

PLAIN TALK

Serving our readers since 1884.

Volume 126, Issue 12
USPS 657-720



Friday,
April 1,
2011
75¢

© 2011 YANKTON MEDIA, INC., all rights reserved

ALSO INSIDE:

- ♦ Benefit account for Hand established, Page 05
- ♦ Fifth grade boys are Tri-State Champs, Page 06
- ♦ VHS ProStart team takes second, Page 09

www.plaintalk.net

VSD faces major cuts in '11-'12

By David Lias

david.lias@plaintalk.net

The South Dakota Legislature's successful balancing of the state's budget at the end of this year's session means major fiscal cuts must be made by the Vermillion School District.

Details of those cuts were revealed during discussion at the Vermillion School Board meeting Monday night after the board members heard 20 minutes of passionate testimony from a parent urging that a middle school music teacher position be retained.

The Vermillion School District must deal with a double-whammy as the school board prepares its 2011-12 budget. The local general fund will be receiving an estimated \$462,000 cut in revenue from Pierre.

At the same time, \$139,000 in federal dollars the district received from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) will be used up by next fall, with no new reimbursement coming from Washington.

These items/positions, followed by the reductions they will bring to the general fund, are currently being considered by the school board: Textbook delay, \$46,000; 10 percent cut in supply purchases, \$23,000; one FTE (full time equivalent) guidance, \$40,000; one fte library, \$36,000; 1 fte elementary teacher, \$40,000; half-time fte high school math, \$17,000; one fte music, \$40,000; half-time family consumer science, \$22,500; one fte high school English, \$40,000; one fte maintenance, \$25,000; one fte clerical, \$22,000; one sport coach, \$8,500; and other activity, \$2,000.

These cuts, if enacted, will reduce the local district's general fund by \$462,000.

The school board is considering these additional cuts that had been funded the last two years by ARRA: a part-time birth-3 teacher, \$10,000; a reading specialist, \$60,000; a part-time special ed teacher, \$24,000; a part-time math teacher, \$20,000, and an education assistant, \$25,000. These reductions total \$139,000.

The board is also considering eliminating two Title I teaching positions to reduce the budget \$82,000; one fte special ed teacher or assistants, \$40,000, and a part-time grant funded position that will trim \$15,000 from

■ CUTS, Page 5

'We come together to celebrate life'



These women perform a traditional dance which is simple in appearance, but plays a very important symbolic role. The dancers move their feet to the beat of the drum to represent the heartbeat of mother earth. See more photos of last weekend's Wacipi held at USD at spotted.yankton.net.

(Photo by David Lias)

39th annual traditional Wacipi held at USD

By David Lias

david.lias@plaintalk.net

There were times when dancers participating in the 39th annual traditional Wacipi, held last weekend in the ballroom of the Muenster University Center, found themselves squeezed together in a small amount of floor space.

They didn't mind rubbing shoulders. Many of the participants in last weekend's Wacipi have become acquainted over the years as they participate in similar events. They are well-steeped in the traditions of this celebration that remains a vital part of their culture.

They are family.

J.R LaPlante, who served as the arena director for the weekend event, expressed gratitude for all of the effort put forth in advance to make the Wacipi possible.

"There is a lot of work. It starts with fundraising for the powwow, and then once the powwow gets here, you've got to set up everything," he said. "You have to put your staff together, the people who manage and direct the powwow once it starts - and that consists of an emcee, an arena director, your judges and your drum judges, because with the powwow, like all of aspects of Indian culture and

■ WACIPI, Page 3



LAPLANTE



PICKNER



Dr. Tim Heaton and Dr. Donming Mei discuss the problems at the nuclear plant in Fukushima, Japan, resulting from the recent earthquake and tsunami.

(Photo by David Lias)

Forum: Nuclear plant safety is vital

By Travis Gulbrandson

travis.gulbrandson@plaintalk.net

The problems seen at the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear complex in the wake of Japan's magnitude-9 earthquake and tsunami should not dissuade other nations from using nuclear power - as long as they follow the safety regulations.

