

Top 10 Nebraska News Stories, 2011⁵¹

1. Extended flooding over the summer displaced thousands of Nebraskans, damaged and destroyed homes and threatened the Omaha airport, wastewater treatment plants and a nuclear power station.

2. After heavy political pressure, energy infrastructure company TransCanada pledged to reroute its proposed Keystone XL oil pipeline through Nebraska.

3. The state's nearly \$1 billion projected budget deficit dominated the 2011 session of the Nebraska Legislature.

4. The Nebraska Cornhuskers went 9-3 during the regular season, their first in the Big Ten, and prepared to face the University of South Carolina in the Capitol One Bowl in Orlando, Fla.

5. Suspended 17-year-old Robert Butler, Jr. fatally shot an assistant principal at Millard South High School and wounded the principal before fleeing the campus and taking his own life.

6. Seventeen-year-old Teresa Scanlan won the 2011 Miss America pageant, becoming the first Miss Nebraska to be named Miss America.

7. The Legislature and the state auditor's office harshly criticized the state's efforts to privatize Nebraska's child welfare services.

8. Football and wrestling programs at the University of Nebraska at Omaha were dropped as the school moved to Division I.

9. Census estimates showed that Nebraska's population grew at a faster rate than the total U.S. population for two years in a row between 2008 and 2010, due to the relative strength of the state's economy.

10. Nebraska attempted to set its first execution date in more than 13 years, but questions about the state's supply of the three drugs needed to carry out a lethal injection forced more delays.

⁵¹ Source: Associated Press; surveys of Nebraska newspaper editors and broadcast news directors.

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1. Farmers, ranchers and residents of several cities struggled through the worst drought in decades, renewing concerns over water usage.

2. Firefighters throughout Nebraska stayed busy over the summer battling wildfires driven by drought conditions and high winds.

3. State Sen. Deb Fischer defeated former Sen. and Gov. Bob Kerrey in the race to replace Ben Nelson in the U.S. Senate.

4. Officials unveiled a new, preferred route for the Nebraska portion of the Keystone XL pipeline. The new pathway was designed to avoid the Sandhills region.

5. Tom Osborne announced his retirement after five years as the University of Nebraska's athletic director. He became athletic director emeritus on Jan. 1, 2013, and will remain involved in department operations through July 30.

6. State Sen. Deb Fischer of Valentine defeated two better-known, better-financed rivals to win the Republican nomination for U.S. Senate.

7. Former Sen. Bob Kerrey announced that he would seek the Democratic nomination for a Nebraska U.S. Senate seat, three weeks after saying that he would not run.

8. Andres Gonzalez took a pharmacist hostage during a botched drug robbery in downtown Alliance. The 27-year-old wounded three officers and the pharmacist during the daylong standoff that ended with his death. During the standoff, he admitted to killing two people.

9. Lawmakers overrode Gov. Dave Heineman's veto of a bill that restores prenatal care coverage to the children of low-income women, including illegal immigrants.

10. Headlines erupted in March over so-called "pink slime" made by Beef Products Inc. (BPI) in South Sioux City and other plants. BPI sued ABC News in September for defamation over its coverage of a meat product called lean, finely textured beef that critics referred to as "pink slime."