

Vermillion residents complete leadership training

The 26 graduates of Year 19 of Partners in Policymaking were honored to have Governor Dennis Daugaard and First Lady Linda Daugaard in attendance for their banquet and banquet held in Sioux Falls on April 9, 2011. Over 475 individuals have completed this statewide leadership course.

Cathy Colwell and Heather Lafferty of Vermillion received their certificates for completing the 6-month training course. The class motto for Year 19 was "We Are All Alone in This.....TOGETHER!"

While in the class, Colwell and Lafferty and their classmates studied about the history of disabilities, inclusive education, presented mock testimony to a panel of South Dakota legislators, learned about meetings, Social Security, employment, assistive technology and inclusive communities.

Keynote speaker was Dr. Jerry Blake of Sioux Falls who told the class to "never tire of doing the right thing." Receiving awards for advocacy were Elaine Roberts of SD Parent Connection in Sioux Falls and former Secretary of State Chris Nelson of Pierre. Other guests attending the banquet included Carmyn Egge of Sioux Falls representing Senator Tim Johnson, Jeannie Hovland of Sioux Falls from Senator John Thune's office and representing Representative Kristi Noem was Brad Otten from Rapid City. Also in

attendance was former state Senator Dan Ahlers from Dell Rapids.

Partners training Analyzes developmental disability issues and builds skills that consumers, parents, and guardians need to effectively obtain the most appropriate state-of-the-art services for themselves and others and participate in decision-making situations.

Partners is Policymaking is a nationwide training now in 38 states and also in the UK, Scotland, New Zealand, Ireland and the Netherlands. National and state speakers who are knowledgeable of disability issues present on current issues affecting people with disabilities, best practices, and the policymaking and legislative processes at the local, state, and federal levels. The overall goal of Partners in Policymaking is to achieve a productive partnership between people needing and using services and those in a position to make policy and law.

The training program in South Dakota is conducted by SD Advocacy Services (SDAS). Sandy Stocklin Hook of Pierre is the project coordinator for the statewide training course. She noted, "We now have 499 individuals throughout South Dakota who have completed Partners in Policymaking. Their voices are being heard!" Stocklin Hook also commented "We strongly believe that individuals who use services should have



Tim Neyhart of Pierre, representing SD Advocacy Services presents a certificate to Cathy Colwell and Heather Lafferty of Vermillion. Colwell and Lafferty recently completed the leadership course Partners in Policymaking and were honored at a banquet held in Sioux Falls on April 9.

a major role in determining what services they are being provided and how they are delivered. It is really exciting to see the Partners' enthusiasm and commitment to improving national, state and local services." Robert Kean, Executive Director of SDAS, noted, "Partners is a training event that is growing in stature

and being recognized as one of, if not the premier advocacy effort in the state."

Class speakers for graduation were L. Waltner, Harrington, J. Nelson and Bohm.

In addition to graduation ceremonies, 151 graduates of prior years of SD Partners in Policymaking spent the

weekend in Sioux Falls attending continuing education classes on current issues. "Networking is a very integral part of the entire training initiative. We have made a commitment to gather all graduates with the current class and offer continuing education and networking. Once a Partner graduates from the course, they are not forgotten," commented Stocklin Hook.

Year Twenty of South Dakota Partners in Policymaking will begin in November 2011. For more information on the program, contact Sandy Stocklin Hook, SD Advocacy Services, 221 S. Central Ave., Pierre, SD 57501 or call 1-800-658-4782. Or you can visit the SDAS Website for Partner information at www.sdadvocacy.com or email hooks@sdadvocacy.com.

Partners is sponsored in South Dakota by grants from the SD Council on Developmental Disabilities, Center for Disabilities at Sanford School of Medicine at USD; Children's Care Hospital and School; and SD Parent Connection. South Dakota Advocacy Services facilitates the training and contributes funding through the Protection & Advocacy Developmental Disabilities Program; Protection & Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness Program; and Protection & Advocacy Individual Rights Program.

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revenue, depending on need."

In a pre-recorded video message Dr. Barry Dunn, dean of the College of Agriculture and Biological Sciences at SDSU, explained the reasoning behind the center locations.

"We selected these sites because they've become the business hubs of South Dakota," Dunn said. "They provide

medical services for us, government services are located there and they've become major shopping and retail areas. Ninety-five percent of the audiences we've served are within a 75-mile radius of these sites."

The delivery of information will rely more on technology, including Web-based resources, mobile devices and video conferencing at each of the centers, Dunn added.

