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SHAUNA MARLETTE/FOR THE PLAIN TALK
Jim Auen, operational manager for Lewis and Clark Regional Water (LCRW) expressed concern on behalf of LCRW that the proposed changes could affect the water supply of more than 300,000 people. However, he said the company was asking only for time to complete a study of the LCRW well-heads planned for this summer, not opposing CAFOs.

An Issue Of Zoning

Public Hearing On Proposed Changes To CAFO Ordinances Held

By Shauna Marlette
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Proposed changes to Clay County ordinances removing limits on the number of animals allowed in concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) were discussed at a public hearing held by the Clay County Planning and Zoning Commission Monday evening in front of a standing room only audience.

According to Clay County Commissioner Travis Mockler, who also serves on the zoning board, the current Clay County Ordinance was established in 2013.

"We are here tonight because the Clay County Commissioner voted to send the ordinance back to the zoning board," Mockler said. "They want us to take a look at it and recommend changes. We are going to align with the state DENR regulations. We are going to update provisions to eliminate the need for multiple interpretations, ensuring provisions are consistently applied. Most importantly give a balanced reflection of what is important to Clay County."

From there Mockler identified the proposed changes to the ordinance, a few of which include: Changing the

definition of a CAFO to align with state regulations; changing the classifications from small, medium and large to class A, B and C; eliminating the cap on the size of CAFOs allowed in Clay County; potentially allowing permit CAFOs of unlimited size in designated aquifer protection districts; and, reduce setbacks from homes, private wells, roads and highways.

Mockler said the topic of revising the CAFO ordinance began when a producer came in to be permitted and the

■ ZONING

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CASA Finds A New Home

By Elyse Brightman
The Plain Talk

The Southeast Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) is coming to Clay County.

Saturday night, CASA made its official announcement of plans to expand services within the next few months.

"When an abused or neglected child is brought into the court system, either because someone in the community called to file a complaint about a parent, or something along those lines, we have trained CASA advocates who are appointed to represent that child's interest in the court room," said CASA board president Ryan Cwach.

Southeast CASA, based out of Yankton, is part of a national organization that gives these children a voice in the courtroom, as well as making sure the children are getting proper care at their home. The new expansion will be based out of Vermillion and will provide services throughout Clay County.

"We found that Vermillion's case load was about 75 percent of Yankton, which is significant. We're talking about an estimated 10-20 kids a year," Cwach said.

In the three years since Southeast CASA has been established, they have helped 60 children through the court systems in Yankton County.

"The CASA volunteer advocates for all the children in that family, so when I say 60 kids, we haven't had 60 cases,



but we've had 60 children that we've already had, or are currently advocating for, just in Yankton County," said Sherri Rodgers-Conti, program director of Southeast CASA.

All the advocates are volunteers who dedicate about 10 hours or less a month per case.

"In this state, children don't really have any rights," said CASA volunteer John Lillevold of Yankton. "Parents have rights, adults have rights, but children don't have rights. They are not allowed to speak at a trial, so I speak for them."

Southeast CASA becomes involved once a child is removed from their home and placed in a foster home. Most cases last around one year.

"I get one case and I'm able to focus a lot more energy on the kids than social services does because my time is not so divided," Lillevold said. "I do pretty in depth investigations on the parents, what they're doing, how the chil-

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SPANNING THE GAPP



SHAUNA MARLETTE/FOR THE PLAIN TALK
As part of the German American Partnership Program (GAPP), 15 students from Ratingen have made Vermillion their temporary home. The students have been staying with VHS students and their families who in turn have visited or will visit their homes and schools in Germany. Pictured are the students and teachers involved with the program.

Unique Exchange Program Promoting International Friendships, Opportunities

By Shauna Marlette
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Vermillion High School (VHS) gained 15 new students this month and the influx is engaging the school.

As part of the German American Partnership Program (GAPP), 15 students from Ratingen, Germany (Vermillion's sister city) have made Vermillion their temporary home. The students have been staying with VHS students and their families who in turn have visited or will visit their homes and schools in Germany.

"This past summer Hailey Freidel, Anna Hackemer, Isaac Rosdail, Morgan Fuller and I all went over to our sister city, Ratingen, Germany for two weeks," said Noah Westergaard, a junior at VHS. "We stayed with our host families. The following week we traveled around Germany. So, that was really fun. Now, the five people we stayed with have come here. All the people that hosted the original five now are here visiting us, a true

exchange program."

