

BOARD

From Page 01

particular district, we would have good response within minutes, if not even less."

School Board member Matt Lavin noted that Vermillion USD, the Clay County Sheriff's Department, and the South Dakota Highway Patrol. "For us, it doesn't seem to be an issue," Esping said. "I completely agree with Dr. Froke. I think it's going to be a hot, hot topic across the state."

"I do like the idea in this proposal that it allows local decisions," Stammers said, "and that there is mandatory training. I think it has to be that way."

"I still think that even though you receive the required hours of training, you still don't have the experience like a law enforcement officer would," Esping said. "They (law enforcement) are trained to react to these kinds of things."

The talk of law enforcement led Stammer to describe a concern with the sentinel idea.

"Say there is a shooting, you've got two or three teachers in that school (with guns) and the police arrive," he said. "When they see a person with a gun, they're going to shoot them."

HB1087 and other, similar measures have arisen in statehouses across the nation following the deadly shooting in December 2012 that left 26 people dead at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, CT.

After that incident, local school administrators immediately reviewed security measures at the Vermillion School District's four school buildings, and came up with a list of changes to be made to several of those buildings all

with the goal of making them safer.

Suggested security upgrades include the addition of interior door locks on classroom doors in all of the district's buildings.

Security upgrades will also include the addition of a front door buzzer and locking system – similar to the one that's been in place for several years at the high school – at the middle school and at Jolley and Austin elementary schools.

"We have the high school building's front door locked during the day," Froke told the school board last month. "That is not the case at the two elementary and middle schools."

Other upgrades listed for the district's buildings include placing locks on the gymnasium interior doors at Austin and Jolley schools, cleaning exterior door locks at the middle school, and additional camera surveillance at all four schools.

Suggested improvements to the high school include replacing and/or repairing existing door locks and repairing some door latches so that the doors close easily.

Froke also noted last month that Austin and Jolley schools – two of the district's older buildings – need a comprehensive intercom, telephone and clock system.

"I contacted a security firm to come in and take a look at our schools, and provide some quotes for you to look at at a later point," he told board members. "There are definitely some things that need to be addressed."

At the middle school, for example, there are some doors that open to the inside off a commons area.

"In the case of a fire, you want the doors opening out so that kids and staff can move out of that area fast rather than pulling back on the doors to get out," Froke said. "During normal operations, there are some things that you just don't notice, but when you start taking a look at your facilities in terms of security, there are some things that stick out."

How quickly every item that's been identified will be implemented will depend on the total price tag.

COOP

From Page 01

own food locally," said board member Norbert Pinkelman, who farms on the Nebraska side of the Missouri River not far from where the Clay County Park is located on the South Dakota side of the river.

"We can't grow everything that we need, but we can produce a lot of it," he said. "Why shouldn't we grow good food locally instead of exporting the good food to other areas?"

Pinkelman plans to be a producer for the cooperative. He raises livestock on his farm, and also is involved in honey production. Audience members at Thursday night's concert dined on popcorn raised by Pinkelman's father.

"We're going to emphasize local foods," Munes said. "That is our main objective. It may be produce from local farmers, or local meats. We want to have those in the store, and to have less of footprint. Instead of getting goods in from far distances, we hope to rather support the community by supporting local

ranchers, farmers and producers in the area."

Being involved with Red Earth continues to be an adventure, Pinkelman said.

"None of us on the board have been involved with a co-op, or been on a co-op board, so the learning curve is kind of tremendous," he said, laughing. "We are learning as we are going here. Sometimes, people may think we aren't doing things right... we don't know. We're doing the best that we can, we're feeling our way through it, and we're hoping we're doing things right. Time will tell."

Pinkelman is confident that the cooperative will be successful.

"There is no reason that this cannot work," he said. "People have to understand what a co-op means. It means that the members have to participate and support it. Along with that commitment is the fact that you get to have a say in it. As a co-op, we still have to be concerned with profit or loss, but at the same time, our members remain an important factor."

"Can it work? Definitely," Pinkelman said. "But it's up to the people to make it work."

The cooperative needs to attract fewer than 100 members

to reach its goal of 250. "The reason we want 250 members is so we know we have a customer base," he said, "plus, it raises capital for the business, too. We are all on a shoestring budget. The board members are all contributing their time and talents and money, too. It's a great idea."

"There is no large investment; we're starting up based on the members who are pitching in \$40 for their yearly membership," Munes said. "That is going to be what enables us to buy the equipment, the shelves, the food items that go on the shelves, and pay a small salary to a person and pay the rent."

Contemporary agri-business, Pinkelman said, involves shipping locally-raised crops and livestock out of the area for processing at plants owned by large, multi-national corporations.

"Every load of corn or livestock that gets hauled out of the area means you're hauling economy out of the area," he said. "If we can produce it here, and purchase it here, and consume it here, we're generating economic activity. And we don't need the state to help us – the people can do that themselves,

and it's real economy."

An enthusiastic audience of Red Earth Cooperative members greeted musicians Jami Lynn and Dylan James, of Rapid City. Others who are interested in learning more about the cooperative's mission and goals also packed the co-op's cozy store space Thursday to hear the duo.

Lynn is well known in Vermillion, having studied music at USD before launching her career as a regional folk singer. Lynn and James recently began recording their first duo album together at the Historic Homestake Opera House in Lead. "Cluck & Croon" will include old-time tunes mixed with gypsied out jazz standards and originals. It is scheduled to be released this spring.

The doors of the cooperative's Main Street business have yet to open. The space, except for a couple coolers and some other equipment, is mostly empty. But the walls boast a fresh coat of paint; the ceiling and lighting also appears to have received substantial attention.

It is a place that seems to be very, very close to have an "open" sign appear on its front door soon.

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A BIG COYOTE

THANK YOU

To the Vermillion community
 for answering our late-night call for help with the Coyote Village closure; for providing emergency backup and helping transport, feed and house students until essential services could be restored.

Thank You!

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