

Elk's Hoop Shoot Planned For Next Weekend

YANKTON – Yankton Elks Lodge #994 would like to announce that it is once again hosting the Elk's Hoop Shoot this year. A change has been made in the format of the competition. Most of area schools, including the schools here in Yankton, will not be hosting a school qualifying round. Instead Yankton students and area students wanting to participate in the Hoop Shoot competition can come directly to the local Lodge competition, which will be held on, Saturday, December 19th at the Summit Activities Center, 1801 Summit St, Yankton, SD 57078. Doors will open at 9:00 A.M. for registration, and registration will be closed at 9:30 A.M. The competition will begin at 10:00 A.M. There will be two divisions – Boys & Girls – And three age brackets in each division for a total of six groups.

Eligibility requirements are as follows:

- If the contestant will be age 7 on April 1, 2016, they are too young to participate.
- If the contestant will be age 8 or 9 on April 1, 2016, s/he shoots in the 8 to 9 age group.
- If the contestant will be age 10 or 11 on April 1, 2016, s/he shoots 10 to 11 age group.

- If the contestant will be age 12 or 13 on April 1, 2016, s/he shoots in the 12 to 13 age group.
- If the contestant will be age 14 on April 1, 2016, s/he is too old to participate.

The 8 & 9 year old age groups will shoot from 4 feet in front of the free throw line. The contestants that make the most free throws in each group will advance to the next round of competition, which is the State Level, with the opportunity to then advance to the Regional Level, and finally the National Level. The South Dakota Elks will pay for the expenses of the champions to advance to the Regional and National levels of the competition. The next levels are scheduled as follows.

LOCAL: 12/19/2015 – Yankton Summit Center, 10 a.m. – registration closes at 9:30 a.m.
 STATE: 01/16/2016 – Pierre SD at 9:30 a.m.
 REGION: 03/12/2016 – Rapid City, SD
 NATIONAL: 04/16/2016 – Chicago, IL

If you have questions, please contact the local Hoop Shoot director, Steven Pietila, at 605-760-4916.
 Visit this website for more information and rules.....<http://www.elks.org/hoopshoot>

Applications For Farm Bill Program Due January 15, 2016

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HURON – USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is accepting applications for its Agricultural Conservation Easements Program (ACEP).
 "This is an exciting opportunity through the 2014 Farm Bill for more people to get involved in conserving our natural resources," said South Dakota State Conservationist Jeff Zimprich, Huron. "We encourage Indian Tribes, state and local governments, non-governmental organizations and private landowners to see how this Farm Bill program might fit their working lands objectives."

The ACEP, created through the 2014 Farm Bill, funds easements for agricultural lands and wetlands. Approved agricultural easements would prevent productive working lands from being converted to non-agricultural uses and maximize protection of land devoted to food production. Cropland, rangeland, grassland, pastureland and non-industrial private forestland are eligible.

Wetland reserve easements would restore and enhance wetlands and improve habitat. Eligible lands include farmed or converted wetlands that can be successfully and cost-effectively restored. ACEP-Wetland Reserve Easements serve similar purposes of the former Wetland Reserve Program that was authorized under previous Farm Bills.

Applications are currently being accepted for wetlands reserve and agricultural lands easements and will be rated according to the easement's potential for protecting and enhancing habitat for migratory birds, fish and other wildlife.

Applications must be submitted by January 15, 2016 and are available at local USDA Service Center and at www.nrcs.usda.gov/GetStarted. Applications will be evaluated starting in early February.

The ACEP combines NRCS' former Farm and Ranch Lands Protection, Grassland Reserve and Wetlands Reserve programs. Learn more about ACEP and other Farm Bill programs at www.nrcs.usda.gov/farmbill. To get started with NRCS, visit your local USDA Service Center or www.nrcs.usda.gov/GetStarted. Learn more about the Farm Bill at www.nrcs.usda.gov/FarmBill.

With Medicaid Request, Governor Must Triumph Over Hatred For Obama

By Bob Mercer
 State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE – It doesn't take much pawing to unearth this truth in South Dakota. Many Republican elected officials don't like President Barack Obama.