Along with the five original German hosts, an additional 10 students and two teachers have made the international trip to Vermillion. Each of them in turn is being hosted by members of the Vermillion High School German classes taught by Kamden Dibley, that will make a return visit to Ratingen in the future.

Alli Mockler, who is hosting a student even though she did not get to travel this past summer, explained all the host students have taken at least one year of German at VHS.

"Next May, the students who are hosting will go to Ratingen and stay with the students they are hosting this year," she said. "So, every two years we will be traveling or hosting students."

The five VHS students who traveled this past

■ GERMAN

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VHS Construction To Begin Tuesday

By Sarah Wetzel
For the Plain Talk

Mike Hubbard of Johnson Controls met with the Vermillion School Board Monday to discuss further plans for the Vermillion High School (VHS) renovation project.

Topics presented included the project partners and supervisory team, key interface milestones and the implementation plan.

Hubbard stated that they made an active attempt to keep business local.

"We tried to keep it as local as possible," Hubbard said, noting four of the partners are local businesses. "Once we started getting the local people involved they quickly realized that the scope of this was really outside what they could handle, so you'll see lots of subcontractors on there."

Other partners include companies out of Pierre, Sioux City, Sioux Falls, Yankton and Harrisburg.

Marty Gilbertson of Vermillion was named as the site superintendent.

Construction is set to begin Monday and according to Hubbard work is expected to take 143 days.

"About 80 percent of that will be completed within 120 days of the start of work, just because we have to get you back in there Aug. 20," Hubbard said. "We do already have permits

from the city and the final construction documents will be completed this week from the consultants."

Hubbard indicated some of the key milestones—including the heating system shutdown set for May 4—will allow the project to move forward.

The school will remove items from classrooms and offices beginning May 20. Ideally classrooms should be able to be reset beginning Aug. 12, one week before the start of the 2015-16 school year.

The plan summary was presented as follows:

- Start date will be April 20 with ACM removal;
- Mechanical demolition will begin April 27;
- Items should be removed from work areas by May 25;
- Domestic hot water done by Aug. 4 so cleaning can begin;
- Items moved back into classrooms by Aug. 14, seven days before the first day of school on Aug. 19;
- The boiler plant will be operational by Oct. 22.

Though Hubbard said every effort will be made to complete items early, students and community members might experience slight inconveniences such as the heat not functioning until late October.

"We're South Dakotans," board

member Shannon Fairholm said. "We can handle it."

Hubbard and the board agreed that this should not be a problem unless cold weather is experienced early in the season.

Due to the summer-long remodel, the Vermillion Community Theater moved the performance date of its production of Mary Poppins to the week after school starts, as air conditioning will not be functional in the auditorium until that time.

Hubbard emphasized that the priority is to prepare the classrooms for the return of students, though every effort will be made to accommodate groups like the community theater as well.

In addition to the discussion on the remodel, the board asked Tony Graham, service director for Vermillion Schools, to discuss changes in the program.

Graham discussed plans to improve student satisfaction, including providing five choices for middle school and high school lunches and two choices for elementary school.

Graham also pointed out ways the program attempts to help the community.

■ SCHOOL

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Having Fun With Art

By Sarah Wetzel
For the Plain Talk

As part of National Library week, kids, teens and adults joined together to turn ideas and sketches into sidewalk chalk and starch-paint art Monday afternoon.

"I've drawn since I was little, so it's always something that I've liked," said Tate, 13.

Tate's sidewalk square showed a lovely oak on a hill. "I love trees to death," he said. "They are my favorite thing of all time. Oak and willow are the prettiest trees I've ever seen."

According to Tate, more should be done to save trees and stop deforestation.

"It bugs me when people chop them down," he said. "There are other things you could be using like brick or concrete."

Tate's love of art has fueled this passion for trees.

"There's this picture that really spoke to me where these lumbermen were cutting down these trees," he said. "As they were cutting them down, the roads that they made looked like a giant tree. I thought that was very ironic."

Also on Tate's square was a depiction of BMO.

"It's from 'Adventure Time,'" Tate explained. "It's a show kids watch. I might do another drawing but I'll wait till everyone does one just so everyone gets a square."

Tate also enjoys doing artwork in oil pastels.

Caleb, 13, also chose the subject of his chalk art based on a personal passion.

Caleb's portrait of Gabe Newell came to life on the sidewalk in front of the library.

■ ART

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