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Gov. Dennis Daugaard is shown filing criminal justice reform legislation in the South Dakota Senate Tuesday. Pictured are, from left: Sen. Majority Leader Russell Olson, House Majority Leader David Lust, Daugaard, Supreme Court Chief Justice David Gilbertson, Senate Appropriations Committee Chair Deb Peters, and House Speaker Brian Gosch. In the foreground, is Carolyn Riter, assistant to the secretary of the Senate. (Photo: Chad Coppess, S.D. Department of Tourism)

Lawmakers find positives in 'State of State'

By Randy Dockendorf

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Area legislators say they like Gov. Dennis Daugaard's plans for overhauling the state's prison system and caring for buildings at the Human Services Center (HSC) in Yankton.

The District 18 (Yankton County) delegation sees possibilities for improving HSC buildings and the overall campus.

"It fits with (Daugaard's) stewardship theme, and I appreciate

that a governor is taking a personal interest," said Rep. Bernie Hunhoff (D-Yankton). "He wants to spend perhaps (up to) \$6 million on restoring some of the buildings — including the grand old dairy barn — and demolishing others."

However, some lawmakers, including Democrats like Hunhoff, said they heard little or no mention about education and Medicaid funding in Tuesday's "State of the State" address.

"It left me wondering whether we're

being good stewards of the most important factor in our future — namely our 130,000 youth in public schools whose education is being jeopardized by the extreme budget cuts of the last two years," he said. The biggest public policy issue we're facing is how to rebuild the schools, and the subject never even came up in the speech. It was as if you went to the circus and didn't see any elephants or lions."

Legislators also expressed concern about the impact of delayed federal

funding decisions for South Dakota.

District 18 Sen. Jean Hunhoff (R-Yankton) said the federal gridlock stands to push the Legislature to its final day on passing a budget.

"If the feds don't settle this by the first part of March, we may not be completed (with a budget) until we come back for Veto Day," she said. "It really depends on what Congress does, so the state knows what (federal officials) are asking for when it comes to sequestration."

District 18 Rep. Mike Stevens (R-

Yankton) believes the state should rely on itself as much as possible when it comes to funding, given the federal financial crisis.

"(The federal government is) economically messed up. I would be afraid to count on them for anything," he said. "(The federal debt) is such an enormous problem, most of us can't get our mind around how difficult that situation is. If we rely on them to assist and be partners in programs, I think

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'Tremendous crowd' fills DakotaDome Farm show attendees appear optimistic despite lingering drought

By Travis Gulbrandson

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It's a big anniversary for the Dakota Farm Show, and exhibitors say Tuesday may have been their biggest opening ever.

The 30th annual show opened Tuesday at the DakotaDome in Vermillion and will be open today (Wednesday) from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and Thursday from 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

John Riles, president of Midwest Shows Inc., producer of the show, said he expects approximately 25,000-30,000 farmers to visit the nearly 300 exhibitors.

"It's been a tremendous crowd," he said.

The exhibitors agreed. Jason Diekevers, precision ag specialist with the Farmers Coop Society, said his booth had been visited by approximately 100 people by the early afternoon.

"It's probably the best first day we've seen," added Bill Christensen, former owner of Christensen Well & Irrigation

Inc. of Hartington, NE.

Dallas Harkness, area sales manager in South Dakota for Curry Seed, said there was a "huge amount" of visitors that tapered off as the day went on.

"I would say we were busier in the first hour than we normally are. We've had real good results," he said. "I think tomorrow's going to be better yet, even."

Riles said he may know the reason.

"Things are really good in agriculture right now," he said. "Things are really as good as they're going to get, I believe, and we're just hoping it'll hold. The price of corn and all the commodities is right up there."

"Things are good, and farmers are doing well," he said. "I was a farm kid when I grew up. It's always been a lot of hard work, but there's just a little more money in it today."

Diekevers said the Farmers Coop booth has had the most questions on autosteering technology and planter



A farmer can never have too many tools. A number of them gathered at this colorful display at the Dakota Farm Show Tuesday, shopping for new wrenches to add to their tool boxes. (Photo by David Lias)

"Those are the two biggest drivers right now," he said. "I think all the farmers are in 'spring mode' in their head, or thinking for next spring. 'What do I need to get ready? What equipment do I want? What do I want to try?'" Christensen said higher commodity prices have had

positive effects for multiple

areas of agriculture.

"The last 10 years irrigation has been pretty steady because of the grain prices, and higher land prices," he said. "People are developing the land they have, rather than buying. It makes sense if you can

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City reviewing size, cost of proposed pool

By Travis Gulbrandson
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Members of the Vermillion City Council said they preferred a smaller pool for the proposed aquatic center that may be constructed at Prentiss Park.

This was according to an informal poll taken after a presentation by City Manager John Prescott during an educational session Monday afternoon.

The present council members said they preferred a six-lane 25-yard pool over a six-lane 50-meter pool for the facility based on a number of considerations, including costs, staff and space.

According to a comparison sheet provided to the members of the council, the construction cost for the smaller pool would be approximately \$6.15 million, while the larger would cost approximately \$6.95 million, a difference of \$800,000. Annual total operating

costs for the smaller pool would run from \$201,000-\$336,000, and \$261,000-\$436,000, a difference ranging from \$60,000-\$100,000.

In an interview Tuesday, Prescott said that some of the operating expenses could be offset by the revenue generated by the completed facility.

"The project consultant feels that with our market area as well as some of the features that we have, that some additional individuals will come to the pool from outside the community that typically would not come to the facility we have today," Prescott said. "So, we would have an expanded drawing area in terms of potential patrons for the pool."

Among the proposed features of the facility are various slides and a lazy river.

"The consultant feels that in looking at our trade area that we could draw some additional patrons to the

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