

# Vermillion manufacturing job growth drives creation of welding boot camp

The recent addition of Builder's Choice to Vermillion's economy, and new expansion plans for Masaba Mining Equipment have pushed the demand for skilled trade workers to an all-time high. In order to meet this demand and remain competitive for future industrial economic development projects, the Vermillion Area Chamber and Development Company (VCDC) created a Welding Boot Camp to introduce basic welding skills to prospective workers seeking careers in manufacturing.

"Our recent growth has not only highlighted the great opportunities in Vermillion and Clay County, but also our shortage of skilled trades people, said Steve Howe, executive director of the VCDC. "This is a trend in the region and to combat this shortfall, communities need to be proactive."

Representatives of the Vermillion School District, Masaba Mining Equipment, and the VCDC met to devise a rapid study curriculum to help meet immediate need

for welders by area employers.

"This course is intended to provide the basic knowledge of welding processes to make the employee more marketable to companies and reduce the necessary on-the-job training required by the employer," said Howe. "We're finding employers are willing to train, but the hurdle is finding workers who have the core skill set for them to build on, and we think this course will help provide that."

The 35 hour course will begin on Jan. 9, 2012 and focus on the MIG welding process and include education on shop safety, steel cutting methods, shop related math skills, and the various welds needed to be successful in the local workforce. While geared toward the recent high school graduate seeking the skills to enter the workforce or the adult worker considering a career change, those with a general interest in learning the basics of welding are also welcome to attend.

The strong demand for welders will

allow for immediate employment opportunities upon successful completion of the course, and the VDCD, through its workforce component of the Vermillion Now initiative, will offer tuition reimbursement for students obtaining employment with a Clay County company.

Howe explains, "These skills are needed, and Vermillion Now has provided us with the resources to help. As much as we want to recruit new companies to the area, it is as important, if not more so, to help your current businesses stay healthy and grow."

To register for the class or to receive additional information, contact the Vermillion Area Chamber and Development at 605-624-5571 or [vcdc@vermillionchamber.com](mailto:vcdc@vermillionchamber.com).

For more information about business development opportunities in Vermillion, please visit [VermillionEDC.com](http://VermillionEDC.com) or call 605.624.5571.



Dan Brosz, left, curator of collections for the South Dakota State Historical Society at the Cultural Heritage Center; and Mike Mueller, special projects coordinator for the state Bureau of Administration, rehang the portrait of Gov. Samuel Elrod. (Photo courtesy South Dakota State Historical Society)

## Governor portraits return to Capitol after conservation treatment

Eight portraits of former governors were returned to the Capitol hallways Monday, Dec. 19, in Pierre after being away at a conservation center for treatment.

The portraits were sent to the Midwest Art Conservation Center in Minneapolis for cleaning, retouching, and in some cases remounting after an assessment by the South Dakota State Historical Society found them in need of preservation work.

"We're pleased to have them home in the Capitol," said Jay D. Vogt, director of the State Historical Society. "They are part of a unique historic collection. The work done on the portraits will help preserve them for continued display for many years."

The portraits of Coe Crawford, Samuel Elrod, Ralph Herseth, William McMaster, George S. Mickelson, Robert Vessey, Tom Berry, and Frank Byrne were returned to the first floor

of the state Capitol in Pierre where the collection of 30 former governor portraits is publicly displayed.

The preservation work was paid for with what remained of private funds raised last year for the Capitol's centennial celebration. The limited amount of those funds precluded two of the portraits - those of Berry and Byrne - from receiving treatment. The cost of preservation work on the six portraits totaled \$11,995.

"With initial estimates we were hopeful to get all eight completed," Vogt said. "But once they got to the conservation center and could be closely reviewed, there just wasn't enough money to get them all done."

Vogt said the Historical Society would continue to monitor the portrait collection and watch for other private funding opportunities for continued preservation work.

## Use caution when shooting fireworks in dry conditions

The South Dakota Division of Wildland Fire Suppression is asking everyone to take extra precautions to prevent wildfires over the holiday weekend. The possibility of fireworks displays causing fast moving wildfires has increased significantly for this time of year because of warm, dry conditions and lack

of recent moisture. The grassland fire danger is expected to be in the high or above category.

