

Nutrition and diet topic of workshop for parents Jan. 14

Do you have a child on medication? Are you concerned with your child's weight loss or weight gain? Wondering about gluten-free or casein-free diets? Herbal supplements? Other issues? Julie Jensen, Registered Dietician, will answer pre-submitted questions from parents during her presentation on "Nutrition and Diet." Questions will also be taken during the meeting as time allows. Appropriate for parents of students with attention, autism spectrum, cognitive, emotional/behavioral, or learning disorders.

The workshop is open to the public and will begin at 7:00 pm on Thursday, January 14th at University of SD, Delzell Education Center, Room 203, East Campus Drive. Pre-registration is not necessary. Please submit your diet and nutrition related questions to SD Parent Connection via www.sdparent.org, to sdpc@sdparent.org and by calling 1-800-640-4553.

Sponsored by South Dakota Parent Connection and USD Center for Disabilities, the Learning/School Difficulties Parent Education and Support Meetings are held each month via video-conference (Dakota Digital Network-DDN) across South Dakota and are without cost to participants. When available, materials for the presentation will be posted for viewing and printing prior to each session at www.sdparent.org, under Events "Support Groups" tab.

For more information, please contact South Dakota Parent Connection at 605-361-3171, 1-800-640-4553 or sdpc@sdparent.org. Information on all upcoming sessions available at www.sdparent.org.

Thune announces disaster relief assistance for producers

Senator John Thune has announced that South Dakota agricultural producers can now sign up for the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) Program. The program is one of the permanent disaster relief programs Senator Thune helped to establish as part of the 2008 Farm Bill. Benefits are available to producers starting today, for losses from the 2008 and 2009 crop years. The 2008 Farm Bill authorized the SURE program through September 30, 2011.

"The farm safety net is designed to give farmers and ranchers a measure of peace of mind when natural disaster strikes," said Thune. "Permanent disaster programs provide assurance that needed disaster funding will not be held up by political games-

manship in Washington, as was too frequently the case in the past. I encourage affected South Dakota producers to learn more about the SURE program."

Assistance is available to producers with land in counties with a USDA Secretarial Disaster Designation and contiguous counties. Outside of USDA Secretarial Disaster Designation and contiguous counties, producers whose actual crop production is less than 50 percent of normal are also eligible.

Interested producers should visit www.fsa.usda.gov or visit their local Farm Service Agency Office for additional information. Senator Thune is a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee.

Call for Proposals: Dakota Conference on the Northern Plains

A call for proposals has been issued for the 42nd annual Dakota Conference on the Northern Plains to be held April 23-24 at the Center for Western Studies on the campus of Augustana College.

Western Highways: Journeys through Space & Time is the theme for the spring conference. The focus will be on paths, trails, roads, and highways that crisscross the Northern Plains and their impact on the lives of indigenous and immigrant people. Previous conferences on the theme of transportation considered railroads (2007) and rivers (2008).

Travel by foot, horse, cart, wagon, stagecoach, bicycle, motorcycle, and automobile – "from moccasins to motorcycles" – will be considered, but also spiritual and metaphorical road journeys. For example, there will be sessions on "Plains Indian History: The Road Ahead" and "The Journey to Wounded Knee Reconciliation." Proposals for papers and sessions addressing any aspect of road travel in the Northern Plains are welcome.

Send a one-page paper or session proposal with title, brief description, and biographical sketch, along with presenter name, address, phone number, and e-mail address, to Dr. Harry Thompson, Dakota Conference Director, The Center for Western Studies, 2001 S. Summit Avenue, Sioux Falls, SD 57197 (harry.thompson@augie.edu). Proposals are due on or before February 5, 2010.

Cash awards of \$150 and \$100 in academic, non-academic, student, and women's history categories are available.

Scholarships available for local high school seniors

The Siouxland Community Foundation has scholarship opportunities available for Siouxland high school seniors who will graduate in May 2010 and reside within a general 50-mile radius of Sioux City. Applications are due by February 15.

"The Foundation currently administers over 20 different scholarship funds that have been established by donors whose charitable intent is to assist students in their pursuit of a post-secondary education," said Debbie Hubbard, Foundation Executive Director. "Some scholarships are open to any major, while others are limited to students pursuing a career in a particular field of study like nursing, music, mass communications or journalism. Some scholarships are only available to students attending a particular Siouxland high school, while others are less specific."

To learn more about scholarship opportunities available through the Siouxland Community Foundation and to obtain application materials, go to <http://www.siouxland-communityfoundation.org/scholarships.aspx>

Questions regarding the various scholarship programs may be directed to the Foundation at (712) 293-3303.

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SD lawmakers oppose sales tax boost

By Chet Brokaw
Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota lawmakers have no interest in increasing the state sales tax to fix the state's budget problems, according to a survey by The Associated Press.

Two-thirds of the legislators responding to the survey said they oppose increasing the sales tax to balance the budget in the next year or two.

House and Senate leaders said lawmakers want to balance the budget with spending cuts, not tax increases.

"I think one thing both parties seem unified on is to try to find a way to balance our budget without increasing taxes," said House Republican Leader Bob Faehn of Watertown.

House Democratic Leader Bernie Hunhoff of Yankton said sales tax revenue has fallen below expectations because people have reduced their purchases during the economic downturn, so boosting the tax would make no

sense.

"To think the fix is to actually increase taxes on people who already can't afford to buy things is just backwards," Hunhoff said.

Gov. Mike Rounds has proposed a state budget that would use \$32 million in reserves for the year beginning July 1, and he said the gap between ongoing revenue and ongoing spending could exceed \$100 million in the following year unless tax collections begin to grow significantly. The Republican governor has said he will not propose a tax increase to solve the budget problem because he doubts lawmakers would pass a tax increase.

