

What's a community/county to do?

By Bill Krikac

This is the last week of September. A theoretical threat date of December 31, 2021, was given as the date this publisher would lock the doors of the *Clark County Courier* and throw away the keys. Has the Courier been sold? NO. Will this closure happen?

This article was written hesitantly, after much soul searching. The bottom line is the Clark County Courier is very important to the community, AND MUST CONTINUE. I've chosen to be proactive - not reactive. The issue has become dire. Please continue to subscribe hoping a solution will be found!!

Why is the publisher calling it a career?

This is not a spur-of-the-moment, snap decision. When I turned 65 - four years ago next month, a decision was made to sell the newspaper by the time I turned 68. Well, that didn't happen.

I do not feel as if I have been sitting absently by - not doing anything to get the newspaper sold. Newspaper realty companies tell me I'm too small, numerous phone calls, emails and advertisements got me nowhere and then the pandemic hit and economics turned things upside down, causing the newspaper business product to be worth even less than when I started the selling process.

Every month I tried at least one new lead or avenue, with months turning into years and the hope of selling the Courier turning into lasting frustration.

I have the wet version of macular degeneration in my left eye and this summer acquired A-fib (heart). A-fib causes my heart to beat faster and irregular. The 'deluxe supply of new pills' makes it even more difficult to function and focus.

As of January 1, 2022 I will be without office manager/type setter Annette Helkenn, who will have deservedly retire. She is the lifeblood of this place! Trudi Gaikowski has replaced Kimberly Harrington as proof reader and local news correspondent, as well as learning the graphic arts portion of the business.

I have nothing but respect and honor to say to the citizens of Clark County and subscribers and advertisers of the Courier. Much pride comes with putting out a weekly newspaper. The vast majority of Clark County residents have relied on the Courier as their number one local news and advertising source and look forward to their Wednesday reading.

Why has the paper not been sold?

It's not because my asking price is too high. Heck, I haven't even gotten to second base in that ballgame. I have yet to give anyone whatsoever a solid number.

So, it must be the product itself. This is where the 'rubber meets the road' and grim truths need to be addressed. To throw in another cliché, "Will the new owner need a leap of faith?"

Newspapers have been on the decline as digital technology has advanced. As cellphones become smartphones, everyone walks around with a computer in their pocket and a newspaper is so last century.

That is the worst-case scenario regarding newspapers and how millennials and younger look at newspapers, but let's stop the presses for a second.

Clark County is a rural county without a T.V. or radio home. The Courier relies on local news. Take away the Courier and that leaves Clark County in a News Desert.

What does that mean? That means that everyone would have to get their news elsewhere. Good luck. The newspaper has been counted on for over 140 years in Clark County to objectively, consistently and accurately cover county, city, school and law enforcement news. How would you get this news? Facebook?

Everything from births to deaths, from ballgames to honor rolls from Potato Days to Achievement Days, would slip through the cracks. No promotions or advertising or business cards would exist. We need a newspaper!!

Every time some one who lives

or had lived in Clark sells his/her business to someone who doesn't live in Clark, often times a corporation, the advertising goes away. Advertising is the most important component of the newspaper, followed by subscriptions.

In order for community newspapers to survive, in my opinion, advertising customers must remain loyal as they have in Clark County and subscribers will have to donate to the paper to keep the newspaper afloat.

This might be too futuristic a concept to wrap your head around.

De Smet Model

Let's look south a county to Kingsbury County and De Smet. After going through a decade-long period of trying to sell the *De Smet News* and *Lake Preston Times*, owner Dale Blegen announced he was shuttering the newspapers.

Over 20 volunteers stepped up and have kept the *Kingsbury Journal* going. I'm on the outside looking in on this situation, but De Smet/Lake Preston volunteers with only a pair of local paid employees, have made this work. Hats off and hope things continue!

The *De Smet News* was a broad sheet and is now a tab. (A tab is the smaller, sideways version of the newspaper. The Courier is the longer, broadsheet format. Many weeklies have gone successfully to tabs.)

