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Highlights

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Welcome Table will meet Feb. 15

The next Vermillion Welcome table will be Monday, Feb. 15 from 5:30 to 7 p.m. at the United Methodist Church.

The Feb. 15 meal will be sponsored and served by Friends of Welcome Table.

Thank you to Wal-Mart for sponsoring and serving last Monday's meal.

Red Dawgs at Dome Feb. 13

The Red Dawgs wheelchair basketball team will play an exhibition game on Saturday, Feb. 13 at 3:30 p.m. at the DakotaDome in Vermillion.

The Red Dawgs will face the Vermillion All-Stars for the exhibition contest. Tickets for the game are \$3.

In addition, the Red Dawgs will also compete later that day at halftime of The University of South Dakota versus New Jersey Institute of Technology women's and men's basketball games on Saturday. The Coyote basketball double-header starts at 6 p.m. with the women's game.

At halftime of the USD women's basketball game, the Red Dawgs will face the Coyote women's soccer team, while at halftime of the USD men's basketball game the Red Dawgs will play against members of the Coyote football team.

The Red Dawgs, who are undefeated this season, are defending national champions and also the 2009 Northern Conference Champions.

Local economy discussion is Feb. 16

On Tuesday, Feb. 16, at 7 p.m. in the W.H. Over Museum, Steve Howe, executive director of the Vermillion Area Chamber of Commerce and Development Company, will present a snapshot of Vermillion's current economy and discuss how the community's industry mix must change in order to achieve long-term prosperity for its citizens and businesses.

Nick Koster will explain the design and certification of passive houses, and how Greenfield Builders will attempt to build them in Vermillion. Discussion will also include how, as we move forward, we can do so in a sustainable manner that complements the unique nature of Vermillion and promotes the development of green businesses.

Dinner and dance planned at St. Agnes

A major fundraiser for the St. Agnes School in Vermillion is planned. The PTSA (Parents and Teachers of St. Agnes) extend a welcome to the entire community to take part in the Ninth Annual St. Agnes School Classic Dinner and Dance on Saturday, Feb. 20.

On this special night, the school's auditorium will be transformed into the setting for the elegant dinner and dance.

Jim Cody, owner of Cody's Steak House in Elk Point, has graciously agreed to cater a delicious prime rib/chicken dinner again this year. Guests will enjoy hors d'oeuvres, dinner, free will bar, music, and dancing. The evening will also feature raffle and silent auction items generously donated by local businesses.

Tickets for the night are \$40 per person. Stop by the school (909 Lewis) on a weekday or at the church after a weekend Mass to purchase tickets. Come enjoy this special event! Please contact the school with any questions by calling 624-4144.

PETA names USD, Regents in legal complaint

By David Lias
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People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) filed a complaint in First Circuit Court in Vermillion Wednesday, Feb. 3, seeking information from the University of South Dakota and the South Dakota Board of Regents about experiments conducted on animals by researchers on campus.

PETA is claiming that the Regents and USD are violating South Dakota's open records law. In a press release issued Wednesday shortly

after the legal complaint was filed, PETA states that USD administrators have failed to provide PETA with documents related to the university's taxpayer-funded experiments on monkeys.

"There are several reasons why PETA, as a nonprofit organization that pursues education and advocacy, states that they would like to have the information they are requesting," said Caitlin Collier, a Vermillion attorney representing PETA in this court action, "which is under the South Dakota open records law.

"It has to basically do with keeping people informed," she said. "That's part of their mandate as an organization. I see this really as one of the first tests of the new open records law (in South Dakota). The Legislature has finally changed the law to more of a presumption of openness. That's really at the heart of the lawsuit - to try to clarify what that new law means."

According to court papers filed Wednesday, USD was cited in 2007 by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for violations of the federal Animal Welfare Act pertain-

ing to the use of primates in invasive stroke research experiments. PETA states that the violations found by the USDA include lack of psychological enrichment in the cages, and housing animals individually rather than in pairs or groups.

This USDA citation prompted PETA to seek more information about the use of animals, particularly monkeys, in research projects at USD. In July 2008, PETA submitted a public records act request to Laura Jenks, USD vice president for research. A request for dis-

closure of public records was also sent to James Shekleton, general counsel for the South Dakota Board of Regents.

The request was denied, and an appeal through the South Dakota Board of Hearing Examiners was also turned down.

Action by the South Dakota Legislature during its session last year amended South Dakota law pertaining to public records, prompting PETA to once again request records from USD.

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Local citizens learn importance of figures at fair

'Know Your Numbers' is theme of Saturday's event

By David Lias
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People who attended Saturday's Community Health and Wellness Fair, held in the Lee Medical School building on the University of South Dakota campus, learned that sometimes you have to crunch some numbers to know the status of your health.

"This is our third year where it has been this big, and it's the second year that it's been held in the Lee Medical Building," said Amanda Anderson, a wellness nurse at Sanford Vermillion Medical Center.

She quickly rattled off some of the many activities going on at the health fair.

