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Vermillion

PLAIN TALK

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Tight Grip

Tegan Smith, Winterset, IA, keeps a tight grip while competing in the junior bullriding competition of the 19th Annual Bull-A-Rama, held Saturday at the Clay County Park Rodeo Grounds west of Vermillion. Smith won junior championship honors in the bullriding competition. Senior bullriding champion at Saturday's event is John Young of Orient, IA.

(Photo by David Lias)

Ribs, rods, rock 'n' roll...and wings

By Travis Gulbrandson
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Each year the organizers of the annual Ribs, Rods & Rock 'n' Roll event come up with something new to attract more visitors.

This year's addition? Wings. One of the highlights of opening night, Friday, Sept. 7, will be a wing war from 5:30-7 p.m., with people's choice judging.

"People like to sample what the contestants are cooking, and since it's a closed competition they don't really get to, so people's choice is a way for them to sample these things from national barbecue teams," said event president Jenny French. "A lot of other contests do another people's choice (in addition to the barbecue) – some of them do a chili cook-off, some of them do a dessert war – and so we just thought, 'Wings.'"

"Pro's is kind of famous for their wings, (as are) different places in town," she said. "We thought the locals and the college kids would respond well to that."

Event organizers also have worked more closely with USD Athletics this year, as the

festival coincides with the home opener football, which will be held at 2 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 8.

"We've got a combo ticket, where you can go to goyotes.com and get a ticket to the game, and either Friday or Saturday night of Ribs, Rods & Rock 'n' Roll at a discounted price," French said.

Attendees can also expect to see the things they've come to love returning to year after year – food and live music. French said five barbecue vendors will be in attendance, as well as 10 other food vendors.

A further 10-15 sidewalk vendors also will be there, she said.

The festivities will kick off Sept. 7 with the opening of the food court at 5 p.m. The area will stay open until 1 a.m. and will feature performances by Autumn Road and The Rude Band.

There also will be a family fun area with sidewalk vendors open from 5-8 p.m. that night.

The food court will be reopened at 10 a.m. Saturday, again closing at 1 a.m., and the Family Fun Area will be open from 10 a.m.-8 p.m.

Prior to this will be a motorcycle charity poker run, and Breakfast with the Eagles at 9:30 a.m.

The South Dakota BBQ Championship will take place from noon to 4 p.m., as will the Classic Car & Cycle Show & Shine.

French said she has been told by car show organizer Scott French that there will be "a lot more entries this year."

People's Choice Public BBQ Judging will take place from 2-3:30 p.m., followed by the South Dakota BBQ Championship Awards presentation at 4 p.m.

The evening will feature performances by Mrs. Begley & the Boys, and Go Figure.

French said she hopes the event's lucky track record with the weather continues this year.

"Two years ago, it drizzled a little bit, but then it cleared off and it was great," she said. "We'll keep our fingers crossed. ... We just encourage everyone to come on out. It's a signature event for Vermillion, and there are a lot of fun things to do and see."

For more information about Ribs, Rods & Rock 'n' Roll, visit <http://sdbbq.us/>



Jon Bigalk, co-owner of Willingham's World Champion BBQ of Nashville, TN, prepares to remove 100 slabs of freshly-smoked ribs from the "Willingham's Wham Turbo Cooker," invented by his uncle, John Willingham, in 1981 in this photo taken at last year's Ribs, Rods, Rock 'n' Roll event held in downtown Vermillion.

(Photo by David Lias)

Stream to hang up its Vermillion call center

By David Lias
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A major employer in Vermillion will be closing its call center in October.

Stream Global Services announced Thursday that it will be shutting down its facility here, which employs over 150 people, near the end of October.

According to a statement released by Joe Thornton, Stream's senior director of brand management in Bloomington, MN, "The company is realigning resources across some of our U.S.-based facilities to better support our client needs and long-term

business objectives. The affected client workload will be absorbed within our U.S. operations."

Those U.S. operations include a call center in Sergeant Bluff, IA.

"Certain positions may be open or soon become available in Stream's Sergeant Bluff, IA facility," Thornton said. "We are encouraging any employee interested in these jobs to consider applying for them following the conclusion of their responsibilities at the Vermillion facility."

Stream's Vermillion service center provides inbound customer care, sales and retention sales services, and data

entry for a number of leading brands. The center has a history of working with telecommunications and broadband services providers

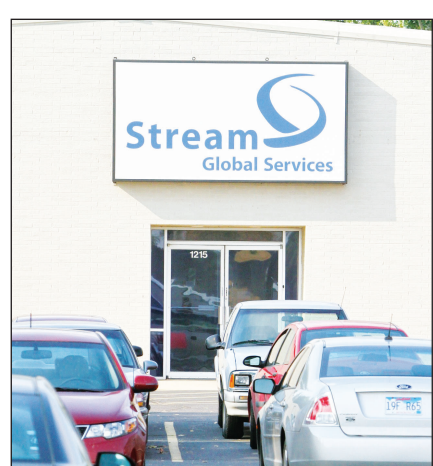
Thornton said Stream recognizes that this action affects people's livelihoods, so affected employees who stay with the company through the closure will be provided severance packages and access to a variety of outplacement services.


Stream's service center in Vermillion is located in a 20,000 square foot building at the intersection of Cherry Street and Highway 50 on the city's western edge.

The company's Sergeant Bluff, IA facility is much larger – 148,000 square feet – and can accommodate approximately 1,200 workers.

In early 2011, Stream laid off 250 people at Sergeant Bluff after losing a major client. Approximately a month later, however, the company was looking to hire 500 people in Sergeant Bluff after it added additional gaming platform services for one of their existing consumer electronics clients to the site.


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