Looking at this week's (9/22)

Kingsbury Journal, it looks like a blast from the past - as it is 18 pages (36 tab sheets), loaded with stories, pictures and great advertisements. The *Kingsbury Journal* is a fresh and exciting newspaper. Is Clark County up to this task - long term?

If I were 20 years younger I would re-format the Courier into a tab. I would definitely consider moving from a subscription-based model to a membership-based model - based upon what the member thinks the Courier is worth to them - not a predetermined subscription price.

Plus the digital formatting of the Courier needs updating. This upgrade would interject more interest, but revenue needs to follow.

Of course, that is the bottom line. The Courier needs to be profitable in order to exist. Can I guarantee that? It would require open doors and open relationships - getting along. The right person, or persons, could do well.

There is a lot of history here

E. F. Conklin, son of General S. J. Conklin published the first newspaper in Clark County, in 1880, *The Clark Pilot*. Since then no less than 19 papers have been published in Clark County.

The *Clark Republic Courier* became the *Clark County Courier* in 1911. E. A. Silfies, who along with son Orval bought out the other Clark paper, the *Pilot Review*, in

1925. The Silfies then moved to the Review Shop, at 117 1st Ave. East, where the Courier was located for the next 75 years.

In 1945 B. W. 'Jeff' Condit and partners bought the Courier and in 1947 Condit and son-in-law Bert Moritz became owners and in 1957, Moritz became sole owner. In 1972 Dave Moritz joined the partnership and he and brother Jim, Faulkton, eventually bought out their father in the Moritz Publishing firm.

In 1995, with David Moritz as publisher, I became editor and then publisher, in 2001. Since 1968, the Courier has been printed in Ortonville, Minn.

So, you're basically looking at three sets of owners in over 100 years. The owners were different and the newspaper has definitely changed. But - all three sets of owners were known for and took pride in always paying their bills. That is a pretty important business element and it continues today.

The *Clark County Courier* needs to continue. Weekly newspapers need to be looked at as what they are - A vital, visible extension of the community, with public notices - Your Right to Know! No one wants to see this go away.

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The hometown newspaper of Julaine Stianson, Watertown, SD

Warm and dry autumn conditions to continue

Laura Edwards
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Climate forecasters are pointing towards a warmer than average October, with odds leaning towards drier conditions for the last few months of the year.

The latest monthly and seasonal climate outlooks were released on Sept. 16, 2021 by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Climate Prediction Center. There is good consensus in the computer models and forecasters that October will be warmer than average in South Dakota. As for precipitation in the month ahead, there is much more uncertainty. Most of the state is designated as having equal chances of above, below or near-normal precipitation in October.

A look further ahead to October through December overall reveals that the warm signal in mid-autumn may not linger into the winter. The chances of warmer than average temperatures dwindles by the end of the year, and the three-month outlook indicates equal chances of warmer, cooler or near-average temperatures for October through December.

For the last three months of the year, the odds of drier than average

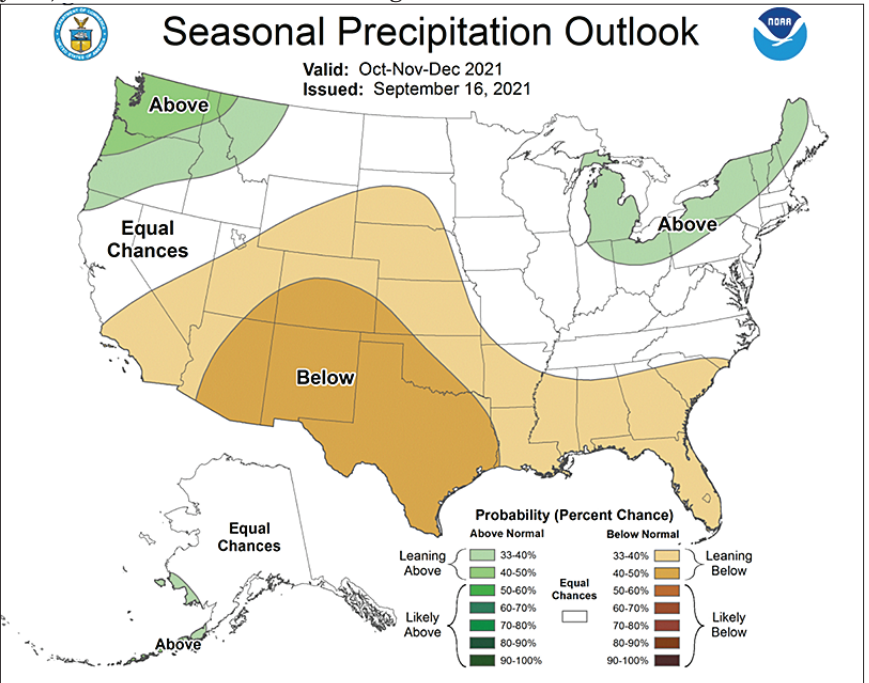
conditions increase. All of South Dakota, except for the northern-tier counties and far-eastern region, have slightly increased chances of drier than average conditions.

