

Lawmakers find positives in 'State of State'

By Randy Dockendorf
randy.dockendorf@yankton.net

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 we're fooling ourselves."

Overall, area legislators saw a number of upbeat things in Daugaard's address.

District 19 Sen. Bill Van Gerpen (R-Tyndall) praised the state's emphasis on long-term planning rather than "knee-jerk" governing. He contrasted South Dakota's "sound" budget compared to the "unhealthy" national budget.

Van Gerpen said he remains hopeful for additional education funding. "I think we need to focus on teacher pay increases," he said.

His home of Bon Homme County includes Mike Durfee State Prison of Springfield, and he applauded Daugaard's focus on the criminal justice initiative.

Van Gerpen noted the sharp rise in the state's prison population, particularly among repeat offenders. "What can we do to help them stay away from committing another crime?" he asked.

When it comes to prison reform, District 16 Rep. Jim Bolin (R-Canton) said he remains receptive to alternative sentencing.

"We do have to change our approach to non-violent offenders. Locking them up is not working," he said. "It

seems many in the penitentiary are not very penitent. So I reserve final judgment, but I am in basic agreement with (the governor's) approach."

In another issue, Bolin said he supports the governor's proposal to create a new state park at Blood Run in the Canton area.

"As for the tenor of the (governor's) speech, it was much better than last year. It was more of an idea of building consensus and working together," Bolin said.

District 17 Rep. Ray Ring (D-Vermillion) also sees promise with penal reform.

"Based on what I know so far, the corrections reform proposals seem to make a lot of sense," he said. "We need to do something about the high levels of incarceration, especially for non-violent offenders. It's important that the changes truly be 'evidence-based.'"

District 21 Rep. Julie Bartling (D-Gregory) said she would like to see more funding for education and health care.

"Even though the governor's budget has 3 percent inflationary increases planned for both K-12 education and Medicaid, the funding falls desperately short of what is needed to meet the expenses being

incurred," she said. "In my opinion, stewardship of our children's educational opportunities and caring for our most vulnerable (citizens') medical needs must be among the top priorities of state government."

Bartling said she looks forward to a bipartisan effort at crafting legislation "to heal the wounds left by budgetary cuts over the past few years."

District 19 Rep. Kyle Schoenfish (R-Scotland) saw many positive themes arising from Daugaard's address. He pointed to the proposed criminal justice reforms modeled after other states' success, the possibility of additional funds for education and Medicaid, and addressing the contractor's excise tax for economic development.

"There were a lot of things to be optimistic about," Schoenfish said. "We have a strong economy and the state's finances are solid, especially compared with many other states."

District 17 Sen. Tom Jones (D-tViborg) sees an end to the contractor's excise tax as desirable but difficult. "Our 'economic pie' isn't very big and everyone wants a piece of it and in most cases, want a larger piece," he said.

Jones sees some concerns

with the recently passed state law demanding a balanced budget.

"To me, that sword cuts two ways. Not only must we not spend more than we take in, but the other side means that we cannot carry over excess moneys that surpass our expenses," he said. "This Legislature should either return the excess to the taxpayers or use the moneys in a way that improves our way of life in South Dakota."

Overall, Daugaard's address set a good tone, especially compared to the rancor found in Washington, Bernie Hunhoff said.

"We always get along pretty well (in the Legislature), but maybe the bad example of the U.S. Congress these past few weeks has made all of us in Pierre appreciate the atmosphere in our citizen Legislature," he said.

"We will have policy differences and we'll disagree on priorities, but we like each other, we respect each other and, at the end of the 38-day session, we'll pass a balanced budget and shake hands and go home."

You can follow Randy Dockendorf on Twitter at twitter.com/RDockendorf

VHS presents original one act parody, 'Midwest Side Story'

Vermillion High School students will be presenting the one-act play, "Midwest Side Story," written and directed by Mary Begley on Friday, Jan. 18 at the VHS Performing Arts Center.

This humorous spoof of the popular 1950s musical "West Side Story" substitutes inner-city Puerto Rican and Polish-American gangs with South Dakotan east-side farmers and west-side ranchers.

This 45-minute production will be performed at 7:30 p.m. It

is free and open to the public.

