

# Event Aims To Spread Farming's Message

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The guest of honor at Monday's "Know Your Farmer" at RED Steakhouse wasn't found at the head table.

Actually, it was found on the plates.

The "star" was the pork featured for the entrée and other courses.

Chef Kirk Phillips plated more than 30 plates of pork shank before making the formal presentation in the dining room. The shank filled the entire plate of each diner.

"Maybe they'll be so full from the meat that they won't want dessert," the chef joked.

He wasn't wrong, as some diners methodically worked their way through the entrée. Others requested a Styro-foam box to take home the leftovers.

It was the kind of goodwill that the Ag United organization sought to build with Vermillion residents and employees.

The farmers acting as hosts included Jerry Schmitz of Vermillion, Travis Mockler and Richard Vasgaard of Centerville, Steve Rommerein of Alcester and Vicki Schultz of Freeman.

Vasgaard, president of the state Ag United/South Dakota Farm Families, said the dinner targeted a number of influential people to help spread the agricultural message.

"We tried to get community leaders, county commissioners, University (of South Dakota) people, city people - people with leadership skills and connections," he said.

In turn, the farmers wanted to answer any questions held by their "city" brethren.

Vasgaard said the farmers fielded a number of questions and heard concerns.

"We talked about the way we (farmers) grew crops," he said, including organic and niche crops.

At Vermillion, one woman expressed concerns about hormones that may be used in meat. Other guests asked about the types of crops that are grown locally and the methods used in production.

"We did this in Sioux Falls two weeks ago, and we got questions on GMO (genetically modified organisms), chemical use and pesticides," he said. "It was a really good opportunity to answer their questions about their food supply."

Vasgaard welcomed the feedback and believed the dinner provided a great setting for one-on-one interaction.

"This social atmosphere provided a time for us to break bread," he said. "It's how we get to know each other."

He believes the dining atmosphere - in which the five farmers rotated tables after each course - was more



RANDY DOCKENDORF/P&D  
Chef Kirk Phillips put the finishing touches on his pork entrée during Monday's "Know Your Farmer" dinner.

personal and meaningful for the guests.

"I think it meant more to them, to gather around the dinner table, compared to someone standing up and giving a presentation," he said. "Here, they had a chance to interact."

Vasgaard hopes - and knows - Monday night's dinner is just the beginning of spreading the producers' message. Ag United, like other organizations, relies greatly on social media and the Internet.

"Younger people make such use of social media," he said. "If we can make connections with them, they will help spread our message much further, and quickly."

Monday's audience includes state lawmakers who worked with bills during the 2015 Legislature - and who will be considering future action as well.

In that respect, the Ag United sponsors believe Monday's dinner put a face on their organization, but also allow city, county and state lawmaker to understand the issues better.

"We are promoting livestock production in the state, things like the dairy and pork farms and the poultry farm they're trying to start (in Turner County) near Parker," he said.

The proposed Turner County poultry farm is tied up in legal proceedings, Vasgaard said. However, the Turner County state's attorney advised him the issue could be resolved by July.

Ag United and other farm organizations are stressing the need to grow South Dakota's agricultural sector - particularly value-added agriculture.

"We raised 8 million bushels of corn in South Dakota last year," he said. "Sixty-plus percent went to livestock and ethanol in the state. The other 30 percent was loaded on rail cars and shipped elsewhere to get the added value. If we got the poultry farm at Parker, I'm

told it would add 10-12 cents per bushel to the price of corn."

At Monday's dinner, two District 17 legislators said they welcomed the chance to learn more about agricultural issues.

District 17 Rep. Ray Ring (D-Vermillion) said it helped his perspective in drafting and handling legislation.

He noted, during last year's dinner, he learned about a disease that was infecting piglets and creating problems. This year, he learned more about the state's loss of corn that was shipped out of state and other value-added money that was draining out of South Dakota.

"We're not a full-time Legislature," he said. "We need to talk to various groups, to get more information."

Monday's dinner provided a two-way street for communication, Ring said.

"It's a time to meet with people - to learn what they want to hear about, and to hear from us," he said.

