

INSIDE:

Highlights

Learn about Vermillion's past ■ p. 2

Grow

Group explores economic opportunities ■ p. 7

Benefit dinner at Eagles Feb. 23

A spaghetti benefit dinner will be held Tuesday, Feb. 23, at The Eagles in Vermillion. A social will be from 5 to 6 p.m., with the meal served from 6 to 8 p.m.

Tickets may be purchased in advance, and at the door, for \$5. Tickets are available at Pioneer Drug, Vermillion HyVee, Printsources, the Vermillion Chamber of Commerce and Development Company, Civic Council and the Eagles.

All proceeds will go to Big Friend-Little Friend, Inc., a local 501c3 non-profit corporation matching youth in Clay and Union counties.

Welcome Table will meet Feb. 8

The next Vermillion Welcome table will meet Monday, Feb. 8 from 5:30 to 7 p.m. at the United Methodist Church.

The Feb 8 meal will be sponsored and served by Wal-Mart - Vermillion.

Thank you to the Intro to Health Sciences class at USD and Friends of the Welcome Table for sponsoring and serving last Monday's meal.

Powell selected to Policy Makers Council

The city of Vermillion announces that City Councilman Jack Powell has been selected to the Policy Makers Council (PMC) of the American Public Power Association.

The PMC of the APPA is an appointed committee whose mission is to assist APPA in promoting legislation that is important to its members or opposing harmful legislation, and to provide advice on other issues of importance to the organization. The council is made up of 40 members who serve on either utility boards or are elected officials in public power communities. Four members are appointed to the Council from each of the 10 geographic regions recognized by APPA. In addition, there are a number of "At-Large" members of the Council from across the country who are appointed based on vacancies in the 10 regions. These At-Large Members are appointed for one-year terms, while the regional members are appointed for three-year terms.

The APPA expects 2010 will be a busy legislative year and that the PMC will play a key role advocate public power's positions on such important matters as climate change, railroad competition, cyber security and the Electric Market Reform Initiative (EMRI). The APPA is excited to have dedicated, enthusiastic, and active community leaders like Vermillion's Jack Powell to help us achieve these goals.

Vermillion's drop in sales tax revenue topic of discussion at city council meeting

By David Lias
 david.lias@plaintalk.net

Vermillion City Manager John Prescott took time during Monday's meeting of the Vermillion City Council to add additional information to an article published in the Yankton Press & Dakotan last week.

"The Press & Dakotan had an article which noted that Vermillion's sales tax receipts were down \$3.1 million, or roughly 4.6 percent in 2009 in comparison to 2008, and I guess I just want to make a couple clarifications on that," he said. "To arrive at that number, they added together the first and second penny (sales tax) as well as the Bed, Board and Booze sales tax. And it's also important to note that

the 2008 sales tax receipts (in Vermillion) were very strong. If we look at 2008 versus 2007, there is a 15 percent increase in receipts in 2008 when we compare that to 2007."

The Press & Dakotan, on Jan. 27, noted that Yankton was one of only three large South Dakota communities to enjoy an increase in sales tax revenue during 2009.

Yankton had \$7.4 million in sales tax due to it in 2009, which was a 1.58 percent increase over 2008, according to a report from the South Dakota Department of Revenue and Regulation.

Aberdeen saw a revenue increase of 2.11 percent, and Pierre experienced a 4.01 percent uptick.

One of the best comparisons that can be made, he said, using city sales tax figures, is to compare the

2009 sales tax receipts in Vermillion with the 2009 budget approved by the Vermillion City Council.

"When we looked at that, the budgeted sales tax receipts for 2009 versus our actual sales tax collections - there is a difference of roughly \$70,000 for both the first penny as well as the second penny (sales tax)," Prescott said. "Between reducing some budget expenditures in 2009 and some other changes that we had, we were able to complete 2009 without using any of our budgeted reserves."

The Press & Dakotan noted last week that Vermillion's sales tax numbers were not as high in 2009 as they were in 2008.

"But we were able to complete the year without

Turn to CITY on Page 3



The survivors of cancer - dressed in purple - kicked off Sunday's American Cancer Society Relay for Life of Clay County and USD with a victory lap in the DakotaDome. They were later joined by caregivers of people who are currently battling the disease. See more photos of the annual event designed to raise funds to fight cancer at spotted.yankton.net. (Photo by David Lias)

Volunteers of all ages join forces against cancer

By David Lias
 david.lias@plaintalk.net

For Wess Pravecek, the circle - more appropriately, the relay - that had once been broken is now whole again.

Sunday afternoon, with scores of local citizens logging laps on the track in the DakotaDome, Wess, after taking a bite from a hot dog she had purchased from a food vendor - took time for a breather.

