

Master's degree in Addiction Studies to be offered at USD

With anticipated growth of substance abuse counselors in South Dakota and the nation during the next decade, The University of South Dakota will begin offering an online Master of Arts in Addiction Studies.

The new degree is designed to prepare professionals for advanced levels of competency to address current and future addiction challenges in society, and it offers graduates of the program the highest level of addiction professional certification through the South Dakota Certification Board for Alcohol and Drug Professionals (SDCL 36-24). Additionally, the program will assist the state in meeting the demand for professionals in the field as evidenced by the South Dakota Department of Labor, which currently lists substance abuse counselors in the top 15 of "Fastest Growing Occupations."

According to Dona Kennealley, chairperson of USD's Department of Alcohol and Drug Studies, growth in the field has remained steady over the last several years with overall employment of substance abuse

counselors expected to rise faster than the average for all occupations through 2014. The National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors also says the need for addiction professionals licensed and possessing a master's degree is expected to increase 35 percent this year.

"Not only does a master's degree in addiction studies support the Governor's 2010 Educational Initiative providing opportunities for graduate-level training and education," Kennealley added, "it responds to the credentialing needs of the profession and prepares more graduates for employment in addiction counseling."

USD's master's degree in addiction studies is the first to be offered in South Dakota and the region. The Department of Alcohol and Drug Studies is part of USD's School of Health Sciences.

To apply online for the Master of Arts in Addiction Studies degree, please go to www.usd.edu/grad/how-to-apply.cfm or for more information, contact the Division of Continuing and Distance Education, at (605) 677-6240 or 1-800-233-7937.

Homeowners should monitor plumbing vents

South Dakotans should monitor plumbing vents to be sure they do not freeze in frigid weather or are covered by snow accumulation on the roof, a South Dakota Cooperative Extension Service specialist said.

Extension Farm Machinery and Safety Specialist Dick Nicolai said it's important to monitor openings to see that they don't crust over or become covered by snow. Plumbing vents can be troublesome in northern latitudes because the vent is connected to a sewage tank of substantial surface area, containing relatively warm water producing large amounts of vapor. This vapor can sometimes condense and freeze in the pipe, causing a complete blockage. Sewer gases then cannot exit the pipe and are forced back into the house.

There may be an ice or snow blockage problem in the vent if you notice a gurgling sound in the tub and/or sink when flushing the toilet. Also a pungent odor of sewer gas in the home indicates a problem.

"Clearing a frozen sewer vent on the roof calls for extreme care," Nicolai said. "The job usually involves a ladder, a slippery roof, and pouring hot water down the vent."

Removing ice accumulations from the sewer vent stack will solve the problem temporarily, but will not prevent it from occurring again. Several methods that minimize the chance of vent stack freeze-up include:

- Wrapping foil-back insulation around the stack that passes through a vented attic space to reduce frost build-up.
- Wrapping thermostatically controlled heat tape around the vent if the pipe is accessible.

Nicolai also said that homeowners in the process of building or renovating can avoid these problems by making sure the vent passes through as little unheated space as possible and by using ample insulation. Newer homes are frequently designed to conduct heat better, so that freezing is less of an issue.

Funds available for existing emergency housing shelters

South Dakota Housing Development Authority (SDHDA) is now accepting applications for the Emergency Shelter Grants Program.

The Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG) Program, which is funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and administered by SDHDA, assists existing emergency housing shelters improve or expand their facilities and provide services.

Since the ESG Program's inception 23 years ago, SDHDA has awarded more than \$5.6 million directly to shelters statewide. SDHDA anticipates \$350,000 will be available for the ESG Program in FY10.

"These funds can be used to renovate or rehabilitate emergency housing shelters. They can also be used for maintenance, operating costs, and activities for homeless prevention in our state," said

Executive Director, Mark Lauseng. "This Program has been a valuable resource in assisting emergency housing shelters."

While it is difficult to get an absolute account of the homeless, a 2009 survey reported there were more than 1,730 homeless people in South Dakota. Most of the homeless were white, single males between the ages 13-55. However, all races, genders and ages are subject to homelessness.

The ESG Program is one of several sources designated to reduce homelessness throughout our state.

For more information or to request a grant application, e-mail lisab@sdhda.org, call 605.773.3181, or write SDHDA at P.O. Box 1237, Pierre, SD 57501-1237.

Applications must be received by March 1, at 5 p.m. Project selection will be made on or before May 31.

South Dakota Corn Growers hold 24th annual meeting

The South Dakota Corn Growers Association held their 24th Annual Meeting on Jan. 9, attracting over 1,000 ag producers, legislative leaders and allied industry to the daylong event.

Attendees took in advice for 2010 from thought leaders in marketing, future trends and energy security during seminars offered throughout the day. Rick Tolman, CEO of National Corn Growers Association addressed the crowd as the Luncheon speaker. The SDCGA set its legislative policy for the upcoming year during the resolution session at which new board directors were chosen and will officially take their positions in February.

