

Wishing You a Safe & Happy 2010!



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Sobriety checkpoints planned in January

The South Dakota Highway Patrol has sobriety checkpoints scheduled in January in the following counties: Brown, Charles Mix, Clay, Codington, Davison, Day, Fall River, Hand, Lake, Minnehaha, Moody, Pennington, Spink, Sully, Roberts and Walworth.

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

Clear ice and snow for letter carriers

Winter is back in full swing, bringing significant snow and ice to the Upper Midwest. That means slippery surfaces, which can be dangerous and costly for homeowners, as well as for their visitors — including their letter carrier. By clearing a path when the snow arrives, accidents can be prevented.

Letter carriers are advised to use good judgment when attempting to deliver to addresses where ice and snow are not cleared. They are not allowed to dismount to make curb deliveries when the approach to the mailbox is hazardous because of snow or ice.

Some tips:

- Customers are asked to clear enough snow from curbside boxes — at least six feet on both sides of the mailbox — so the carrier may approach and leave without backing up his or her vehicle.
- Walkways need to be cleared so as to allow enough traction to avoid slips, trips and falls.
- Steps — especially painted wood — must be kept clear of ice and snow and in good repair.
- Overhangs must be clear and free of snow and ice to avoid injury.

Blood bank in need of donations

The Siouxland Community Blood Bank is strongly encouraging everyone to donate blood as soon as possible.

"The impact of last week's snow storm has really put our inventory in a bind," said Jan Twait, CEO. "We're asking any donor that's eligible to donate to come in as soon as possible."

The Siouxland Blood Bank had projected to collect almost 400 units of blood from Tuesday through Saturday last week. However, the weather forced many mobile blood drives to close early on Tuesday and Wednesday and all mobile blood drives were cancelled on Thursday. The main office in Sioux City also closed early on Wednesday and remained closed until Monday.

The Siouxland Community Blood Bank is doing everything it can to recoup those losses starting immediately. "We are trying hard to get back out to our communities for our donors," said Twait. "However, poor road conditions have forced us to cancel more blood drives today which only puts us back that much farther." Blood drives scheduled for O'Neill, NE and Hartington, NE were cancelled.

To complicate matters, the blood bank is also preparing for the New Year's weekend.

The blood bank's main office will be open normal business hours this week with the exception of Friday. Offices will be closed on New Year's Day but will reopen Saturday morning at 8 a.m. Mobile blood drives are also scheduled throughout this week in communities in Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota. For a complete list of locations and hours, please visit www.siouxlandbloodbank.org. Donors are also encouraged to call 1-800-798-4208 for more information.

To be eligible to donate, donors must be 16 years old, weigh at least 110 pounds, be in generally good health and not have donated whole blood in the past 56 days. A photo ID is needed at registration.



Surviving the snowpocalypse

The strong winds that accompanied the heavy snowfall during the Christmas 2009 blizzard in Vermillion treated townsfolk to a change in scenery when they were finally able to emerge from their homes. Winds created this unique snow sculpture on the south side of the Vermillion Post Office. (Photo by David Lias)

Three-day blizzard dumps 23 inches of white on Vermillion

By David Lias

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It may have not been the strongest blizzard to ever strike the Vermillion area.

At times, the storm system that moved across South Dakota would blow and snow for a while, take a breather, and then snow some more.

After several fits and starts, and what seemed at first to be an unwillingness to bring widespread misery to the region, Mother Nature finally decided, after a dropping a few inches beginning the afternoon of Dec. 23, through most of Christmas Eve, to really let loose on Christmas Day.

By the day after Christmas, the wind was howling as the snowfall began to lessen.

When it was all over, Vermillion residents found a special holiday gift had been left on their streets, driveways and sidewalks — 23 inches of winter precipitation, sculpted by the wind into

drifts that, in many places, were over three feet in depth.

It's the most snow that City Manager John Prescott has encountered in the nearly five years he has lived in Vermillion.

"I don't ever remember us having it snow as much at one time like this," he said.

City street department workers put snow removal equipment to work beginning at approximately 2 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 26. They finished up at about 4 p.m. Saturday, leaving most major streets in Vermillion negotiable by automobile.

Drivers had to use caution, however. The 14-hours of non-stop labor included using motor graders and sand trucks, some outfitted with blades on the front, to move the snow into ever-growing piles that divided streets right down the center.

The task of removing the long, high man-made drifts had to wait as city workers focused on taking

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A couple pauses at the intersection of Court and Main Streets while taking a stroll in downtown Vermillion Dec. 26. A strong wind was still blowing at the time, but the snow had subsided, prompting people to break out their shovels and snowblowers to clear their driveways and sidewalks. (Photo by David Lias)



Kelsey Campbell, 10-year-old daughter of Heather and Jason Campbell, Vermillion, uses a scraper to clear her mother's car of snow. Snow began falling in Vermillion early Wednesday afternoon, Dec. 23. At that time, it was predicted the Vermillion region would receive up to 18 inches of snow through Dec. 26. Just over 23 inches was recorded in Vermillion by that time. (Photo by David Lias)

USD prof shares observations from climate conference

Elizabeth Burleson, professor at The University of South Dakota School of Law, attended the COP15 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, Denmark in mid-December.

Burleson, a member of the USD School of Law faculty since 2007, is no stranger to United Nations policies having participated in treaty negotiations at the U.N. in 1991 during proceedings for the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development. She also attended the Bali Climate Conference two years ago on behalf of UNICEF.

While attending COP15, Burleson assisted the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) with their booth and distributing side event materials. She also helped the National Wildlife Federation conduct a side



Elizabeth Burleson

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Council gives initial approval to zoning change in residential area

By David Lias

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The Vermillion City Council has given initial approval to a zoning change that will affect 29 residential properties located near the downtown area.

The action follows the filing of a petition signed by 48 percent of the property owners that reside in the area, who have requested that the zoning of the area be amended from its current R-2 residential to R-1 single family residential.

The primary difference between the two residential zoning districts is that R-2 allows multi-family structures of up to four dwellings, and R-1 is reserved for single family homes, and does not allow duplexes or four-plexes.

The residential property is located south of Kidder Street, between Church and Market streets.

"This has gone to the (city) planning commission, and while there, we did have a public hearing, and there were several people there both for and against the change," said Farrel Christensen, city zoning official at Dec. 21's meeting of the Vermillion City Council. "Comments that we heard from those opposing the change came from people who wanted to retain their flexibility and continue to have twin homes, tri-plexes and four-plexes."

"The opposing side wanted to retain the historic nature of the homes that

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