

Boys State Elects Flannery Of Elk Point, Governor

ABERDEEN – The 306 high school boys between their junior and senior years, who were delegates to the 73rd Annual Session of The American Legion Boys State of South Dakota held their general election for state officers on Thursday, June 4th. After lunch, election results were announced by Boys State Director Gene Opbroek of Pierre.

Andrew Flannery of Elk Point, who will be a senior this year at Elk Point High School, was elected as Governor. Elected as Lt. Governor was Logan Eckhoff of Sioux Falls, a student at Washington High School in Sioux Falls.

Austin Lentsch of Pierre and Andrew Silva of Gettysburg were selected as the two delegates to represent South Dakota at The American Legion Boys Nation in Washington, D.C. in July. Gabriel Dannenbring of Yankton and Omar Elkhader of Aberdeen were selected as Alternate Delegates.

Ryder Grantham of Hayti was selected as the 2015 American Legion South Dakota winner of the Samsung Scholarship. Ryder's application has been forwarded to the National American Legion Selection Committee. The committee will award \$20,000 scholarships to ten of the State Finalists.

Other election results were Joseph Kavanagh of Brookings for Attorney General; Daxx Wiebelhaus of Letcher for Secretary of State; Maxxwill Hausman of Estelline as State Auditor; Jaydon Hinsch of Sioux Falls as State Treasurer; Nathan Powell of Chamberlain as Commissioner of School and Public Lands. Elected as members of the Public Utilities Commissioner were Samuel Gusso of Yankton, Landon Pooley of Mitchell and Thomas Trautman of Aberdeen.

In non-political elections, the delegates also elected five justices to serve on the Supreme Court. Elected as Supreme Court Justices were Cole McDougall of Brookings, Andrew Peitz of Yankton, James Uthe of Sioux Falls, Bryan Waugh of Spearfish and Lucas Ladenburger of Rapid City, who was elected the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

August Veerman of Sioux Falls was selected as the Speaker of the House of Representatives. Gabriel Dannenbring of Yankton was selected as the Nationalist Party Chairman and Jayden Hinsch of Sioux Falls was the Nationalist Party Keynote Speaker. The Federalist Party chose Joseph Kavanagh of Brookings as their Party Chairman and Alex Chapman of Rapid City as their Keynote Speaker.

Alex Chapman of Rapid City captured the honors of Outstanding Speaker. Daxx Wiebelhaus of Letcher was selected as the Outstanding Boys State Citizen and Levi Kessler of Mina received the Spirit of Boys State Award, which recognizes the Boys State Delegate who best exemplifies the purpose of American Legion Boys State of South Dakota.

American Legion Boys State of South Dakota was held on the campus of Northern State University in Aberdeen, June 1-5, 2015.

Germann Selected As 4-H Focus Delegate

Kailey Germann has been selected to represent Clay County during the 2015 Citizenship Washington Focus trip to Washington, DC June 13-21, 2015.

Kailey is one of 41 South Dakota 4-H members who will have the opportunity to visit the US Capitol Building, the White House and

the National 4-H Center. All delegates will have the opportunity to debate national issues with other 4-H members and leaders from 12 other states. Participants will also be able to visit with South Dakota Senators and Representatives. County delegates are chosen based on their personal applica-

tion and outstanding 4-H membership.

Kailey is the daughter of Julie Jensen and Jeff Germann. She is a three-year member of the Young Producers 4-H Club and has been active in the Swine, Goat, Rabbit, Poultry, Cat, Visual Arts and Home Environment project areas

and has also participated in Consumer Decision Making and Horticulture judging schools.

The Citizenship Washington Focus trip is co-sponsored by the Clay County 4-H Leaders Association, Clay County Youth Trust Fund, Inc. and the South Dakota 4-H Foundation.

Plans

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As part of its study, the city solicited a broad range of opinions from residents of all ages, said City Manager John Prescott.