"This is an important step for us to take. The world is changing rapidly, and we need to be nimble

enough to change with it," he said.

Kennedy said the budget cuts should not affect such events as Achievement Days.

"I think when those counties start having three or four Achievement Days combining into one, the fight's going to be on," he said. "That's where there's going to be hurt feelings. It's like schools consolidating - they lose a little bit of their town. I don't think we're going to have to worry about that for the near future."

He added that he did not foresee the state fair being

affected, either - this year, at least.

"Until things turn around, it's going to be tight," Kennedy said. "It's not always going to be free anymore. But you know, the state doesn't owe us a 4-H program, they don't owe us a horse show, they don't owe us that stuff. And that's OK, we can raise funds, we can do things like that."

Julie Fallan, president of the Clay County Leaders Association, said any slack in preparations of the Clay County Fair will have to be picked up by local citizens, as well.

"If we don't have an advisor here working with Clay County, it will fall on the volunteers, the leaders and the parents to put the fair together," she said.

The Extension service is not the only cut faced by SDSU. The university also will be required to close two of its eight experiment stations across the state, as well as two of its on-campus service labs.

Despite this, Dunn said SDSU will work to maintain its relationships with its advisory boards and county commissions to provide services.

"We are committed to continue our strong service to

you, but in new and relevant ways," he said. "We will look different. We anticipate that this will be controversial and will need a time of adjustment, but it's a step that we need to take, not only because of the budget cuts that we face, but because it is the right thing to do - to move forward in a new and emerging world."

For more information about the restructuring of the South Dakota Cooperative Extension Service, visit <http://www.sdstate.edu/sdces/index.cfm>.

FREEDOM

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Through their use of non-violence, the Freedom Riders helped to put injustice into the national consciousness, said Robert Hilderbrand, Ph.D. professor of history at USD.

"There was a Gallup poll very early in the Freedom Rides that showed that only 24 percent of the American people supported the Freedom Rides," he said. "The vast majority of people thought that they shouldn't be there."

"When they can see the way that people who are on the side of one kind of law were behaving non-violently and they were being beaten and abused by people on the other side, it's possible for them to see which law had the higher moral force. And really, it was that shift in public opinion," he said.

Tom Sorensen, associate dean of the USD School of Law, agreed.

"It's not a fight, physically. It's a one-sided, I'm going to stand here and tell you the truth, and I'm not fighting back. How brave is that?" he said. "That's really what makes this successful. It made people sit up and take notice, which is really what had to happen. Because this was a string of days that really brought attention."

O'Connor said that thanks in part to the methods of CORE and the Freedom Riders, non-violence became "the standard of how you bring about change, and I think that's very, very important. It's critical."

It's a legacy that needs to continue into the future, said Andre Oliver, vice president of the South Dakota chapter of the NAACP, located in Sioux Falls.

"I look at my parents, my mentors, my friends and family and I know that I am standing on the shoulders of giants. And it's up to myself and people that care for me to continue the legacy," he said.

O'Connor was a college student when she received the opportunity to join the Freedom Ride from CORE recruiter. With the blessing of her family, she traveled to Nashville, TN, for training in non-violence.

Her segment of the ride went from Nashville to Jackson, MS, where she and her co-riders were arrested and charged with breach of the peace at the bus station where they had stopped.

"Nobody's peace was breached. The only people there were the police and us," she said.

O'Connor spent almost two weeks in jail before she was bailed out, at which point she had to return to Minnesota for her job.

She said the reactions she received upon returning were

"across the board." "It was not something everybody agreed with," O'Connor said. "That is one of the myths of the '60s, that it was a different time, and everybody was more progressive or more open to change. It wasn't true."

But due to movements like the Freedom Rides, positive change was eventually brought about, Hilderbrand said.

"There is less hatred in America than there used to be - plenty of problems, plenty of nutcases running around out there - but there's less hatred," he said. "And it's because that foundation for racial hatred was discredited, and it was discredited not because of the force of the federal government. It was discredited because of the sole force of the power of those non-violent people who made the American people - even Southerners - confront their own hatred."

Oliver added, "As you look

across history, you go from slavery, you go to separate but equal, you go to the civil rights period and everything in between. ... What happens is over time, the hatred becomes more intelligent and can be more easily hidden, so I just encourage everyone to always be self-analyzing."

"Just because what Clair and her predecessors did happened in the 60s ... that should not make us blind," he said. "We should be sober to the fact that at our jobs, in our families, that we should be constantly, constantly observing, looking for moments of action, choosing our battles selectively, communicating, finding the best course of action. And then finding a way to make change."

