

★ TOP of the Week

WEATHER

Ryan Eggleston - Official Weather Observer

	HI	LO	PR
Dec. 6	11	2	.50
Dec. 7	9	2	.11
Dec. 8	10	-9	0
Dec. 9	1	-8	0
Dec. 10	9	-3	.32
Dec. 11	11	-16	0
Dec. 12	3	-12	0
2016 precipitation to date	20.96		
2015 precipitation to date	22.09		

Clark Chamber Open House is Saturday

The Clark Chamber of Commerce annual Christmas Open House is this Saturday, December 17 at the Clark American Legion building from noon to 2:00 p.m. for free bingo. Drawings for the prizes will be held at 2:00 p.m. One must be present to win the \$150 Clark Bucks prize. One need not be present to win the \$100 Clark Bucks or the \$50 Clark Bucks drawings. Santa will be present.

Don't forget your hometown this Christmas season. The final Dacotah Bank Movie, Finding Dory, is this Saturday.

The Clark Chamber of Commerce reminds everyone to remember to fill their Christmas Memories 2016 punch cards. Until December 17 these cards can be used at any participating Chamber member business for cash only purchases, no charge purchases. Every card must have \$100 in total purchases and must be completely filled before submitting for the drawing to be held on December 17 at the Clark American Legion building.

Courier Christmas edition next week

Next week's paper will be the Clark County Courier's Merry Christmas Greeting edition with Christmas greetings from many area businesses.

As Christmas falls on a Sunday this year, as does New Year's, no changes will be necessary for publishing the Clark County Courier.

Community music concert is Dec. 18

St. Paul Lutheran Church in Clark is hosting a community Christmas Concert on Sunday, December 18.

There will be several groups and some individuals performing in addition to the Community Choir.

Winter weather is very evident

Even though winter is officially one week away, frigid temperatures have arrived and are predicted to stay. Whether La Nina weather patterns or an Arctic cold front are the culprits, below zero lows are the reality, with wind chills hovering around -30° at times.

Plus, another snow event is forecast for South Dakota, beginning Friday.

With large snow drifts in the area, Clark has to be one of the leaders in snow amounts totals in eastern South Dakota to this point, as almost an inch of moisture was recorded last week.

Santa Day is Thursday, Dec. 22

Due to the impending Saturday, Dec. 17 weather, the Santa Day celebration in Willow Lake will be Thursday, Dec. 22.

A big day is on tap, including a Tour of Homes, horse-drawn wagon rides, meetings with Santa and the Mrs. and a lighted parade. Please note the revised date of Thursday, Dec. 22.

2017-2018 school calendar getting closer to approval

The Christmas season is a busy time and it is so busy, the Clark School decided to have an early morning school board meeting this month to allow for the school calendar to have the Christmas music concert Monday night.

At the December school board meeting, routine business was the order of the day, with the 2017-2018 school calendar again being the topic garnering the longest discussion.

Action will be necessary in January to formally adopt the 2017-2018 calendar and the board is looking at the calendar option that begins Wednesday, August 23, 2017 and ends Wednesday, May 16, 2018 and also is the choice of the certified staff. The second calendar option added another week of vacation for the Christmas break and the third option would start after Labor Day.

Principal Jerry Hartley started the discussion explaining that being able to have semester tests prior to Christmas is a big advantage to students and teachers alike and better for learning.

Hartley then put on his athletic director hat, reporting that the state sports calendar is an intricate and complex model, trying to accommodate all of the extra curricular programs.

"From an athletic director stand point there are concerns if we start late, such as after Labor Day," said Hartley and he noted that football practice begins August 7 and volleyball starts on August 10.

"Football games can start as early as Aug. 18 next year and that means we could have played three games before school starts, if we started after Labor Day," said Hartley. "Also, college begins next year around Aug. 21, so that would affect dual credit students."

Regarding calendars and scheduling Hartley said much more learning goes on early in the school year, than occurs in May and teachers are comfortable starting with 10 days left in August.

This led to a topic of how the school is handling the two recent snow days. Board member Trudi Gaikowski asked principal Hartley if all periods were used and just shortened when there is a late start. Hartley said that the school has done it that way, but this year hours one and two have been staggered with three and four. "That seems to work well."

Superintendent Luanne Warren, who also is the elementary principal said that regardless of the late start, elementary students always get their reading and math in.

Three minor adjustments were then made to the preferred calendar option before next month's official action.

In other business:

▲ High school semester tests will be on Monday and Tuesday next week, Dec. 19 and 20.

School board
(continued on page 4)



Christmas Village added to courthouse tree display

Sara Tarbox and her two children, Lane, 6 and Paige, 3, look at the new Christmas Village on the first floor of the Clark County Courthouse. The Christmas Village is new this year and with a dozen or so decorated Christmas trees, make sure you get a chance to look at the Christmas tree display at the courthouse. The commissioners and courthouse employees will host the Courthouse Open House on Tuesday, December 20.

Worship services in the area will celebrate Christmas

"Joy to the World - the Lord has come. Let earth receive her king. Let every heart - prepare him room and heaven and nature sing."

