

# National Guard unit provides health care

By Spc. Zane Craig

109th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Soldiers of the 730th Area Support Medical Company, of Vermillion, provided medical services, including health fairs and additional staffing to the Indian Health Service clinics and ambulance companies at Lower Brule and Fort Thompson as part of the Golden Coyote training exercise from June 8-22.

"The 730th's mission during this year's Golden Coyote exercise was to provide health services and expanded opportunities for preventative healthcare to the tribes of South Dakota, particularly the Crow Creek Sioux and the Lower Brule Sioux tribes," said 1st Lt. Keith Bryant, headquarters platoon leader with the 730th.

According to Bryant, one medical doctor, one first-year resident, three dentists and several registered nurses, physician's assistants, dental hygienists and Army healthcare specialists from the 730th and the SD Army National Guard's Medical Command were tasked with augmenting the IHS providers.

"Our assistance expands the residents' opportunity to access healthcare. At the clinics there are only a certain number of providers and the wait times can be long," said Staff Sgt. Chad Nielsen, healthcare specialist with the 730th and Sioux Falls resident. "With us coming in, they get things done like checkups, sports physicals, routine stuff that with only one or two providers here might take a bit longer."

More than 60 soldiers of the 730th set up four health fairs, and provided personnel to augment IHS staff at the medical and dental clinics and ambulance services on the Lower Brule and Crow Creek Reservations. The unit's leadership also met with tribal leaders in advance to receive input about which services were most needed.

"We didn't want to come in here with what we thought they needed. We wanted to know from the local healthcare system the services they needed most and we would try to provide them," said Bryant.

When a patient arrives at a health fair tent, a healthcare specialist takes their vital signs, including blood pressure, heart and respiratory rate and provides a patient-directed evaluation and educational experience.

"As the South Dakota National Guard, we are serving one of our populations here, where diabetes is really prevalent," said Sgt. Jessica Myers, a health care specialist with the 730th and Springfield resident. "I love the fact that when we convoy down the road, nine out of ten people are either going to give us a salute or smile and wave, or stop in, even if they're not here for our health care, to say 'Thank you for serving, thank you

for being here."

Both Lower Brule and Fort Thompson have medical clinics run by the IHS, which are the only sources of medical care for those communities aside from hospitals in Chamberlain and Pierre – 25 and 65 miles away, respectively.

"Here at Lower Brule, the dental clinic has been closed for a few years, so we got it up and running. We provided general dental services, to include extractions and restorations, screenings for preschool students and general exams, and we do have a dental hygienist here," said Maj. William Manke, general dentist with the 730th and Winner resident.

Manke explained that with the clinic not having been in use for some time, everything was stored in boxes, equipment hadn't been run in two years and required expeditionary setup by his team, just like in a deployment situation.

"Personally, I get a lot of satisfaction out of doing this because this is one of the most underserved areas in the country, our Native American reservations. So just providing that service is really satisfying," he said.

Capt. Timothy Quinn, a physician's assistant with the 730th and a Faulkton resident, said the aspect of this mission he most enjoyed was interacting with the Native American people. Although he grew up near a reservation, he said bringing medical care was very different and enjoyed seeing the appreciation in their faces as he helped them.

"The care we're providing here at the clinic is essentially any that would normally be provided in any healthcare clinic," he said. "Anything from a preschool screening to sports physicals. We've also been doing some acute care, which involves upper respiratory infections, pneumonia and care for injuries."

Manke said the 730th's mission enjoyed great support from the local community, many of whom remember the Soldiers from their prior mission in the community in June 2009.

Doug Uecker, an emergency medical technician with the Crow Creek Sioux Ambulance said the overall health situation in the area they cover is a huge challenge. Diabetes is prevalent and the life expectancy is not high, so they see people at a young age having pretty complex medical issues.

"The area we cover is fairly large, and there are many people out there who don't have transportation. They rely on us for transport service," said Uecker, who appreciates having the extra bodies from the South Dakota National Guard to help, even temporarily.

