groups in Nebraska.

After concerns about an initial route through the Sand Hills, Heineman approved a second route that largely skirted that region.

Stacy says she'd issue an opinion later.

Minivan Reported Before Fatal Crash

MITCHELL (AP) — The Mitchell dispatch center says it received a complaint about a minivan driving erratically in the same area and about the time of a fatal crash.

The Daily Republic reports that the dispatcher didn't know for sure if the van complained about was the same one involved in Wednesday's crash, but both were described as a white minivan.

Authorities say a white minivan driven by 23-year-old Sara Claggett, of Tripp, drifted into the oncoming lane and collided head-on with a pickup driven by 82-year-old Donald Geidel, of Dimock.

Both of them were killed, but Claggett's 2-year-old daughter survived. She's at a Sioux Falls hospital.

Claggett's record includes a drug conviction from March, a drunken driving charge that was dismissed, two petty theft convictions and three speeding tickets.

Weapons, Gun Charges Filed Against 18

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Federal and local authorities have charged 18 suspected gang members for weapons and drug offenses.

Authorities say more than 50 officers executed search and arrest warrants on Thursday and have at least nine of the suspects in custody.

Authorities say the charges are a result of a High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Program that began its work in January.

The criminal histories of the 18 include more than 72 arrests, 15 felony convictions and 49 misdemeanor convictions.

U.S. Attorney Deborah Gilg says "career gang thugs with drugs and guns have terrorized Omaha far too long."

SD Park Could Be Home To 1,000 Bison

RAPID CITY (AP) — The South Unit of Badlands National Park could become home to more than 1,000 bison as part of a long-range plan to establish a new national park on the Pine Ridge Reservation.

Ruth Brown, the Eagle Nest District representative for the Oglala Sioux Tribe, tells the *Rapid City Journal* that bison could be reintroduced on parts of the South Unit in 2015.

Trudy Ecoffey of the Intertribal Buffalo Council of Rapid City says the tribe wants to manage the park in a partnership with the National Park Service.

The tribe currently has about 800 bison. Ecoffey says the demand for bison as a source of meat and as a symbol of Lakota culture is expected to increase as the population on the Pine Ridge increases.

Rural Affairs Head Brings Iowa Experience To Job

BY NICK HYTREK
Sioux City Journal

LYONS, Neb. — Never underestimate the power of dinner table talk.

Growing up on a farm near Laurens, Iowa, Brian Depew remembers sitting at the table with his parents, hearing them stress the importance of being involved and working for change.

"My parents were always really engaged and worked with advocacy agencies," Depew told the Sioux City Journal (<http://bit.ly/16BJual>). "It was always a topic at the dinner table."

Those talks sowed the seeds of Depew's future calling.

On Sept. 1, Depew became the executive director of the Center for Rural Affairs in Lyons, succeeding longtime director Chuck Hassebrook, who is running for Nebraska governor. Since 1973, the center has been an advocate for agricultural and rural issues.

The funny thing is, Depew wasn't born into the farming life. He came from Pennsylvania and didn't live on a farm there. He was 10 years old when his family relocated to the 320-acre farm in Laurens that belonged to his father's family.

Perhaps foreshadowing his future,

Depew lobbied his parents to make the move. He even began saving money from his paper route so he could buy his own chickens once he was a farm boy.

"I'm not sure where that interest in agriculture came from," he said.

Once transplanted to Iowa, Depew's ag interests sprouted faster than corn kernels in the warm, moist spring soil. He bought those chickens, then put up a sign along Highway 10 to sell the eggs. By the time he was in high school, he was heavily involved in the family's hog operation and realized that people like him needed to protect rural America and its way of life.

"In high school, I cut my teeth on issues around the consolidation of the hog industry. I saw the effects that had on family hog operations. I saw the effect that had on communities as well," he said.

While other teenagers played video games, Depew researched farm issues.

Depew read his father's copies of the Center for Rural Affairs newsletter. While in college, Depew sent the center a donation so he could receive it, too.

About seven years ago, the newsletter contained an item about a job opening at the center. Depew couldn't have

found a better fit. He was hired as a policy organizer to work on the run-up to the 2008 Farm Bill.

Since then, he's been involved in the issues that affect the future of towns like Lyons and Laurens, whether it be farm bills, financial support for small Main Street business startups or agriculture entrepreneurship.

"My passion for small towns is a life's work and a life's mission," Depew said. "I could not imagine a job or an organization that would align more fully with what my values are, what my interests are."

At age 32, Depew lives many of the values for which he fights. He owns 12 acres outside of town, a small patch of land he calls Thistle Root Farm, where he raises sheep, chickens, garlic and a large garden.

"I still get to have my hands in the dirt," Depew said.

Getting his hands dirty in the production side of agriculture, even on a small scale, helps give him perspective when fighting for issues that affect the way of life he loves and being an active member of the community.

Just like Mom and Dad talked about at dinner.

Students Improve In Reading, Math, Science

BY MARGERY A. BECK
Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — Nebraska students overall are showing progress on statewide reading, math and science tests, but achievement gaps continue to exist between Native American, Hispanic and African-American students and their peers, according to a Nebraska Department of Education report released Friday.

The "State of the Schools" report showed that while scores for those racial groups improved steadily over the past two years, they still lagged well behind overall scores.

