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**Chadrad Communications, Inc.**  
226 Bordeaux St - Chadron, NE 69337  
308-432-5545 fax 308-432-5601  
E-mail: [kcsr@chadrad.com](mailto:kcsr@chadrad.com)

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### **(S.D.)-Pine Beetle Battle Wages On In Black Hills**

By: Chris Fankhauser Posted at: 09/20/2012 10:19 AM

SPEARFISH, S.D. (AP) - Western South Dakota's Meade County has signed a cooperative agreement with the Northern Hills Ranger District in hopes of battling mountain pine beetles within the county, including at Veteran's Peak and Deadman Mountain.

The agreement allows the county to hire crews and contractors to cut beetle-infested trees in the Black Hills National Forest. Northern Hills District Ranger Rhonda O'Byrne says the forest service will provide oversight and help protect resources.

Crews started work this month and aim to be done in December.

O'Byrne says the timing is ideal because Meade County is just starting to get the troublesome beetles. County Commissioner and logger Alan Aker says the county has dedicated about \$90,000 to the project this year.

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