District 17 Sen. Art Rusch (R-Vermillion) said he welcomed the interaction with producers.

"It's really good to get the input from some farmers," he said. "Ag is South Dakota's biggest industry, and we deal with a number of ag issues up in the state Legislature. I'm trying to come up with laws for the next session that will help agriculture in South Dakota."

The audience wasn't all producers and politicians.

University of South Dakota football coach Joe Glenn showed his enjoyment at being part of the crowd. And contrary to what some might think, he knows something about farming as well as football.

"I grew up in Nebraska and went to school in South Dakota," he said. "I walked beans and I built grain bins while I was in graduate school," he said.

Glenn also made farm friends while attending the

University of South Dakota. "Joe Trudeau of Jefferson was my (football) teammate and is in the Hall of Fame at USD," he said.

Trudeau never lost his connection to the land, Glenn said. "Joe loves to talk about beans," the coach joked.

Glenn said he enjoyed being part of Monday's dinner and its emphasis on agriculture, an important topic around Vermillion.

"I have farm friends in the area, and I liked the chance to sit down with farmers tonight," he said.

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## Law Student Association Wins Award

The Native American Law Student Association at the University of South Dakota was named Chapter of the Year at the 40th annual Indian Law Conference sponsored by the Federal Bar Convention. USD law student Tsyoslake House was honored as 2L of the Year, the top award for second-year law students.

The awards are presented annually at the Indian Law Conference. The Native American Law Student Association chapter at USD previously won the Chapter of the Year award in 2008.

"I was humbled and honored that our chapter won this award," said Kyle Chase, second-year law student and president of the USD NALSA Chapter. "There are many NALSA chapters in various law schools across the nation so to be recognized for our efforts at a national level was very special."

"The NALSA membership has worked really hard to bring attention to Native American issues, assist in legal aid on the SD reservations, and promote the education of our members" Chase said. "This recognition puts the spotlight on South Dakota and our law school. It also signifies all of our accomplishments, and I look forward to see this continue next year."

## Krohmer Plumbing Earns State Award

Krohmer Plumbing Named 2015 Contractor of the Year by the South Dakota Association of Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors

Krohmer Plumbing, Inc. of Mitchell and Sioux Falls has been named the 2015 Contractor of the Year by the South Dakota Association of Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors (SDAPHCC). This award is given annually to a contractor who shows commitment to the SDAPHCC and to the industry at large.

"Krohmer Plumbing is a long-term, successful company that is a family operation with a positive presence both statewide and in their home community of Mitchell," said Ken Melius, executive vice president of SDAPHCC.

"[Krohmer Plumbing owners] Frank and Chris Krohmer are very supportive of the plumbing industry and have a strong interest in increasing public awareness of the importance of plumbing professionals. They are a credit to the industry."

Frank Krohmer, owner and president of Krohmer Plumbing, said, "We are honored by this award. We pride ourselves on having skilled employees who provide the highest quality craftsmanship and services. Being a part of SDAPHCC is a huge part of our commitment to the industry, and being recognized by our peers is high praise."

## Audiology Students Provide C. Service

Thirty-three University of South Dakota students enrolled in the university's Aural Rehabilitation course participated in a semester-long project serving children and adults in the Vermillion community.

The students performed a variety of activities and services, including providing detailed education about hearing and hearing loss, and how to protect hearing. Over 150 community members were reached through the program, from preschool age to community elders at a number of community organizations and institutions including USD Head Start, Sanford Care Center, Beyond School Adventures, St. Agnes Red & Gold Program, and SESDAC.

The project, said Chris Stockwell, Assistant Director for Academic Engagement at USD, offered the students an opportunity to share knowledge they had acquired through their studies and provide a valuable service to the general public.

"Rather than simply making practice presentations to their classmates, the students in this class invested time and effort to improving actual public education, and by delivering presentations in the community they made a tangible impact on preventing hearing loss," said Stockdale. "The project was so successful that the students were asked to offer additional training at later dates for staff members of local organizations."