"From day one of our information at public meetings, this tax was one of the legs to fund the project," Powell said. "We didn't want to raise property taxes so we looked at doing the malt beverage tax."

Powell said that the malt beverage tax is critical to continuing with the park plans as they stand and for the future of Vermillion.

"It is really critical for not just our kids, but when companies come looking at Vermillion they certainly look at the amenities that we have like the golf course," he said. "I don't use it, but I sure do support it. The library, the issue there, they are important to employers who are looking to relocate their employees."

The city had hoped to place the bonds this summer with the assumption that the 5 percent malt beverage mark-up would be used to help cover the anticipated average annual debt service of \$222,127.

"I am cautiously optimistic; I would think if people approved the bond issue, they would approve this," Powell said. "(The ordinance) was passed by the council, so now ballot issue is an effort to undo that. A vote yes would do away with the 5 percent and a vote no would not. It is crucial for the public to understand that."

"We put the project on hold, and will revisit it to see if we have to cut back on the amenities and facilities following the vote to make the budget work."

A Look Back

The city took the Prentis Park improvement plan to the community through several public meetings last year, Prescott said.

"We did a survey and came up with

a whole list of features that people would like to have included in the pool," Prescott said. "It would be a very nice pool but not more than we can afford to build and maintain."

As part of the bond issue, other park improvements would include an updated band shell, new basketball courts, new bathroom facilities at the baseball field and additional parking.

The bond measure required a 60 percent majority for passage but received closer to 75 percent, Prescott said. Besides issuing up to \$3.1 million in bonds, the financing plan called for \$1 million each from the general fund reserves and the second-penny fund reserves.

In January the council approved Ordinance 1325 to implement a 5 percent malt beverage markup on the wholesale cost and freight of malt beverages as of July 1.

State Statute provides that a community can implement and collect a 5 percent markup on the wholesale cost of malt beverages.

The ordinance specifies that the proceeds of the markup would only be used to retire the General Obligation bond for Prentis Park improvements and/or maintenance, operation, capital improvements or expansion to the parks and park facilities within the city.

The funds can be used for park improvements whether they are bonded or not.

The ordinance includes language that the City Council would annually conduct a public hearing to receive comments on the use of the funds and the continuation of the malt beverage markup ordinance, if adopted.

The annual public hearing required in the proposed ordinance is to be part of the budget adoption process. There they will seek to have an annual review of the receipts and use of the funds during the budget meetings which are in August and September of each year.

Following approval by the city council, the ordinance was published on Feb. 27

and became effective on March 19.

An initial referendum petition was received on March 18 that was determined by the City Attorney to not be valid due to the wording on the petition. A second petition was received on May 11 from Blaine Schoellerman which was determined to be valid and meet the 5 percent requirement of voters needed and was determined to be valid.

According to city manager John Prescott the decision of the voters will greatly affect the direction the council will take in regards to the Prentis Park Project.

"The current estimate of the project is that it will cost \$5.25 million," Prescott said. "The council designated \$1 million of reserves from the general fund, \$1 million of the second penny fund reserves and estimated that we would need to seek a bond of \$3 million to finance the project."

A malt beverage mark-up is provided for in state statute and allows a city to add up to 5 percent on cost and freight of malt beverages, which according to the last year of data available of 2007 would have generated \$116,600 per year.

Prescott said that using the costs associated with malt beverages at the golf course, which the City manages, for one brand of beer an 18-pack has a cost of \$12.40 or \$0.69 per can. With the mark-up of the cost for that can of beer would be \$0.72, or three cents higher. For the most expensive bottled beer sold at the golf course, it would be equivalent to a six cent increase per bottle, which the providers would be required to capture in their sales costs. Likewise for keg costs, the most expensive keg would incur a six cent per glass increase.

Prescott said should the mark-up now be voted down by voters, it would force the city council to greatly reduce the plans for the Prentis Park Project.

Randy Dockendorf contributed to this report.

