

# Clark County Courier

The voice of Clark County since 1880

Clark Homecoming Parade 2014 was last Friday.

For more Homecoming pictures, turn to pages 8 and 9.



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The hometown newspaper of Ted Wicks, Gillette, WY.

## OTE's wind farm is quite a learning experience

"We're in the wind zone," stated Bill Makens, creator of the Oak Tree Energy Clark Wind Farm, north of Clark. Makens is referring to the Coteau des Prairies/Bufalo Ridge, a plateau in northeastern South Dakota, southwestern Minnesota and northeastern Iowa, 200 miles in length and 100 miles wide, rising some 1,700-1,820 feet above sea level.

Makens hosted the Lake Area Technical Institute Energy and Technology and Operations classes on Tuesday and Friday of last week, giving them a tour and presentation on his developing wind farm.

On Friday, 18 students from the second year LATI class boarded a bus along with their instructor Scott Leitheiser and started out for the Oak Tree Lodge to begin their morning.

The on-site visit of the OTC wind farm began Friday morning at the Oak Tree Lodge, with wind farm proprietor Bill Makens giving a little history and background of both the hunting lodge and the wind farm project. Makens explained that the Makens' farm is a six-generation farm and the hunting lodge is 14 years old. It is on this property that seven of the 11 wind farm turbines are located.

"We're located on the edge of the Buffalo Ridge so the potential for wind energy is really off the charts here," stated Makens. "It's like we're in the Saudi Arabia of wind power. South Dakota is the fourth largest wind producer of wind technology. It's a growing and very interesting industry."

Makens went on to explain the 1978 Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act (PURPA) law, under President Jimmy Carter's administration that was the demonopolization of the power company. "Kind of like when the government came in and changed 'Ma Bell' with the telephone company monopoly. It created competition and the price went down. This is the same thing with utility companies. By law, the utility company that is closest to a qualifying facility generating energy (like Clark's wind farm) must buy from it."

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Bill Makens  
Oak Tree Energy

When asked by a student, where this wind farm's power is sold to, Makens' answer was Northwestern Energy with their home office located in Montana. He went on to explain how a utility grid works and when electricity goes into the grid - it's in there. Since the 1960's with the Oahe Dam power plant construction, most of North and South Dakota's power comes from there.

"With wind power adding to the mix now and our population being smaller than other states, sixty percent of our power goes out

of state. Tennessee with its large demand is buying wind power from North Dakota for example."

"Technology continues to get faster. Keep up with it, once you graduate," advised Makens. "When we started this process a few years ago now, we thought we would go with 1.5 megawatt turbines, then found out that 1.85 megawatt turbines are the newer way to go."

Questions came in on the building of the turbines. For a solid base for the 120 ft. turbine, 250 million pounds of concrete were used on a 40 foot base with 250 million pounds of quality dirt on top of it. Engineers make sure the compaction is sound. Site staff are on the grounds with their engineer making sure everything is done according to specifications, advising the crew along the way.

"Sixty thousand pounds of steel go into the base and the base is about 40 foot across with its concrete footing. Forty loads of concrete went into the base with about 10 yds. per truck load.

"When all is said and done, 11 turbines will cover a seven mile area, with one base 1,913 feet above sea level. The substation north of Clark a few miles is the interconnect site for the electricity. The Watertown Area Power Administration (WAPA) is the balancing facility for the power in its distribution as it goes through Northwestern Energy.

"When it's all up and running and hopefully that will be close to early November, our farm has the potential to light up 5,500 homes," ended Makens.



Lake Area Tech's Energy Technology and Operations classes, first year and second, visited the Oak Tree Energy Clark Wind Farm sites last week. Shown above, Bill Makens, third from left showed pictures and explained the footing specifications required for the 120 foot tall towers. Eighteen 'energy scientists' and their instructor Scott Leitheiser heard from Makens and the head site staff engineer as she answered questions on wind energy along with Makens.

## Great weather helps make for a great weekend



The third weekend in September annually is the date for the PDR Hunt. In its seventh year, nine disabled hunters spent the weekend hunting white-tail deer and practicing their shooting.