During the evening banquet, Congressman Leonard Boswell, D-IA, Chairman of the General Farm Commodities and Risk Management Subcommittee delivered the keynote address. Also during the program, the following awards were given to individuals recognized by the SDCGA for their contributions to the industry over the past year:

- Retiring Presidential Award: Bill Chase, Wolsey.
- Outstanding Service Awards for retiring SDCGA board directors: Chad Blindauer, Mitchell; Bill Chase, Wolsey; Jason Kontz, Flandreau; and James Krier, Herrick; and retiring Industry Representatives Kyle Broughton of Canton, and Denny Everson of Yankton. Retiring from the South Dakota Corn Utilization Council (SDCUC) board were Keith Alverson, Chester; and Francis Hass, Raymond.
- Legislative Appreciation Award: Rep. Tim Rave, District 25, Baltic.
- Excellence in Public Outreach Award: Greg Lamp, editor of the Corn and Soybean Digest.
- Excellence in Agriculture Award: Delton Strasser, Wilmot.
- Most Valuable Player in Agriculture Award: Denny Everson, First Dakota National Bank, Yankton.

"The SDCGA Annual Meeting is designed to celebrate the successes of the South Dakota corn industry while recognizing the leaders who have made a difference in the SDCGA over the past years," said Bill Chase, president of the SDCGA.

The SDCGA wrapped up their annual meeting with outstanding entertainment by American English, considered the best Beatles tribute band by Beatles fans.

Avera Sacred Heart Hospital offers new technology to test for C. difficile bacteria

Avera Sacred Heart Hospital is now offering a new advanced laboratory testing system designed to provide quick results in identifying the presence of Clostridium Difficile (C. diff) toxins as of Nov. 30. Most laboratories perform a rapid C. diff A and B toxin assay with poor sensitivity. This sometimes caused the doctor to order more than one test to determine the presence of C. diff which could take more than 24 hours to diagnosis the condition.

"We now have the capabilities with this new technology, known as a PCR test, to have very accurate results in approximately two hours.

The PCR test also increases the accuracy and quality of results," says Warren Erickson, director of laboratory at Avera Sacred Heart Hospital. "Physicians will be able to diagnose and treat patients with C. diff more efficiently with this new technology," Erickson says.

C. diff is a serious bacteria that can cause symptoms ranging from diarrhea to life-threatening inflammation of the colon. Recently, C. diff infections have become more frequent and more severe. Treatment of these infections is becoming more complex and expensive. In addition to earlier results, this new C. diff testing technology could

also help decrease the length of stay and additional costs attributed to C. diff.

Testing for Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) using the same PCR test technology will be available in early 2010.

Avera Sacred Heart Hospital is the only hospital in the region to offer the PCR test technology. For more information or questions regarding this new technology or C. diff testing, contact Warren Erickson, Avera Sacred Heart Hospital Laboratory director, at (605) 668-8169.

Extension specialist offers insight for dealing with snow loads on roofs

South Dakotans might want to use a snow rake to remove heavy snow loads on roofs, especially from older homes and buildings.

That's according to South Dakota Cooperative Extension Farm Machinery and Safety Specialist Dick Nicolai, who said older homes and buildings were often designed to carry less weight.

"Roofs and trusses are designed for a total weight, and that includes the weight of the truss, plus the snow load," Nicolai said. "Generally speaking, roofs are designed for 25-40 pounds per square foot, but that includes the weight of the truss, so when you subtract that off, the actual snow load that you can accumulate, the safe snow load, is around 20 pounds per square foot for these older buildings."

Nicolai said newer homes and farm buildings have higher snow-load rates than those of older buildings. The result may be that older buildings do not handle snow loads as well.

The snow that accumulates on roofs may be two to three times more dense than snow that falls on the ground, Nicolai added.

"Normally, snow that is 12 inches deep would probably weigh about 6 pounds per square foot, but on a roof, a person can figure the same 12 inches of snow depth weighs up to 15-20 pounds," Nicolai said. "This is in part due to the settling that takes place on the roof and warming underneath that melts the

snow somewhat."

Nicolai said the solution is to remove snow when the on-roof depth gets to more than a couple feet.

"It needs to get removed when it is that deep, and it's best to work from bottom up, in other words, use a snow rake to remove the snow from the bottom as far as you can reach," said Nicolai. "Then start to get up there on the roof and start shoveling or raking it down."

Nicolai said home or building owners or agricultural producers should not climb on roofs alone or address snow build-up on roofs by themselves.

"Work always in pairs so that there's someone else around, especially if the roof happens to be steep," said Nicolai. "People should use a safety line or some kind of a rope harness to secure themselves on steep roof to avoid injuries from falls, and people must be careful when scraping the roof to avoid chipping the shingles or the nails that hold steel on farm buildings. Improper snow raking can create holes that will lead to leakage."

Another place home or building owners should inspect for snow accumulation is areas of roofs were two or more pitches connect.

"We really want to check those areas of the roof between two roof lines, where we have a valley, or if there's a porch on the ends of the roof where different pitches come together," Nicolai said. "That's where the snow will accumulate and where it will be deepest."



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