Wess, in the role as community chairperson, and Sarah Olson, chairperson of the USD Chapter of Colleges Against Cancer, had been working diligently for weeks leading up to that afternoon, leading a group of volunteers and making all of the necessary arrangements to make that day's annual Clay County Relay For Life event a success.

The afternoon marked Wess' return to a more significant role in the event designed to raise funds to battle cancer.

"I had been a procrastinator. I had always thought I wanted to be involved with the American Cancer Society in some way because cancer has been a part of my family for a long time. My maternal grandmother died of cancer, my aunt, my godmother, died of cancer, and my dad died of cancer. So, I always thought, 'How could I get involved?'"

Wes first discovered the answer to that question when she and Janet Mount, another woman from Vermillion, walked in one of the first Relay for Life events held in the community, sponsored by a recreation class at The University of South Dakota.

"The community wasn't involved in the event very much at

that time ... and as we walked that day, Janet and I said to each other that this event needs to be even bigger. So, we approached the Clay County American Cancer Society board, and told them we'd like to chair it the following year," Pravecek said.

Her involvement stayed strong in the annual event for a five-year period. "And, we just took a break from it for a little while," she said. "But there was interest from a new USD student group called Colleges Against Cancer, and that organization wanted to get involved in the relay. Janet got involved in it, and then two years ago, I became involved again."

The American Cancer Society Relay For Life is held in communities not only in the United States, but across the globe, as a

Turn to RELAY on Page 14

Clay Rural Water decides Hyperion can't tap into system

By David Lias
 david.lias@plaintalk.net

The board of directors of the Clay Rural Water System (CRWS) decided at its monthly meeting Thursday to not fulfill a request of the Hyperion Energy Center to be one of its water suppliers.

All nine members of the board voted to deny Hyperion's request.

"A major issue was how to pay for those improvements (to deliver the water)," said Greg Merrigan, manager of Clay Rural Water. "Our board wanted Hyperion to pay for those costs up front. Hyperion wanted us to pay for them, and then they would pay us back with a long-term supply agreement. So the real issue was payment of the infrastructure that would be needed to deliver the amount of water they requested."

Hyperion had requested that Clay Rural Water supply from 9 to 12 million gallons of water daily to its energy center.

In a press release, Robert Wood, the water system board president, noted that Clay Rural Water has no legal obligation to serve water to the energy center. He added that although the water system has commercial, residential, agricultural and consumer users in the trade area surrounding the projected location of Hyperion's energy center, Clay Rural Water doesn't presently have the ability to provide 9 to 12 million gallons per day to serve Hyperion Energy Center's commercial and industrial needs.

Wood also noted that the capital expenditure to supply that amount of water to Hyperion would be substantial, and would require Clay Rural Water to secure substantial financing to complete the project.

Turn to WATER on Page 14

USD panel: Tensions between West, Islam part of long-standing history

By Randy Dockendorf
 randy.dockendorf@yankton.net



Retired University of South Dakota history professor Donald Pryce (left) and the Rev. Steve Miller speak about the role of martyrdom in Islam during Wednesday's forum "Dying For God!" at Farber Hall on the USD campus. (Photo by David Lias)

Tension between Islam and the West dates back centuries, but the current jihad further illustrates the Muslim extremists' willingness to die for their religion, two University of South Dakota panelists said Wednesday, Jan. 27.

Retired USD history professor Don Pryce and the Rev. Steve Miller spoke on "Dying For God!" during the forum, held at Farber Hall. The forum focused on Islam but recognized that martyrdom has existed in many religions.

Pryce looked at past and modern-day Islam, including terrorism in the name of the faith.

"Islam has a tradition of tolerance for other religions," he said. "But Islam is also a militant religion with a sanc-

tion for killing. The concept of jihad is deeply imbedded in Islam."

The willingness to die for Islam figures prominently today among many adherents, Pryce said. "Martyrdom brings its instant rewards (for those people)," he said.

The Muslim mistrust of the West dates back to the Crusades, Pryce said. The balance and location of global power between Muslims and the West have shifted over the centuries, he said.

Christianity eventually took over more of Europe, and even parts of the Middle East fell under European domination during the last century, Pryce said.

"Imperialism was and still is a major humiliation (for Muslims)," he said.

Turn to PANEL on Page 12

Complete Surgical & Vascular Care. Call to schedule an appointment with GENERAL & VASCULAR SURGEON, LUKE C. SERCK, M.D. VERMILLION MEDICAL CLINIC® 101 South Plum Street • Vermillion, SD 57069 605-624-8643 • www.yanktonmedicalclinic.com