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## Powering Vermillion

City To Consider Second Substation Site

BY SHAUNA MARLETTE  
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At any given moment in Vermillion, with the flick of a switch, residents know that the lights will come on and with the installation of two new 115 kV breakers increasing the redundancy in the City's system, the reliability has been greatly increased. However, Vermillion Light and Power (VLP) superin-

tendent Mark Koller said the time is now for the city to consider installing a new, second substation site in Vermillion.

The current \$1.08 million project for the new breakers is entering the final stages, Koller said.

"We have done all of our switching and things are the way we want them to be in a normal mode right now," he said. "With is this project we



put in two new 115 kV (1 kilovolt equals 1,000 volts) breakers. We have our east line and our west line and they are actually tied together at our substation right now. With the relaying that was done

with this project, if something were to happen to one line or the other, what should happen is the lights will flicker, but not go out. It is called a redundant system."

The project also included new 15 kV high voltage breakers, which according to Koller run the town.

"You have usually 35-40 years of a life span on high voltage breakers," Koller explained. "The oldest building we have out there was from

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COURTESY PHOTO  
Kicking off Thursdays on the Platz in downtown Vermillion, the featured musical guest is the Mission Essential Brass Band (MEB) from the 147th Army Band of South Dakota Army National Guard.

## A POETIC TITLE



COURTESY PHOTO  
Lee Ann Roripaugh, a poet and a professor of English at the University of South Dakota, has been named South Dakota poet laureate by Gov. Dennis Daugaard. She will serve in that capacity until 2019.

## New SD Poet Laureate Finds Inspiration In Ancestry

BY REILLY BIEL  
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Contrary to popular belief, poetry does not just involve rhyming words. Lee Ann Roripaugh, South Dakota's new Poet Laureate, would be the first to say so.

"I typically write in free verse," Roripaugh explained. "I sometimes do contemporary versions of traditional Japanese. I like the form to fit or grasp the theme I'm working with. Each book I've written are about things similar to my style, and each book feels a bit different."

Since July 1, Roripaugh has formally taken the place of the state's former poet

laureate, David Allan Evans, who had been the state's poet laureate since 2002. Roripaugh's term will run until 2019.

Born and raised in Wyoming, Roripaugh started writing poetry at a young age using self-help example books, and continued to write for several years. She later developed an interest in music and earned a BM in piano performance at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana, eventually obtaining an MM in music history and an MFA in creative writing as well.

Roripaugh continued to write poetry and published her first book, "Beyond Heart Mountain," in 1999. She has been a professor of English at the University of South Dakota in Vermillion since 2000

and serves as the director of creative writing there while also serving as editor in chief for the South Dakota Review journal.

She has since published three more volumes of poetry, won several writing awards and is currently working on a fourth book about the Fukushima disaster that occurred in Japan in 2011.

Being a second-generation Japanese American plays a large role in Roripaugh's work.

"I write a lot about identity, tensions and challenges of growing up with a mixed race identity," she said. "My last book, 'Dandarions,' was about language

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## 147th Mission Essential Brass Band Set For Platz Summer Stage

BY JAMES COOPER  
For The Plain Talk

If you are not the sort to sit inside all day, then downtown Vermillion is the place for you. Thursday nights from July through August are filled with live music, food, and fun at the Platz on Main Street.

Kicking off Thursdays on the Platz in downtown Vermillion, the featured musical guest is the Mission Essential Brass Band (MEB) from the 147th Army Band of South Dakota Army National Guard.

This seven member ensemble contains two trumpeters, two horn players, a trombonist, tuba player and a percussionist.

Dr. Timothy Schorn First Sergeant of the band and senior enlisted member, as well as associate professor of Political Science and director of the International Studies Program at USD, spoke on behalf of the MEB.

"It is nice to know the band, but it is even nicer to know the people behind it," Schorn said. "In civilian life (the MEB) are computer programmers, graduate students of music or psychology and university professors."

This mixed bag of musicians is doing something right to be among those few who get to play in this elite group.

The 147th Army Band began 130 years ago as the Dakota Regimental Band and has played all over the world in times of war and peace.

The Mission Essential Brass band began four years ago and plays around the state of South Dakota in schools and communities. Of course, that many performances require a lot of music.

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SHAUNA MARLETTE/FOR THE PLAIN TALK  
City of Vermillion finance officer Mike Carlson explains how Council members, Katherine Price and Kelsey Collier-Wise should canvass the votes from the June 30 election, as city manager John Prescott looks on.

## City Council Certifies Election Results

BY SHAUNA MARLETTE  
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The Vermillion City Council during its noon meeting on Monday at City Hall canvassed the voter records from last Tuesday's special election. They certified that in the

election:  
• Initiated Measure: Repeal of Title XI, Business Regulations, Chapter 112 Alcoholic Beverages, Section 112.24 thorough 112.31, imposing a charge upon malt beverage

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## Revisiting A Very Personal Past

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF  
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Many Americans try not to think much about the Vietnam War.

John Mollison is working to make sure they never forget.

The Sioux Falls public relations, marketing and advertising executive – and filmmaker – was scheduled to depart over the weekend for eight days in Vietnam. He is accompanying Capt. Charlie Plumb, a former Navy fighter pilot who was a prisoner of war (POW) in the former North Vietnam for nearly six years.

Mollison, a journalism graduate from South Dakota State University, will use the material from the trip for a documentary. He has worked with the South Dakotan Newspaper Association (SDNA) on making arrangements for providing material from the trip to South Dakota newspapers.

"As far as the Vietnam War, I believe it was one of the pivotal moments of the 20th century," he said. "The case could be made that it had just as much impact as World War II."

Mollison plans to capture Plumb's emotions and memories upon returning to a place that represents so many painful experiences.



Mollison

Plumb grew up in Kansas and graduated from the Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland, according to his biography. He went on to fly the F-4 Phantom jet on 74 successful combat missions over Vietnam.

On his 75th mission, with only five days before he was to return home, Plumb was shot down, captured, tortured and imprisoned in an 8 foot x 8 foot cell. He spent the next 2,103 days

as a POW in communist war prisons. During his captivity, Plumb served for two years as the chaplain in his camp.

His military honors include two Purple Hearts, the Legion of Merit, the Silver Star, the Bronze Star and the POW Medal.

Plumb, who currently resides in California, has spoken to more than 4,500 audiences as a motivational speaker, according to his website. He has also appeared on national television programs such as "Good Morning America," "Nightline," "Larry King Live" and "The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer."

"Attitude is the secret to survival," he says on his website.

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