



PLAIN TALK

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A farmer's attempt to bale straw Tuesday afternoon in a field approximately 12 miles north of Vermillion was interrupted when the straw and surrounding stubble caught on fire. No significant precipitation has fallen in the Vermillion area for four weeks. Fortunately, the Vermillion Fire Department was able to quickly contain and extinguish the flames in this very dry field.

(Photo by David Lias)

Crops suffer, farmers' optimism withers as drought continues

By David Lias
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Several consecutive weeks of temperatures nearing triple digits plus no rain equals trouble for farmers in the Vermillion area.

Kevin Myron, owner of Ag Opportunities in Vermillion, hasn't personally been inspecting area corn fields, but he's hearing reports from the farmers who have planted them.

"I'm just hearing comments from farmers. I think we missed out on a rain last Thursday or Friday (July 12-13) and that's probably about the point that the crops flipped," Myron said. "We're losing bushels every day now that we do not get a rain."

According to data compiled last week by the USDA and the National Drought Mitigation Center, the Vermillion area, along with much of southeastern South Dakota, was experiencing "moderate" drought conditions as of July 10.

No rain has fallen since, and temperatures have remained hot, climbing into the 90s and at times exceeding 100 degrees.

Those continued dry and hot conditions have had a detrimental effect on crops over South Dakota as well as much of the nation, including nearly all the Corn Belt. According to the US Drought Monitor, all of South Dakota could be categorized as "abnormally dry" as of last week.

The Vermillion area, along with a large portion of southeast South Dakota, is described to be experiencing moderate drought. Areas farther west in the state are in a severe drought because of dry conditions this year and last fall.

According to climatologists with the National Weather Service, no improvement in these conditions is likely to occur in the near term.

"The unfortunate part of that is this is following a short crop last year," Myron said. "Due to all of the flooding, and then it got kind of hot last July, and then we had a little bit of an early frost - all kinds of things hit us last year."

"Our beans were about a third of the normal volume, and corn was a little less than half," he said. "We may be shaping up to see that exact same thing again."

"Conditions since the spring have been somewhat dry

■ DROUGHT, Page 14

SDSU Extension hosts drought updates

The current drought is having a negative impact on agriculture, South Dakota's number one industry.

To provide the most current information and resources to the state's crop and livestock producers, SDSU Extension will host Drought Updates at SDSU Extension Regional Centers throughout the state on Monday July 23.

"The drought is worsening day by day and has reached the critical point where South Dakota's crop and livestock producers will need to make significant management decisions to address its challenges," said Rosie Nold, Agriculture and Natural Resources Program Director for SDSU Extension. "SDSU Extension is here to provide information and key resources."

With the aid of live video streaming, SDSU Extension will bring together experts from across the state to discuss the drought and its impact on crops, livestock and

the families involved with agriculture producers throughout South Dakota. Extension Field Specialists specializing in livestock, crops and family will address regional or local issues at each Extension Regional Center, with much of their time devoted to question and answer sessions. Representatives from local agencies and organizations are invited to attend and contribute information and resources available to help producers and families.

Seminar presenters include: Jon Farris, deputy secretary of agriculture; Dr. Dennis Todey, state climatologist; Warren Rusche, SDSU Extension cow/calf field specialist; Dr. Mike Moechnig, SDSU Extension weeds specialist, Bob Fanning, SDSU Extension plant pathology field specialist; and Carrie Johnson, SDSU Extension family resource management field specialist.

■ SDSU, Page 14

Camp at USD allows youth to dedicate themselves to music

By Travis Gulbrandson
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The campus of the University of South Dakota was abuzz with approximately 175 young musicians last week.

That's because it was the site of the 61st annual Upper Midwest Summer Music Camp. From Sunday to Friday students who had just completed fifth grade through those who had just completed their senior year of high school had a chance to devote themselves to a common interest.

"It's basically a week of dedicating their lives to nothing but music - learning about music and making music, and everything involved with that," said camp director Dr. Jonathan Alvis last week.

Throughout the week, they have an opportunity to get involved in major ensembles, smaller ensembles, concert band, concert choir, jazz band, show choir and other activities.

"Every kid (likes) something different," Alvis said. "That's one of the nice parts about camp, is that it's not just one type of kid - we have kids from every different background, every type of band, and really I think in the end their favorite parts are getting to make music and getting to meet new friends. ..."

"During camp, I want them to have just absolutely fabulous musical experiences," he said.

In addition to the ensembles, students had the opportunity to participate in a variety of classes and workshops.

Each night of camp was highlighted by a

different event. The first night featured performances by USD faculty members, while another night had an honors recital and still another hosted a talent show.

"They get to hear professional musicians, and they get to hear their peers perform," said Alvis, who serves as USD's director of athletic bands and associate professor of low brass.

The students also performed in two big final concerts in Aalfs Auditorium Thursday and Friday that showed what they learned throughout the week.

A majority of the campers came from South Dakota, but in-state residence was not a requirement for attendance. Other students hailed from Iowa, Nebraska, Minnesota and Wyoming.

Some came even farther, Alvis said. "We actually have a student from Polynesia this year," he said. "It's very interesting for us, because she only speaks Mandarin. It's been experience for her, it's been an experience for



Cellists perform at the grand finale concert of the 61st annual Upper Midwest Summer Music Camp Friday, July 13, in Aalfs Auditorium.

(Photo by Travis Gulbrandson)

us, but everybody's having a good time with." Some campers have such a good time that they come back over multiple years.

■ MUSIC, Page 09

City adds third bike plan to construction plan

By Travis Gulbrandson
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A third bike trail was added to an existing construction plan at the regular meeting of the Vermillion City Council on Monday.

According to city engineer José Dominguez, the original agreement the city made with the state allowed for the construction of two bike trails - one along the Vermillion River, and the other along Highway 50.

"This proposal would essentially allow the city to complete the trail (along Highway 19) between Highway 50 and Cherry Street, so once this is eventually completed a person would be able to traverse the trail from Main Street along Stanford all the way to Dakota Street," Dominguez said. "This is going to provide a safer path for pedestrians, bicyclists (and) users in general, rather than having people walking or riding their bikes across the street."

Bids for the project will be opened later this year, he said.

Dominguez added that the estimated cost of the project is \$180,000, not allowing for construction administration.

For this reason, he proposed the council set aside \$225,000 for the project.

"This amount we expect to cover the estimated costs for construction, engineering and construction administration, and also provide a small contingency just for change orders and so forth," he said.


While the city would cover the costs, Dominguez said they would be reimbursed by the state for approximately 81.95 percent.

"The city would pay about \$40,000 once all is said and done," he said.

The council members voted unanimously in favor of the project.

Dominguez added that while the project was not budgeted for this year, it will be included in the budget


■ BIKE, Page 09



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