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'We really felt like Vermillion found us'

Ceremony welcomes Builders Choice to community

By Travis Gulbrandson
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It took only "three days shy of three months," but Vermillion's newest manufacturing facility is ready to go.

Builders Choice, Inc., of Anchorage, AK, held its opening and ribbon cutting ceremony Thursday night at its new commercial products division, located at 1212 Norbeck St.

"I really appreciate you guys coming out," company president Mark Larson told the crowd of local citizens in attendance. "It means a lot to us that you did that. You can come by and say hi any time, and just from us as owners, we're really grateful to the community for how you supported us. And thanks again for letting us celebrate today with you."

The arrival of the business was announced in October, after which time workers got busy readying the already-standing facility.

"These guys have really been laying it out over the last couple of weeks to get this plant up and running on time," said Steve Howe, executive director of the Vermillion Chamber of Commerce and Development Company. "They've



Mark Larson, president of Builders Choice, speaks to a crowd of well-wishers at his company's new manufacturing center in Vermillion Thursday afternoon.

(Photo by David Lias)

been putting in extra hours. They've just been going all-out to make this plant happen."

The new plant will build modular units to serve a variety of commercial applications, from worksite housing, hotels and apartments, to office and

administration facilities.

Modular construction helps expedite the construction process and control costs on commercial buildings for a wide range of businesses.

The products manufactured in Vermillion will be used in North Dakota.

Larson, a native of Minnesota, said he was looking to expand his business south – initially searching on the western side of South Dakota, before looking in Sioux Falls.

That is where a Realtor told him Vermillion might be an option.

"We really felt like Vermillion found us at that point," he said. "We found this great facility – we know it's been sitting around for a while. We're going to be proud to use it, and it really is

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Noem tells USD grads to prepare for life's changes

By David Lias
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Rep. Kristi Noem had something in common with students of the University of South Dakota who were waiting to receive their degrees during Saturday's 36th winter commencement exercises in the DakotaDome.

"I have my fingers crossed because I've turned in my final paper and if it does well, I'm going to graduate with you in 2011 as well," she said. "We've probably gone through totally different experiences going through the classes and getting to the graduation point that I've reached but it certainly is very significant to me."

A native of Hamlin County in northeast South Dakota, Noem was elected to the United States House of Representatives on Nov. 2, 2010 after serving in the South Dakota House of Representatives. In the U.S. House, Noem serves on the Agriculture, Education and Workforce, and Natural Resources Committees.

As a member of the state house, Noem represented South Dakota's Sixth District and was assistant majority leader before taking a run at Congress.

When Noem was 22, she left college to help run her family's ranch after her father was killed in a farm accident. Though her college career was interrupted, she has, over the years, taken classes, including online courses and she has received intern credits for her work in Congress.

Noem said she is often asked why she decided to go back to school years after her father's death.

"It all started with a conversation I had with my sister," she said. "We were talking about our lives, and how things had changed ... and she said 'one thing that's really surprised me is you've never completed school to get your degree. You don't quit at anything.'"

Noem said she kept telling herself that she would have more time to complete her



Rep. Kristi Noem's childhood dream of ranching side-by-side with her father abruptly changed when he was killed in a farm accident. "We've all heard the cliché that the only thing that is constant is change. Well, it's a cliché because it really is true. I know all of you have future plans, naturally," she said during her keynote address to graduates of USD at Saturday's commencement exercises in the DakotaDome, "but don't be surprised if they change. There's no telling where our plans will take us, and where our future will take us."

(Photo by David Lias)

schooling later in life, when things perhaps weren't so busy. "Hopefully, I will learn soon that, I, too, will have met my goal (of receiving a university degree) and I'll be right there with you," she said.

Noem told the graduates that she is aware that they, too, also faced challenges to achieve

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A Time of Waiting, Preparing ...



Davoux: Christmas story includes promise of new life

Editor's note: This story is the final story in a series that focuses on the days leading up to Christmas – a time which may bring difficult memories of past observances.

By Travis Gulbrandson
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Although most people know the story of the birth of Christ, few are familiar with the Bible's presentation of his lineage.

Pastor Devon Davoux of Vermillion's Cornerstone Church said this is something he's been thinking about this holiday season.

"Now, people that haven't read the Bible probably aren't as familiar with it, and those that do read the Bible would skip over it," Davoux said.

Located in Matthew 1, it is not the most interesting read, he said – filled with "begats" and names most people would fail to recognize at first glance.

Davoux said that what makes it notable is several of the people mentioned came from less-than-mental backgrounds, which they eventually overcame.

"It's really a picture of his grace, that God transforms people, even those with checkered pasts," Davoux said. "There's hope,



PASTOR DEVON DAVOUX

Local Guard receives orders

Two South Dakota Army National Guard units and a Black Hills area physician have received official mobilization orders for deployments to Afghanistan in 2012 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The 730th Area Support Medical Company, of Vermillion, the 1978th Contingency Contracting Team, of Rapid City, and Maj. David Lauer, of Sturgis, will deploy to support on-going operations throughout Afghanistan.

Lauer, who serves as a physician with the 730th, will deploy in January as an individual augmentee. Lauer will serve as a field surgeon within an assigned area of responsibility.

730TH AREA SUPPORT MEDICAL COMPANY (ASMC)

The 730th with 48 assigned members will deploy in July. The unit's mission is to provide Echelon I and Echelon II health support to any personnel within its area of operations.

To provide Echelon I, or basic emergency medical services, the unit is equipped

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