

Wagner Brings New Perspective To USD's D-Days Planning

BY ELYSE BRIGHTMAN
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This year will be Doug Wagner's first as the advisory to the Dakota Days (D-Days) committee after beginning his as the assistant director of programming at the University of South Dakota in January and he's looking forward to his first homecoming in Vermillion.

"I've found that the University has a lot of school spirit as is," he said. "It's got a resting level of school spirit here that's pretty high, my expectation is that during D-Days that only gets amplified and I'm excited to see that."

As the assistant director of programming at the school, Wagner oversees the committee of students who plan the events for D Days.

"The students are responsible for all of the planning. My job is more to offer advice when they need it," he said. "It's a committee that's usually chaired by two students and then has a series of different committees and other chairs underneath those two overall chairs who talk a lot about and plan the parade and different events that go on around campus."

This year, D-Days kicks off on Sunday, Sept. 27 and wraps up on Saturday, Oct. 3 with the homecoming football game against Youngstown State. Events planned for the week include a comedian, a fun run, a Yotes Got Talent show, parade, pep rally, and a Verm Town Bash.

"They're going to close (Market Street) and we're going to have a DJ. We're going to work on having some different carnival booths and a dunk tank and some inflatables and things like that," Wagner said. "It's going to be a big week and we're excited about the events and things that are happening."

Planning for the events began in

February and had continued through the summer because of when D Days fall on the calendar this year.



Wagner

"It's been a lot of planning, and a lot of hard work on behalf of the students doing what they need to do to get stuff done," Wagner said. "I can't say enough about how great they've been to work with."

Typically, the week-long homecoming celebrations take place the second week in October, but this year it falls on the last week of September.

"What we're running into is, they're away and I'm here so I've been working very hard to be their representative for things that need to get done here," Wagner said.

He represented the students at a recent city council meeting to get noise permits to have streets shut down during events. He also mailed out the invitations to alumni to attend.

Events are free to USD students at \$5 for non-students to attend.

"The best way that people can get involved is to just support the events that are going on," Wagner said.

Once the week concludes, Wagner said he is open to feedback from attendees.

"If there is something that someone doesn't like, I don't know how to make it better if no one says anything," he said.

Along with D-Days, Wagner advises Dakotathon and the Campus Activities Board.

"The way my role has been described in the past is that I'm an ambassador of fun," he said. "My responsibility is making sure that fun things happen on campus and that's students know about them and attend them."

City

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to state law we are forced to go with the out of town provider. ... I don't know if having this down to the penny is what is most important. There are other issues here. When it is \$2,000 different, you are forced to go with the outside supplier, when it is only a few hundred dollars, you can go with the local guy."

On average, the cost of legal notice advertising to this community is less than one half of one percent of the total city budget.

As required by the state, in 2014 the City of Vermillion spent more than \$22,000 on legal notice advertising. Based on that number, with the 30 percent discount offered by the Plain Talk, going forward the city would have saved the tax payers more than \$6,600 per year. There was no discount offered by our competitor. The City Council chose to award the legal newspaper status to the competitor, costing the taxpayers thousands of dollars.

Howard Wilson said he was torn between the two papers.

"I need to weigh both sides and be a steward of our taxpayers' dollars," he said.

At the evening meeting, Wood addressed the council one final time.

"Our paid circulation numbers are roughly 3 1/2 times higher than (our competitors) are on a weekly basis," he said. "The rate based on our new proposal is a discounted rate. It offers the city council the opportunity to save

literally thousands of dollars on those legal advertising notices by continuing with the Plain Talk. Once that designation would be identified, we would begin billing at that discounted rate. It is an opportunity for the taxpayers of the city to save substantial dollars. We have an opportunity here for the city to work with us and us to once again work with the city."

However, at the evening meeting, Wilson made the recommendation to choose the competitor.

