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NBA Weekly Update for July 16, 2021

The Weekly Update is a service designed to provide National Bison Association members with news and information affecting bison production and marketing. Many items in the Weekly Update are reprinted from outside sources. The content of those articles does not necessarily reflect the policy position of the National Bison Association. The articles are reproduced here only as a means to keep our membership informed as much as possible of all information and opinions relating to bison that is circulating publicly.

NBA Staff Attends Midwest State-Legislator Tour

National Bison Association Executive Director Dave Carter, Assistant Director Jim Matheson, and Director of Development Eloise Mongillo were on hand as 53 legislators from 11 states and four Canadian provinces received an introduction into the Bison Advantage at the 777 Bison Ranch south of Rapid City, SD on Saturday.



The state legislators toured the 777 ranch as a part of the annual meeting of the Midwestern Legislative Conference, which includes lawmakers from Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin, as well as the Canadian provinces of Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario and Saskatchewan.

Moritz Espy, Manager of the 777 Ranch, guided the lawmakers into the bison pasture, then provided an overview of the ways in which the ranch focuses on creating a healthy symbiotic relationship between the bison and the land.

The NBA also provided the group with an informational flyer entitled *What Every State Legislator Should Know About Bison*. That flyer provided a brief overview of the growing bison business.

Staff Tours Center of Excellence, Custer State Park

While in Rapid City for the Midwestern legislative Conference tour, the NBA staff visited the Center of Excellence for Bison Studies to meet with COE Director Kristi Cammack, along with South Dakota State University researchers Hector Menendez and Jamie Brennan.



Dr. Cammack provided the NBA staff with an overview of the Center's operations, and the timeline for initiating the eight research projects recently awarded.

NBA Executive Director Dave Carter noted, "It was extremely helpful to finally have an opportunity to see the Center, and to meet in person to discuss the opportunities ahead for bison research."

NBA Vice President Chad Kremer also hosted a tour of Custer State Park and his personal bison herd for the NBA staff members on Saturday morning, prior to the legislators' tour of 777 Ranch.

Eloise Mongillo, NBA's Director of Development, said afterward, "As a newcomer to the bison community, these meetings and tours were extremely helpful in continuing to get me grounded in this amazing part of agriculture"

NBA Board Votes for Return of 2022 Winter Conference and GTSS to Denver

The NBA Board of Directors at their June meeting voted unanimously to hold the 2022 Gold Trophy Show and Sale, and the corresponding NBA Winter Conference, in Denver, Colorado January 19 – 22, 2022.

While the contract is still being finalized, the conference will most likely return to the Denver Renaissance-Stapleton Hotel with the same room rates as the 2020 Winter Conference. The Winter Conference planning committee, again chaired by Beverly Brown of Texas, is planning another information and activity-packed event that will benefit both the new and potential bison producer as well as the seasoned professional. The committee did vote to start the conference a bit later, kicking off with the Wednesday evening "Foundation Reception" starting at 4 pm on January 19th, as to allow attendees to travel in that Wednesday and avoid an additional night of lodging. Stay tuned to <https://bisoncentral.com/winter-conference/> for updates.

Similarly, the 2022 Gold Trophy Show and Sale will take place at the newly renovated National Western Stock Show complex in Denver. While the show and sale is still being finalized in terms of classes to be offered, etc. The Gold Trophy Show and Sale (GTSS) is the premier bison auction in the U.S. For nearly 40 years, bison producers have brought their best bison stock to Denver's National Western Stock Show to show and sell their animals. The sale features high quality, judged breeding stock as well as top-notch production animals that are sure to perform back at the ranch. Stay tuned to <https://bisoncentral.com/gold-trophy-show-and-sale/> for updated details.

Please mark your calendar and plan to join us in Denver!

Carter Meets with USDA Over EU Export Requirements

NBA Executive Director Dave Carter and U.S. Meat Export Federation Analyst Cheyenne McEndaffer met with a dozen officials from the USDA and the U.S. Trade Representative's Office (USTR) this morning to discuss changes that the European Union is implementing on Health Certificates for U.S. meat products exported to that country.