O'Connor said people don't have to be special or unique to help bring about change - it's something of which anyone is capable.

"I think that's the other

message from the Freedom Rides," she said. "Things don't happen from the top down, as we know very well. They happen from the bottom up, and they happen because people get together and they organize."

"Freedom Riders" will be broadcast on South Dakota Public Television May 16.

For more information, visit <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/freedomriders/>.

For information regarding last week's post-film discussion, visit www.sdpb.org.



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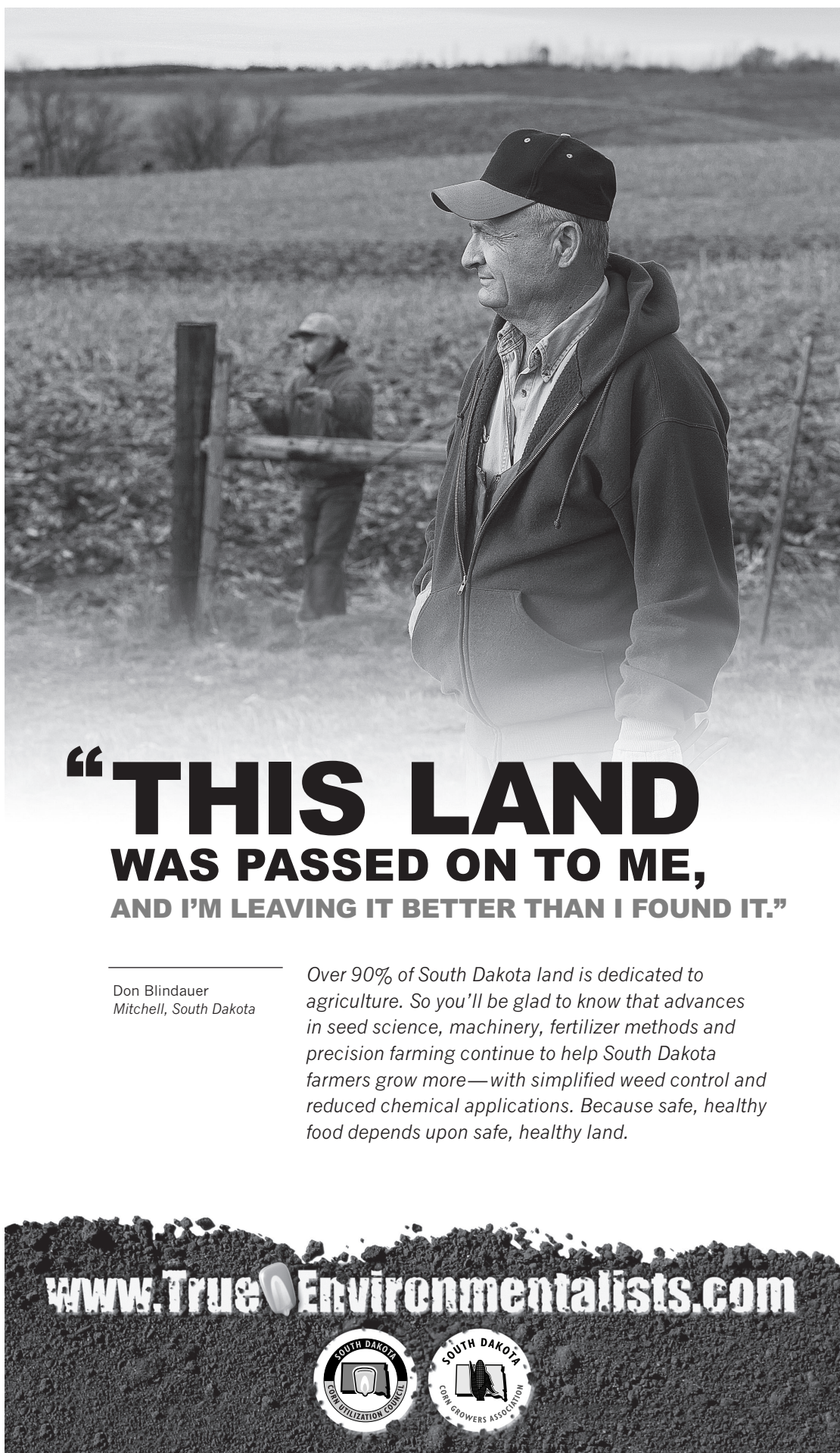
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