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Show choir invite to be held

Vermillion High School Show Choir will be hosting an invitational Saturday, Feb. 27 at the Vermillion High School.

Twelve teams from Sioux City, Sioux Falls, Aberdeen, Elk Point and Ruthven-Ayrshire, IA will compete. Competition will begin at 9 a.m. Finals will be at 6:30 p.m. and awards at 9:30 p.m.

The Vermillion Middle School Music in Motion will perform at 4 p.m. Paradise Fears will be performing at 4:15 p.m. Rhythm in Red will perform at 9 p.m.

Tickets are \$8.00 and can be purchased at the door.

Troopers will check sobriety

The South Dakota Highway Patrol has sobriety checkpoints scheduled in March in the following counties: Brookings, Brown, Charles Mix, Clay, Codington, Fall River, Gregory, Hand, Jackson, Jerauld, Lawrence, Lincoln, Minnehaha, Pennington, Roberts, Spink, Stanley and Walworth.

For sobriety checkpoint text message alerts, visit activilized.com.

Welcome Table will meet March 1

The next Vermillion Welcome table will be Monday, March 1 from 5:30 to 7 p.m. at the United Methodist Church.

The March 1 meal will be sponsored and served by Delta Sigma Pi.

Thank you to Vermillion High School Student Council and Vermillion High School National Honor Society for sponsoring and serving last Monday's meal.

Budget concerns topic of USD forum Monday

By David Lias
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Budget issues regarding higher education currently being debated by the South Dakota Legislature were the focus of a student forum held on the USD campus Monday night.

The meeting, sponsored by the Student Government Association (SGA) and the Cross Media Council, was held in the Muenster University Center.

Blake Alberts, president of the SGA, told the sparse audience at the forum that the South Dakota Legislature is looking to make some cuts in the higher education budget.

"That stems from it being an election year, and also forecasts for continued bad times economically for next year's fiscal year," he said. "Gov. Rounds' budget was really friendly

towards higher education – it actually had an expansion of one program with a Ph.D in physics, but at the same time, he was going to have to tap into state reserve funds to fund his budget as he proposed it, and legislators are looking to cut back and avoid using those dollars."

Factors that complicate the budget process, he said, include and underestimation by \$4 million of the funding needs of K-12 education in the state, and forecasts of lower than expected estimates of state sales tax revenues.

"Without a doubt, there are going to be substantial hits taken across all of state government, and we just want to make sure that the South Dakota Board of Regents doesn't get hit too hard," Alberts said.

It is important for citizens to



Paul Rann, a Student Government Association senator, and Blake Alberts, president of the Student Government Association (SGA), answer questions concerning higher education funding at a student forum held on the University of South Dakota campus Monday night.

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Up With People gives a unique glimpse of the world to Vermillion

By David Lias
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Local young people, ranging in age from kindergartners from St. Agnes School, to undergrads at the University of South Dakota, found themselves in a new world at the Muenster University Center Tuesday.

It was here, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., that local residents of all ages learned about the cultures of lands far from the snowy confines of the Vermillion city limits.

The cast of Up With People was in town earlier this week, arriving on the USD campus late Monday afternoon. Cast and crew settled in that evening with host families, and also took up residence in USD dormitories, sororities and fraternities.

Tuesday was a day to give something back to the Vermillion community, but it soon became apparent that the Up With People entourage was having just as much, and perhaps more, fun than the Vermillionites they were entertaining.

On Wednesday night, the international cast gave a public performance at the Vermillion High School Performing Arts Center.

Up With People presented a cultural showcase in the MUC Tuesday. It was a time when visitors of all ages could learn dance steps from different lands, and converse with cast members about the customs, traditions and characteristics of their home countries.



At times, walking through the crush of students of all ages was difficult Tuesday at the MUC. Up With People's cultural showcase, held on the USD campus, attracted throngs of visitors eager to learn about the various cultures represented by cast members. (Photo by David Lias)

Brandon Serna, and Up With People cast member from Denver, CO, joined other dancers from the international troupe in teaching a few new dance moves to USD students and members of the kindergarten class from St. Agnes School.

"We do salsa dancing, swing dancing – a wide range of different dancing in our show," he said later that afternoon. "I wasn't a dancer before the program, but we have the opportunity to be taught everything from dancing to public speaking, and through being on stage and through our leadership program,

ing – a wide range of different dancing in our show," he said later that afternoon. "I wasn't a dancer before the program, but we have the opportunity to be taught everything from dancing to public speaking, and through being on stage and through our leadership program,

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Whether an Olympian or a local athlete, records matter

But they aren't the only driving force behind individual success

By Justin Rust
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The 2008 Summer Olympics gave the world a couple of the biggest record breaking performances.

