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Local Dakota Rural Action chapter in the works



Dakota Rural Action organizer Sabrina King anticipates creating a DRA grassroots chapter in the Pierre/Fort Pierre area by early fall. (Allison Jarrell/Capital Journal)

By ALLISON JARRELL
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Dakota Rural Action, an organization encouraging grassroots community activism, may soon open a new chapter in the Pierre and Fort Pierre area.

Dakota Rural Action organizer Sabrina King said the group is focused on helping people become active civic citizens by advocating for the kind of community they want to have.

"Dakota Rural Action exists to help people have an impact in their own community and throughout the state," King said. "We help people who really want to work on an issue by figuring out the best way to go about doing that."

To learn more about Dakota Rural Action or to get involved, contact Sabrina King at 605-716-2200 or Sabrina@dakotaural.org. For more information on the organization, visit www.dakotaural.org.

Dakota Rural Action has chapters throughout South Dakota – from the Black Hills to Sioux Falls – and has been involved with a variety of issues over the last 25 years – supporting local family farms, creating comprehensive land use plans and supporting land owners with oil and gas issues or with the Keystone Pipeline.

King said the organization acts as "infrastructure support" by not only gathering community members, but also training them on the technical aspects of introducing a

bill or participating in the state Legislature.

Dakota Rural Action is driven by membership, whether it's an individual member or an entire chapter, and with increased interest surfacing in Pierre and Fort Pierre, a sustainable, multi-issue chapter could be in the works.

King said talk of a local DRA chapter began in April when a group of Pierre area residents invited her to speak at an urban

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Report: Gov't scooping up Verizon phone records

WASHINGTON (AP) — The National Security Agency currently is collecting the telephone records of millions of U.S. customers of Verizon under a top secret court order, Britain's Guardian newspaper said Wednesday.

Verizon Communications Inc. listed 121 million customers in its first-quarter earnings report this April — 98.9 million wireless customers, 11.7 million residential phone lines and about 10 million commercial lines. The court order didn't specify which type of phone customers' records were being tracked.

The order was granted by the secret Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court on April 25 and was good until July 19, the newspaper said. The order requires Verizon, one of the nation's largest telecommunications companies, on an "ongoing, daily basis" to give the NSA information on all telephone calls in its systems, both within the U.S. and between the U.S. and other countries.

The newspaper said the document, a copy of which it had obtained, shows for the first time that under the Obama administration the communication records of millions of U.S. citizens were being collected indiscriminately and in bulk, regardless of whether they were suspected of any wrongdoing.

The Associated Press could not authenticate the order because documents from the court are classified.

Verizon spokesman Ed McFadden said Wednesday the company had no comment. The White House declined comment and referred questions to the NSA. The NSA had no immediate comment.

Sage grouse season might be shut down

By BOB MERCER
STATE CAPITOL BUREAU

It's illegal under federal law to kill a wolf west of the Missouri River in South Dakota. The sage grouse might be headed toward the same protection.

The state Wildlife Division on Thursday proposed closing the 2013 hunting season for sage grouse.

The hope is that a break will help the small population recover. At the same time, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has a national program under way to restore the rare bird's numbers.

A Pheasants Forever biologist already is stationed at Belle Fourche as part of the Wildlife Division's effort to help ranchers and other landowners make their property more habitable for sage grouse.

West Nile virus cut into sage grouse numbers

The state Game, Fish and Parks Commission decided Thursday to propose the recommendation that the season be closed for 2013. A public hearing will be held July 8 in Pierre.

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CREWS WORK TO KEEP STATE CAPITOL GREEN

GARDENING ON A GRAND SCALE



By DAVID ROOKHUYZEN | DAVID.ROOKHUYZEN@CAPJOURNAL.COM

Rollie Isaacson employs more than a dozen people to help him keep his yard looking the best it can.

To be fair, his yard is 80 acres, and includes 6,500 trees and large bushes, 14,500 flowers, 10 acres of parking lots and 11 miles of sidewalks. It also sees 100 events and hundreds of thousands of people in a given year.

Isaacson is the manager of the Buildings and Grounds Department at the state Capitol building, which, in his words, is in charge of "all the stuff you do at home, but on a larger scale."

On Wednesday that meant the 14-member grounds crew was out planting flowers – red and white petunias along with blue salvias – around the Capitol. It was the end of a three-day effort to plant the thousands of blossoms in the numerous planters spread across the complex.

The planting is part of a spring ritual to beautify the Capitol during the warmer months. In addition

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Rollie Isaacson, manager of the Buildings and Grounds Department at the state Capitol building, with the view of Capital Lake in the background. Isaacson is in charge of 78-member staff that maintains more than 80 acres of land and the Capitol building. At top, petunias and salvias ready to be planted on the Capitol building grounds Wednesday morning. The flowers were a small part of 14,500 that were planted around the complex. (David Rookhuyzen/Capital Journal)

Quarter Horse races to \$155,000 finish for Pierre owners

By LANCE NIXON
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In the photos it looks as though No. 7 is winning, and in fact he does pull ahead – about one stride past the finish line.

It was too late for the win, but that second-place finish by Hes Relentless – officially, the stallion has no apostrophe in his name – was good enough to bring home \$155,000 for his Pierre owners.

Tom Maher Sr. of Pierre says it's the best horse he's ever owned, and last weekend's finish at the Heritage Place Futurity for 2-year-



Hes Relentless came in second at the Heritage Place Futurity in Oklahoma City last week. (Courtesy photo)

olds in Oklahoma City is enough to have him looking forward to the next big race.

Hes Relentless will run in the August trials for the

All American Futurity. The finals of that event take place on Labor Day, and the purse is \$2.4 million, to be split among the 10 finalists.

Maher said there's nothing he would have done differently in the Heritage Place Futurity.

"The winning horse had just got off to a tremendous start and we had to run her down," he said.

Maher had been expecting great things because Hes Relentless clocked the best time from a field of about 200 horses in the trials for the Oklahoma City event.

Hes Relentless will probably benefit from the longer course in the All American Futurity, Maher said, noting that the Heritage Place

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