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# It's A Big Deal

## National Cribbage Tourney Opens Here Today

BY ALISSA WOOCKMAN  
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Atlanta, Phoenix, and now, Yankton. All are locations of the most recent annual American Cribbage Congress (ACC) Grand National tournaments.

Starting tonight (Thursday) through Sunday afternoon, Yankton will be the site of the 34th annual tourney. At least 300 cribbage players from across 34 states, are gathered to enjoy the camaraderie of the game.

In attendance will be the top six living cribbage players of all time and ten of the current ACC Hall of Fame members, among them this year's Grand

National Tournament director Scott Kooistra.

"If (other tournament players) get good cards and play them well, they stand just as good of a chance as any of those hall of famers," he said. "I believe totally in hot streaks and cold streaks in anything. Anyone could win if they know how to play, know how to count the points, get good cards and maintain good strategy."

This year's tournament is hosting nine separate events of competition throughout the weekend at the Best Western Kelly Inn. Each will include separate entry fees and separate prize money.

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### Bravo Battery

# Breaking New Ground

## Park Takes Historic SDNG Leadership

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF  
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2LT Jessie Park stood out from her fellow Bravo Battery members at Saturday's change-of-command ceremony.

She is the first female commander for a South Dakota National Guard (SDNG) field artillery unit. In addition, she is the first female soldier for the Yankton unit. Now known as Bravo Battery, the Yankton unit is part of the 1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery.

However, don't think of her as a token female. She noted she was approached by military superiors for a leadership role based on her qualifications. In addition, she completed the Basic Officer Leadership Course.

"(Bravo Battery) qualified for the Superior Unit Award, and my responsibility is to help maintain a good unit here," she said.

Park, who is single and lives in Sioux Falls, doesn't carry the typical military background. However, she brings a wide variety of experiences.

She didn't join the military until four years ago, when she was 30, but she comes from a military family. After completing her master's degree in a branch of mental health counseling, she served two years with the Peace Corps in Ukraine.

She currently works with the Sanford Health system's arts therapy program relieving stress, fear and boredom for patients. She also works with a canine program in Sioux Falls.

Park believes she brings a maturity and well-rounded background to her leadership role, particularly when working with young soldiers.

"I am 34 years old. I have more life experience than a 17-year-old,"



RANDY DOCKENDORF/P&D

2LT Jessie Park stands at attention with the rest of Bravo Battery 1/147 FA during Saturday's change-of-command ceremony at the Yankton armory. She holds a dual historic role as the first female commander for a South Dakota National Guard (SDNG) field artillery unit and the first female soldier for the Yankton unit.

she said. "I have dealt with life issues. I can be a mentor and offer guidance."

Park wants to be the best soldier, regardless of gender. She also holds high expectations for her soldiers but also wants them to find her approachable.

"I will be a platoon leader," she said. I will show them what a platoon soldier should be like and work together as a team should be.

However, she also recognizes her unique role as a woman leading the unit. As a platoon leader, she will help lead not only the 70-plus men in Bravo Battery but

also the three other women who have enlisted with the unit and will report when they finish basic training.

"I work with the females and their needs," she said. "However, we are all soldiers, and (the female soldiers') job is to be regarded like the others."

Park is also engaging on her own learning curve. In her last unit, she served with a maintenance platoon and is learning more about field artillery.

"It's necessary to have humility to be a leader. I wasn't trained in field artillery, so I don't act like I

think I have been," she said. "I also arrived here Saturday. You have people who have been here (with Bravo Battery) for 26 years. They understand the necessary things that need to be done."

The Yankton unit has maintained its work with the Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS), a highly mobile, automatic system that fires surface-to-surface rockets and missiles from the M270 platform, according to a SDNG news release.

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## Dakota Southern To Hold Lease On N-P Line

BY BOB MERCER  
State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE – Ending what had become a 10-year stalemate, the State Railroad Board chose a different party to run the defunct Napa-Platte line Wednesday.

Board members voted 4-1 to give Dakota Southern railroad a 60-day lease effective Sept. 21 and directed the state Department of Transportation to assemble a 20-year contract.

The decision opens the way for a \$35 million elevator complex and rail hub planned by Dakota Plains Ag Center to be constructed on 27 acres in northern Yankton County.

The site is part of a proposed 196-acre industrial park on which Dakota Plains and Dakota Southern have agreed to be partners.

The line came into state government's possession after the Milwaukee Road bankruptcy in the late 1970s.

It crosses through productive agricultural areas of Yankton, Bon Homme and Charles Mix counties where farmers rely on trucks for access to markets because there no longer is regular rail service.

"We've been debating this area and this track in this area a long time. We want to do what's best for everyone," Todd Yeaton of Kimball, the state board's chairman, said. "We want to make things happen."

An earlier attempt involving Dakota Southern and various investors from outside the immediate Napa-Platte line stalled in 2013, amid local resistance and because of dogged local support for a proposed ethanol plant that couldn't get enough financing to move forward.

Dakota Southern has shown itself as an able operator on the state-owned

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### CORRECTION

In the sports teaser photo on the front page of Wednesday's *Press & Dakotan*, it should have said that Mount Marty lost its home opener to Dakota State, not Dakota Wesleyan. We apologize for the error.

## Broadway Accident

A two-vehicle accident in Yankton Wednesday afternoon sent two minors to the hospital. According to Yankton deputy fire chief Larry Nickles, the two vehicles collided at the intersection of Broadway Ave. and W. 25th St. at around 4 p.m. A cause was unavailable at press time. The Yankton Fire Department and Yankton Police Department both responded to the accident, as did the South Dakota Highway Patrol. (Kelly Hertz/P&D)



## MMC Joins Education Consortium

BY REILLY BIEL  
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Mount Marty College (MMC) has found a new way to increase its national visibility.

On Sept. 1, MMC officially joined the Upper Midwest Higher Education Recruitment Consortium (UMW HERC), a group of more than 50 colleges in eastern South Dakota, eastern North Dakota, Minnesota and western Wisconsin. The consortium of institutions collaborates to address general, dual-career and diversity hiring. HERC also works with

hospitals, research laboratories and government agencies.

To be eligible for joining HERC, colleges must be accredited by an agency, sanctioned by the U.S. Department of Education and, for UMW HERC, be located in the upper Midwest.

As part of HERC, MMC can list potential job openings for staff and faculty positions on HERC's website.

MMC president Marcus Long knew of HERC and encouraged the

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