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PLAIN TALK



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Private Daycare Registration Supported by Council

By Alan Dale
The Plain Talk

The City of Vermillion council approved the second reading of Ordinance 1326 – registration of private, in-home, daycares with the city – 7-2 on Monday night after almost 90 minutes of discussion, sometimes heated, with members of the public.

Councilman Parker Erickson and councilwoman Holly Meins were the two members to vote against the reading and the ordinance, which has now met with final approval by the council.

Many that spoke were concerned with issues such as the ability for the city to make sure

they are able to thoroughly check for registered sex offenders that may become a part of the process, potential additional costs, how and when inspections would occur, and if the process wasn't broke why tinker with it now.

A number of people who spoke also acknowledged that they believed the council's intentions were aimed at the safety of Vermillion's children.

Yet for many, it boiled down to brass tacks.

"If we have three providers quit at the same time (once the codes are enforced) we have nine in our town, it's not enough (for Vermillion)," daycare provider Laurie Kruse said. "They are not

running into Vermillion to daycare. No one wants to open their house to do this. We have to keep every one of these providers that we have. Why would one quit? Because now there is a timeline.

"We are not the young anymore, we have all done this many, many years. Do we argue safety? No. But have we had issues? No. Could a fire happen? Absolutely. Will it happen? I am standing on top of these children and I don't have to come out of a deep sleep to get all these kids out the door. Is that fire extinguisher going to help me? No."

Kruse said that the need to keep the veteran providers able to work with kids without burden is

essential.

"Having a shortage is going to be a bigger safety issue," Kruse continued. "What if we can't take kids in because there aren't enough slots? The daycare centers don't take drop-ins, we do. They close, we don't... We can't have two or three or four (providers) quit in the same year. We don't have enough coming in, we don't have daycare centers coming in.

"What we are saying is we don't need to fix something that is just not broken. Do not be frustrated with us, understand us."

Kruse said that most of the requirements are not difficult to address, but that providers know

the rules since some have already been registered with the state, and they are "doing fine."

Kruse also added that many of the parents that trust these workers are fighting a tight budget.

"I can't tell you how many times I have had (parents) ask me 'can you wait (for payment),' Kruse said. "If I was a center I'd say 'sorry, because someone else wants your spot.' Please listen to these kids, they can't afford any more, and I don't want to lose any more providers."

"Thirty-something years into

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This year's University of South Dakota Dakotathon begins at 9 a.m. Saturday, April 18 and concludes 24 hours later at 9 a.m. Sunday, April 19. All funds raised will go toward a local Children's Miracle Network branch located in Sioux Falls.

COURTESY PHOTO

Dance, Dance, Dakota-thon

By Elyse Brightman
The Plain Talk

The Dakotathon is returning to the University of South Dakota on Saturday, April 18 for its 18th year.

The event starts at 9 a.m. on April 18 at the Muenster University Center and participants stay up for a full 24 hours, without the help of caffeine, and put on a number of different activities for the "miracle children" to partake in.

Dakotathon, rebranded two years ago from the name Dance Marathon, is a

24-hour fundraiser held on college campuses across the country to raise money for Children's Miracle Network. All the money raised at USD goes to the local Children's Miracle Network in Sioux Falls.

"It's not just a 24 hour fundraiser, it's a year-long fundraiser," said Ashlin Peitzmeier, a senior at USD and overall co-chair for this year's Dakotathon. "We put on different events throughout the year to raise our goal, which is \$61,000 this year."

Last year, USD raised

\$58,000. Every participant has a personal goal for fundraising and the executive team of 23 people has a goal of \$518, up from \$500 last year. Raising money is not mandatory though highly encouraged.

Children and their families from Sioux Falls' Children's Miracle Network Hospital come to spend the day with the students. The Dakotathon covers the cost of the hotels for families that make the trip.

"They tell us a 'family talk,' which is like a 15 minute talk on why

they've been impacted by Children's Miracle Network and how Dance Marathon has helped them with their lives," said Peitzmeier.

Each child is paired with a "morale group," a subgroup of 15-20 dancers that act as a team with an appointed leader for the whole 24 hours, and each morale group learns a dance. Right now 16 children are expected to attend.

"It's basically a day for them to not remember that they've been in a hospital or that they're

sick," Peitzmeier said. "It's a day for them to get away from their normal lives and spend 24 hours with us. A lot of the kids actually do stay up for 24 hours."