Rules

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Pamela Hanson runs a daycare out of her home and is also against the ordinance passing.

"I understand the safety thing," she said. "If the issue is they don't know where the in-home daycares are in Vermillion we would be willing to go down and put our names down at the fire station. We'd give our name, address, any information that they would want."

Hanson was state licensed for eight years before deciding to drop licensing due to not having children in need of state licensing.

"They're talking about safety but most of us are already doing those things," she said. "They're telling us we have to have fire extinguishers and smoke alarms and our exits have to be up to standards. Most of us already have most of that put in place."

This is not the only issue Hanson has with the ordinance.

"They're also telling us that we can't have anyone under the age of 18 helping us or they have to be with us or in our sight," she said. "In the summertime we provide employment to a lot of the younger kids of Vermillion like high-school kids and we wouldn't be able to do that any longer."

Another pointless aspect of the ordinance according to both Hanson and Pietrzak is the fact that their yards must be fenced in to regulations or parents must sign a waiver.

"I do have my yard fenced in but my rails don't meet the standard," Hanson said. "It's supposed to be, I believe four inches from rail to rail and mine are five inches so I would have to have a piece of paper signed by all my parents saying that they understand that my fence is not meeting the regulations. To me that's just dumb. Why are we making it? We put these regulations in place but we can have parents sign a paper saying it's null and void."

Pietrzak has a large unfenced backyard herself in a residential area with not much traffic.

Her backyard is far enough away from the street to appease state officials.

"I didn't want to fence in my yard," she said. "The state said not a problem

you're back far enough away. Well, the city wanted me to put in a fence. In my opinion if you pass inspection from the state that should be good enough."

Priorities don't seem to be in the right order for the city according to Hanson and Pietrzak.

According to Hanson, many parents ask her if the other kids in her care are immunized which seems to be of higher importance to them than the regulations imposed by the daycare ordinance.

"They're not asking me if I have fire extinguishers and smoke alarms because they can see that we already have those things," Hanson said. "I've been a daycare provider for 18 years now. I have a fire extinguisher; I have smoke alarms in my house. I am CPR certified. I do have a map in my kitchen as to where the fire exits are in my house. The state said my backyard fence was fine and I didn't have to have a piece of paper signed by parents telling me that it doesn't meet the regulations."

To Hanson, the regulations simply aren't needed.

"If it's not broken don't fix it," she said. "It's working. Look at Sioux Falls. They have so many child abuse cases and they have regulations up there so it's clearly not working to be licensed through the city. Someone said they validate us if we're on that sheet of paper. How does that validate us? They're not checking our records to see if our kids are immunized. To me that's more important."

Pietrzak also believes the city doesn't know what is really necessary.

"To me it's not the fact that they want to do the ordinances, it's the fact that they didn't know what they needed for an in-home daycare registry," she said. "I feel like if they really wanted to know what was right for the kids and for the providers and for the city, they would have focused on other things. I would have put sex offender registry higher on the list than some things that they put. I would have put vaccinations and record keeping higher on the list. I would have answered respectfully when people asked."

The process and methods of accountability and record-keeping also are highly flawed according to Hanson.

"I don't know who's regulating it for one thing," she

said. "Who's going to come do the inspections in the houses? That's one of our concerns. We always knew when the state came in who it was going to be. We don't want just anyone walking in our houses."

"They also said they want to come in on unannounced visits," Hanson continued. "They said that's never going to happen but they're not going to take it out of the paper. So much of the stuff they've told us has been so wishy-washy. They're not even having us have our child to adult ratio checked."

Pietrzak also disagrees with the surprise inspection policy.

"The fire chief said they want to be able to come in at any time," she said. "No. Why? My parents have an open-door policy. They come in any time they want. If your child is in my house you're welcome to come in. Why do we have to have 15 other people that can show up throughout the day?"

The fact that the city doesn't intend to check up on several important regulations also bothers Pietrzak.

