

Moving investigations 'out of infancy'

South Dakota Secretary of Corrections Dennis Kaemingk told The Daily Republic for a story published Saturday that the DOC's use of social media to locate walkaway inmates and parole absconders is "in its infancy."

It's time to make the effort grow up. In October, Kent Davidson, 36, left a DOC facility where he was serving his parole. He never came back. The DOC issued the usual alerts to law enforcement in an effort to locate him, to no avail.

Then, earlier this month, Davidson's name popped up in the news when the state Attorney General's Office sought the public's help in locating him for questioning regarding a homicide in rural Chamberlain. In short order, Davidson turned up in Sioux Falls and surrendered to authorities after a standoff.

After being told Davidson's name, staffers in The Daily Republic newsroom began researching him on the Internet. They found that his Facebook page was public and contained all manner of details about his life and whereabouts over the previous five months, including his engagement to Mitchell resident Crystal Schulz, whose body was found earlier this month and

sparked the manhunt for Davidson.

We should point out that although authorities have called Schulz's death a homicide and have questioned Davidson about it, the crime remains under investigation and he has not been charged with playing any role in the death. Authorities have repeatedly said charges of some kind are anticipated.

We also should mention that we do not blame Kaemingk or the DOC for Davidson's actions, whatever those actions were. Davidson was the one who chose to violate his parole.

We do blame the DOC, though, for not being more advanced in its use of social media to locate walkaways and absconders. If anybody with a computer and a Facebook account could learn so much about Davidson in so little time, there's no reason the DOC shouldn't be doing the same.

There should be some kind of program within the department to track down at least those walkaways and absconders who are so brazenly making their whereabouts and activities known on social media websites.

— The Daily Republic, March 27, 2013

Animal rabies cases rise for second year

South Dakota animal rabies cases were up in 2012, climbing for the second straight year, according to the yearly surveillance report recently released by the Department of Health. There were 60 animal rabies cases in 2012, up from 40 the year before.

While animal rabies is

reported every year, the disease tends to be cyclical, with years of high case numbers followed by years with lower numbers, noted Dr. Lon Kightlinger, State Epidemiologist for the Department of Health.

"Rabies is a risk every year in South Dakota and that risk is statewide,"

said Kightlinger. "Rabies vaccination is readily available, inexpensive and important to protect your pets and the people around them."

In 2012 there were rabies detections in 29 South Dakota counties. Those rabies positives included 21 domestic animals – 16 cattle, three

horses, two cats – as well as 36 skunks and three bats. South Dakota's last human rabies case was reported in 1970.

The 16 rabid cattle in 2012 was the highest number of cases in 15 years for South Dakota and higher than any state in the country.

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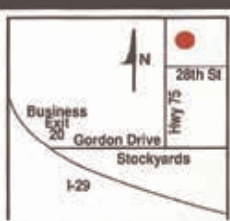
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