Two issues pertinent to bison trade are:

- Exporters will be required to retain Export Verification records for three years, as opposed to the current requirement for one-year retention; and
- Exporters will need to verify that ranches supplying animals have had "regular" visits from veterinarians.

Dawn Williams, Senior Director of the Animal Division for the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service and Krista Dickson of the USTR office, both said that the EU has not provided any definition for "regular visits."

Carter noted that most commercial bison operations may only have a veterinarian on site at one time a year.

"First of all, a veterinarian is generally around during the annual roundup, but bison are naturally adapted to the environment, so don't require regular veterinary care," Carter said. "Send, there's an overall shortage of large animal vets already, but you can multiply that shortage times five to get to the number of large animal vets that work with bison."

The USDA and USTR officials said that "regular" could be defined as annually or every 18 months.

In a related development, the USDA Agricultural Trade Advisory Committee for Animals and Animal Products formally delivered a [joint letter](#) this week to Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and Trade Ambassador Katherine Tai outlining the livestock sector's priorities for any upcoming negotiations with the EU. That letter emphasized the importance of eliminating the 20% tariff on bison meat exported to the EU.

Voluntary Inspection Excluded from FSIS Reduction in Overtime and Holiday Fees

The National Bison Association is reaching out to USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service following the issuance of a new notice that provides a reduction in overtime and holiday inspection fees for small and very small processing plants but excludes voluntary inspection from those reductions.

According to Notice 27-21, issued last Friday, FSIS will reduce overtime and holiday inspection fees for eligible small plants by 30 percent, and for very small plants by 75 percent.

However, the Notice reads, "Facilities that receive voluntary inspection services, establishments that function solely as Official Import Inspection Establishments, or solely as exporting facilities are not eligible for the fee reduction."

Dave Carter, NBA Executive Director, said, "Excluding voluntary inspection fees from this reduction only compounds the competitive disadvantage that bison producers face in processing their animals when compared to mainstream livestock species. We will be working with FSIS and the Agricultural Marketing Service to try and correct this inequity."

Editor's Note: The following news stories were distributed by organizations not affiliated with the National Bison Association. They may not reflect the opinions or the positions held by the NBA on matters such as genetic



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Mother Earth News Podcast #113 – Bison Ranching

(From Mother Earth News)

In this episode of Mother Earth News and Friends, John Flocchini of Durham Ranch in Wyoming chats with us about raising bison, and their benefits to the land.

John Flocchini grew up sweeping floors and packing steaks for the family's Durham Meat Company in San Jose, California learning the business from the ground up. As soon as he could, he began spending summers working at the Durham Ranch in Wyoming. He moved to the ranch full time after graduating with his degree in Agriculture from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo in 1980. He took over the management reins of the ranch in 1985. He raised 2 beautiful daughters on the ranch, Erin and Cari and, married Gaylynn in 2009. John's hobbies are running, flying, fly-fishing, gardening and traveling.

Hear the podcast at <https://www.motherearthnews.com/podcast/bison-ranching/zepz2107ztil>.

Scientists Recover Human, Wolf and Bison DNA From 25,000-Year-Old Sediment

(From Market Research Telecast)

Recently, an international group of researchers published a [study](#) in the scientific journal Current Biology, in which they claim to have recovered and analyzed human and mammalian nuclear and mitochondrial environmental genomes from a single sample of Upper Palaeolithic sediment. The sample is about 25,000 years old and was found in Satsurblia Cave in western Georgia.

Sediments from caves in which our ancestors lived millennia ago have been shown to preserve ancient DNA, although these are generally fragmented samples, which do not allow an individual's entire genome to be sequenced. Bones, on the other hand, are more likely to contain complete DNA, but they are much more difficult to find and deteriorate more easily than sediments and rocks.

However, everything seems to indicate that it will be increasingly easy to find and sequence ancient genomes without the need for perfectly conserved skeletons. This was demonstrated by the authors of the new study, who managed to reconstruct incomplete mitochondrial DNA extracted from the soil sample from the Satsurblia cave.

Among the recovered DNA is that of a woman who would have lived 25,000 years ago. Only a small fraction of his genome was obtained, but from that the researchers were able to determine that he was a member of a previously unknown group of modern humans. That group, now extinct, contributed to the current populations in Europe and Asia, according to the comparison of that ancient genome with the current human genomes.