After Friday's performance, the students will take the show on the road to the Region IA South Dakota High School Activities Association's one-act play contest held at Yankton's Mount Marty College theatre on Tuesday, Jan. 22 at 11 a.m.

Cast: William Card, Nathan Presho, Natalie Swanson, Jacob Ford, Meghan Cameron, Savannah Kirsch, MARRISA BRADY, Ruth Murphy, Dustin Fischer,

Sam Pearson, Rachel Axtell, Allison Howe, Jim Yao, Katie Zimmerman, Leah Geis, Adam Ahmed, Morgan Fuller, Audi Colmenero, William Getzin, Ellen Hanson, Jakari Knight, Elly Miller, Jayce Whipple

Crew: Jessica Brady, Abby Weiss, Dylan Pritchett, Anjie Ge, Rali Sykes, Sara Marker, Lucas Hodges, Sarah Johnson.



The cast and crew of "Midwest Side Story" have been busy in rehearsal this past week. The one-act play will be presented in the Vermillion High School's Performing Arts Center at 7:30 p.m. Jan. 18. (Photo by David Lias)

Check Us Out!

Visit us on the Web!

www.broadcasteronline.com
www.broadcasteronline.com
www.broadcasteronline.com
www.broadcasteronline.com
www.broadcasteronline.com
www.broadcasteronline.com
www.broadcasteronline.com
www.broadcasteronline.com
www.broadcasteronline.com

• WANTED •
 Old Vehicles • Farm Machinery • Scrap Iron
PAYING TOP DOLLAR

Call **402-841-1060** For Price

BIG IRON
 ONLINE AUCTIONS
 Experience the POWER of BigIron.com

ONLINE ONLY UNRESERVED AUCTION
www.bigiron.com
Wednesday, January 23, 2013
 First Lots Scheduled to Close at 10:00 AM Central Time
NO BUYERS PREMIUM FEE & NO RESERVES!!

12 Tractors, 1 Combine, 2 Dozers, 2 Wheel Loaders, 1 Skid Steer, 7 Trailers, 2 Dump Trucks, 1 Digger Truck, 9 Straight Trucks, 5 Semi Trucks, 3 Sprayers, Drill, 2 Grain Carts, Headers, 2 Mower/Conditioners, Precision Farm Equipment, Tillage Equipment, Planters, Rakes and much more!

The next BigIron.com auction is on January 30!!
 Do you have equipment to sell?
 Call 1-800-937-3558 for your local representative.
 BigIron.com is a division of Stock Auction Company

Patricia Curry: 605-661-2860
 Archie Dunham: 605-366-4625
 Also see us at Siouxlandhomes.com

Dunham COMPANY
www.dunhamcompany.com

Virtual Tours

Elk Point, SD

1706 Arnold Palmer - \$214,900
 2097 sq.ft., 4 BR, 3 full bath, new countertops, appliances stay. Main floor laundry. Open concept, fireplace, slider to deck. Master BR w/walk-in closet and bath w/jet tub. Lower level finish w/wet bar, 2 bedroom plus finished walk-in storage.

602 S. Pickney - \$207,900
 4 BR, 3 baths, 2216 sq. ft. finished. Open concept, fireplace, appliances stay. Master BR with 3/4 bath & walk-in closet plus a double closet. Main floor laundry. Over sized 2 stall. Lawn irrigation system, fresh paint. Will sell furniture. Close to school!

1101 W. Main Street, Elk Point - \$219,000
 HIGH VISIBILITY LOCATION: for business, office or retail. Exit 18 I-29. 1995 framed building. 2187 sf, 10'ceiling, tiled floors through out.

611 S. Pickney - \$294,900
 3,926 sq. ft., 4 bedroom, 4 bath crown molding, deck, fireplace, main floor laundry, master bath w/master walk-in closet, porch and underground sprinklers. Move in ready!

Want to Downsize Your Gas Guzzler?

Find your answer in the Broadcaster Classifieds — in print and online!

Go to www.broadcasteronline.com or call 605-624-4429.

Broadcaster Classifieds

AUTOMOTIVE
 06 CIVIC. Runs great. 34 MPG, 30k miles. Call Jim (605) 555-3210.