In the photo above, PDR Hunt founder Dean Rasmussen is shown visiting in the foreground, with two hunters shown practice shooting, after supper time, on Friday evening.

A great community event was held over the weekend.

Landowners, hunting enthusiasts and many volunteers came together to make the seventh annual PDR Hunt a memorable occasion for nine disabled hunters.

PDR Hunt founder, Dean Rasmussen said, "Just about everybody in Clark and the Clark area, has some connection to this hunt now. We love hosting the event as much as the kids who come here to hunt."

This is the seventh annual PDR Hunt and the weather cooperated nicely, staying dry, with lows in the 50's and highs in the 70's.

Each year, somewhere near 10 hunters participate and this year there were nine hunters, ages 13 to 17. "Our youngest participant has

been 12 and we let them hunt until they are 18," said Rasmussen. This year three Minnesota hunters were part of the group.

Dean Rasmussen, along with his son Brad, started this great tradition in 2008, which takes disabled youth on guided, handicap accessible hunts around the area.

Mike Constanzo, PDR Hunt volunteer from Sioux Falls, sums up the PDR Hunt nicely: Paper targets, pieces of apples and plastic drink bottles splattering at their finger pulls imbued the kids with a sense of power and control, something their damaged bodies seldom ever feel. A sense of accomplishment empowered these kids. Their attitudes about themselves, their capability and their self-worth rose

with the muzzle roars. If pride comes from hands-on experience, this one was a bull's eye forever.

**PDR Hunt**  
(continued on page 3)

### WEATHER

Ryan Eggleston - Official  
Weather Observer

	HI	LO	PR
Sept. 16	69	37	0
Sept. 17	71	46	0
Sept. 18	73	48	0
Sept. 19	77	55	0
Sept. 20	78	44	0
Sept. 21	65	42	0
Sept. 22	72	43	0
2014 precipitation to date	14.32"		
2013 precipitation to date	18.60"		

## Temperatures could be as warm in early fall as they were in late summer

Fall fell earlier this week. On Monday of this week Autumn began and with this new season comes the transition into moderate daytime highs temperature-wise and hopefully good sleeping weather. Get out the rakes and guns and leave the shovels alone for awhile.

The warm-up across South Dakota last week and this week may bring some optimism to farmers as preparations begin for fall harvest. The potential for frost last week brought worries to a few farmers, but fortunately only about one percent of the total corn acres in the U.S. were impacted by frost, and the weather is warm this week as we head into the first day of astronomical fall on September 23.

However, wetter than average conditions are likely in northern and northeastern South Dakota as

we move into October, said Laura Edwards, SDSU Extension Climate Field Specialist, as she references the latest national climate outlook from NOAA's Climate Prediction Center. The same climate outlook shows above, below and near average temperatures are all equally likely in the coming month.

"This latest climate outlook may be a mixed blessing," Edwards said. "Climate forecasts are leaning wetter and that could impact grain moisture and the ability to do field work at harvest."

On a positive note, Edwards said the climate forecasts are no longer trending cooler, as they have much of the 2014 growing season.

She added that the cooler than average summer and early fall season has delayed crop development, particularly for corn, soybeans and

other field crops. "The cooler conditions, in combination with ample moisture in June and August, ensured that most cropping areas in the state were not drought stressed and crop conditions are currently rated very good for most of South Dakota," she said.

The latest United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) projections show record yields for both corn and soybeans this year. "There is hope of warmer climate conditions through October so that South Dakota farmers can realize this yield potential," she said.

Pasture and range conditions in South Dakota are currently rated 70 percent in very good to excellent condition, among the best in the nation. Edwards said according to the

**Temperatures**  
(continued on page 3)



## Third graders visit county museum

The Clark Elementary third grade students took a short, one-block field trip last week to the Clark County Historical Museum, at the Clark House.

Clark County Historical Society (CCHS) president Greg Furness gave an hour lesson on Clark County history. Furness told of the history of Clark County and also gave a tour of most of the buildings at the

museum.

Above, third graders Taylor Merkel, left and Jada Wagner look at items in the Clark House, including old wartime military helmets on the top shelf and old toys.

Cindy Wientjes is the third grade teacher.