

Happy Holidays from Your Friends at The Plain Talk



Vermillion  
**PLAIN TALK**  
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## INSIDE:

### Highlights

Learn about  
Vermillion's past ■ p. 2

### No Celebrate Vermillion Dec. 31

There will be no Celebrate Vermillion activities in Vermillion this New Year's Eve. Unfortunately, the event will not be held to ring in 2010, however, Celebrate Vermillion is simply "under construction" for the time being. The committee fully intends to ramp up planning efforts early in 2010 for a fun, family-oriented, alcohol-free and tobacco-free celebration at the end of next year.

The first Celebrate Vermillion was held December 31, 1998 to ring in the year 1999. This event has included well over 1,000 participants and volunteers in years past. Plans for Celebrate Vermillion include a bit of a face lift with new activities and a new location in December 2010 as well as hopes for growth in participation.

Fortunately, in recent years, the event has involved an excellent and sizeable group of high school student volunteers. That, and strong involvement from community members, will remain a vital element for Celebrate Vermillion's future success.

The Celebrate Vermillion committee is asking for additional community members willing to participate in the planning process starting in early 2010. If you or your business are interested in joining the committee, please e-mail Devon Davoux at [djd117@msn.com](mailto:djd117@msn.com).

### USD softball clinics planned for January

The University of South Dakota softball team has set the dates for its winter clinics.

The USD Softball Clinic pitching, catching and hitting will be held on Jan. 9 and 16 at the DakotaDome in Vermillion, while the USD Softball Skills Clinic is set for Jan. 30 at the DakotaDome.

The USD Softball Clinic will focus on the fundamentals of pitching, catching and hitting. For pitchers, there will be three levels — beginner, intermediate and instruction. The pitching and clinic portion of the clinic will be held from 1 to 3 p.m. on Jan. 9 and at 1:15 to 3:15 p.m. on Jan. 16. The hitting portion of the clinics will be held on 3:15 to 5:15 p.m. on Jan. 9 and from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Jan. 16.

The USD Softball Skills Clinic will be held from 12:30 to 6:30 p.m. on Jan. 30. The event will include softball fundamental training from USD coaches and players, along with working on infield fundamentals, outfield fundamentals, baserunning, hitting plus playing an actual game on the softball turf.

The brochures for each link are listed [http://www.usdcyotes.com/sports/softball/release.asp?release\\_id=5439](http://www.usdcyotes.com/sports/softball/release.asp?release_id=5439). For more information, contact Coach Amy Klyse at (605) 677-6587 or at [amy.klyse@usd.edu](mailto:amy.klyse@usd.edu).

### Plain Talk

#### poll results

**Poll results 12-18-09**  
Do you agree with Gov. Rounds' decision to not boost state aid to schools?  
Yes (32 Votes)  
No, Legislature should find funding for education (46 Votes)

Undecided (1 Vote)

To participate in the Plain Talk Internet poll, log on to [www.plaintalk.net](http://www.plaintalk.net).

# The Pressbox comes tumbling down

## Gruenwaldt, city come to terms over damaged building

By David Lias  
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After being severely damaged in a Sept. 29, 2008 fire, and after being the topic of controversy before the Vermillion City Council and local courts, the Pressbox is no more.

On Monday, workers began tearing down the building, located at 9 W. National Street, that housed the tavern.

The work comes nearly a year after the city ordered the tavern's owner, Chad Gruenwaldt, to demolish the building because it was unsafe.

The city and Gruenwaldt were finally able to reach an agreement last month, shortly before Gruenwaldt's appeal of the city's order was scheduled to be heard before Circuit Court Judge Steven Jensen.

"Chad agreed to the terms and conditions where he would have to tear the building down," City Manager John Prescott said. "Instead of having a decision being made by a judge, the two parties (Gruenwaldt and the city) entered into an agreement called a writ of certiorari. Instead of a trial, the parties agreed to argue this issue based on the documents that were already filed.

"Between that discussion happening, and those documents actually being filed, they agreed to the terms that had already been laid out," he said. "So the writ of certiorari never actually had to be filed."

Gruenwaldt and the city agreed to file a document of stipulation and final judgement that was submitted to



The Pressbox, already weakened by a fire in September 2008, was no match for heavy demolition equipment Monday afternoon. Chad Gruenwaldt, owner of the Vermillion tavern, and the city of Vermillion reached an agreement last month calling for the demolition of damaged structure. (Photo by David Lias)

Judge Jensen for his signature.

This agreement called for Gruenwaldt to apply for a permit to demolish the Pressbox building and clear the building site by Jan. 1, 2010.

Had Gruenwaldt not begun the work by that date, the city would have the option to raze the structure and clear the lot.

The fence that surrounds a portion of The Pressbox property is allowed to remain until June 30, 2010, or until demolition, clearing and new construction at the site is complete.

struction at the site is complete.

