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GVHS Students Set For Laptop Learning

Each HS Student To Have Laptop Computer For School Year

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GAYVILLE — The students at Gayville-Volin High School will be more well-connected when they start classes again later this month.

That's because the school has begun a laptop initiative that will provide each of them with a school-owned laptop computer throughout the year. "The reason for that is to increase their accessibility to Internet resources, and also to try and increase technology skills," said Superintendent Jason Selchert. "We've been thinking about doing this for a couple years, and it just seemed like a good time to make the jump."

Approximately 80 Gateway laptops for use during the upcoming year are already being stored at the school.

"We have more than 200 machines in the building — some of them laptops, some of them desktops — but these 80 are specifically for the high school students," Selchert said.

The school's move toward a more technologically-relevant learning environment is part of a push that

has been building across the state during the past few years. The program is similar in design to the state-funded 2010 Laptop Initiative, which provided schools with matching grants to purchase laptops.

Selchert said the local pro-

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JASON SELCHERT

gram has much in common with the state initiative, apart from the type of computers and wireless connections used.

"Pretty much everything is being followed except the hardware side of it," he said.

Two of the biggest advantages to the students will be in access to technology and the relevance of that technology, he added.

"You may have needed to schedule (computer) access to your class," Selchert said. "That's not going to be a problem anymore. When you schedule a lab, you might not necessarily get the hardware

that's the most recent. Everything that we have now is the latest ... so our students are going to be exposed to all the latest software as it becomes available."

At the beginning of the year, each high school student will enter into an agreement with the district regarding the use of the machines.

"The agreement we'll have with students is that the laptop remains the property of the school district, and that they will have use of that (promptly) during the school year," Selchert said. "They will sign an acceptable-use policy, which is what they do every year anyway. It just basically says that you're going to do appropriate things with the laptop."

The students will also be held responsible should something happen to the laptops.

"(The program) won't cost them anything unless they damage or lose the laptop," Selchert said. "If they damage or lose the laptop, it's going to cost them a deductible on the policy that we've taken out, and they



Grant Rice, 11, helps to unpack the approximately 80 Gateway laptops that were recently delivered to Gayville-Volin School. Once classes begin, each student in 9th-12th grade will receive one of the school-owned laptops to use throughout the upcoming year.

don't have another shot with the rest of their time. They've got one shot in four years time to lose or damage, and after that it's up to the student to pay for a replacement."

Based on the insurance policy, replacing a laptop in the first year of the program could cost the student approximately \$400, he added.

Selchert said the laptop initiative could change both how the students learn and how the classes will be taught.

"We believe that we've been on a pace over the past couple of years to pretty much change our teaching to more inquiry-based learning instead of rote memorization, and so all that type of information is readily accessible

to the students if they have a computer in their hands," he said. "If they're using a textbook, the information is only as good as the copyright date. That stuff changes consistently, so we will be changing our teaching style."

For this reason, the district will purchase online textbooks in the future. Selchert sees this as a trend that will affect schools everywhere.

"Materials will either be Internet-based or network-based," he said. "Paper and pencils are slowly going to be phased out. That will take a while to get used to, but slowly that's where we will be headed. But we think, that over the next couple of years, we'll see a cost savings that could be re-invested back into a lot of things."

Ice Cream Social Set For Bergen Church

MECKLING — The members of WELCA of Bergen Lutheran Church are holding their annual Ice Cream Social at 5-7 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 17. The social will be held at the church, located on Timber Road in rural Meckling.

Items served will be taverns, hot dogs, homemade pies, ice cream, coffee, lemonade and iced tea.

Guests are encouraged to donate a free-will offering which will be matched by Thrivent Financial.

South Dakota in top 10 business states

A new report from an independent source ranks South Dakota among the most business-friendly states.

The Pollina Corporate Top 10 Pro-Business States annual study, released today, rates states on 33 factors, such as taxes, energy costs, workers compensation laws, economic incentive programs and state economic development efforts.

This year's study ranks South Dakota in eighth place among all states in terms of attractiveness to business opportunities.

"We are pleased with our ranking, but certainly not surprised," said Gov. Mike Rounds. "We work hard to make South Dakota a great

place to do business, raise a family and enjoy life. I've said it many times, but it bears repeating: We cut the red tape for businesses, but we do not cut corners."

Pollina officials say South Dakota and other Top 10 states serve as models for retaining and growing jobs and businesses.

"Considering all the negative press about jobs lost during the recession, you and your administration should be proud of the efforts your state has made to preserve jobs, strengthen your economy and improve the economic well-being of your residents," Brent A. Pollina, company vice president wrote in a letter to Gov. Rounds.

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