Additionally, the sediment sample contained DNA from a previously unknown and now extinct wolf lineage, suggesting that wolf populations changed and reshaped significantly at the end of the last Ice Age, around 11,000 years ago.

Read [more](#).

BLM advances American Prairie's bison grazing application

(From KPVI News 6)

On July 1, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) advanced American Prairie's modest request to graze bison on some public lands in Phillips County where they hold priority grazing privileges. The BLM's initial findings conclude that the proposed action will not have a significant environmental impact on the land and "will benefit local wildlife, improve land and water quality, and create new local jobs, all without impacting the value of the ranching economy."

The BLM can issue grazing permits or leases and modify existing permits to substitute many different types of livestock for cattle, including bison. It has done this for decades in several states across the West and in the case of American Prairie, the BLM has approved similar grazing modifications twice before.

Alison Fox, CEO of American Prairie, says the proposed action is consistent with past BLM decisions and in this instance, approval will create opportunities to collaborate with local officials and neighbors in Phillips County, while the Montana-based organization advances species and habitat restoration efforts.

"We've grazed bison on public lands for more than a decade and the proposed action is consistent with our successful track record," said Fox. "We view this as an opportunity to collaborate with public land managers and local officials to ensure the long-term health of the land, our herd, and of the Phillips County livestock industry."

Read [more](#).

Summer, 'The Exuberant Season' Of Bison Life in Yellowstone

(From Mountain Journal)

Too many photos of bison, you may wonder, looking at this essay? I have hundreds of thousands more from my nearly 50 years assigned to live and work at Canyon and making early morning forays into Hayden Valley.

It is their exuberant season—bison time— here in Yellowstone and they are among the last token survivors of the magnificent diversity of North American megafauna—the vast majority of whom went suddenly extinct just 10,000 years ago. More recently, say only a few human generations ago, we nearly lost bison as a species, the result of deliberate eradication.

At Canyon, I happen to inhabit a bison neighborhood; they live nearby, in the meadows around my home and, of course, in the Hayden.

Every summer lots of truck traffic moves to and fro across park highways as part of the improvement...of Yellowstone's infrastructure. The heavies mix with the congested often high-speed visitor traffic, of which there seems to be record-shattering numbers again this year. Many of the motorists ignore the park's traffic regulations let alone the mandated maximum 45 mph speed limit.

Yesterday morning, as is my daily habit, I drove upriver through Hayden at first light to enjoy the sunrise. As usual, especially in places where there are clusters of hot springs, fog filled the valley bottom. Such are some of the atmospherics you find in Yellowstone and few other places on Earth.

Read [more](#).

Wyoming Wild Bison License Up for Raffle Through July 16th

(From County 10 News)

For the third year, Governor Mark Gordon is donating a wild bison license to support Wyoming wildlife conservation. The license will be issued through a random raffle open only to Wyoming residents.

“The bison is the symbol of Wyoming and a fitting hunt to raise money for conservation,” Governor Gordon said. “I am happy to once again offer this opportunity to residents who care so deeply for our wildlife.”

Tickets are \$10 and can be [purchased on the Wyoming Game and Fish Department website](#). There is a limit of one ticket per person. The raffle winner will receive a 2021 wild bison license but must still purchase any additional stamps and applicable licenses. Proceeds from the raffle sales will go to the Wyoming Governor’s Big Game License Coalition and will help support efforts to sustain Wyoming’s wildlife.

Only Wyoming residents are able to purchase a raffle ticket and must be eligible to hunt big game in Wyoming. Hunters must be at least 12 years of age by the end of the year and meet hunter education requirements. The wild bison license is non-transferable. Hopeful hunters should review the [bison hunt areas on the Game and Fish website](#).

The raffle closes July 16. The winner will be announced on July 28.

Read [more](#).

The Bison Are Back: Bison Could Appear in Glacier Soon

(From the Great Falls Tribune)

A herd of at least 75 or 85 bison may be released even within a year or so to land in the Chief Mountain area of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation, with freedom to wander onto their native land, now Glacier National Park, according to the Buffalo Program of the Blackfeet Nation.