Overcoming that hate is the challenge facing Gov. Dennis Daugaard this winter.

The Republican has looked during his five years in office for ways to better use state government's revenue.

One situation he hasn't been able to correct deals with the federal Indian Health Service.

The federal agency is supposed to provide healthcare for American Indian people.

But state government for years has been forced to help pay for services provided to them outside the federal Indian Health Service system.

For the most recent year those services cost \$139 million. State government paid \$69 million.

Daugaard wants the federal government to pay all of it. Republicans in the Legislature cheer Daugaard for that effort. Where he finds deep dissension is the bargain he might have to make.

The governor would expand eligibility for Medicaid services, to cover an estimated 45,000 to 55,000 lower-income working adults, whose households scrape at the edge of poverty.

He could pay for Medicaid expansion – by 2021, state government's share would be \$57 million – if the Obama administration agrees to pay the full cost of American Indian healthcare.

That means tying South Dakota deeply into Obamacare. There might be no move more precarious for a Republican right now in South Dakota politics.

Our three Republicans in Congress vote time after time,

trying to knock President Obama down, especially on Obamacare, and issue news releases about doing so.

Our state's Republican attorney general repeatedly has joined lawsuits in other states challenging the president.

They've sued on Obamacare several times. They're fighting new regulations on water and air and firearms.

They tried but lost on same-sex marriage, where even the president was later than expected in getting to the wedding.

For years, Daugaard too declined to support Medicaid expansion.

He used the word hate in his budget speech on Tuesday to describe his feeling about people who get deeper into government assistance but don't work.

And then he spoke for the single parent who works to support three children and can't afford health insurance.

Compassionate conservatism became a discredited cliché under the presidency of Obama's predecessor, Republican George W. Bush.

But Daugaard might have found a situation where the slogan fits.

He wants Republican legislators to give him budget authority – \$373 million of federal spending and 55 more positions on the payroll – to accomplish the Medicaid expansion if he can get the Indian Health Service waiver.

Of course, our federal government doesn't have the money to fully pay for any of this, but doesn't restructure either. Congress doesn't budget very well.

With Republican majorities in both chambers of Congress, the opponents of Obama could be making changes that really take the fight to the president.

Instead they send him Obamacare repeals that he rejects. Seldom can a governor find a solution that eluded his predecessors. But Gov. Dennis Daugaard might have done it.

That is, if Republican legislators are willing to let him accept what many see as a devil's bargain.

Home For Christmas

By Rep. Kristi Noem
 December 11, 2015

From the time that I was a little girl, Bing Crosby's "I'll Be Home For Christmas" has been one of my favorite Christmas songs. I remember singing along with it while it played on the radio and I admit that I didn't grasp the song's true weight until I got a little older.

The lyrics were originally written in 1942 - just months after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Many of our young soldiers wouldn't make it home for the snow or mistletoe that year. They would be spending Christmas away – many of them for the first time.

This year, 162 soldiers from the Rapid City and Wagner-based 155th Engineer Company of the South Dakota National Guard will be spending Christmas in sandstorms instead of snowstorms. In August, they left for a one-year deployment to Kuwait. These families are in my thoughts and prayers every day, but especially in this holiday season. I can't imagine that this time of year is easy for them.

Despite the sacrifices, thousands of South Dakotans stand up each year in service to our country. I'm always humbled by the fact that our state has one of the highest National Guard service rates in the entire country. It's a

tremendous testament to the courage and sense of duty that is instilled in South Dakota's young people. And like in so many other areas, when South Dakotans do something, we do it well.

The 114th Fighter Wing, for instance, is one of the nation's premier flying units. The Sioux Falls based "Flying Lobos," as the 114th is called, has been nationally recognized for its accomplishments. It has an excellent safety record, experienced airmen, and the unwavering support of the Sioux Falls community.

Over the next year, the U.S. Air Force will be looking for the next units to assign the new F-35 Joint Strike Fighter. Because the 114th has consistently been recognized as one of the top flying squadrons in the country, it seems like the ideal location. I – alongside Senators Thune and Rounds, Governor Daugaard and Adjutant General Reisch – reached out to Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James earlier this month about this. We encouraged her to base the new technology within one of the nation's most elite squadrons: the South Dakota National Guard's 114th Fighter Wing.