Swimmer Michael Phelps won eight gold medals in Beijing and Jamaica's Usain Bolt broke the record in both the 100-meter and 200-meter dash.

But even with those two record breaking athletes, performances by athletes may have started to plateau and the competitors may have hit a peak, according to an report in the Los Angeles Times.

In the article, Geoffrey Berthelot, a researcher at INSEP, an internationally respected school and research institute for athletes in Paris, found peak times in track and field have not improved in 64 percent of events since 1993.

After 1990, the same was true for swimming and diving as times were down, until 2000

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FEMA answers flood of concerns

Vermillion meeting covers both flooding insurance, precautions

By Randy Dockendorf
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When it comes to anticipated flooding, federal officials are advising the Boy Scout motto: Be prepared.

Dave Kyner and Norm Ashford of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) spoke Tuesday night to two dozen people at Vermillion City Hall. The gathering marked the second of eight public meetings in eastern South Dakota.

The National Weather Service (NWS) has forecast "significant to major" flooding for eastern South Dakota, similar to 1997.

Kyner referred to the tremendous probability of flooding this spring.

"We anticipate a high-risk flood season," he said. "If all the snowpack melts slowly, we'll be fine. But if the snow becomes strong and (the snow) melts rapidly, and we see flooding, we're in for a major event."

Kyner noted the huge snowpack that remains across South Dakota.

"There is 4 to 8 inches of water in the snowpack that sits on the ground today," he said. "The potential for flooding is certainly there. Be prepared for it. It can save your property, your life and your neighbor's life."

This year, the NWS forecasts a 92 percent chance of major flooding on the James River at Scotland.

On the Vermillion River, the NWS forecasts a 98 percent chance of moderate flooding and an 84 percent chance of major flooding at Wakonda. Downstream, the NWS foresees a 72 percent chance of moderate flooding at Vermillion.

Kyner advised a three-point plan: make a plan, build a kit and be informed. A disaster supply kit can include food, water and even coins, he said.

"Make up backpacks, maybe one for each member of your family," he said. "Include a map identifying how you will leave the city or farm. Let your family out of state know where you will be. Teach your children how to communicate with you."



At Tuesday's meeting in Vermillion, Norm Ashford explains the national flood insurance program offered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Extensive spring flooding is forecast for eastern South Dakota. (Photo by David Lias)

With a large snowpack and little indication of slow melting, all signs point to major flooding in the Dakotas, Kyner said.

"We're not saying a flood is going to occur, but everything is leading up to it like last year," he said. "North Dakota has a 96 percent chance that the Red River flowing to Canada will see a bad flood."

During the second part of the program, Ashford spoke

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Practice rather than policy focus of much of Cracker Barrel meeting

By David Lias
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Saturday's Cracker Barrel meeting in Vermillion, featuring District 17 Reps. Eldon Nygaard of Vermillion and Jamie Boomgarden of Chancellor often centered more on practice rather than policy, on the things lawmakers often must do to try to get their legislation approved.

It involves horse-trading of sorts, agreeing to vote for a colleague's resolution in exchange for support of a pending piece of legislation, for example. This glimpse of the legislative process helped local citizens learn that it's not always a pretty process, and it's not always successful.

Judy Zwolak took Rep. Nygaard to task for his support of a House concurrent resolution that calls for "balanced teaching" of global warming in public schools in South Dakota. Rep. Nygaard voted for the resolution; Boomgarden did not support it.

"It never should have made it out of the House," Zwolak said. "There are many people in this room – concerned parents ... – who are very upset about this. It's an embarrassment to South Dakota, and it presents us in a very unscientific light."

Nygaard admitted at first that he likely might have accidentally voted for the resolution when he meant to vote against it. Later, his comments reflected how legislators make so many votes on resolutions and bills

during a session that it's easy to forget the reasoning behind their decisions.

"Concurrent resolutions are merely political tools," Nygaard said initially. "As far as I'm concerned, they have no political weight whatsoever ... I probably pushed the wrong button quite honestly, because it clearly does not represent the desires of my constituents."

As members of the Cracker Barrel audience continued to voice their displeasure over the resolution and the effect it could have on public school curriculum, Nygaard recalled the reasoning behind his vote.

"I just realized why I voted that way," he said. "I needed another vote to try to pass what I thought was sensible," Nygaard said, describing a piece of legislation that he hoped would be approved. "So I went across the hall to someone who is about as far right as you can get, and he agreed to vote for my legislation if I would vote for the resolution."

"I really have a problem with the far right and the far left running this state," he added. "We don't have a majority of Republicans or Democrats in this state. The middle is made of very unscientific light, and the conservative Democrats and the conservative Republicans. If we could get back to have the middle of both of our parties

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