“There’s no fences, no boundary fences, between the park and our land,” said Ervin Carlson, director of the Buffalo Program. “So those animals would venture into the park’s side, and the park is really receptive to that, and so I think it’s kind of a win-win situation for the tribe and for the park.”

Bison used to live on the land that’s now in and around Glacier, and that’s something visitors to the park should know, said Kyle Langley, a seasonal archaeologist for the park. The University of Montana graduate’s 2021 master’s thesis explores the history of the animals in the park.

“A lot of people come to Glacier,” said Langley, of Columbia Falls. “They expect to see mountain goats and sheep and bears. For some reason, bison have eluded people’s awareness that they were here, basically. They were exterminated locally in the mid-1800s, and were it not for that, they’d still be here. And they were an important part of Glacier’s story.”

Read [more](#).

USDA allocating \$500M for new meat processing capacity

(From AgriPulse)

The Department of Agriculture plans to invest \$500 million in the nation's meat processing

capacity, but specifics on how the money will need to be determined by an upcoming public input process.

Speaking at a press conference in Council Bluffs, Iowa, Ag Secretary Tom Vilsack said USDA would be investing \$500 million in American Rescue Plan funding to build new meat and poultry processing capacity. The department also plans to distribute \$150 million to help get existing small and very small processing facilities through the COVID-19 pandemic, creating new rules for "Product of USA" labels and making new markets accessible to producers.

"We have got to expand the amount of capacity, the processing capacity in this country," Vilsack said. "We can no longer rely on a handful of processing companies to do the job, to make the market competitive, to do right by farmers, to ensure as well that we have resilient food supplies."

According to Vilsack, USDA will use the \$500 million in funding to provide grants, loans and technical assistance to building processing facilities that will create a more competitive market for meat processing within the United States. He stressed that this \$500 million is just the start and said he believes that the amount of available money can be expanded through private investments, philanthropic interest, state economic development resources and local government commitments.

"We're not just talking about \$500 million," he said. "We're talking about the power of \$500 million to stimulate interest and then to act as a catalyst to draw those additional resources."

He added that the initial funding is already available, but he hopes the program can be an example for Congress to provide a "more permanent structure" for later on. The USDA said in a release that it will be soliciting public input into how best to spend the money, including studying "the needs, gaps, and barriers to fair and competitive meat processing markets" through a [Request for Information](#).

Of the \$150 million being put toward strengthening existing small and very small processing facilities, \$55 million has been made available in Meat and Poultry Inspection Readiness Grants and \$100 million will go toward "reducing the financial burdens of overtime inspection fees" for these plants.

Rep. Cindy Axne, D-Iowa, who also spoke at the press conference said the effort will add stability to markets

"We've gotten shut out in far too many markets because of lack of transparency and an inability to be able to market our products in a way that gives us some equal footing so that our farmers can do better here in Iowa," she said.

The announcement also drew support from Sens. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, and John Thune, R-S.D., though Thune expressed his disappointment with where the money was coming from.

Survey Examines State of Agritourism Pre-Pandemic

(From University of Vermont Press Release)

Agritourism is a growing industry in the United States, providing opportunities for agricultural operations to generate revenue by offering visitors educational and recreational experiences, including tours, tastings and hospitality, as well as direct-to-consumer sales of products.

To gauge the breadth and impact of agritourism in the country, University of Vermont (UVM) Extension, in collaboration with research and cooperative extension faculty in California, Oregon and West Virginia, conducted a national online agritourism survey. The survey period ran from November 2019 to February 2020, concluding shortly before the COVID-19 pandemic hit the United States.

While farms experienced substantial changes during the pandemic, this survey of farms open to visitors provides a snapshot of the state of agritourism prior to the start of the pandemic. Plans are underway for a follow-up survey in late 2021.

A total of 1,834 farmers, ranchers and vineyard operators from all 50 states responded, including 222 from Vermont. Nationwide, Vermont had the most participants, followed by Oregon, Tennessee, California and Kansas. The top responding counties were, in order, Chittenden, Addison, Windsor and Orange.

The survey was designed to assess the economic viability of agritourism enterprises through a better understanding of the range of experiences offered such as farm stays, corn mazes, pick-your-own fruit operations and on-farm direct sales. Participants also were asked for input on challenges faced and types of support needed to achieve success.

