

Guest Commentary:

# Christmas in the great outdoors

By Gov. Dennis Daugaard

Christmas is a time when all of us, young and old, are free to become children again, if only for a while.

Laura Ingalls Wilder, the author of the "Little House on the Prairie" series, said it this way: "Our hearts grow tender with childhood memories and love of kindred, and we are better throughout the year for having, in spirit, become a child again at Christmas-time."

Wilder, who spent a good part of her life in the De Smet area, used the term "kindred," which is an old-fashioned way of saying kinfolk or family. That's appropriate, because Christmas is all about family, the spirit of giving and the joy of being together.

As a child, I could hardly wait for Christmas to arrive and the gifts to be passed around and opened.

Now that I've grown up, I find that my enjoyment of the season is more about watching others open their gifts.

My enjoyment of the season is also about the sights and sounds and smells that carry the Christmas message of peace and good will.

I'll admit that on Christmas, I do become in spirit a child again, anticipating the expressions of surprise and joy on the faces of family and friends as we share gifts.

It's a wonderful feeling, and it is meant to be shared.

You know, I'm one of the luckiest people in South Dakota these days. The annual Christmas tree display is ready for viewing in the Capitol. When I walk into the Capitol building each morning from now until after Christmas Day, I will be greeted by the rich aroma of pine trees and the sparkling reflection of Christmas lights on the ornaments that decorate those trees. Just walking down the hallway to my office is an opportunity to re-experience childhood memories of this joyful season.

In the spirit of the season, I very much would like to share that rich experience with each of you.

This year's theme for Christmas at the Capitol is "Christmas in the Great Outdoors." Many volunteers have devoted precious hours to create the annual holiday display. As always, they have done a great job.

Each of you is invited to visit the capital city anytime during the Christmas season to enjoy Christmas in the Great Outdoors. The display, which includes nearly 100 trees, is open to the public from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily from Wednesday, Nov. 27 through Saturday, Dec. 28.

I invite you to take the opportunity to visit your Capitol this season. Bring your family or friends. Enjoy the display and, for a little while, become in spirit a child again.

# City agrees to small fee increases at The Bluffs

By Travis Gulbrandson  
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The Vermillion City Council voted to increase a variety of fees The Bluffs Golf Course, most of them ranging between 50 cents to \$10.

"We increased where we felt we could increase, yet we did not increase the fees so much that it was going to be a scary number," said Parks & Recreation Director Jim Goblirsch. "These rates are in line with other courses around the area, some higher, some lower."

Items like a nine-hole green fee and the nine-hole cart rental have increases of only 50 cents, while others – such as private cart storage – increase \$10.

One of the larger increases was a season pass for two parents and one child, which moved up from \$709 to \$724, and from \$739 to \$754 for families with more than two children.

The action was taken at the city council's regular meeting Monday night, and aims to help solve what a

council agenda memo terms "the financial challenge" at the golf course.

"Spring was a little bit hard for the golf course as far as weather concerns," Goblirsch said.

Later-than-normal snowfall resulted in fewer USD students utilizing the course.

"We're down 38 memberships this year, but of those 38 memberships, 35 of those are college memberships," Goblirsch said. "We're really only down a few non-college memberships at this time."

According to the council memo, a total of 252 memberships were sold for 2013, 20 juniors, 57 university, 110 adult and 65 family.

"Overall, the total rounds of golf in 2013 were 19,689 compared to 22,639 rounds in 2012," the memo said.

Council member Tom Davies asked if officials had considered having half-memberships for college students, but Kirk Hogen, PGA rep at The Bluffs, said the course already does offer some specials.

"In all honesty, the college pass is pretty reasonable," Hogen said. "If they're going to play golf at all, they're going to chew up that college pass pretty quick. ..."

"Otherwise, we have the option of paying \$10 for nine holes," he said.

In addition to the rate increases, Goblirsch said investigations are being made on how to encourage new members and new golfers to use the facility, including an online registration system that will help grow the market.

"We feel that's going to be a plus for us," he said.

A new fleet of carts will be on the course this season, as well, and will be fitted with outlets for phones and GPS systems.

Goblirsch added that the Department of Parks & Recreation is working on an education program to get the word out about the course via college radio and other mediums.

The motion for the fee increase passed unanimously.

# Winter commencement Dec. 14

Sen. Corey Brown of Gettysburg, SD, will provide the keynote address as the University of South Dakota confers degrees to more than 580 candidates at the 38th Winter Commencement Ceremony at 10 a.m. on Saturday, Dec. 14 at the DakotaDome.