"The Sergeant said for anyone who works with you, I want you to put them through the sexual registry to make sure they're not sex offenders," she said. "And I said, 'Ok, we're going to do this. Who's going to check the files?' Nobody's going to check those files. They're just going to trust that we did it. They were making a bigger issue over the fence than the files. That bugs me. Anyone can tell if there's a fence there. You can't always tell if someone coming in to work with your child is a sex offender."

"You're not supposed to have more than 12 kids at your daycare," she continued. "They said at the meeting they're not going to monitor the numbers. It feels like it's busy work for them, not that they really care about the kids. They're micromanaging things without having a clue what they're doing."

The fact that the city seems to be assuming power they don't intend to

use makes daycare providers like Hanson and Pietrzak nervous that though the registration is free right now, they'll start assessing a fee in the future.

"That's a fee that will be given to the parents," Hanson said. "We try to keep our daycare costs as low as we possibly can. I'm not worried about passing the regulations. I don't want them coming in and telling me what I have to do when I'm already doing it. I feel like they're trying to get their foot in the door. Then in a couple of years are they going to try and make it stronger? Originally they gave us a list of regulations that was like 10 pages long. Then they hand-picked the ones they wanted put in as regulations. I'd like to know how they hand-picked them because some of the stuff isn't necessarily the most important."

Hanson wondered again why this is even necessary.

"If they've been doing daycare for up to 20 years and it's been fine then what's the problem with it now?" she said. "If it wasn't a safe house they wouldn't be living in it themselves. I can understand if something happened in Vermillion or if there were reported cases of things going on but I don't see that in Vermillion."

"If the state hasn't said South Dakota needs to do this why is the city coming in and doing it?" she said. "It feels like it's a control issue that the city is taking over on us. I don't know why it's there because we haven't had any problems that I'm aware of."

Pietrzak believes there are other solutions than being so strict on pointless regulations.

"It's so any new person that moves into town knows what's expected of them," she said. "That doesn't make sense. You could just as easily say if your yard is so many feet from the street they're excluded from having a fence. There are different ways you could word that. They could have used input from daycare providers."

Pietrzak also hasn't been impressed with the level of helpfulness expressed by

the city.

"At one of the meetings, the daycare provider asked why we need to do this every year and they said it's better for registration," she said. "That's not an answer. When you're state licensed they do a lot of things if you need it done to provide care for these kids. They're all about helping out. The city's not. Just things like that."

The biggest reason why Hanson believes the Daycare Ordinance is unnecessary is the fact that the city needs to simply trust the parents of Vermillion with the care of their own children.

"The parents come to our house," she said. "They can see if my house is safe or unsafe and they make that choice. In a lot of ways the city is almost insulting our parents saying they're not smart enough to decide if their kids are safe to come to our houses. That's why a lot of the parents are fighting."

"I think most parents are very happy in Vermillion," she said. "The parents who chose in-home daycares have a reason for wanting that. If they choose a daycare center that's because that's where they want their children."

Pietrzak agrees. "As parents you know when you go to leave your child somewhere, you get a feeling for that place," she said. "There are people that

didn't choose me as a provider and there are people that I didn't take. There are a lot of different factors that go into a daycare decision on both sides."

Hanson commented that if the ordinance does pass she would continue to stay open.

"The only change I would have to make at this point is to draw up a paper about the fence in the backyard," she said. "I'm not going to stop doing daycare. I've been doing it for 18 years and I love my job. It won't stop me but I don't see why we need it done. None of us are that worried about this passing. We just don't want them coming in and regulating what we're doing."

Pietrzak, on the other hand, would most likely have closed down if the ordinance passed and she was not moving.

"After they gave me the waiver for the fence I think I maybe would have had to do one other thing, maybe \$100," she said. "It wouldn't have been a big deal. My house is already set up for it."

The fire chief is a very nice man. The way he didn't answer questions, the way he kind of talked around them made me not want to stay open. I didn't leave any of those meetings feeling like I (had answers)."



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