"We have cholesterol screenings, blood sugar checks, pulmonary function screenings that are done by our respiratory therapist, we offer an osteoporosis screen, and we have various groups that offer different health education events that are well received here," Anderson said. "It helps to promote local services here in the community."

"Know Your Numbers" was the theme of the health fair, an event sponsored by Sanford Vermillion, which focused on informing local citizens of the importance of knowing their individual numbers, pertaining to various health tests, and understanding what they mean in terms of overall wellness.

"If you know your numbers - if you come here and you learn what your numbers are in everything from your blood pressure to your blood sugar to your cholesterol and your vision - once you know your numbers, it's hard to ignore them," said Mary Merrigan, public relations director at Sanford Vermillion Medical Center.

Free health screenings included blood pressure, blood sugar, body fat/body mass index analysis, lung/breathing test, Dermascan™ skin damage screening, heel ultrasound - osteoporosis screening and oral cancer screening. Reduced cost screenings available include cholesterol testing and PSA blood screening for men.

The mobile unit of the Commu-



Hallways, classrooms and conference areas on all three floors of the Lee Medical Building on the University of South Dakota campus were needed Saturday to provide the necessary room for the various activities of the annual Community Health and Wellness Fair. (Photo by David Lias)

nity Blood Bank of Sioux Falls was also on hand, accepting blood from willing donors.

The fair serves as a good opportunity healthy people to be assured they are taking the proper steps to

maintain that positive status, and it also serves as a chance to for people to learn of areas of possible concern.

"Having high blood pressure, for

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2009 visitor spending soared in Vermillion, Clay County

The South Dakota Office of Tourism recently released 2009 visitor spending figures at the Annual Tourism Conference in Pierre. The data showed for the period of November 2008 through October 2009 visitor spending in Clay County soared by 28 percent over the prior year, increasing from \$8.4 million to over \$10.8 million. This increase represents the third consecutive year of growth in visitor spending for Clay County.

"We had great events in 2009, the year-long Sesquicentennial Celebration, all-school reunion, and the South Dakota Barbecue Championship, all which contributed to the increase," said Steve Howe, executive director of the Vermillion Area Chamber and Development Company (VCDC). "Of course we're excited about the big boost in 2009, but we are equally encouraged by seeing consistent growth year after year in visitor spending. It shows people are continuing to find new reasons to come to the area."

According to the Office of Tourism estimations, visitor expenditures of \$10.8 million had a total economic impact to the area of approximately \$27 million. "Vermillion and Clay County have so much to offer visitors, from the National Music Museum, the expanded facilities and trail system at Clay County Park, and the Missouri River is an absolute gem. Most people don't realize we have a national park in our county," said Howe, referring to the stretch of river that abuts Clay County which has been designated the Missouri National Recreational River.

The VCDC currently partners with the Southeast South Dakota Tourism Association and the South Dakota Office of Tourism on many co-op marketing efforts, but plans to increase independent marketing as well.

"We have never really seen ourselves as a tourism destination or recognized these dollars as a viable revenue source. But seeing the overall economic impact tourism has, it's time we start getting the word out about what we have to offer," Howe said.

Up with People coming to Vermillion Feb. 24

A multinational cast of Up with People is headed to Vermillion. Up with People, (UWP) which has toured to 38 countries around the world during the last 44-years has announced that Vermillion will be a tour stop for Cast A 2010. Their performance will take place at the Vermillion High School Auditorium on Wednesday, Feb. 24 at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$5 for USD students, \$6 for seniors and students and \$14 for adults. Tickets are being sold at the Vermillion Chamber of Commerce.

Best known for their high-energy, upbeat, family-friendly entertainment, the cast and staff of 100 representing 20 countries is also participating in UWP's international global education program for young

adults. Long before American Idol began discovering and refining new talent or High School Musical tapped into the exuberance of young ensemble casts, Up with People pioneered these attributes while touring the world with their optimistic message of global cooperation and goodwill.

"A Song for the World," UWP's latest production is a two-hour performance featuring both original and popular music and is a dynamic blend of feature soloists, full cast production numbers, fast-moving choreography and colorful costumes. Audience members will be taken on a musical tour around the world and back in time with special moments including "The Love Medley," a col-

lection of popular music and dancing moments from the last three decades on the theme of "boy meets girl."

Throughout the show, international cast members will provide the audience with a glimpse of their own national traditions and cultures through music and dance with musical stops in Europe, Asia, North America and Africa.

While in Vermillion between Feb. 22-25, they will spend time participating in community involvement and service projects while staying with local host families. By the end of their five-month world tour, Cast A 2010 will visit two dozen communities throughout the central and western U.S., Mexico, and the Philippines. Community service projects will

take place on Feb. 23. Up with People strives to become involved with local organizations and programs that are relevant and meaningful to the communities they visit and provide an opportunity for local students to join the cast members in the service activities.

A centerpiece of the 22-week program is the opportunity for UWP students to stay with local families during their stay in each community. The sharing goes both ways...while families share their traditions and local attractions, the cast members share their experiences and cultures. Local families in the Vermillion area are being sought to host the cast members between February 22-25 and are asked to provide local