Brown, a member of the South Dakota Senate since 2008, is serving his third term as the president pro tem of the Senate where he represents the counties of Campbell, Edmunds, Faulk, Hand, McPherson,

Potter, Spink and Walworth. Brown has also served as chairman of the appropriations committee and assistant majority leader.

Following more than a decade of military service in the United States Navy, Brown returned to Gettysburg with his wife, Karen, and their four children: Reagan, Harrison, Madison and Kennedy.

While in the Navy, Brown logged more than 2,500 hours of aircraft commander and

instructor pilot time. He completed three deployments to the Middle East, two of which were in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and he has flown both the S-3B Viking and the E-6B Mercury during his military career.

Brown was awarded two Air Medals and two Navy/Marine Corp Commendation Medals for his outstanding service, which includes 318 carrier landings during two deployments aboard the USS Constellation.

Following his service in the military, Brown took on the role of executive director of the Gettysburg/Whitlock Bay Development Corporation where he assists new and expanding businesses in the region. He is currently an agent for the family's insurance business.

A University of Notre Dame graduate with a degree in government and international relations, Brown received a Master of Arts degree in international relations at the University of San Diego.

## VERMILLION POLICE DEPARTMENT CALLS

11/24/13 05:35 – Officers impounded a vehicle for illegal parking after finding the vehicle had three other outstanding parking tickets.

11/24/13 16:54 – Officers responded to a report of shots fired near a city park. A search of the area determined the shots had been fired from a group of men in the County and no illegal activity was suspected.

11/24/13 19:05 – Caller reported an 8-year-old child wandering in the cold. Officers took the child to her home and insured there was someone to care for the child.

11/25/13 09:01 – Caller requested a welfare check on an individual who had made frightening statements.

11/25/13 09:34 – Complainant reported a fraud. He has sold an item online. The buyer had sent a check written for more than the agreed on price and requested the extra money be given to the person picking up the item. The check was written on a false account.

11/25/13 10:36 – Complainant reported an

attempt at identity theft. Caller had received a text message requesting information in order to activate an account. The message was not sent by the bank.

11/25/13 10:41 – Complaint reported unauthorized charges to one of their accounts. Under investigation.

11/25/13 13:03 – Caller reported a decaying animal wrapped in some clothing. Officers found it was the remains of a long-deceased dog.

11/25/13 15:15 – Caller reported an attempt to access their debit card. They had received a text warning about possible illegal use of their account. On call back they were asked for their card number. The call/text was not from the card-holder.

11/25/13 15:31 – Officers received information about an individual making threatening statement.

11/25/13 17:53 – Caller reported a man stole two bottles of liquor and fled the business. Officers have been unable to locate the suspect.

11/26/13 16:20 – Caller reported that someone had made unauthorized

charges against his account. Under investigation.

11/26/13 20:25 – Caller reported a possible sex crime that occurred in another jurisdiction. Information was relayed to the appropriate investigators.

11/27/13 08:39 – Officers provided a court ordered civil standby for a subject so he could recover his property from a residence he was no longer allowed at.

11/27/13 13:02 – Officers responded to a medical call and provided care until the ambulance arrived.

11/28/13 02:10 – Officers investigated a fight outside a bar. One subject was arrested on outstanding warrants.

11/28/13 02:55 – Officers responded to a 911 call. The caller did not speak English and needed help with finding a warm place to stay while waiting for a friend to come get him. The officer assisted him.

11/28/13 13:08 – Officers located a dog at large with a broken lead. Officers secured the dog and located the owner.

11/28/13 15:01 – Caller locked themselves out of

their apartment. Officers offered to contact a locksmith or the landlord to assist the caller. She declined offered assistance.

11/28/13 22:07 – Driver was stopped for an inoperable headlight. The driver did not have an operator's license, and was cited.

11/29/13 08:53 – Landlord reported several fire extinguishers being set off in his apartment complex. No suspect information or usable evidence was found.

11/29/13 14:23 – Caller reported a possible intruder in her home. Officer checked the area, and interviewed nearby residents. Under investigation.

11/30/13 06:56 – Caller reported a man urinating in public. Officers contacted the man who was arrested for three outstanding warrants out of Minnehaha.

11/30/13 07:31 – Caller reported a neighbor's dog in their yard growling aggressively. Officers tried to contact the owner unsuccessfully. The information was referred

to code enforcement. 11/30/13 07:42 – Caller requested a welfare check on an individual found sleeping in a restroom. The man was contacted and was all right.

11/30/13 08:45 – Officers investigated a report the odor of gas. Officers and fire units responded and checked the area, but no source was found.

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