Overall, more than 77 percent of students were at or above proficiency levels in reading, compared with 74 percent in 2012. But the re-

sults showed only 49 percent of American Indian students last spring were proficient readers, while 54 percent of African-American readers tested at proficient. Sixty-three percent of Hispanic students were proficient readers in 2013.

About 69 percent of all students were proficient in math, compared with 67 percent in 2012. But Native American students tested at only 37 percent proficient, African-American students at 38 percent and Hispanic students at 52 percent.

"There's still work to be done" in closing those gaps, department spokeswoman Betty VanDeventer said.

Friday's report did not include a breakdown of performance by race in science, because those numbers aren't needed to meet profi-

ciency requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind law, department spokeswoman Betty VanDeventer said.

Friday's report reflects the second year of results under the Nebraska Performance Accountability System adopted two years ago.

The Nebraska Legislature adopted the system after the U.S. Department of Education said Nebraska had failed to show its local assessments accurately measured student achievement under the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

The new system is designed to give schools an idea of what they need to improve, while giving credit to those that remain low-ranked even while showing strong progress.

While the state report

shows student achievement has steadily improved, 286 schools out of the state's 961 public schools did not meet educational targets set by No Child Left Behind — a jump from 199 the previous year.

That is not a fair indication of how schools are performing, said Diane Stuehmer, federal programs director for Nebraska's Education Department. Rather, it's a reflection of the federal law's unrealistic goals. This year, the federal law required 80 percent to 90 percent proficiency on state tests by all student groups in Nebraska. By next year's report, the goal goes to 100 percent proficiency across the board.

"I have some schools who have improved by 10 to 12 percentage points, but they're still not meeting the federal goal," Stuehmer said.

Informational
Open House

Sunday, September 29th
2:30 PM
Cyber Café
MMC Campus

Join us!

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Center for Active Learners

Center for Active Learners is a program that provides short educational seminars covering a broad spectrum of topics for adult learners. These non-credit courses (no requirements, no tests!) are available to anyone of any age or background who loves learning and enjoys the exchange of ideas with others.

Courses are open to both members and non-members. Become a member for \$25.00 a year and have first chance at registration, a discount on the courses, and the opportunity to bring a friend to a session. Course fees are \$50/course for members and \$75/course for non-members. Visit us online at WWW.MTMC.EDU/BENEDICTINEINSTITUTE to learn more.

Fall Semester Courses Begin October 22nd!



The Dead Sea Scrolls and Qumran: Early Monastery on the Dead Sea with Dr. Terry Lafferty
Tuesdays, October 22, 29, November 5, 12
10:15 AM - 11:45 AM | Bede 205
Who lived at Qumran and why did they leave their scrolls behind? What happened to the people who lived there? What is the value of the scrolls to those who read the Bible today? Has the discovery of the scrolls changed the way we read the Bible? What do these scrolls tell us about the community there and their view of the world? What rules governed those who live there? All these above questions will be addressed in a fascinating study of this early Christian community.



Amazonian Rain Forest: Past, Present, Future with Dr. Uriel Buitrago
Tuesdays, October 22, 29, November 5, 12
12:45 PM - 2:15 PM | SLC 108
What are the geological changes that give us the present configuration of this endangered rain forest? How extensive is its animal and plant diversity? Who are its native people? What about the future of this fragile ecosystem? Its importance for the survival of the planet? Dr. Buitrago grew up in this area and is passionate about what is happening there.



Great Faces, Great Places: Exploring and Traveling South Dakota with Bernie Hunhoff
Thursdays, October 24, 31, November 7, 14
1:00 PM - 2:30 PM | SLC 107
Bernie Hunhoff, editor and publisher of South Dakota Magazine, will share his insights and experiences of the culture and places of South Dakota. His love of the state and its people will come through clearly as he tells stories and shares pictures. He will talk about the diversity of cultures, geography, and life styles he has experienced in his travels which has widened his appreciation for the state in all its facets. In addition, he has a wealth of pictures he has accumulated in his travels. We will come away with a broader and fuller view for the land we call home.



Film Genres and American Culture with Sr. Cynthia Binder
Thursdays, October 24, 31, November 7, 14
10:00 AM - noon | Bede 118
How have American films revealed our national culture and/or created it? What do films tell us about ourselves as Americans? What are the genres that America spawned in the early years of Hollywood? Our comedies, westerns, musicals, and crime stories reveal more than "meets the eye," as they say. A film during each session will help us understand the issues these questions put before us.



Stained Glass Creations with Sr. Kathleen Courtney
Saturday, November 2, 2013
9:00 AM - 4:00 PM | Sacred Heart Monastery Room 216/217
Limited to 8 Participants
Stained glass making: a hands-on workshop for those interested in creating art objects using stained glass. Glass and glue the hours away! Create a stained glass project to give to a loved one or to create an environment of peace and delight in your home. Exercise the creativity and artist in you. Bring an open heart, a sense of humor, and a little patience. (materials are \$20)



Writers' Workshop: the Poet within, the Poetry of Memory and Place with Maria Mazziotti Gillan
Wednesday, November 20
5:30 PM - 7:30 PM | SLC 108 | Limited to 25 Participants
This workshop helps us to discover the stories we have to tell and the words to tell them. It is based on the belief that when we find the courage to explore our memories, we find the source for powerful, evocative writing. Using our daily lives and our varied experiences, we unearth our stories and discover how the places in which we find ourselves affect the way we experience the world. The workshop requires participants to be honest and specific. Please bring paper, a pen, and the willingness to take risks. (free for members)

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