



PLAIN TALK

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Mo. River Flood 2011

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PREPARING FOR THE WORST



Missouri River flows at record levels

South Dakota Department of Transportation officials advise that bridges along the Missouri River are structurally sound and not in danger from the impending high water. A contract was awarded last week to add and extend riprap that protects the embankment under the Newcastle-Vermillion bridge that crosses the Missouri near Vermillion. Similar protective measures have already been done at the Missouri River bridge between Pierre and Ft. Pierre. The Discovery Bridge and Meridian Bridge in Yankton are not experiencing any problems with erosion at this time. Secretary of Transportation Darin Bergquist said, "as a precautionary measure, crews will continue to monitor all bridges along the Missouri River in order to mitigate any issues with erosion of the embankments." The work on the South Dakota side of the bridge, done last Friday, was just part of the efforts made in the last week, from Pierre down to Dakota Dunes, to prepare for record releases of water from the Missouri River mainstem dams. For the latest news, photos and videos of river flooding and its impact on the area, log on to www.plaintalk.net, www.yankton.net, and Plain Talk editor David Lias' blog at davidlias.wordpress.com.

(Photo courtesy of Dave Tunge/Dakota Aerials)

USD, SDNG, local volunteers join forces as river rises

By Travis Gulbrandson

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The arrival of summer usually marks the beginning of a slow period for the University of South Dakota campus.

However, the threat of flooding along the Missouri River has made it a center of prevention efforts, with members of the National Guard and regular citizens joining together to help those in need.

"I think we actually have more people on campus right now to take care of than we do during the normal year, and the summer help is gone because we don't usually have this many people," said USD President James Abbott.

It all came together very quickly, said Bob Fitzpatrick, director of USD's Marketing and University Relations Department - with an e-mail sent to available staff and students the morning of Tuesday, May 31.

"Within only a few hours, between the people we sent out to Dakota Dunes and Yankton, and the people who were doing stuff on campus, we had close to 100 people already getting their hands on this," he said. "It's a grassroots operation, but at this point we've probably had more than 300 people get involved."

Also arriving that day were more



Weary members of the South Dakota National Guard began arriving at the Muenster University Center on the University of South Dakota campus to enjoy a bit of rest and hot meal. More than 1,000 South Dakota National Guard soldiers and airmen are now supporting flooding operations in the Pierre, Fort Pierre, Dakota Dunes, Vermillion, and Yankton communities. It is expected that up to 600 National Guard soldiers could be housed on the USD campus for up to two months this summer.

(Photo by David Lias)

than 200 members of the National Guard, who have since taken temporary residence in campus dorms when they're not busy at the future flood sites.

"Help was needed in preparing their rooms and getting food together for

them," Fitzpatrick said. "Aramark is feeding them, but we have volunteers who've been serving breakfast and dinner to them, and also putting together box lunches for them."

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Daugaard: South Dakotans 'scrambling' ahead of floodwaters

By Travis Gulbrandson

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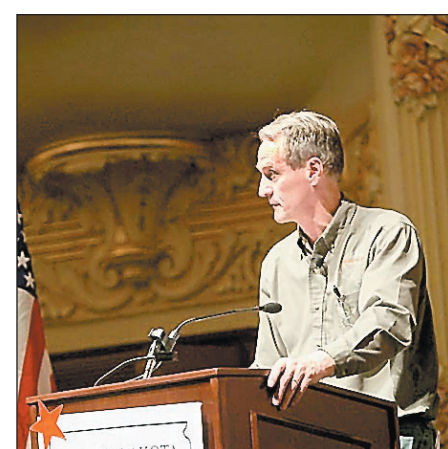
On Thursday, June 2, the Oahe Dam near Pierre released an average of 85,000 cubic feet of water per second (cfs). On Friday, that level approached 100,000 cfs. By the end of this week, it promises to reach 150,000 cfs.

Previous to this, the record release was 59,000 cfs.

"Pierre/Fort Pierre for the last week have been racing," said Gov. Dennis Daugaard. "About 2,000 homes have been evacuated as the Oahe rises, and even as I speak there are heavy equipment operators trying to build levees to protect the towns."

The governor stopped to give a presentation at 2011 South Dakota Girls State in Slagle Hall at the University of South Dakota last Friday, after which time he went to Dakota Dunes, another site of the approaching flood.

Of the approximately 1,100 homes in Dakota Dunes, "probably 800 to 900 of them" are in danger of flooding, Daugaard said.



Gov. Dennis Daugaard discusses flood prevention efforts with the attendees of 2011 South Dakota Girls State Friday morning in Slagle Hall at the University of South Dakota.

(Photo by David Lias)

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Paradise Fears prepares for first album release next week

By Parker Knox

"Born in the heartland and bred in front of a microphone, the future holds promise for the Paradise Fears boys, so mothers, warn your daughters!"

Those are the words of Jay Escobar-Haskins, an album reviewer for Rawkzilla.com, speaking about the Vermillion-based pop rock band whose first full-length album makes its official debut next week.

Paradise Fears, composed of Vermillionites Cole Andre, Jordan Merrigan, Sam Miller, Marcus Sand, Michael Walker and Lucas Zimmerman, will celebrate the release with a show at The Eagles Club in Vermillion at 7 p.m. Thursday, June 16. Doors will open at 6 p.m. for the show, which will also feature The After Party, a Kansas City band with whom Paradise Fears will tour the Midwest this summer.

Those who purchase tickets in advance can do so for \$5, which also allows purchase of "Yours Truly," the band's first album, for \$5. On the day of the show the ticket price is \$7 and the album cost is \$10. Information can be found at <http://paradisefears.bigcartel.com/product/vermillion-sd-presale-tickets-6-14-2011>.

It seems longer, but it's been just a year since four of the six band members graduated from

high school and the sextette set forth on what some may have thought was a fool-hardy year of fighting the long odds against success in the pop music world.


"We're much further ahead than I ever would have guessed a year ago," Walker said. "Looking back to that point in our career is a huge inspiration when I see how far we've come. When I get discouraged or feel that things are going nowhere, I

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Paradise Fears members, from the left, are Cole Andre, Marcus Sand, Jordan Merrigan, Sam Miller, Lucas Zimmerman and Michael Walker.

(File Photo)



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