In Vermont, surveys were sent to 376 agritourism operators by direct email. Of those, 196 responded with an additional 26 completing the survey through a link for the multi-state survey. They ranged in age from 26 to 83 with an average age of 57 compared to 55 nationwide.

Sixty-two percent of Vermont respondents have 10 or more years of agritourism experience with one operation in business since 1943. The newest operators became involved in agritourism in 2019.

Read [more](#).

Rural Veterinarians Play Integral Role in Livestock Producers' Operations

(From Tri-State Livestock News)

Lainie Kringen-Scholtz loved Frank. He was a 4-year-old rodeo horse in training she worked with herself. So, the day he broke his leg, she was desperate to get him the help he needed.

The first veterinarian she reached out to was not on call that night. The second veterinarian Kringen-Scholtz called was at the farm in less than an hour. Brooke Braskamp's response impacted Kringen-Scholtz's philosophy on how she would practice large animal medicine.

"She was eight months pregnant and trekked through 3-feet of snow to help me and my horse," recalls the veterinarian, animal chiropractor and acupuncturist. "She was there right away. She didn't care that it was zero degrees out. She didn't care that she had the burden of being eight months pregnant, she was there to help me, and I just wanted to be able to do that for people too."

Today, Braskamp is Kringen-Scholtz's boss. And like her, Kringen-Scholtz is willing to be on call so that anytime of the day or night her clients need her, she is there for them and their animals.

Access to a veterinarian is crucial for South Dakota's more than 14,000 livestock operations, explains registered Simmental producer Clay Duxbury.

"Our bottom line is already so tight, so that every live calf matters," says Duxbury.

Full [text](#).

Animal Health Matters: Grazing Cattle on Short Pastures Can Increase Anthrax Risk

(From Farm Forum)

Of all the cattle diseases producers need to worry about, anthrax is one that usually

registers quite a bit of concern when reports surface.

While conditions such as bovine respiratory disease or calf scours are more consistent and economically important to beef operations year after year, the term "anthrax" grabs attention from non-producers and producers alike.

For most of the public, anthrax evokes thoughts of biological weapons and terrorism. For those defending our country, this threat remains a concern. Cattle producers, however, know it as a potential cause of death for cows and bulls on pasture.

In cattle, anthrax is caused by a bacteria that survives for years - even decades - as a very tough spore form in the soil. When cattle graze short pastures or when these spores have been washed up on grass from previous pasture flooding or dug up during excavation, they're more available to be eaten by the cow or bull.

Full [text](#).

Regulatory Changes Needed for Gene-Edited Animals

(From Farm Progress)

For the past several years, the Food and Drug Administration and USDA have battled in a turf war over which agency should be in charge of regulating gene-edited animals. New recommendations now call on updating the existing FDA regulatory framework and developing a coordinated and streamlined assessment and approval process between USDA and FDA.

For the past 18 months a panel of experts convened by the American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges and the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities studied the issue found that in order for gene editing in agricultural animals to unleash enormous gains in productivity, "a remodeling of the federal regulatory landscape is needed" for potential productivity gains to be realized.

The "AAVMC/APLU Gene Editing in Agriculture Task Force Report" suggests current regulatory protocols have not kept up with technological change and must be modernized for society to realize the many benefits of new scientific capabilities.

"For the promises of applying gene editing in livestock to be realized, federal regulatory approval and monitoring processes that are rooted in science and streamlined with the pace of development, as well as public acceptance of food derived from gene-edited animals, are essential," authors say in the report. "Thus, a remodeling of the federal regulatory landscape is needed for the U.S. to sustain its place as a global leader and innovator in the animal agriculture sector and keep pace with the exponentially expanding global human population."

Full [text](#).

Conservation Innovation Grants Available

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is investing up to \$15 million to support the development of new tools, approaches, practices, and technologies to further natural resource conservation on private lands through the Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) program.

This is the national CIG Classic funding opportunity, which supports early pilot projects or demonstrations of promising new conservation approaches, tools, and technologies. CIG Classic grantees must match each federal dollar invested at least one to one. CIG partners use creative problem solving and innovation to address our nation's water quality, air quality, soil health, and wildlife habitat challenges, all while improving agricultural operations.