South Dakota now has a 4 percent sales tax. An increase of 1 percentage point, to 5 percent, would provide enough money to fix the budget gap.

Seventy-two of the 105 lawmakers responded to the AP survey by mail Dec. 14-31.

While two-thirds said they would oppose a sales tax increase, 11 percent

said they would support such an increase. A quarter said they were undecided.

About 83 percent of the Democratic minority opposed a sales tax increase. Slightly more than half the Republicans who responded said they oppose it, while a third are undecided.

Senate Republican Leader Dave Knudson of Sioux Falls said he sees little chance that the Legislature would raise the sales tax. Lawmakers will look at cutting spending, probably through a combination of across-the-board cuts and the elimination of some programs, he said.

"I think we'll look at that through cost cutting," Knudson said.

Senate Democratic Leader Scott Heidepriem of Sioux Falls said he also wants the Legislature to cut state spending in a number of areas.

The sales tax should not be increased, particularly during an economic slump, because it hits lower income people the hardest, Heidepriem said.

USDA enhances farm programs, streamlines payment limits for farmers

Craig Schaunaman, State Executive Director of USDA's Farm Service Agency in South Dakota announced Jan. 5 that USDA is partnering with the Internal Revenue Service to reduce fraud in farm programs and streamline payment limits for family farmers. The actions are intended to strengthen the integrity and defensibility of USDA farm safety net programs and help the agricultural industry to meet requirements included in the 2008 Farm Bill.

"Today's announcement will ensure that the producers who depend upon the safety net of USDA programs will have future access to these programs by enhancing the overall integrity of the programs," said Schaunaman. "It will also provide more flexibility for family farm operations across the country."

As part of today's announcement, USDA has finalized a Memorandum of Understanding with the Internal Revenue Service to establish an electronic information exchange process for verifying compliance with the adjusted gross income provisions for programs administered by USDA's FSA and Natural Resources Conservation Service. This agreement will ensure that payments are

not issued to producers whose adjusted gross income (AGI) exceeds certain limits. The limits set in the 2008 Farm Bill are \$500,000 nonfarm average AGI for commodity and disaster programs; \$750,000 farm average AGI for direct payments; and \$1 million nonfarm average AGI for conservation programs.

The electronic process that USDA developed with IRS reviews data from tax returns, performs a series of calculations, and compares these values to the AGI limitations from the 2008 Farm Bill. FSA and NRCS will receive a record that indicates whether or not the program participant appears to meet the income limits. Written consent will be required from each producer or payment recipient for this process. No actual tax data will be included in the report that IRS sends to USDA. As part of the review and evaluation process, participants whose AGI may exceed the limits will be offered an opportunity to provide third party verification or other information to validate their income.

Meanwhile, beginning with the 2010 program year, USDA has amended the rules that govern the requirements to be actively engaged in farming. These rules

apply to eligibility for payments under the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) or Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) program administered by the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA).

USDA has implemented the following change to permit certain operations, to meet family-run operations, to meet 'actively engaged' in farming requirements under less restrictive rules.

Every stockholder or member of a legal entity, such as a corporation, does not have to contribute labor or management if both of the following apply:

- at least half of the interest in the legal entity is held by stockholders or members who are providing active personal labor or active personal management that altogether qualifies as a significant contribution to the farming operation;
- the total direct payments received, both directly and indirectly, by the legal entity and each of the members does not exceed \$40,000.

Information regarding FSA programs is available at your local FSA office or on the web at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov> or <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/sd>.

Extension farm transition and estate planning training dates set for 2010

The South Dakota Cooperative Extension Service has set 2010 dates in two cities for farm transition and estate planning workshops.

One session of the training will be held at JoDean's Restaurant, 2809 Broadway Ave., Yankton, on Feb. 9, 16, and 23. The second set of workshops take place at Crossroads Hotel, 100 Fourth St. S.W., Huron, on March 3, 10, and 17.

The sessions cost \$50 per person to cover the cost of meals and materials. Payment is due 10 days prior to the program. To register, send payment and contact information to the McCook County Extension office, attention Farm Transition, Box 130, Salem, SD 57058.

Heather Gessner, McCook County Extension Farm Management Educator, said participants in the program should plan to attend the full training schedule.

"Each day will be different and informative, and we

hope to see participants take part in all of the material," Gessner said. "The programs are designed for all members of family operation because estate plans and transition plans are a complex and sometimes confusing endeavor for producers and their families."

Gessner said the sessions cover many aspects and components that can be included in the plans that families will devise. Topics covered during the three days include planning the transition of an operation to children that want to remain on the farm as well as strategies for families where the farming operation will no longer be family run. Another large component of the program covers communicating the wishes of the parents to the children and how to hold family meetings to discuss the issues that may come up during the develop of either a family transfer or when the estate is divided.

Extension staff, attorneys, and insurance specialists will present information on the development of trusts, wills, and probate. They also will cover long-term care and life insurance choices as part of estate plans. In addition to the technical components of setting up a plan, communication and transfer of personal assets also will be discussed. For more information, call Heather Gessner at 605-425-2242 or e-mail her at heather.gessner@sdstate.edu.

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Mobile Home Title required upon registration.

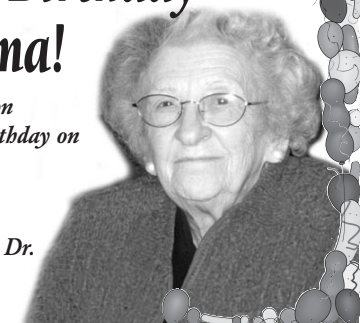
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