We are still a few years off from a final decision and the F-35s won't be shipped to the selected Guard units until 2022 or beyond, but I'm hopeful the 114th will be

able to play a leading role in this new demonstration of military strength.

South Dakota has a proud history of service with the National Guard. The sacrifices made – the holidays that have had to be missed – will not be forgotten, nor will they go unappreciated. Thank you to all who have served and to the families who have made the sacrifices alongside them. I am incredibly and sincerely grateful for all that you do in service to our country.

This holiday season, I hope you join me in keeping all our service members, their spouses, their parents, and their children in your hearts, minds and prayers.

Many thanks to the Vermillion Fire Department, the Vermillion EMS, and all the Professional & Caring Medical staff at Sanford Emergency. You folks absolutely make a difference in all our lives!

Thank you,
 Terry & Lindia Brady

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Thank you to everyone who helped make the 7th Annual Parade of Lights, Community Tree Lighting, Writing Contest, Coloring Contest – Lunch With Santa and Pictures With Santa a great success!

City of Vermillion	Sierra Whitlock –	USD ROTC Color Guard
Vermillion Street Dept.	Atlas Independent Agent	Nate & Krista Welch
Vermillion Light & Power Dept.	Sanford Vermillion - donating the	Howard & Alice Willson
Vermillion Police Dept.	Community Christmas Tree	CorTrust Bank/CorInsurance –
Vermillion Fire Dept.	Hy-Yee – sponsoring the coloring	erving hot chocolate
Vermillion Public Library	contest & lunch with Santa	Peterman Photography –
Mick Breske –	USD Fine Arts Dept.	Pictures with Santa
American Family Insurance	USD Carolers	

All of the Parade Participants:

USD ROTC Color Gaurd	USD Admissions Office	Walmart
Louie's Cleaning & Disaster Restoration	Broadcaster/Plaintalk	United Way
Sanford Vermillion	Vermillion Public Transit	Diamond 'C' Ranch
Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity	The Pride of Vermillion	Kappa Alpha Theta
CorTrust Bank	Marching Band	Vermillion Area Farmer's Market
	Bank of the West	Vermillion Fire Department

On behalf of the VCDC Holiday Events Committee:

Kimberley Andres	Stacey Allen	Ann Breitag
Laurie Siegel	Barb Martin	Tim Bellis

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The Eagles Auxiliary will host a
Christmas Candy Goodie Bake Sale
Select from the cookies to create your own tray!
Saturday, Dec. 19th
11 am - 2 pm

All proceeds go to benefit local charities
 114 W. Main • Vermillion

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Shop the Classifieds!

NOTICE TO CLAY COUNTY RESIDENTS

DETRIMENTAL USE OF RIGHTS-OF-WAY ALONG COUNTY HIGHWAYS IS ILLEGAL

Instances have come to the attention of the Clay County Highway Department of violations of South Dakota Codified Law 31-32-3.1, entitled **INTENTIONAL DUMPING ON HIGHWAY RIGHT OF WAY PROHIBITED**. This statute applies to all public highways, all County Highways, and Township Roads. The piling of snow on County Highways, or within the Right-of-Way thereof, causes a serious hazard to the traveling public and constitutes a Class 1 misdemeanor. These piles of snow can cause serious injuries or fatalities if struck by a vehicle. They also cost the County funds to remove or push back. Because the piles of snow can become very solid, and at times contain debris, serious damage to County snow removal equipment can occur.

The County can recover the cost of equipment damage from the individual responsible for the snow piles, SDCL 31-32-9. In addition, the person performing this misdemeanor also may be legally liable in the event of a vehicle accident. Please remove or flatten any piles you may have placed on public highways, as well as refrain from piling snow in the future.

CLAY COUNTY COMMISSION
 CLAY COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Join us for our 3rd Birthday/Christmas Party
Saturday Dec. 19th
Everyone is Welcome

BUNYAN'S BAR & GRILL
 serving munchies starting at 7pm

605.624.9971 • 1201 W Main • Vermillion