This year, funded CIGs will focus on climate-smart strategies for water resources, soil health (focused on carbon sequestration and climate resilience), nutrient management, grazing lands conservation, and strategies to increase conservation adoption. All non-federal entities and individuals are eligible to apply.

Proposals are due by July 19, 2021.

Read [more](#).

Drought-Stricken Livestock Producers Snapped Up Rangeland Insurance

(From AgriPulse)

Livestock producers across the West and northern Plains are relying heavily on rangeland insurance policies this year, even as the Agriculture Department considers changes to the program that could limit future indemnities for some farmers and ranchers.

The Rainfall Index policies, which can cover annual forage crops as well as rangeland and pasture, are triggered when rainfall at local weather stations falls below the long-term historical average.

Use of the policies has been expanding rapidly, and losses exceeded premiums during 2020. They are on track to do so again in 2021 as drought continues through much of the West and western Plains.

Producers bought policies this year covering 205 million acres, a 41-million-acre increase over 2020. The 2021 total includes coverage for 3 million acres in annual forage crops and 202 million acres of non-annual, "pasture, rangeland and forage," or PRF.

Sales of the Rainfall Index policies have more than doubled since 2018, when producers bought policies covering 98.9 million acres.

In 2020, the policies provided \$949 million in indemnities on \$726 million in premium. Through April of this year — payments for May and June haven't been reported yet — indemnities had already topped \$506 million, more than half of the \$1 billion in annual premium.

"If things continue how they are going, it's going to be a pretty big loss year," said Brandon Willis, who served as RMA administrator during the Obama administration and now sells the Rain Index policies in western states while also teaching at Utah State University. Given the severity of the drought, "it should be a high loss year. It should be a 2012 of the Midwest, if that makes sense," he said, referring to the drought nine years ago that devastated the Corn Belt.

In North Dakota, much of which is classified as under "extreme" or even "exceptional" drought, the Rainfall Index policies have already paid \$14 million in indemnities on \$13 million in premium. Policies sold in Texas have triggered \$231 million in indemnities so far on just under \$280 million in premium.

The Rainfall Index policy also is available to beekeepers, who insured forage for 2.2 million colonies this year.



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Save the Date!

- 07/22/2021 - TNC Tallgrass Prairie Preserve Webcast Bison Auction, OK
- Fall 2021 - Date TBD - RMBA Fall Ranch Tour of Prairie Ridge Buffalo, CO
- 09/23/2021 – Custer State Park Buffalo Roundup & Arts Festival, SD
- 09/25/2021 – BisonFest Music Festival, TX
- 11/6/2021 - Custer State Park Annual Auction, SD
- 11/8/2021 - Antelope Island State Park Production Auction, UT
- 11/13/2021 - Oklahoma Bison Association Fall Auction - OK
- 11/15/2021 - TNC Tallgrass Prairie Preserve Fall Bison Auction - OK
- 11/26/2021 - Minn. Bison Association's Bison Fundamentals Workshop, MN
- 11/27/2021 - Minn. Bison Association's Legends of the Fall Bison Auction, MN
- 12/4/2021 – Kansas Bison Association Sale, KS
- 12/4/2021 - Western Bison Association Wild West Buffalo Stampede Auction, UT
- 12/7/2021 - Northern Range Buffalo Simulcast Auction, SD
- 1/1/2022 - Prairie Legends Bison Auction, TBD
- 1/8/2022 - Turner Bison Exchange Prairie Performance Bison Auction, SD
- 1/19/2022 – 1/22/2022 – National Bison Association Winter Conference, CO
- 1/22/2022 - NBA Gold Trophy Show and Sale - National Western Stock Show - CO
- 2/12/2022 - Dakota Dynamite Buffalo Sale, SD
- 2/19/2022 – Dakota Territory Buffalo Association Sale, SD
- 3/04/2022 - RMBA's Spring Conference - Location TBD

Please visit <https://bisoncentral.com/calendar/> for details and more up-to-date events. If you have a bison event coming up that's not listed, please send the details to jim@bisoncentral.com and the NBA will post the event on its website at no charge.

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