

# Governor cancels special legislative session

Gov. Dennis Daugaard has cancelled the special legislative session that had been called for Saturday, June 22, according to a press release issued late Wednesday morning. The governor cancelled the session because of what he describes as "good news" from the federal Veterans Administration.

Here is the message that was sent to state lawmakers:

Members of the South Dakota Legislature:

I am writing today with new information from the federal Veterans Administration that is good news about the State Veterans Home project. Due to this good news, I will be canceling the special session that I had called for June 22.

As you know, I called a special legislative session after bids for the Veterans Home project came in significantly higher than was estimated. I also accepted the low bid for the project, contingent on approval from the State Legislature to appropriate the additional funds.

As the materials sent to you on May 31 explained, we believed that delaying construction of the project into next year would lead to the State losing a \$23.6 million grant from the federal Veterans Administration, as well as the loss of eligibility for Medicaid. A special session was the only way to appropriate the necessary funds without delaying the project.

That is no longer the case. We have been working with federal VA officials to find a way around this deadline. Yesterday, we received word that the grant can be extended so that we have until February 2014, rather than June 2013, to finalize construction plans. We can also continue to be eligible for Medicaid, so long as work on a new facility is ongoing.

This additional time will allow us to revisit the current plans, seek a scaled-back redesign, and rebid the entire project.

I have spent the last three weeks closely scrutinizing this project, with the hope that cost savings could be found to reduce the cost of the project. When I wrote to you on May 22, I said that I didn't believe that we could cut the cost of this project by \$10 million and still build the facility that our veterans need. I now believe that additional cost savings are possible.

Now that we have received additional time, I am ordering that the entire project be reevaluated, redesigned, and rebid. We owe it to the taxpayers to be certain that we are building a durable, quality, and affordable facility. Scull Construction has agreed to set aside our contingent acceptance of the bid, and I very much appreciate that.

I am hopeful that design changes could lead to a total cost that we can all feel more comfortable with, although I would caution you that construction costs in the Black Hills do seem to be higher than many regions of the country. There will be additional information over the next several months, and a new plan will be presented to the 2014 Legislature.

Finally, I want to thank you all for the patience you have shown as we have worked through this difficult process. I know that many legislators had to change plans to attend the June 22 special session, and I truly appreciate that. We all want to honor our veterans with a home that will meet their needs for decades to come, even as we maintain our responsibility to the taxpayers we serve.

By Travis Gulbrandson  
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The Vermillion City Council approved the purchase of a new baler and conveyor for the landfill at its regular meeting last week.

The council accepted a bid from Recovery Systems Co. Inc. (RSC) to purchase a Harris baler and a Hustler conveyor, along with a maintenance service agreement, for the amount of \$994,999.

City Engineer José Dominguez said the city will receive \$953,000 as a replacement cost from its insurance company, resulting from a fire at the Vermillion Sanitary Landfill last October, and will make up the rest itself.

"This project was not budgeted for in 2013 as the fire

had not yet taken place," Dominguez said. "The money collected from the insurance company will be used to cover the cost of the project. The acquisition of the baler will be adjusted for during this year's budget revision process in September."

It is estimated that the budget will have to be revised by \$41,000 in addition to the \$953,000 from the insurance company, Dominguez added. The specifications for the new equipment were written to ensure that the machines purchased had been proven in the field.

"One of the ways that this was done was by having equipment from acceptable manufacturers," Dominguez said. "The city compiled a list of five acceptable balers and

two acceptable conveyors. If a vendor wanted to propose equipment from a different manufacturer, the vendor would have had to contact the city or consultant for prior approval."

Bids were opened for the project on May 21, and the city sent requests for bids to five vendors, ultimately receiving three bids from two vendors.

Although the low bid – which was in the amount of \$906,830.71 from IBC – had an approved baler, the conveyor was not on the approved list.

"The vendor never received an approval to utilize the conveyor in the bid," Dominguez said. "Furthermore, the conveyor is from a less well-known

manufacturer and does not meet critical items of the required specifications."

By contrast, the bids from RSC both had balers and conveyors from the approved list, and also met all the critical specifications.

The city council members unanimously approved the purchases.

The landfill's baler building caught fire last October, leading to the loss of items including the baler, conveyor and a truck.

In meetings last November, the city council replaced a wheel loader that was lost, as well as fire department gear that was damaged during the blaze.

The cause of the fire was undetermined following inspections from five investigators.

## Noem will seek re-election to U.S. House

Congresswoman Kristi Noem (R-SD) announced June 11 in a post on her Facebook page that she plans to seek re-election to the U.S. House of Representatives in 2014. Her statement follows:

"I am excited to announce today my intention to seek re-election to the U.S. House in 2014. I would like to thank everyone who has encouraged me and pledged support for a potential campaign for the U.S. Senate. However, after spending the weekend discussing our future with Bryon and our children, we decided that

right now we are in the best position to serve South Dakota as a member of the U.S. House.

"It is a privilege to serve South Dakota in the House, and while I'm proud of what we've been able to accomplish, there is a lot more we must do. At the top of that list is getting a full five-year Farm Bill passed to give our agriculture industry the certainty needed to plan for the future.

"In Washington there seems to be a new scandal breaking every day related to federal government overreach and abuse

of power. It is critical that we elect a Republican to the U.S. Senate in 2014 who will hold this Administration accountable, rein in wasteful spending and reduce our debt, and protect our liberties. I will work hard to help elect a South Dakota Republican to the U.S. Senate next year.

"I would like to thank all South Dakotans for the opportunity to serve our state and for all of the prayers and encouragement received in the course of that service."

