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Snow brings beauty, but drought persists

By Travis Gulbrandson
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It may not have been a white Christmas, but it was a white New Year.

But although 5 inches of snow fell in Vermillion last week, that could translate to only a quarter-inch of moisture.

"We don't know exactly how much water was in the last couple inches you received, but in the first three inches that fell, there was only 14 hundredths," Phil Schumacher, meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Sioux Falls said last Friday.

Although some people won't want to hear it, Vermillion's ag producers will need "a lot more rain or snow," Schumacher said.

"The biggest precipitation that Vermillion received was with the rainfall on Dec. 15, and fortunately, I think a lot of that soaked in, which is good for the farmers," he said. "But there's such a deficit right now in southeastern South Dakota and northeastern Nebraska in terms of rainfall that it's going to take a lot of snow over the winter and spring rains to really make that up."

"Anything we get helps, but this by itself is not going to make a huge difference," he said.

Last week's snowfall brought the area total for the

season up to eight and a half inches.

"You're ahead of last year, for what it's worth," Schumacher said. "Through the end of December last year, there was a total of 3 inches that Vermillion had received."

Unfortunately, this trend looks like it will continue.

"It's looking pretty dry," Schumacher said. "We're looking at a cooler, drier pattern right now. On the horizon there's really nothing expected for the area."

Just the same, Schumacher encouraged travelers to be wary on the roads.

As the snow was lacking in moisture, it is very light and fluffy, which could lead to drifting. It could melt during the day, but then refreeze at night.

"If people are driving, especially on east/west roads, just be aware that there could be some slick spots," Schumacher said.

Area snowfall box info (in inches):

- Parker - 3.5
- Akron, IA - 4
- Vermillion - 5
- Sioux City - 5.2
- Emerson, NE - 5.5
- Gayville - 6
- Yankton - 7



(Photo by David Lias)

CONCENTRATED EFFORT

Vermillion's Morgan Hower was one of several Tanager gymnasts who competed Saturday in the Winter Wonderland gymnastics meet, held in the Vermillion High School gym. Results of the meet can be found on the Plain Talk's sports page.

(Photo by David Lias)



Heroes Behind the Badges drive is Jan. 14

By Travis Gulbrandson
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A local rivalry continues.

In less than two weeks, local law enforcement officers and firefighters will have a friendly competition in which they will find out who can donate the most blood.

The sixth annual Heroes Behind the Badges Blood Drive will take place from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. and 2:30-6:30 p.m. on Monday, Jan 14 at the Sanford Vermillion Medical Center.

"This time of the year, blood supplies tend to get very low," said Layne Stewart, director of Clay County Emergency Management. "Donations tend to drop, but also ... accidents and people in need of blood

products usually increases, as well. You kind of get hit with a double-edged sword there."

To help ease this burden, local law enforcement and firefighters try to recruit as many donors as possible.

Last year, there were 104 participants, who donated 78 units of blood.

This year, they hope to come away with 100 units of blood.

"As far as taking part, there's a great response by the local law enforcement agencies," said Detective Robin Hower of the Vermillion Police Department.

"The firefighters have supported it pretty well, too," Stewart added. "A lot of them work in places during the day where they're

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More details surface following Vermillion's sad Christmas

By David Lias
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More details have emerged, through both police and news sources, concerning the Christmas day standoff in Vermillion that ended with an apparent suicide.

In a press release it sent to local media Wednesday, the Vermillion Police Department declined to release the identity of the deceased or any other members of his household involved in the incident which began in the early morning hours of Dec. 25.

The Sioux City (IA) Journal reported Thursday that the standoff ended after Greg Girard, 42, died apparently of a self-inflicted gunshot in the family's Vermillion home located on Crawford Road.

The standoff between the subject, who has yet to be officially identified, and local law enforcement began after a domestic altercation in early Tuesday, Dec. 25, and ended approximately 12 hours later when law enforcement entered his home and found his

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Local Burger King owners honored by peers

By Derek Bartos
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For Dakota King, Inc., people have always come first.

The Sioux Falls-based Burger King franchise, whose locations include Yankton, Vermillion and Beresford, has strived for nearly 40 years to help its customers, employees and the communities it serves.

"It all comes down to people," said Tom Walsh Jr., who owns Dakota King, Inc., with his father, Tom Walsh Sr. "If your people know you care and you take care of your



TOM WALSH JR.

named as finalists for Burger King's North America Franchisee of the Year Award. Candidates for the award are chosen based on successful

people, they'll take care of everything else."

In recognition of their commitment and success, the father and son were recently

operations, sales, community involvement and overall business model.

The Walshes were recognized among fellow franchisees, top Burger King executives and employees in attendance at the 2012 BKW North America Convention held in Las Vegas.

"Our franchisees' commitment to the Burger King brand and dedication to service at every one of their restaurants is the reason that the brand continues to solidify its position as the QSR food authority," said

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A Happy & Healthy New Year to You!

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