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# Vermillion

# PLAIN TALK

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## Open for business



Shortly after word spread that Café Brulè had opened its doors in downtown Vermillion, curious diners began arriving to sample the new restaurant's cuisine. Owners Jim Waters and Monica Iverson are discovering that people are now coming back to enjoy their business' atmosphere and good food.

(Photo by David Lias)

## Café Brulè serving up unique dishes, atmosphere

By Travis Gulbrandson  
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When Café Brulè opened its doors for the first time more than two weeks ago, it did so quietly — at first.

"We just took the paper off the window one morning since we wanted to be sure that we weren't going to be bombarded, and that we were going to be ready so our first impression was going to be decent," said co-owner Jim Waters. "It was quiet for about two hours, and then the word kind of got around. Then lunch got busy, and dinner got busier, and it's pretty well been busier each day."

Co-owner Monica Iverson added, "I think we expected a lot of curiosity, and we're hoping that the people who are coming in who are just curious will really enjoy the food and the atmosphere, and come back again. So far, we've been seeing that."

Located at 24 W. Main in the former location of the Coffee Shop Gallery, Café Brulè is the culmination of a dream of both Waters and Iverson.

Waters worked as long-time manager of Mr. Smith's in Jones' Food Center, while

Iverson is the owner of Cakes by Monica. Both were interested in expanding, so when the building went up for sale in December, they decided to collaborate.

"I thought it made perfectly good sense, because we had worked together for the past eight years anyway at Jones' Food Center," Waters said. "And so, we both knew we were both workaholics. We both knew we were both driven by detail, and we are particular in our products, servicing and taking care of the customers."

The roles each fill in Café Brulè overlap to a certain extent, Waters said.

"They cross over, because I bake and do pastry also, and she has a background in food service. ... It was basically a good partnership," he said.

"Between what I know about the baking and the pastries and what he knows about the cooking and the menu, neither of us can really take a day off until we have some help trained," Iverson added.

Café Brulè employs approximately 40 people and serves food Waters describes as a "kind of fusion."

"Kicked-up American and kicked-down European is what I like to call it," he said.

The menu consists of two categories:

"Country" and "City."

Under the first category, diners are likely to find items like hot beef sandwiches and hamburgers, while the second features such dishes as croque monsieur and croissant sandwiches.

An all-day breakfast menu is available on Sunday, Waters said.

Iverson said some dishes already have been singled out as local favorites, including the Monte Cristo sandwich.

"I've heard we have one of the best ones around, and that there's one other shop in Sioux Falls that serves it, but ... they only serve it one day a week. So it's not an easy sandwich to find," she said.

Café Brulè's grilled cheese sandwich — featuring Muenster and gruyere cheeses — also is a hit.

"We've had some people come in and say they don't know what kind of cheese it is, but it's the best grilled cheese they've ever had," Iverson said.

The menu also features desserts such as crème brûlée and crepes, and will be expanded in the future, Waters and Iverson said.

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## USD tuition hike reduces budget cuts

By Travis Gulbrandson  
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ABBOTT

The University of South Dakota was forced to make some eliminations to compensate for the budget reductions for FY2012, but USD President James Abbott said things aren't as bad as they could be.

It was announced by USD and the Sanford School of Medicine Wednesday, April 20, that in response to state cuts totaling \$4.9 million, 11 positions will be eliminated.

This development comes on the heels of the closure of Watertown's L.P.N. to R.N. program.

"It's always painful, (but) it could have been worse," Abbott said.

Of the 11 positions, eight were vacant at the time of their elimination, and three were part of the Watertown program.

"(Those are) not the only cuts that we made, of course," Abbott said. "We made cuts across campus. But basically, they were not significant, and they were pretty much agreed to. We asked everybody to indicate what they could live without, and we just made minor adjustments."

"We've ended up being in pretty good shape, because we had more retirements and resignations than usual, and because we cut fairly significantly two years ago. We're in better shape this year than we thought we might be," he said.

