



# PLAIN TALK

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## A Joint Agreement

### City Council Approves USD Tax Rebates

By Shauna Marlette  
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The partnership between the City of Vermillion and the University of South Dakota (USD) continues to grow, this time, with a rebate of up to \$700,000 of sales tax expenditures on the new arena, science, health and research lab and track and soccer complex.

USD is investing more than \$66 million, plus \$18.5 million of financing costs, to construct these capital improvements.

Sheila Gestring, vice president of financing for USD, said the rebates will

be recouped through city-wide economic development spurred by the new facilities.

The agreement sought by USD is similar to one between the City of Vermillion and Polaris, which saw the city rebate approximately \$340,000 to Polaris for their new \$10.4 million conveyor system project. The program is also in line with how the Governor's Office of Economic Development operates sales and use tax rebate awards on the state level.

As the invoices for eligible purchases are received by USD, copies will be given to the Vermillion Area Chamber & Development Company (VCDC) to verify that the

local sales and use tax has been paid by the vendor credited to the City of Vermillion. The City will then refund the payment of the local sales and use tax paid on eligible items to VCDC to distribute the funds to USD.

According to the agreement, the city will have 45 days from the end of each quarter to complete reimbursement with all purchases to be made through January 1 and September 30, 2017.

"I think the fate of the University and the fate of the City are intertwined. I always have," said USD president James Abbot. "I think it is important to note, we are asking you to funnel the dollars the city

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COURTESY PHOTO  
John Lushbough receives George McGovern Hunger Ambassador Award earlier this month in Mitchell.

## Lushbough Wins Hunger Ambassador Award

By Elyse Brightman  
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Nobody should have to eat alone. At least that's what Vermillion's John Lushbough thought more than 13 years ago when he began the Welcome Table located at Vermillion's United Methodist Church.

"The previous pastor who came here over 14-years ago was involved in a meal in Mitchell and he asked if I would be interested in starting something here," Lushbough said.

Though he may have had the idea, Lushbough is quick to share the credit with all the volunteers who cook and serve the food that keep the Welcome Table coming back each week.

"It wasn't just me, there are a bunch of people that met for probably six months before we started," Lushbough said. "We probably average about 140 every Monday, but it could be under a hundred or we could be closer to 200."

Each week a different sponsor prepares the meal — either by cooking or having it catered — and then serves it to guests Monday evenings between 5:30-7 p.m. Some of the most frequent volunteers are from the sororities and fraternities at the University of South Dakota (USD).

"During the academic year, the majority of the groups that serve are student groups from USD. In the summertime we don't have them, but we still serve the meal," Lushbough said.

People who visit the Welcome Table don't need to give any money or be needy in anyway, the only qualification is wanting to share a meal with someone.

"Everybody who comes to this meal is treated like a guest. We try to treat them as family, celebrate their birthdays, sometimes anniversaries," said Maxine Johnson, who's been a volunteer at the Welcome Table since it began. "We share sadness with them. Some of our families have been coming from the very beginning and we watch them lose children, have weddings, new babies and it's quite a privilege to be a part of it."

Lushbough even sports a tribute on his left calf.

"One of the first pastors said 'let's just serve them ham' so (John) has (a ham) tattooed on the back of his leg," Johnson said.

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## OPENING NEW DOORS



SHAUNA MARLETTE/FOR THE PLAIN TALK

Vermillion High School students were on hand Tuesday at the CTE Open House showcasing student's work completed throughout the year.

## Open House Highlights Student's Work

By Shauna Marlette  
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Tucked behind Vermillion High School (VHS) in a non-descript building featuring a huge door, is more than a classroom. It is an opportunity for students to find skills, and for some their future careers.

Tuesday night, Vermillion High School chose to show off the talents of its students and showcase the work that has been done in the district's Career and Technical Education (CTE) classes.

Mark Pier, career and technical education instructor, explained that the new facility where the open house was held was built last school year and was used for the first time this year.

"This building is used for residential construction, a new program we started this year," he said. "We used the first semester to get moved into the building and get operational. Then this semester, right after the first off the year we moved into the building."

He said the first project completed was a mobile bathroom.

"We have a partnership with Builder's Choice here in town," Pier said. "We teach our students modular construction. That is what we are doing here. We build modular units."

Because of the new building, the students were able to build the project from the ground up, well from the trailer up.

The trailer that the mobile bathroom is on was built by a company in Brookings. When it was received at the school it was a rough trailer with a bunch of wood stacked up on it.

"What was unique about this is our students did the framing, and all of the installations: we did the electrical, the plumbing and we installed the appliances inside each stall," said Pier. "We did the roofing, the siding, everything, with assistance from Builder's Choice."

The modular bathroom, once it is completed will be going to Stallion Oil Company in North Dakota.

"I have 20 students in the class this year," Pier said. "It is a year-long class. We have 20 students and each student is in class about 10 hours per week, we have a lot of hours into this. We didn't do it all right the first time. We had to take some things apart and do it again, but that is part of the learning process. Everything is owned by Builder's Choice, we just supplied the labor."

Lofton Covington, a senior at VHS said that the entire

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## USD Students Asked To Donate To Food Pantry

By Elyse Brightman  
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At the end of each school year, a lot of college students are left with extra money on their school cards to spend on food at the stores on campus.

Beta Theta Pi at The University of South Dakota is hoping students will put that money to good use this spring by supporting a canned food drive from April 27-May 1 to benefit the Vermillion Food Pantry.

"The idea is that students have a lot of flex money left over, which is part of their meal plan," said Beta Theta Pi's philanthropy chair Matthew Preszler. "If you don't use that money by the end of the school year then you

lose it, so a lot of times students go and buy a whole bunch of random food, candy, pop, things that they don't really need so they can get the money used up because they have paid for it."

Preszler noticed Beta Theta Pi's philanthropy wasn't at the level he wanted it to be, so when he was elected chair this year, he immediately began focusing his time to planning fundraising events. A lot of the fundraisers put on by the sororities and fraternities benefit national organizations, but Preszler wanted focus on the community he lives in.

"I'm really trying to do more with the community because in

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## A DAY IN THE LIFE OF: HEAD COACH AMY WILLIAMS

### Work Doesn't Slow Down In Off-Season, It Just Gets Busier

By Elyse Brightman  
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It's hard to describe a typical day in the life of a college coach, mostly because every coach has a completely different schedule.

"I think people feel like they have kind of an idea of what life is like during a season," said University of South Dakota's women's basketball coach Amy Williams. "They always think that when basketball season is over my life is just going to calm down. It just never works that way."

Just this last week, Williams had eight hours of individual player

meetings in one day, followed by team dinners, booster meetings, panel discussions, individual skill practices and recruit visits the rest of the days, and that's during the off-season.

"People don't realize that it's probably as busy, or more busy, for me than the in season," Williams said.

In-season game days can be a little more predictable.

"Generally, in the morning I kind of have the same routine," Williams said. "I drop my girls off for school in the morning and I'm here by 8:30

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