"We learn a morale dance, we have a hypnotist coming, a magician, dueling pianos and we have a little basketball game going on with our men's basketball team with the children. We have fireworks, we have just about everything."

As of a month ago the

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Defending the Right to View

USD PROFESSOR PROTECTS FIRST AMENDMENT BY SHOWING FILM ON ABUSE OF WOMEN

By Alan Dale
The Plain Talk

The controversial movie "The Honor Diaries" is about violence against women in honor based societies.

It is not about disparaging religion, but more about fighting for the human rights of a select group of women, according to Miglena Sternadori, an associate professor and coordinator of women and gender studies at the University of South Dakota (USD).

It is Sternadori's hope to feature the film Friday at USD's annual Women and Gender Conference. "The Honor Diaries" is scheduled for screening at 1:45 p.m. in room 216 of the Muenster University Center.

However, Sternadori has faced resistance to the screening because it, "features women activists who hope to stop the honor killings of women, female genital mutilation, forced marriages of young girls and other abuses of women."

Sternadori is concerned about perceived attempts to censor the film.

The film has been attacked by some critics as being anti-Muslim and they say it offers a one-sided view of the subject.

The film was previously scheduled to run on March 29, but the showing was canceled.

"The University of South Dakota supports free speech and robust discussion of controversial topics in a setting that offers respect to all involved," Jim Moran, provost and vice president for Academic Affairs at USD, stated in an email to the Plain Talk requesting information on the previous cancellation. "The earlier showing of 'Honor Diaries' was cancelled because the format and setting did not allow for appropriate discussion following the screening. Whenever USD hosts speakers or films that are controversial, the goal is to promote education and better understanding of the people and issues involved."

So what happened?

Cindy Johnson-Struckman, professor of Psychology at USD, attended a

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Ring, Rusch Discuss Issues at Rotary Meeting

By Alan Dale
The Plain Talk



Ray Ring (left) and Arthur Rusch speak Tuesday at the Vermillion Rotary Lunch. ALAN DALE / THE PLAIN TALK

Tuesday afternoon at the noon meeting of the Vermillion Rotary Club at the University of South Dakota's Neuharth Center, Arthur Rusch (R-Senate) and Ray Ring (D-House) took the time to speak during the District 17 Legislation wrap up in front of a full house of interested Rotarians and guests.

Nancy Rasmussen (R-House)

could not attend due to other commitments.

The two discussed items such as issues with state education, the upcoming planning commission hearing on Monday, and the increase of the highway speed limits to 80 mph.

The higher speed limit was added into a transportation bill signed in March by Gov. Dennis Daugaard that raises the gas tax and vehicle registration fees to pay

for road and bridge repairs.

"The bill went through the Senate with no mention of any kind of a speed increase on it," Rusch said. "The final day it came back to us from the House with that increase to 80 mph. That last day we could vote against that and go back to the House and go back-and-forth or we could accept what the House had done. The Senate agreed to

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art OF VERMILLION

VERMILLION'S FARMERS MARKET

By Sonia Hernandez
For the Plain Talk

The Vermillion Area Farmers Market has been a part of the community for over a decade. Around 1998, the market began with a group of passionate people advocating for local food in Vermillion.

Today, the market has become a symbol of the local community.

Grace Freeman, the Vermillion Area Farmers Market board treasurer, has had a vested interest in local farming since before

her arrival in Vermillion in 1997.

"I got involved right when we moved here," says Freeman, "I have worked on farms all over the country, and it was something second nature to me."

Amy Schweinle, the board President, became involved with the project in 2003 upon moving to the community.

"We went looking to find out what's in Vermillion," says Schweinle. "There was a group of people pushing for local food, and I just became

friends with them."

At first, the band of advocates met opposition due to concerns about location and property tax. Local businesses were also apprehensive to support a farmers market because it would add to local competition, but the market got its big break in 2010.

"We received the USDA's FMPP Grant for 2010-2011, and that was definitely our turnaround," says Freeman. "We finally

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The Vermillion Area Farmers Market is all about promoting fresh, local food. The summer market begins May 14 from 3-7 p.m. at the fair grounds

SONIA HERNANDEZ / FOR THE PLAIN TALK