He added that he feels "good" about the outcome, and "I think the staff and faculty do, too."

State general funds appropriated to USD and the Sanford School of Medicine have been cut by \$7,348,389 over the past three years.

Along with the recent cuts, this has resulted in the loss of 75 positions, reductions in 14 employment contracts, closure of the Business Research Bureau,

reduction in the technology fellows program, elimination of the Computational Science and Statistics Ph.D. program and a 50 percent reduction in the M.D./Ph.D. program.

Abbott said USD sets its budget based in part on what it estimates the state Board of Regents outlines in terms of reductions and increases in tuition fees.

The percentage by which those fees is lowered or raised can benefit the university in terms of what cuts it needs to make, he said.

"If we had to cut \$2.2 million, and then they turn around and raise tuition by 6.9 percent, that reduces significantly the cut," Abbott said. "(For FY2012), we were cutting 10 percent, and we had a 6.9 percent increase. So then you're left with about a 3.1 to fool with. So in this case, I think a fair statement is that tuition increase approved by the board significantly reduced the cut that we had to take."

USD was only one of many institutions and programs affected by cuts proposed by Gov. Dennis Daugaard in January, and subsequently passed by the state legislature.

The governor proposed reducing funds by at least 10 percent for each state-funded program.

## SHATTERED



Upon arriving at work the morning of April 11, employees of the Vermillion Public Library found someone had shattered the glass in the building's front door. The entire pane is now a spider web of broken glass and needs to be replaced. A \$500 pane has been ordered, but has not arrived yet. The identity of the vandal or vandals is unknown at this time.

(Photo by Travis Gulbrandson)

## National Park Service serves with innovation

By Randy Dockendorf  
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Steve Mietz talked trash to his audience Thursday, April 21 at the University of South Dakota.

The National Park Service (NPS) uses the "Big Belly Solar Trash Cans" at selected sites, said Mietz, the Yankton-based superintendent for the Missouri National Recreational River (MNRR).

The system compacts trash in cans along the MNRR, then uses a sensor to notify NPS officials when the cans are full and ready for collection.

"It's wicked cool," Mietz said.

"There's a cost to get from our Yankton headquarters to the far reaches of the park to empty trash. This system saves gas, time and personnel."

Mietz spoke during Thursday's annual research symposium sponsored by the Missouri River Institute (MRI). He used the "trash talk" to illustrate just one of the many innovations for better serving the MNRR and those who live along or visit the stretch from Pickstown to Ponca, Neb.

As part of that mission, the NPS

will conduct a visitor studies survey from July 28 to Aug. 3, Mietz said.

"We have the people tell us what they like about the park and what they don't like," he said. "We want to know how we can refocus our resources along the river."

Mietz plans to make greater use of social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter to connect with the public and provide more information about the river. The NPS is working on more visitor contact stations, and additional signs will be placed this summer along the Missouri River water trail between Yankton and Sioux City, IA.

"We want to expand our recreation opportunities," he said. "We have day-trip ideas. It's a big, challenging river. We can give you ideas if you have only a day or two."

In that respect, the NPS is encouraging the public, particularly young people, to explore the great outdoors, Mietz said.

"We have the 'Let's Move Outside' program," he said. "We want people to get away from the computer for a while, to see beyond four inches in front of their face and to get outside."

To gather input on offerings, the



Kirsten Wert describes the findings she and her colleagues made while conducting wildlife surveys on the Niobrara Delta of the Missouri River near Springfield last summer. Wert, a biology graduate student at the University of South Dakota, is just one of several speakers participating in the Missouri River Institute Research Symposium at USD April 21.

(Photo by David Lias)

NPS is held meetings on its visitor services programming plan Tuesday at the Wagner Armory and Thursday at the Niobrara, NE, fire hall.

The current draft of the plan is

available for review at [www.nps.gov/mnrr](http://www.nps.gov/mnrr). For questions or more information, email the project

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