Gruenwaldt has retained his beer and liquor licenses. "Previously, his licenses had been continued (after the fire) and now the licenses have been issued but are inactive," Prescott said. "They will remain inactive until such time that new construction is complete and any new building passes inspection."

Gruenwaldt was not required to submit any permit for new construction while the demolition process is under-

way. He will be allowed, should he desire, to rebuild a bar on his property.

"One thing the city council did do, when they issued his liquor license, is to just make it for the building, not for the entire parcel," Prescott said. "He would only be limited to indoor use of the liquor license."

Before the fire, The Pressbox was host to sand volleyball tournaments

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## 'We make a good team'

### Roberts serves as interpreter, counselor at funeral home

By David Lias  
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Monique Roberts and Lori Kober, co-owner of the Iverson-Siecke-Kober Funeral Home in Vermillion, have had a professional relationship going back several years.

That relationship has been enhanced as Monique's role at the funeral home has expanded. She serves not only as executive assistant and an interpreter for Lori, the only deaf mortician in South Dakota.

She also plays an integral part of the Iverson-Siecke-Kober Funeral Home staff, working as a licensed pre-needs counselor.

"I'm here part time, two to three days a week. That means that any time people come in to meet with Lori, she's going to have an interpreter," Monique said. "Either I'm going to be here interpreting, or if someone comes in and I'm not here, we do arrange to have another interpreter here."

In situations where families want Monique's presence during funeral planning, there are times when they must call ahead, just to make sure she will be in Vermillion at that time.

"Some people have had a relationship with Al (Siecke), too," Lori said, "so in some situations, Al will come and he helps out, too."

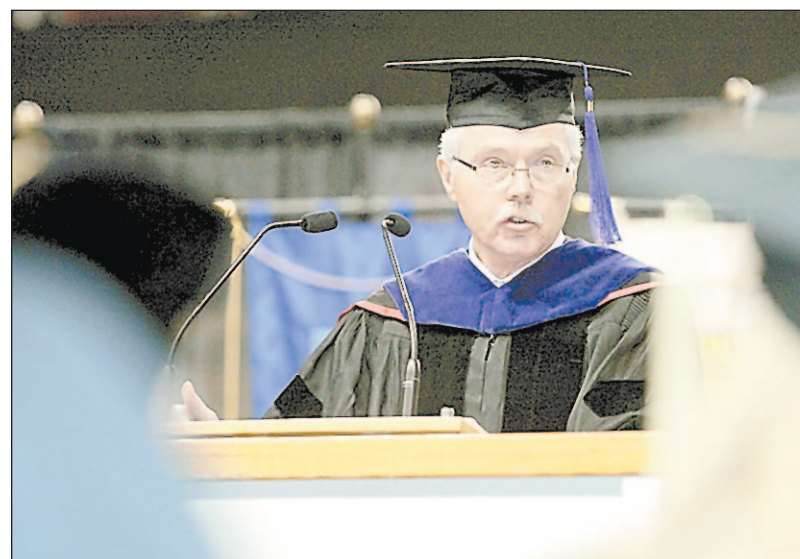
"Lori has interpreters for that need, at times I may not be in Vermillion," Monique said. "Everything has always been covered in that way, and our families have always been really happy."

Lori has the professional training to deal with the many aspects of funeral preparation. "My training is all through her, and she's been a very good teacher," Monique said. "Customer service is my strong point; I had my own business for 10 years before I came here, and customer

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Lori Kober, (left) co-owner of Iverson-Siecke-Kober Funeral Home in Vermillion, says the assistance she receives from Monique Roberts is "a blessing from heaven." (Photo by David Lias)



Larry Long, former South Dakota attorney general who now serves as a circuit court judge, addressed USD graduates at the university's commencement, held Saturday in the DakotaDome. His speech was entitled, "Thoughts About Your Future." (Photo by David Lias)

## Long to USD grads: Job market is tough

By Travis Gulbranson  
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While addressing the University of South Dakota's most recent graduates, Larry Long, circuit court judge with the state's 2nd Judicial Circuit, was blunt about the job market. "It's tough out there."

Long shared tips on how to get a job at USD's 34th winter session commencement exercises, held Saturday in the DakotaDome.

"Because the economy is in the tank, finding a job and keeping a job will be tougher for you than it was in my day," he said.

Long said his office recently filled a \$26,000-per-year position.

"They received 80 applications," he said. "Fifty applicants had graduated from high

school, 13 held two-year associate degrees, 24 were bachelor's degrees, one applicant had a masters degree and one applicant was a lawyer. Ten applicants were invited to interview."

He described these numbers as "typical." However, Long said the students do have an advantage over many potential employees: "You grew up in South Dakota or were educated in South Dakota," he said.

Long said that when he served as South Dakota's attorney general, he came in contact with employers from across the country.

"These employers repeatedly told me they preferred to hire people from the Upper Midwest (because they) practice personal values these companies seek. So

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