"I still feel I have questions I don't understand and I can't grasp it in my mind because we got a sample of the ad that we used for the swimming pool election, to cut it short," he said. "... However, after our discussion this afternoon and my deliberation this afternoon, I am going to lean towards the (competitor) and making that our legal newspaper for the next period of time. It doesn't say we have to be that way forever, but we can at least give it a try and see how it works out. So, I will make a motion to have the (competitor) as our official newspaper."

The motion was seconded by Steve Ward.

"The reason I think today that some of us are having a change of mind about the Plain Talk is that there was a long period of time that we were overbilled," he said. "That can be an honest mistake and I believe it was. I also, from my point of view, have not been entirely satisfied with the reporting on the last two controversial issues that have went on for the city. That is where I am at. The discussion has been about the

cost and what we have been charged in the past. All of us have gone through what pica means and what the proper width of column is in a paper and gotten into the minutia of that. For me, I don't know that is what we should be focusing on. In my point of view, it is a reasonable time to allow another paper to have its shot with this service for the public."

Following the meeting, Wood reacted to Ward's comment about the Plain Talk's coverage.

"In researching Mr. Ward's comment about coverage of the special elections, I found that the Plain Talk was the only paper to extensively cover these issues," said Wood. "Starting four weeks before the election, we researched the issues and dedicated the space necessary to ensure that we covered both sides fairly and accurately in order to present the information to the public and allow them the opportunity to make a well-informed decision on how they wanted to vote."

As a final point Katherine Price noted she appreciated what the Plain Talk had done for the city in the past 130-plus years.

"The Plain Talk has been a great newspaper for us as long as we have had it," she said. "... They have a wide circulation and there are a lot of positive points about the Plain Talk. ... I wish there were a way to make both papers our legal paper: I think that would help in the ultimate goal which is to inform as many citizens in the city about what is going on. Unfortunately, we can't do that financially."



Art

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he had been involved in the past. He already had a piece that was on USD campus for the past couple of years. He heard about the new call for art that came out last winter or last spring. This work that we have is a new work, it wasn't already exhibited in Sioux Falls though it is a part of the bigger program."

The sculpture, "Back Channel" sits front of Library on Church St. The other three sculptures stand on the corner of Main

St. and Church St. in front of Bank of the West, the corner of Main and Center in front of Whoopti Do Salon, and one on the Platz on Main St.

"As a visual artist and an art advocate I am so excited to see a project of this scale brought to Vermillion," Heggstad said. "I think Vermillion is a perfect community to support something like this. We have a community full of creative people of all sorts. Having public art is a really important thing to remind the community of different ways that art can manifest itself and that we can do things to change our environment and support



creativity, things like that.

"I think I'm most excited that it's part of the bigger Sioux Falls SculptureWalk program which means there's potential for it to grow. It's going to change regularly and hopefully it will inspire young people who see them to think about what it means to make art for the public, maybe inspire some young artists."

Heggstad also men-

tioned that she hopes the new art will inspire the community to take part in the downtown mural renovation set to take place next month.

"There is an opportunity where people will get to participate," Heggstad said. "They can actually play a role if they want to. They will remember it for decades, if not their whole life."



SARAH WETZEL/FOR THE PLAIN TALK

LEFT: This beautiful sculpture on the corner of Main and Center St. as one of four new additions to Vermillion downtown. CENTER: "Moon Dance" by Ivan Schultz of Colorado is displayed on the Platz on Main St. RIGHT: "Device #2" by Nathan Pierce of Missouri stands at the corner of Main and Church St. PAGE 1: "Back Channel" by Dan Perry of Iowa sits on Church St. in front of the Vermillion Public Library.

2015 HuntSafe Class

Clay County Public Safety Building Basement
15 Washington St. · Vermillion

August 24th, 25th & 27th
6:30PM - 9PM

August 29th
8:00AM - 10:30AM

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<http://gfp.sd.gov/outdoor-learning/hunter-education/ClassList.aspx>
click on the Vermillion location

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