This song is often at the start of many Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services at local churches proclaiming the jubilation of Jesus' birth. Other songs also telling of the good news of Jesus' birth are "Go Tell it on the Mountain", "Silent Night", "The First Noel", "Away in a Manger" and "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear".

Songs that tell of our greatest gift at Christmas - the son of God who was born in a humble stable at Christmas - Jesus Christ - our Savior.

Christians still make up the majority of the population in the United States and the warm feelings of love at Christmas are shared by many. The term 'Merry Christmas' can often be heard without hesita-

tion in many businesses who aren't following the move to be politically correct, changing over to 'Happy Holidays'.

The reason for the season is Jesus - let us not forget. Have the guts to tell it like it is and keep Christ in Christmas, first and foremost - like in the word 'Christmas' as well as in God's word - the Holy Bible where the book of Matthew tells of his birth. The birth of the Savior to us all through God's grace if we believe.

Like the popular hymn, "O Come All Ye Faithful", spend time this Christmas at any one of the following Christmas celebrations in local churches.

Worship services in our area include: In Clark, at the Plymouth Congregational (UCC) Church, a Christmas Eve Candlelight worship will be held at 7:00 p.m. with Pastor Fawn Lamb. No services will be

held on December 25.

In Raymond, commissioned ruling elders will lead the Christmas Eve Candlelight service with communion at the First Presbyterian



Church at 5:30 p.m. No services on Dec. 25.

At Bethlehem Lutheran in Raymond, Pastor Randy Bader will lead the children's Christmas Eve service at 4:00 p.m. On December 25 at Peace, the Word and Song service will be held at 9:00 a.m.

At St. Paul Lutheran, their Christmas Eve Candlelight worship service with communion will be held at 6:00 p.m. The service will be led by Pastor Mindy Ehrke. Fellowship at 9:00 a.m. and worship at 10:30 a.m. will be held on Christmas Day.

At the United Methodist Church in Clark, Pastors Mark and Joy Tracy invite all to the Christmas Eve Candlelight service held on the 24th at 3:00 p.m. On December 25, an 11:00 a.m. hymn sing will be held at the church.

At St. Michael's Church in Clark, a Christmas Day Nativity of the Lord Mass will be led by Father Dan Smith at 9:00 a.m. on Dec. 25.

In Garden City, Pastors Mark and Joy Tracy will be hosting a 5:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight worship service. No service on Dec. 25.

In Carpenter, the United Methodist Church will have their Christ-

mas Eve Candlelight service and Sunday School program at 5:00 p.m. on December 24. On Christmas Day worship will be held at 9:00 a.m. (no Sunday School).

The Congregational Church in Willow Lake will hold their Christmas Eve service of Candles and Carols at 6:30 p.m. with Pastor Rosanne Anderson. At the United Presbyterian Church, a Christmas Day worship will be held at 9:30 a.m.

Pastor Randy Bader invites members to the Willow Lake Evangelical Lutheran Church for their Christmas Eve children's service at 6:00 p.m.

At Grace Lutheran Church, Pastor Bryan Taffe will lead the Christmas Eve worship at 5:30 p.m. Pastor Bryan Taffe will officiate at the Good Hope Christmas Eve worship.

Church services
(continued on page 4)

Lower sales tax collections lead to lean state budget proposal

By Dana Hess
Community News Service

Gov. Dennis Daugaard presented a lean budget proposal to legislators on Tuesday, holding the line on spending due to sales tax collections that are projected to be lower than expected.

The \$1.62 billion general fund budget for fiscal year 2018 includes 1 percent increases for education, health care providers and state employees. The budget includes about \$20 million in general fund spending increases.

The total budget for FY 2018 is

\$4.6 billion. In addition to general funds, this includes roughly \$1.65 billion in federal funds and \$1.35 billion in other state funds.

Daugaard explained that a variety of factors have led to the lower than expected sales tax collections. He noted that tourism numbers were down after a record year in 2015, a slow ag economy had led to fewer equipment sales and consumers are more cautious about their spending because of concern about the election or the future of the economy.

State budget
(continued on page 6)

Arrest made Monday morning

According to City of Clark Chief of Police Jeremy Wellnitz, through the overnight hours of December 11, 2016, the Clark Police Department was notified of property vandalism to mailboxes. The Police Department received numerous reports of mailboxes and stop signs that were knocked over by a vehicle throughout the City of Clark. Through the investigation, it was discovered a fire hydrant was also struck near a stop sign that was knocked over.

Wellnitz reported that as a result of that investigation, Kobe Weets, age 18, was arrested and charged

with felony intentional damage to property, hit and run, failure to report accident and reckless driving. He was transported to the Codington County Detention Center where he was released after posting \$1,000 cash/surety bond.

The investigation is still ongoing and more charges are pending said Wellnitz. He added that if you have any information pertaining to similar incidents, please contact the Clark Police Department at 120 North Commercial Street or call 605-532-3112.



CHS Christmas concert was Monday

Monday, December 12 was the middle school and high school band and choir concert at Clark School. Above the Clark Middle School Choir is shown performing. Lola Bartels is the band director and Tera McDonnell is choir director.