That was the consensus of a panel discussion at Monday's International Forum, held in Farber Hall at the University of South Dakota.

The panel members were asked whether the United States could continue to expand its use of nuclear power as its energy needs increase.

"I think if we follow the regulations

on a regular basis ... then it should be fine," said Dr. Donming Mei, professor of nuclear physics at USD.

However, earth science and physics professor Dr. Tim Heaton pointed out that those same regulations may also prove to be a block against expansion.

"There are so many regulations with nuclear power now, it's one of the more expensive ways of generating electricity," he said. "But I think it has a place in the mix. It all comes down to the human factor."

Mei concurred, saying there are more than 400 nuclear reactors throughout the world, with a cumulative 14,000 reactor-years. Thus far, there have been three major

■ FORUM, Page 7

Are answers to a robbery riddle buried in the Hy-Vee parking lot?

A mystery concerning a bit of Vermillion's history appears to have been solved, thanks to a growing pothole problem in the parking lot of the Vermillion Hy-Vee food store.

Store director Steve Parker ordered the excavation of a small portion of the Hy-Vee parking lot in hopes of solving a vexing pothole problem.

After breaking through asphalt and gravel, workers have reportedly uncovered evidence of a bank robbery that took place in Vermillion in the early 1930s.

The fact that such a robbery took place has never been in dispute. For decades, local historians have unsuccessfully tried to determine whether the armed bandits were John Dillinger and three members of his gang.

Parker said items recovered from the hole dug in Hy-Vee's parking lot, which reportedly include an engraved pocket watch likely lost by Dillinger himself as his gang fled following the bank robbery, appear to



DILLINGER

confirm that the famed robber and his gang indeed did strike in Vermillion. The story was first revealed to citizens in the Vermillion area in the Jan. 26, 1933 issue of *The Dakota Republican*. Splashed across that issue's front page is this bold headline: Four Well Armed Bandits Take \$2,800 In Hold-Up of Citizens Bank & Trust.

According to the news report, four heavily armed and unmasked men Citizens Bank & Trust entered the building on Jan. 26, 1933, held up three employees in the bank, M.J. Chaney, C.L. Lloyd and Miss Maude Sloan, and also cornered three

■ HYVEE, Page 14

USD program aims to reduce binge drinking

By Travis Gulbrandson

travis.gulbrandson@plaintalk.net

Volunteers are being sought to give input into a program that hopes to decrease binge drinking in Vermillion.

The project falls under a Strategic Prevention Framework - State Incentive Grant (SPF-SIG) received by the state of South Dakota in 2009, through which communities can seek funds to implement plans to curb underage drinking among 12-20-year-olds and binge drinking in 18-25-year-olds.

A coalition to design a Vermillion-specific program is now being built through the efforts of SPF-SIG officials at the University of South Dakota.

"What we're trying to do is decrease the risk factors and increase the protective factors for binge drinking in the community," said USD SPF-SIG evaluator Gary DeJong. "We're trying to find a nice representation of the community - all different aspects of the community - to work together in the partnership to implement environmental strategies to reduce binge drinking."

This is being achieved through a variety of different venues.

"We're sending out letters. We're advertising to the community, we're going to the Chamber of Commerce ... to try and get the word out about what we're doing to see if there's anybody in the community that's motivated to help," DeJong said.

USD SPF-SIG project director Tiffany Kashas said a Web site also is in development.

DeJong said the effort seeks participation from all areas

■ USD, Page 5

When it Hurts, Help is Near.

If you are faced with one of life's little emergencies, you can count on the Vermillion Medical Clinic to help. Our ConvenientCare Clinic is open evenings to treat minor emergencies such as sprains, cuts, fevers and burns.

No appointment necessary. Walk-in patients only.
ConvenientCare Hours: Monday through Friday, 6:00PM to 9:00PM.

ConvenientCare®
101 South Plum Street • Vermillion, SD 57069
605-624-8643 • www.vermillionmedicalclinic.com