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aid to school districts or give state employees a pay raise next year because it is facing a budget crunch caused by declining tax revenues and higher costs in programs that help those hurt by the recession, Gov. Mike Rounds said in a speech to a joint session of the South Dakota Legislature Tuesday, Dec. 8.

Rounds proposed a \$4 billion state budget that would increase spending of state general funds by only \$52 million, with nearly all going to the federal-state Medicaid program that helps pay for health care for low-income people.

"This is going to be a very basic needs budget," Rounds said. "The emphasis during this budget will be on taking care of people."

The Republican governor's spending plan for the year beginning July 1 would hold general spending per pupil in the state's school districts at this year's level. Doctors, nursing homes and others who provide Medicaid services also would receive no inflationary increase.

And for the second straight year, state employees would get no pay raise.

The governor did not call for any layoffs of state employees. He wants to get rid of the equivalent of 102 full-time positions in state government, but he said those are mostly

unfilled jobs.

Rounds proposed using nearly \$32 million in reserves to balance next year's budget without any general tax increase.

"One of the problems South Dakota has - believe it or not - we are one of the few states that has increased personal wealth," Boomgarden told the school board Monday. "We have a lot of farmers, a lot of farm ground, a lot of real estate, and those values have gone up so much that we have a lot of wealth in this state compared to other states."

Personal wealth is a factor used at the federal level, he said, to determine the amount of federal dollars a state will receive.

"Because we have so much personal wealth, we get penalized on how much we get of federal Medicaid dollars," Boomgarden said. "It was supposed to be a \$15 million hit, and it turned out to be \$7.5 million. It's still \$7.5 million less (in federal funding) that we will have to come up with to cover the budget that's coming before us."

He predicted there would be increased pressure in the upcoming legislative session in January to spend state reserve dollars to help balance the budget.

"The problem is that we're going to need those reserves in the future," Boomgarden

said. "If we spend the reserves all of this year, whether it goes education, whether it goes to the adjustment training centers, whether it goes to the health care providers, the problem is that next session we would be \$107 million in the hole and that alone could take care of the two main budget reserves that you usually hear talked about."

Those reserves include the governor's budget, which totals \$40 million, and the property tax reduction fund, which is at \$63 million.

"Do you want to use all of that money in 2012, or should we start making the cuts now? That's going to be the dilemma we're going to be facing," Boomgarden said.

The District 17 lawmaker told the Vermillion School Board that education never takes a back seat in his caucus group. He is hopeful that during the legislative session, as bills are passed and needed appropriations are earmarked, that out of the state's \$3.6 billion budget, there may be anywhere from \$5 million to \$17 million remaining that legislators will "be able to scabble over."

The governor's proposal would require a change to the formula used to calculate state aid to education. Under the formula, per-pupil funding was to have gone up 1.2 percent in the 2011 budget,

which starts July 1.

But faced with an exploding structural deficit that eventually could top \$100 million, Rounds said Dec. 8 the state doesn't have the money to increase per-pupil funding next year. That funding was at about \$4,800 per student this year.

The state would spend \$3.4 million less on education under the governor's plan. There would be some increases in education, such as \$2.7 million for technical schools and \$2 million for more South Dakota Opportunity Scholarships, but that growth would be offset by reductions in other areas. By keeping per-pupil funding levels the same, the state would save \$3.8 million.

Superintendent Mark Froke reminded Boomgarden that if general spending per pupil in 2010-11 stays at current levels, as the governor has proposed, "that puts us back due to the inflationary pressures we have to deal with. I think that it's important that we maintain existing law, however that can be done."

Froke was referring to the 1.2 percent increase in per-pupil funding that the school board was expecting for next year, which would have provided approximately \$70,000 to the Vermillion School District.

USD students volunteer at VOA Dakotas Thrift Store

Students from The University of South Dakota volunteered their time recently at the Sioux Falls Volunteers of America (VOA) Dakotas Thrift Store. Nine students spent a day organizing the thrift store warehouse, working as cashiers, providing customer service and re-stocking the store.

The opportunity provided students with a better understanding of the causes and issues of homelessness. While in Sioux Falls, students participated in a driving tour of downtown and discussed the homelessness issues, including a tour of The Banquet, a

feeding ministry that serves hungry people in the community. The USD students also toured the St. Francis House, an ecumenical emergency shelter for the homeless that offers hospitality, fellowship and support.

In addition to Ellefson and Owens, students involved in the volunteer efforts in Sioux Falls included Samantha Meyer of Sioux Falls, Maggie Graham of Mitchell, Emily Brockett of Newark, IL, Cati Peterson and Jared Schwab of Vermillion, Judon Mehlhaff of Eureka, and Shane Bryan of Oacoma.

VPD/ from page 1

"Drunk driving is simply not worth the risk. Not only do you risk killing yourself or someone else, but the trauma and financial costs of a crash or an arrest for impaired driving can be significant," he said. "Violators often face jail time, the loss of their driver's license, higher insurance rates, attorney fees, time away from work, and dozens of other expenses. So don't take the chance. Remember, if you are over the limit, you are under arrest."

The national Drunk Driving. Over the Limit. Under

Arrest. impaired driving crackdown is a deterrence program organized by the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) that focuses on combining high-visibility enforcement with heightened public awareness through advertising and publicity.

This December's effort is supported by \$7.5 million in paid national advertising to help put everyone on notice that if they are caught driving impaired, they will be arrested.

Make Your HEALTH A Priority

Fresh Breath – How to Get It, How to Keep It!

No one wants bad breath, but everyone gets it—or at least worries about it—at one time or another. Here are some things you can do to keep bad breath to a minimum.

- Eliminate the bacteria and food particles that can cause bad breath. Floss, then brush your teeth, gums and use a tongue scraper after each meal. Make this easier by keeping floss, toothpaste and a toothbrush in your desk, your purse and your car.
- If you can't brush and floss, rinse your mouth with water after eating to dislodge food and moisten your mouth.
- Have your teeth cleaned and examined by a dental professional twice a year.
- If you are certain you have bad breath, seek out a dentist who offers specialized treatment in that area.
- Learn the proper way to brush and practice what you learn.
- Drink lots of liquids, preferably water, to keep your mouth moist.

If your mouth feels dry, chew sugarless gum to stimulate production of saliva.

You can also chew on raw parsley—it's a natural breath freshener. Baking soda is an effective odor eliminator; if you can handle the taste, try brushing with a mixture of baking soda and water. Or try a toothpaste that contains baking soda.

Try rinsing your mouth for one minute with a 50-50 mixture of hydrogen peroxide and warm water to kill odor-causing bacteria.

Avoid mouthwashes that contain alcohol; read the label! Instead, try a mouthwash that contains chlorine dioxide. This compound doesn't just mask odor, it actually eliminates it at the source by attacking the odor-causing volatile sulfur compounds (VSCs).

Snack on raw vegetables such as carrots, celery and red peppers. This stimulates production of saliva, and some Houston dentists believe it can help to remove plaque from your teeth.

To avoid stress-related dry mouth, practice "conscious relaxation" in stressful situations: breathe deeply, visualize peaceful settings, recognize parts of your body that feel tense and consciously relax them. If you can't get past the stress, chew sugarless gum or mints to keep the salivary glands going.

Use an oral irrigation device such as a Waterpik to remove particles of food wedged between your teeth; portable models are available. If you wear dentures or a retainer, clean them frequently, and periodically soak them in an antiseptic solution.

Bad breath that's resistant to these remedies, or that continues for an extended period of time, should be evaluated by our Houston dentist. You don't have to live with bad breath. Recognize it, treat it, then kiss it goodbye!

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