The soldiers of the 730th, in turn, appreciate the chance to hone their skills and provide a valuable service to their fellow South Dakotans, said Nielsen.

# Local skaters have new place to catch air

By Travis Gulbrandson

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It was perfect skating weather Tuesday for the official dedication ceremony of Vermillion's Barstow Skate Park, as evidenced by the number of youths making use of the facility that afternoon.

"This is definitely something that will be a great benefit to the community over the next – I don't know how many years," said recreation specialist Ryan Baedke. "Hopefully we will be able to continue to add to it and improve it."

The park is 160 feet by 90 feet and is a dual-purpose facility.

"As you all know, this will also turn into an ice rink when weather permits in the wintertime so we will get a dual year-long usage out of it, which is a really nice feature for the City of Vermillion," said parks and rec director Jim Goblirsch.

"It was a learning process the first time we were out here trying to figure out how to make ice that would last," Baedke added. "I think we have a game plan now coming into this fall."

In addition to the ice-skating capabilities, the park also has lights for night skating, and grass is being planted and cement laid around the buildings.

The ramps were designed and installed by American Ramp Company of Joplin, MO.

"It's the largest skateboard ramp manufacturer in the world," Baedke said. "They build parks all over the world. The group we had here building ours had just come from Mexico, and they were headed to Moscow the following week."

"All that stuff is specially-designed to last quite some time," Baedke said.



Representatives from Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield and the City of Vermillion, as well as local skateboarders, participate in the ribbon-cutting ceremony at Barstow Skate Park Tuesday afternoon. (Travis Gulbrandson/Vermillion Plain Talk)

The project officially began three years ago when the City of Vermillion became a part of the Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield Three-Point Play Program.

Wellmark partnered with the University of South Dakota in order to raise funds to assist in the construction – \$200 for each field goal scored by the USD football team and \$25 for each three-point basket scored by the Coyote basketball teams over the past three years.

"Over those three years, we were able to get (more than) \$40,000 to afford our skate park," Baedke said. "That's fantastic. It's a large amount of money, and this project wouldn't have been possible without that program."

Wellmark marketing communications consultant

Stephanie Perry said her company was glad to help.

"It was quite exciting to actually see the project come to fruition," she said. "It was great to see that with just a little bit of money that we were able to provide, that we were able to provide something that, obviously, people here are enjoying."

Baedke thanked everyone who was involved in helping to complete the project, including Perry; Ted Schaffer, for constructing and carving the Barstow Skate Park sign; Travis Lee and the staff of USD Marketing; the City of Vermillion Street Department for installing new sidewalks; the City of Vermillion Engineering Department for assisting with park design; the City of Vermillion Light and Power Department for

installing new lights; the USD football and basketball teams; former parks and rec director Dave Nelson; and MidAmerican Energy for their monetary donation.

Goblirsch echoed these sentiments, stating, "Most of these types of projects come with a vision, where someone brought it to our attention, be it a city council member, be it the city manager or even someone from the rec staff saying, 'Hey, you know what? We would like something like this.' It doesn't happen overnight. There are a lot of people who took time and effort and (made) contributions."

The Barstow Skate Park is located near the intersection of Carr and Dartmouth streets.

## SCHOLASTICS

### Luther College

Hilary Callahan of Vermillion, received the bachelor of arts degree in psychology magna cum laude.

Luther College held commencement ceremonies for the Class of 2013 at 10 a.m. May 19 in Luther College's Regents Center Main Gym.

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majors and pre-professional programs.

### School of Mines

Nearly 270 students received their Associate of Arts, Bachelor of Science, Master of Science or Doctor of Philosophy degrees at the South Dakota School of Mines & Technology's 167th commencement ceremony.

Gov. Dennis M. Daugaard delivered the commencement address, and Carlos A. Beatty,

Jr., of Rapid City, an industrial engineering and engineering management major, delivered the senior class message.

Among area students earning degrees were Justine Sorensen,

B.S., MINE Mining Engineering, and Jacey Wipf, summa cum laude, B.S., ISATM Atmospheric Sciences, of Vermillion.

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