## Swim

FROM PAGE 3

That's pretty cool," she said. "He's never gone to the deep end before but last week he went to the deep end with a floatie on and me holding him."

For others, getting into the pool is a way to step away from their everyday life.

"My teammate and I, we work with Morgally," said USD freshman Kassidie Cornell. "She has Rhett

syndrome which means she can't talk, walk or use her hands, so we usually carry her back in fourth in the lanes. What we have been progressing towards is putting weights on her ankles which allow her to stand which takes all the weight off her body and relieves her of all her pain."

Cornell communicates with Morgally through facial expressions, like smiling, and says seeing her smile tells Cornell she's enjoying her time in the pool.

"She can't even talk or communicate, so seeing the

smile on her face, it brings a smile to my face too," Cornell said. "We smile at her and point things out and she can see us so she'll smile back. When her neck just lies in the water and she looks up, you can just see how relieved she is and how fortunate she is to be in the water."

Vermillion's Special Olympic swimmers travel to Sioux Falls at the beginning of May to compete in the regional competition then to the campus of South Dakota State University for the state competition.

## Pantry

FROM PAGE 1

the past Beta has done some philanthropy but it hasn't been up to what I would like it to be. I've been really trying to get more things planned, so the food pantry is one of the first steps in the process," Preszler said.

Though this drive is aimed at students, Beta is setting up donation bins at HyVee and WalMart for anyone in the community to donate. The donation bins will also be set up at some stores around campus.

"The idea was actually brought to me by some other students that I'm friends with and they did one of

their (class) projects on this idea," Preszler said.

He then asked his friends if he could use the idea and turn it into a reality to benefit the community.

During the month of March, Vermillion's food pantry served 157 families totaling 454 people bringing their 2015 total to 1,321 people served. The food services extend throughout all of Clay County.

To qualify for the food pantry, a family needs to meet certain income requirements to be eligible to sign up. They also have a program to benefit the older population.

"We have an over 60 commodities program that is run by the state," said Linda Wymar, who does

the purchasing for the food pantry. "They sign up with us and they receive a box and they can also sign up with the food pantry and receive a box."

A family of one, who visits the food pantry, chooses 20 items to take, a family of two or three chooses 30 items while a family for four or more can choose 40 items.

Items are donated by community members as well as some local stores and restaurants.

Every Wednesday the food pantry posts on their Facebook page which products are running low in supply. To find out what would be most helpful to donate during the food drive visit [www.facebook.com/vermillionfoodpantry](http://www.facebook.com/vermillionfoodpantry).

### VOTE FOR YOUR TOP 3 ATHLETES!

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201 W. Cherry Street • Vermillion

- Kevin Cusick (Track, Football, Wrestling, 1972-1975 and 1975-1980)
- Tony Glass (Football, Track, 1965-1966, 1966-1970)
- Doug Hanson (Basketball, 1998-1999, 2003-2004)
- Jeff Huska (Football, Baseball, Basketball 1989-1994)
- Jason Huska (Football, Baseball, Basketball, 1989-1994)
- Chuck Iverson (Basketball, 1967-1969 and 1970-1974)
- Jason Leber (Football, Baseball, Track, Basketball, 1990-92, 1993-96)
- Annie Roche (Basketball, 2003-2007)
- Mike Schurrer (Football, Wrestling, Track, 1973-1975, 1975-1979)
- Kurt Seibel (Football, 1977-1980)
- Ashley Bjorkman (Basketball, 2000s)
- Alicia Brown (Track, Basketball, 2004-2008)
- Glynis Bye (Track, 1977-1980)
- Hazen Bye (Wrestling, 1981-84)
- Lonna Larson (Basketball, 1990s)
- Ben Leber (Football, 1996-1998)
- Mark Manning (Wrestling, 1975-1980)
- David Reich (Football, 1983-1986)
- Kevin Seibel (Football, Wrestling, Track, 1976-1979)
- Dave Baade (Football, Wrestling Track, 1964-1967)
- Randy Rosenquist (Basketball, 1990-1994)
- Tyler Starr (Football, 2011-2013)
- William (Steve) Stevenson (Track, 1948-1953)