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Daugaard hunting decision criticized

AGENCY SURPRISED: Officials say they weren't informed about change in access policy.

By Kevin Woster
Journal staff

The policy directive by Gov. Dennis Daugaard limiting access to private property by state conservation officers has angered critics in the sporting community and surprised members of the state Game, Fish & Parks Commission.

GF&P Commission Chairman Jeff Olson said Thursday that he wasn't aware of the policy directive developed by Daugaard staffers and upper-level GF&P Department officials until he read it in the Journal on Wednesday.

"Since we were not included in the discussion, there is not much I can say," Olson said. "But I believe I know how the sportsmen feel about this issue, since it has been debated in the Legislature year after year."

Efforts to change state law so that conservation officers must have landowner permission before entering private land for hunting and fishing compliance checks have repeatedly failed in the South Dakota Legislature. Daugaard's policy stops short of requiring that permission. But it does say that unless officers have reason to suspect illegal activity, compliance checks should be conducted in the vicinity of public roads and section lines, along field borders and where hunters are congregated or where hunters have traveled in vehicles.

Bill Antonides of Aberdeen, president of the South Dakota Wildlife Federation, said in an email Thursday that the policy directive will hurt wildlife law enforcement in South Dakota and force officers to use different standards in checking hunters on public and private land.

"This really sets up two classes of hunters: those who hunt public land and are subject to

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Ryan Soderlin/Journal staff

Ashley Neil, 13, Billings, Mont., shows her boxer, Rosie, in the 12-18-month-old female division of the Rapid City AKC dog show Thursday at Rushmore Plaza Civic Center.

Civic center goes to the dogs

RAPID CITY KENNEL CLUB: Dogs from throughout the nation are competing in an AKC-sanctioned dog show here.

By Lynn Taylor Rick
Journal staff

Shawn Clute and two other handlers drove a motor home full of 12 standard show poodles from Houston, Texas, to the Rapid City Kennel Club Dog Show.

Clute also brought along her pet dog.

"It's a little much," she admitted with a smile.

Seated in a walkway at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center on Thursday morning, Clute brushed out canine hairpieces for the show poodles. Fourteen-month-old Amelia and puppy Erika, both displaying

alarmingly big hair, sat atop a pretable nearby.

Clute has been in the business of showing dogs for the past 20 years, taking just two to three weeks off from showing each year. "My family, they all think I'm nuts," she said.

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Stock show dispute heats up

CONTRACT CONFLICT: Battle continues between civic center and Central States Fair over events.

By Ernie Rusch
Journal staff

The dispute between the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center and Central States Fair over the contract for the Black Hills Stock Show & Rodeo reached a boil Thursday, as officials for both groups threatened to part ways if the stalemate is not broken.

The civic center board struck first Thursday morning, voting unanimously to give the fair until Nov. 3 to sign a new five-year contract to start in 2013 for its share of the popular event. If the deadline is missed, board members said they would seek proposals for someone else to run the trade show portion of the event.

"It's just too important to the community to sit here and keep arguing," civic center general manager Brian Maliske said. "We need to move forward."

But fair officials responded Thursday afternoon by saying they would consider making immediate changes to the 2012 event if it became clear that the civic center would not be renewing their contract. The current contract expires after next year.

"Certainly, if we're not going to get a contract to use the civic center for the stock show in the future, that will impact how we implement this year's show, which would include moving events to the James Kjerstad Event Center for the 2012 show," Central States Fair manager Ron Jeffries said.

Arguments

Rushmore Plaza Civic Center officials have argued that the limitation is necessary to protect the overall success of the event and prevent two competing rodeo events from being scheduled at the same time. But fair officials have rejected the argument and said all they are asking for is to have control over their own facility during the stock show.

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