State Wildland Fire Coordinator Joe Lowe is asking residents and visitors to the state to use extreme precautions when they are shooting fireworks. The purchase and

discharge of fireworks is prohibited within the Black Hills Forest Fire Protection District and many municipalities

This is the first year for a new law that allows for the sale and discharge of fireworks from December 28 through January 1.

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\$21 billion in annual economic activity and employing over 143,000 South Dakotans. The South Dakota Department of Agriculture's mission is to promote, protect, preserve and improve this industry for today and tomorrow. Visit us online at <http://sdda.sd.gov> or follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

## OBITUARIES

### John Rohner

John Jacob Rohner was born Sept. 28, 1973 in Granada Hills, CA. He is the beloved and very special son of Judy and stepfather Ron Garman. He died in Vermillion Dec. 8, 2011 at the age of 38 years, two months and 10 days.

He was baptized and confirmed in the Lutheran church. He attended schools in Vermillion; Westminster, CA; Akron, OH; Centerville; Freeman, and graduated from Lincoln High School in Sioux Falls in 1991. He attended SDSU in Brookings for a short time then worked for a few years in Troy, MI and Maryland until returning to South Dakota. John attended USD in Vermillion where he pursued a double major in psychology and political science. He



ROHNER

became interested in medicine and took many pre-med courses and worked at the USD Medical School Laboratory. He was also employed in other positions in Vermillion. John was an avid football, baseball and ice hockey fan, and followed his favorite teams, the Eagles and Dodgers. He enjoyed watching movies and getting together with his friends. John loved his dog and constant companion, Cole Trane, and his cat, Laney.

He is preceded in death by his maternal grandparents, Sarah and Ervin Rist, whom he dearly loved, and his paternal grandparents, Virginia and John E. Rohner.

He is survived by his mother, Judy; stepfather, Ron; and many very special friends, Patrick and Lisa and family, including a very special godson, Colin; Jennifer, Duane, Denise, Ida and her daughter, Evy; stepbrother, Daryl; stepsister, Debbie; half brothers and a half sister.

Funeral services will be Wednesday, Dec. 28, 2011 at First English Lutheran Church in Centerville, with burial to follow at Grace Lutheran Cemetery, rural Centerville. The family will be present Tuesday from 5 to 7 p.m. at Wass Funeral Home in Centerville with a prayer service at 7 p.m.

### Robin Brookman

Robin Jean Brookman, 93, passed away on Dec. 23, 2011 in Rapid City.

Robin was born on Feb. 1, 1918, in Vermillion, to Lowell and Olive (Bowie) Brookman. She attended the School of Art and Design in Minneapolis and received her RN degree from St. Vincent's Hospital in Sioux City, IA, in 1947. She had fond memories of her nursing career working at Orange County Hospital in Los Angeles, Honolulu Hospital in Hawaii and St. Vincent's Hospital in Sioux City.

She married Warren B. Johnson at the Baptist church in Vermillion in 1951. They lived in Danville, CA, and Edina, MN, before retiring to Paradise Valley, AZ, in 1971. There she found time to devote herself to her passion for art and won many awards for her painting. She was very active in the Arizona porcelain guilds and teachers association. Robin was noted for her portraits in pastel as well as on porcelain. In 2001 she moved to Chelan, WA, where her daughter and family reside. Returning to South Dakota in 2010, she enjoyed being with her son and daughter-in-law in Rapid City.

Robin had great interest in genealogy and traced the Brookman family back to New York in the mid-1700's. Much of her family history is linked to the history of Vermillion. Her grandfather, S.E. Brookman, and his twin brother Edgar came to Vermillion in the 1880s and established flour mills in Vermillion and DeSmet. They

later converted the Vermillion mill into the city's first electrical light plant. Her father, Lowell, was head electrician for the city where he planned and wired much of Vermillion's electrical services for over 40 years. Her



BROOKMAN

uncle, Lawrence Brookman, was a physician in Vermillion and Brookman Hall at USD was named for her uncle, Harold Brookman, who taught engineering there.

