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SHIINE to host Medicare presentation

Senior Health Information and Insurance Education (SHIINE) will host an informational Medicare presentation in Vermillion at the Senior Center, 320 W. Main St. at 2 p.m. on Tuesday, March 16, 2010.

The hour-long presentation will include an overview of basic Medicare, the differences between Parts A, B, C, and D, how and when to apply for coverage, covered services, Medigap coverage, Medicare Advantage plans, and who may be eligible for extra help with prescription drug costs. The presentation is free and open to the public.

Administered by the SD Department of Social Services, SHIINE is a federally-funded program that advocates for, educates and assists consumers with Medicare and related health information, to allow consumers to make timely and informed decisions and access necessary resources. The program is free for eligible seniors.

For more information on SHIINE or the Understanding Medicare presentation, contact SHIINE Regional Coordinator Tom Hoy, at 1-800-536-8197 or visit www.shiine.net.

Welcome Table will meet March 8

The next Vermillion Welcome table will be Monday, March 8 from 5:30 to 7 p.m. at the United Methodist Church.

It will be the 434th Welcome Table meal served.

The March 8 meal will be sponsored and served by The Red Hat Society.

Thank you to Delta Sigma Pi for sponsoring and serving last Monday's meal.

Cancer support group meets March 10

WE CARE: We C(cancer) A (advocacy) R (resource) E (encouragement), the cancer support group in Vermillion, will meet 6:30 p.m. March 10 in the conference room of the Al Neuharth Media Center, located on the corner of Dakota and Cherry streets.

People wishing to attend should use the north parking lot and the north entrance of the building.

The cancer support group meeting is for people battling cancer, and is also open to their family members, friends, survivors and care takers.

The support group holds its regular meetings on the second Wednesday of each month.

Plain Talk poll results

Poll results 2-25-10

Do you believe that after 12 years without a pay raise, state lawmakers should have cut their pay?

Yes 34 Votes
 No 36 Votes
 Undecided 5 Votes

To participate in the Plain Talk Internet poll, log on to www.plaintalk.net.

Census campaign hopes to reach 'hard-to-reach' population

By David Lias
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The Vermillion city government is encouraging citizens of the community to "Take 10" and help the city get what it needs for the next 10 years.

Specifically, it has launched a campaign encouraging townsmen to set aside 10 minutes and complete their U.S. Census forms when they arrive.

"The Vermillion Chamber of Commerce and Development Company has recognized the importance of a complete and accurate count with the 2010 census this year," Evie Johnson, a Vermillion city staff member, told the Vermillion City Council recently.

Various community members are currently serving on a newly formed Complete Count Committee. We've really focused on how to find the

hard-to-count population," she said.

"We've worked really hard to develop an in-depth marketing plan that includes everyone in Clay County and in the city of Vermillion, and really hones in on our students.

"We really believe that this highly mobile student population is really where we are missing our count in Vermillion," Johnson said.

It is estimated that data on nearly one-third of the Vermillion population wasn't collected during the last U.S. Census, conducted a decade ago.

"The numbers that we had said that we had a 69 percent rate (of participation) in 2000, so just about one-in-three people were being missed by the census in Vermillion," Johnson said.

It is important that everyone be counted, she told the Vermillion City Council at its Jan. 19 meeting.

"The census really can help our community with federal funding and also with economic development," Johnson said. "That's why the Chamber has really stepped up. 'Vermillion Now' has acknowledged the importance of an accurate count by committing \$5,800 to the project. We need another \$1,000 for the project to market in all area newspapers and to really hone in on the hard-to-count student population."

The premise of the local marketing theme is "You Count Here."

"One of the things that we're doing in our ad campaign is taking pictures of people who live in Vermillion," Johnson said. "Some are students, some are faculty members, and we also will feature people who have lived in Vermillion all of their lives, and we're going to use those people to

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VAST opportunities await young swimmers

Competition isn't the predominant goal of local team

By David Lias
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With the endless cycle of changing sports seasons swirling around them, members of the Vermillion Area Swim Team (VAST) enjoy the predictability of it all.

While classmates who are involved in other sports have completed basketball and gymnastics, and are gearing up for track and field or golf, the VAST participants know there will always be yet another practice awaiting them at the DakotaDome's indoor pool.

There will always be a chance to improve their swimming technique. To better master a particular stroke. To maybe swim just a bit faster.

And, most importantly, to continue to have fun.

VAST follows the guidelines of United States Swimming, the national governing body for competitive swimming nationwide. The local swimmers compete during a winter season which begins in September and will end later this month. VAST's summer season will begin in mid-April, and will wrap up at the end of August.

"Since things are winding down, we can take time to work with the younger kids and the new kids a bit more than before," said Mike Moran, the head coach of VAST. "They are going to get a break then until mid-April, and then everyone is going to start over new again. That's really nice."

Youth in the Vermillion area who think they might enjoy being a member of VAST are welcome to simply show up at the first practice of the

summer season, scheduled for April 19.

There are only two meets remaining in VAST's winter season, but both are significant. The team will participate in the Short Course State Championship in Aberdeen March 5 through 7. They will then travel to the Midwest Regionals in Minneapolis, MN.

"In the winter season, there has to be at least 10 meets that are available for the swimmers," Mike said. "And, it's strictly optional. There are kids that have not gone to meets yet, and the kids who are first-time swimmers, and decide to go to a meet—they always have a blast."

"Some of the kids think swimming in a meet is going to be really scary, and when they finally do it, they discover that it's really not that bad," he said.

Moran has been the head coach of VAST since September 2009. He directs a team made up of 32 young people, ranging in age from 5 to 18.

This year, the team has grown, and someday, Mike would like to see up to 40 or 50 young people from the region compete in VAST.

"I think we can in this community, because a lot of people just don't know about us. They think it's something that they have to try out for, and it's really not," Mike said.

Some of the young people who participate in VAST may have experience swimming competitively on other teams. And some had barely gotten their feet wet before joining the team.

"It doesn't matter. We work with everybody," he said. "We have kids that

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Coach Mike Moran gives instructions to young members of VAST during a practice session Monday night at the DakotaDome pool. The team typically practices five nights a week. (Photo by David Lias)

Operation Free: Nation's dependence on foreign oil threatens security

By David Lias
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There is a natural link between the present and former members of the U.S. military, and the American freedom they have strived to protect for over two centuries.

One of the biggest threats to our nation's freedom doesn't loom necessarily on the battlefield, according to a group of veterans associated with Operation Free who spoke on the University of South Dakota campus Tuesday afternoon.

The growing risk to the United States' security comes from the country's growing dependence on foreign oil, according to Operation Free, a coalition of veterans, and national security organizations that have come together and are spreading the word of how the U.S. dependence on fossil fuels, specifically oil from overseas, is causing global climate change and threatening the nation.

"Our current energy policies are leading to the deaths and injuries of our men and women overseas in Afghanistan. We don't think about this, but it's the truth. We get 60 percent of our oil from overseas right now," said Matt Victoriano, a former member of the U.S. Marine Corps from Texas who served two stints in the Middle East.

Victoriano describes the rather arduous, and in his words, costly, process that must be undertaken to fuel the U.S. military's activities in Afghanistan.

The United States currently purchases oil from Saudi Arabia, Venezuela and Russia, he said.

"We pay those countries

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Eric Gage, LeighAnn Dunn, Patrick Bellon and Matthew Victoriano address a small gathering of students Tuesday afternoon in the Muenster University Center. They are involved with Operation Free, an organization pushing to strengthen national security by encouraging the development of new sources of energy. (Photo by David Lias)

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