



YOU'RE NOT IN KANSAS ANYMORE. MAYBE YOU NEVER WERE. C1

WOMEN IN SCIENCE

Women in Pierre prepare for upcoming educational conference at Ramkota on Tuesday **A3**

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Gov. will keep promise against increasing fuel taxes

By **BOB MERCER**
STATE CAPITOL BUREAU

PIERRE, S.D. — It's been 14 years since the last ones passed. But don't expect increases in South Dakota's motor-fuels taxes during the 20 months remaining of Gov. Dennis Daugaard's first term.

That's what a member of the governor's Cabinet told the state Transportation Commission during an impromptu discussion about highway funding Thursday.

Daugaard made a commitment during his 2010 campaign that he wouldn't raise taxes except for an emergency.

Transportation Secretary Darin Bergquist said that hasn't changed.

If the governor seeks a second term in 2014, according to Bergquist, he'll take a second look at his position regarding the motor-fuels tax,

and he'll let that be publicly known before the election.

Two years ago the House voted 53-16 to override a veto of an increase in license plate fees and the Senate followed 30-4. The second round of increases take effect this July 1.

"I don't suspect he will make that call until next year. I don't know what his decision will be," Bergquist said.

South Dakota's basic rate is 22 cents per gallon for regular unleaded and diesel used over the road. There is a 2-cent discount for 10 percent ethanol blend.

Whether a second term for Daugaard would bring a change of mind seems unlikely, based

on a series of responses to a reporter's questions later Thursday from his spokesman, Tony Venhuizen.

"The governor is willing to discuss the state's transportation infrastructure needs, but he intends to keep the promise he made to the voters in 2010 that he would not raise taxes," Venhuizen said.

"He hasn't even announced that he's running for a second term. He's been pretty firm on

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Clockwise from top left: Pamela Peabody, played by Kathy Riedy, left, has a fight with Muriel Bingham, played by Jean Person, right, after Dickie Bell (Phil Sheffield) has been punched to the ground in a scene from "The Fox on the Fairway." From left to right, Pamela Peabody (Riedy), Henry Bingham (Henry Reidy), Muriel Bingham (Person), Dickie Bell (Sheffield), Hicks (Ben Beelman) and Louise (Denise Hanisch) all on the "green." Hicks, played by Ben Beelman, center, has a good cry with Pamela Peabody, (Kathy Riedy), left, and Louis (Hanisch), right. (David Rookhuyzen/Capital Journal)

McCahren transfer hearing canceled

By **CAPITAL JOURNAL STAFF**
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The transfer hearing for the case of Braiden McCahren has been canceled by the defense.

McCahren was to appear in Hughes County Court on May 1-2 for the hearing, which would have determined whether to move the case to juvenile court.

The 16-year-old Pierre boy has pleaded not guilty to various charges, including first-degree murder, stemming from the shooting death of classmate Dalton Williams. McCahren was indicted by a grand jury in December.

Another hearing date has not been scheduled yet. The transfer hearing was originally scheduled for April 10-12, but was pushed back after Hughes County State's Attorney Max Gors resigned last month. Beadle County State's Attorney Michael Moore was appointed to prosecute the case in Gors' absence.

On April 18, Sixth Circuit Judge John Brown denied a motion by the defense to obtain a court-ordered deposition of the case's key witness, another 16-year-old known in court documents as "T.Y."

The defense had argued there were inconsistencies in T.Y.'s statements and wanted to be prepared for the transfer hearing and trial. The prosecution disagreed that the statements conflicted and that the defense knew what the witness would say about the events leading to Williams' death.

William Taylor, a Sioux Falls lawyer helping with the defense, said at that

McCahren was to appear in Hughes County Court on May 1-2 for the hearing, which would have determined whether to move the case to juvenile court.

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Pierre Players present 'The Fox on the Fairway'

By **DAVID ROOKHUYZEN** | DAVID.ROOKHUYZEN@CAPJOURNAL.COM

WHEN ASKED THE OTHER day to describe the Pierre Players' latest production, "The Fox on the Fairway," director Katie Duenwald summed it up as being about golf, love and alcohol.

Her listener immediately responded "Oh, it's about life."

Duenwald had to agree it was a fitting description for playwright Ken Ludwig's comedic tale of the behind-the-scenes antics at an upscale golf club.

"It's a microcosm of life, set in a country club," Duenwald said.

The story is set at the fictional Quail Valley Golf Club, which is about to square off in a tournament against its rival, and perennial champion, Crouching Squirrel. Club President Henry Bingham is excited to roll out a new player he believes will carry Quail Valley to victory and is goaded into making a bet — \$100,000 and his wife's

See **PLAY, A8**

Lentsch to take over Agriculture Department from Bones Monday

By **DAVID ROOKHUYZEN**
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The state Department of Agriculture is going to look different Monday.



Lucas Lentsch

Lucas Lentsch, a former director of agricultural development at the department, will become the next Secretary of Agriculture, taking over for Walt Bones who has filled that position for the past two years. Gov. Dennis Daugaard announced Lentsch's selection at the beginning of the month.

Bones said he is stepping down because two years was the commitment he made to the governor, his family and his own

See **LENTSCH, 8**

Northern Beef plant laying off 108 employees

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — A northern South Dakota beef processing plant is laying off 108 of its 420 employees until it can raise enough money to buy more cattle, the company's top executive said Thursday.

David Palmer, president and chief executive of Northern Beef Packers, said the plant has raised more than \$150 million, but it's putting a planned ramp up on hold until it can raise about \$20 million more in working capital, which is used to fund operation. He said the plant is working with additional foreign investors, interna-

"They're all good employees. We want them back,"

David Palmer, president and chief executive, Northern Beef Packers

tional trading companies, established food companies and financial investors.

Palmer called it an "unfortunate setback" but said during a news conference Thursday afternoon that the company is "confident that is only a temporary one."

Northern Beef Packers is currently processing about 200 cattle a day from the Dakotas, Nebraska,

Iowa and Minnesota. The plant hopes to eventually process 1,500 cattle per day.

Palmer said the affected employees were notified Thursday afternoon. He said the goal is to hire them back by late July.

"They're all good employees," he said. "We want them back."

Land for the 420,000-square foot facility in Aberdeen, which

began slaughtering cattle last fall, was secured in 2006. Financial issues, lawsuits, local opposition, delinquent property taxes, flooding, an economic downturn and millions of dollars in liens repeatedly pushed back the opening date. The plant was given new life when Korean investors took over in 2009.

Northern Beef Packers plans to use nearly all of each animal, producing both U.S. Department of Agriculture certified meat cuts and offal, which is in high demand in foreign markets. An onsite rendering plant will open later.