## OBITUARIES

### Mary Jo Ralph

Mary Jo (Kruse) Ralph, born Jan. 9, 1951, went to be with the Lord on Monday, May 20, 2013.

Mary Jo was a character! She had the respect of all who knew her. She had a loud bark, but the softest heart ever. For someone so sane she could be as crazy as a lost firecracker on the Fourth of July. She had spunk and was loved by everyone. She touched so many people who passed through Oak Forest RV Park going through illness, hard times, happy celebrations, or tragedy in their lives. She opened her heart to everyone and touched them in her own special way.

For the little bitty thing that she was, Mary Jo acted like she was seven feet tall and talked like it. She was a strong lady and set an example for all of us. She didn't complain about how bad she felt – she was more interested in hearing about you and what was going on in your life. She was an incredible person and an incredible friend to all.

Mary Jo is with her maker and more than likely will be managing the heavenly park and getting it in shape for us when we show up.

God love you, Mary Jo! She is survived by her mother, Lela Kruse, Vermillion; her husband, Bill, Austin, TX;

her son, Seth and grandson, Shawn Harley, both of Bandera, TX; and her siblings, Linda (Al) Kruse, Marshal, MN, Nancy Kruse, Soldota, AK, Carol Kruse, Vermillion, Tom (Carlotta) Kruse, Vermillion, and Mike (Laurie) Kruse, Vermillion. She was a beloved aunt to many nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her father, Deryl Kruse.

A memorial service will be held at 10:30 a.m., June 22, at Trinity Lutheran Church, Vermillion.

### John F. Check

John F. Check passed away at the Sanford Medical Center on June 5, 2013 in Vermillion, at the age of 91. He was the youngest son of Joseph and Valeria (Kiezewski) Check; the husband of Teckla (Kurzinski) Check; and the father of Gregory, Deborah, Patricia and John David.

John was born on the family farm outside Rosholt, WI, Aug. 22, 1921. Eschewing the agricultural life, he started his teaching career in a one-room schoolhouse while still in his teens. Because he so enjoyed the field of education, he sought to advance himself by teaching at different schools, going on to earn a Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin Madison in 1959.

John taught at the University of Michigan Flint for seven years before coming in 1966 to the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, where he taught for over 20 years. In 1969, he received the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh Distinguished Teaching Award, and was named to the

Outstanding Educators of America in 1970. He was sought after for speeches and seminars and wrote a number of articles published in scholarly educational journals.

For nearly 60 years John led his own dance band, producing numerous recordings on 78s, LP albums and CDs. He wrote over 200 compositions in the polka/waltz idiom, with his first, the "Two Eddies Polka," being recorded by numerous bands. Works of his have been placed in the Mills Music Library of the Wisconsin State Archives and in archives of the National Music Museum in South Dakota. One of his CDs received honorable mention in the folk music category and was acquired by the Library of Congress in Washington, DC.

John received many accolades for his musical avocation including the Concertina Hall of Fame in 1981, the International Polka Hall of Fame in 1991, and the Wisconsin Polka Hall of Fame Lifetime Achievement Award in 2005. First with the Michigan Dutchmen, then later with the Wisconsin Dutchmen, he appeared on a weekly TV show for more than a decade. He also hosted a radio show at various stations featuring "the best in

recorded polka music".

Knowing he would miss his dear friends in Wisconsin, he chose to move to Vermillion in 2009 to be closer to his daughter, Debbie. While in Vermillion, he continued to entertain people with his music and would often serve as a reader at St. Agnes Church.

John was preceded in death by his wife Teckla in 1988. He is survived by his son, Gregory of Cambridge, MA; his daughter, Deborah Reeves of Vermillion; his daughter, Patricia of Oshkosh, WI; his son, John David of Warrensburg, MO; and grandchildren, Adam of Charlestown, MA and Brendan of Los Angeles, CA.

A funeral mass was celebrated at St. Agnes Church in Vermillion, Monday 7 p.m., preceded by visitation at the church at 6 p.m. In Oshkosh, WI, a funeral mass was at St. Raphael's church Thursday June 13, 11 a.m. with visitation starting at 9 a.m. and burial in Sacred Heart Cemetery.

Funeral arrangements in Vermillion are by Hansen Funeral Home, and in Oshkosh by Fiss and Bills Poklasny Funeral Home. In lieu of flowers, the family requests a donation be made to St. Agnes or St. Raphael's Church.

## South Dakota's GDP up 1.9 percent

South Dakota's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is up for the third consecutive year in 2012 with an increase of 1.9 percent, according to preliminary numbers released by the Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce. That's after a very strong increase of 8.8 percent in 2011.

"Although South Dakota's increase in GDP isn't quite as high as last year's, there are a number of positive findings in the report," said Pat Costello, commissioner, Governor's Office of Economic Development. "Within the manufacturing sector, our numbers are up by 10 percent, which gives South Dakota the fifth highest percent increase in the nation for manufacturing."

Costello said that South Dakota's agricultural-based economy played a large factor in the 2012 total.

"Within the agricultural sector, the GDP was down by 16 percent, and most of that loss can be attributed to the drought that has plagued the entire state last year," Costello said. "When you have an ag-based economy like we do here in South Dakota, this is the sort of thing we deal with."

Costello also noted that since the GDP numbers are preliminary, South Dakota's ranking could fluctuate as the figures are adjusted and refined.

Gross Domestic Product by State statistics are released by the U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis as a measure of comprehensive economic activity.

For more information about national and regional statistics, visit [www.bea.gov/newsreleases/regional/gdp\\_state/gsp\\_newsreleases.htm](http://www.bea.gov/newsreleases/regional/gdp_state/gsp_newsreleases.htm).



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