Potential Impacts

When we think about the impacts of the potential of early warmth, and then later dry conditions, across the state, there are a few things to consider. First, is that a later than average frost or freeze is more likely than not. We are currently in the middle of our typical period for first frost, between Sept. 22 and Oct. 10 for most of South Dakota. The current forecast shows dry and warm

Weather (continued on page 3)

WEATHER			
Robert Cole - Official Weather Observer			
	HI	LO	PR
Sept. 21.....	57	41	.36
Sept. 22.....	65	44	0
Sept. 23.....	72	52	0
Sept. 24.....	77	54	0
Sept. 25.....	64	39	0
Sept. 26.....	76	40	0
Sept. 27.....	89	55	0
2021 precipitation to date	18.07		
2020 precipitation to date	16.98		



Farming Bee held at Mike Florey's

Roger Anderson, in tractor, initiated a Farming Bee last Thursday to help out Linda Florey, wife of Mike Florey, who ended up dying that day. She was 63. "That was the right thing to do," said Anderson, as he and truck drivers Darrel Anderson, Johnny Maas and Ronnie Walker all donated

their time, as did Clark Community Oil, for gas. The 30 acres cut for silage were six miles north, one mile west and a mile north of Clark. Mike farms with his brother Paul who was packing the silage.

Waterfowl season is going strong in Clark County

What makes Clark County stand alone, in a positive way, is all of the hunting and fishing opportunities the county boasts. This time of year the county is a virtual hunting paradise. From ducks and geese to pheasants to deer, wild game abound. The duck and goose seasons have opened in the county and go into the early part of December.

"We have plenty of ducks to shoot at in the county," said Clark County Game, Fish and Parks Conservation officer Zach Thomsen. "The ducks are spread out, seeing a lot of ducks. The ducks that are here currently will be here awhile. "Saturday was a stronger day

than Sunday," for the duck hunting opener, said Thomsen. "We had good numbers of hunters out. "Sloughs have dried up a bit but the open water holes are looking pretty good still," said the game warden and he noted the warm September temperatures are going to continue into October.

"Ducks seem to be more concentrated in flocks for hunting season," Thomsen continued. "We have a really good cross-section of ducks currently."

Make sure you retrieve the game you shoot, said Thomsen, as ducks often land in cattails, but need to be retrieved.

As far as geese are concerned, it still may be a little early for the mass migration, but that will be coming sooner rather than later, as fall-like temperatures are eminent in October.

"It's always interesting," said Thomsen of what the goose migration will look like, "and as usual, it will be dependent upon weather conditions. If it gets cold by degrees, not all at once, more waterfowl will stop during the migration to feed and rest. If everything freezes at once, the waterfowl go over the top. So hunting success definitely depends on weather conditions."

Every year waterfowl hunters

need to remember to not have a gun capable of holding more than three shells and they must have a federal and state stamp in their possession. "Also, make sure you identify your ducks before you shoot," Thomsen said. "Especially with brown ducks, it is difficult to distinguish between hens and drakes."

This year the hunter has a choice between the migratory bird stamp or the new, three-ducks splash stamp.

Concerning pheasants, the youth pheasant season has begun. October 9, the residents only season

Hunting (continued on page 8)