Robin is survived by her son, Christopher Johnson (Paula Meloy), of Rapid City; and daughter, Robin (Jim) Werner of Chelan, WA. Her grandchildren are Dr. Erik Johnson (San Francisco, CA), Brook Johnson (St. Cloud, MN), Andrea Johnson (New York, NY), Dr. Joshua McGuire (Spokane, WA), John Werner (Maui, HI), Bill Werner (Scottsdale, AZ), Steve Werner (Phoenix, AZ), and great grandson Zane McGuire.

Memorial services will be held in the spring at the Bluff View Cemetery Brookman mausoleum in Vermillion. Messages to the family may be left at the Serenity Springs Funeral Chapel guest book: [http://www.serenityspringsfuneralchapel.com/obituaries.php?o\\_a=guest-book&id=229](http://www.serenityspringsfuneralchapel.com/obituaries.php?o_a=guest-book&id=229)

### Donna Hannahs

Donna Marie Hannahs was born November 23, 1948 in Burke, SD to Thomasine and Arthur Hannahs. She moved with her family to Rapid City, SD and later New Underwood, SD where she graduated high school.

For Donna, Burke was always her "home." It was here where she returned to raise both her sons. During the years while her own children were young, Donna worked as a daycare provider to several other local children. She cherished those years and loved sharing stories about them. She was a beloved aunt and grandmother who loved the sound of children's laughter filling her home. Donna also enjoyed cooking and baking, always collecting new recipes to try out on her numerous friends and neighbors in the area. She greatly appreciated all the support she received from her community, especially during her last few years of illness.

Donna passed away on December 25, 2011 at Sanford Hospital in Vermillion, SD. She had just celebrated her 63rd birthday.

She is survived by her two sons and five grandchildren, Shawn Hannahs, of Yankton, SD (JD, Sidney, Shelby, and Wyatt);

Jeff and his wife Shari Hannahs

of Sioux Falls, SD (Harley); her mother, Thomasine Hannahs, of Rapid City, SD; her brother, Tim Hannahs, of Vermillion, SD; and by her six nieces

(Echo, Jenny, Heather, Dana, Courtney, and Alexa) and one nephew (Phillip).

She was preceded in death by her father, Arthur Hannahs; brother, Ken Hannahs; and sister-in-law, Wanda Hannahs.

Memorial services for Donna Hannahs, age 63, of Vermillion, SD and formerly of Burke, SD will be held on Friday, December 30, 2011 at 2:00 PM at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Burke. Burial will be in the Graceland Cemetery, Burke. Visitation will be one hour prior to the service at the Church. Please visit [www.clausenfuneralhome.com](http://www.clausenfuneralhome.com) for a complete obituary.

## Sobriety checkpoints planned

The South Dakota Highway Patrol has sobriety checkpoints scheduled in January in the following counties: Aurora, Brown, Clark, Clay, Codington, Day, Fall River, Jerauld, Lawrence, Lyman, Moody, Pennington, Roberts, Stanley, Walworth and Yankton

For sobriety checkpoint text message alerts, visit

## Local generosity helps families through ESA Giving Trees project

What began 25 years ago with three ESA Giving Trees at Hy-Vee, Jones' Food Center, and Pamida has expanded to nine trees located throughout the community. This year's Giving Trees are located at Jones Food Center, Hy-Vee, Nook 'n Cranny/Never Never Land, the Vermillion Public Library, Market Street Café, Wal-Mart, Sanford Hospital, Whimp's, and at USD's North Complex. Through the support and generosity of the Vermillion community, gifts for more than 262 of Vermillion's children were provided through the Giving Tree project.

Each year the project has expanded through the generosity of new groups. This year Eagles Auxilliary gave the Giving Tree project a big boost with a wonderful donation of \$500. Wal-Mart Foundation has stepped up once again with assistance to our group with a donation of \$500. Sanford Hospital also donated miscellaneous items

from a prior event they had for our community children.

We can't forget Stream, Polaris, Rotary and USD Foundation for taking children back to their businesses and coordinating buying within. It's amazing the spirit of giving that comes back from these organizations.

A total of 109 families benefited by the generosity of the Vermillion community.


The Theta Omega Chapter of ESA has, over the years, been humbled by the generosity of the people in our Vermillion community. Each and every year some group, some individual, or some event has made this project a very special one, one which inspires the group's admiration of and pride in the people of this community. The success of this project depends entirely upon the businesses, individuals, and groups who have supported it over the years.

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