

# AG: Beware of sweepstakes scams

Attorney General Marty Jackley is asking consumers statewide to reach out to their elderly family, friends or neighbors, to warn them of the dangers of sweepstakes scams.

The Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division has had several victims come forward to file formal complaints against these types of telemarketers.

One senior wired \$2,000 and attempted to wire an additional \$1,800 before family members were able to stop the last transaction. In a separate case, an individual wired \$1,000 and attempted to wire an additional \$1,300, but a bank employee recognized the scam and was able to contact family.

The Consumer Protection Division has also been working with an individual who has been harassed by a

sweepstake telemarketer for 2 years with the promise of a \$15 million dollar jackpot. The last attempt was an \$11,000 transaction to cover additional taxes. The final transaction was stopped, but not before over \$75,000 was already lost.

"Take the time to talk with elderly friends and neighbors to make sure they understand the danger in responding to sweepstake offers. Keep in mind that the minute the telemarketer asks for an upfront fee to receive a sweepstakes winning, it is a scam," said Jackley.

If you have been a victim of this scam or would like additional information contact the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division at 1-800-300-1986 or consumerhelp@state.sd.us.

# Taxpayer advocate service available

The Taxpayer Advocate Service is an independent organization within the IRS whose employees assist taxpayers who are experiencing economic harm, who are seeking help in resolving tax problems that have not been resolved through normal channels, or who believe that an IRS system or procedure is not working as it should.

For example, if you are experiencing financial problems and will be evicted if you don't pay the rent, the Taxpayer Advocate Service may be able to assist you in obtaining your refund expeditiously.

The Taxpayer Advocate Service also may be able to assist you if you have experienced a delay of more than 30 days to resolve a tax-related problem or have not received a response or resolution to the problem by the date that was promised by the IRS. The service is free, confidential, tailored to meet your needs, and available for businesses as well as individuals.

While the Taxpayer Advocate Service cannot change the law or make a

technical tax decision, it can clear up problems that resulted from previous contacts and ensure that your case is given a complete and impartial review.

You can contact the Taxpayer Advocate Service by calling its toll-free number 877-777-4778, or TTY/TTD 800-829-4059 to see if you are eligible for assistance. The local Tax Payer Advocate is located in Aberdeen, South Dakota, and may be contacted by calling (605) 377-1600.

You can also file Form 911, Request for Taxpayer Advocate Service Assistance (And Application for Taxpayer Assistance Order), or ask an IRS employee to complete it on your behalf.

To learn more about the Taxpayer Advocate Service, see [www.irs.gov/advocate](http://www.irs.gov/advocate).

Free income tax preparation is available until April 15 by appointment in Lake Andes, Mitchell, Winner, Parkston and Chamberlain.

To make an appointment, contact the Rural Office of Community Services, Inc. (ROCS) at (605) 487-7634. ROCS is an Equal Opportunity Organization.

# S.D. ranks 12th for personal income

South Dakota's growth in personal income from 2000 to 2011 surpassed the growth rate for both the region and the nation. South Dakota's personal income grew by 82.5 percent, compared to a rate of 51.4 percent for the nation, according to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA).

Since 2000, South Dakota's per

capita personal income has increased by 67.4 percent. South Dakota's per capita personal income of \$44,217 in 2011 ranks 12th of the 50 states.

The 2011 rank of 10th indicates the average South Dakota resident had more money available for household spending than the residents in 40 other states.

# S.D. farmers need to scout for Japanese beetles in field crops this season

The Japanese beetle is becoming an increasingly prevalent pest in the North Central region of the United States and can occasionally be an economic problem in soybean or corn fields, said Kelley J. Tilmon, SDSU Extension soybean entomologist.

For clarification purposes, Tilmon wants to ensure that readers do not confuse the Japanese beetle with the Asian ladybeetle, which is often called Japanese beetle by mistake.

"Asian ladybeetles are familiar to many as the yellow or orange ladybeetles that come into houses in the fall and are beneficial predators of crop pests," she said.

Japanese beetles are large – up to a half inch long - and metallic green and copper colored. Adults feed on the leaves and flowers of more than 300

plant species. They are an introduced pest first found in the United States in 1916 in New Jersey.

"Only in recent years have they become common in the Midwest," Tilmon said.

The South Dakota Department of Agriculture monitors for this pest with traps, and it has been detected in several South Dakota counties particularly in the southeastern part of the state.

Life cycle of the Japanese beetle

Japanese beetle immatures are soil-dwelling white grubs which feed on roots and organic material and are often pests of turfgrass. The adults typically feed between the veins of leaves causing a characteristic lacy or "skeletonized" damage. They feed on a wide range of plants including various ornamentals,

# Wahls urges positive talk

By Travis Gulbrandson  
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When 19-year-old college student Zach Wahls testified about being raised by two lesbian mothers during a public hearing on Iowa's proposed gay marriage ban in 2011, he had no idea he would end up a major participant in a national conversation.

But after appearances on most of the major TV networks, a memoir and more than 17 million Youtube hits, that is exactly what happened.

Wahls visited the USD campus one week before the United States Supreme Court began its deliberation of two gay marriage cases – involving Proposition 8 and the Defense of Marriage Act – to discuss his experience.

"I still feel blessed to have this opportunity to be a part of a national conversation about one of the most contentious political issues of our time, the question, of course, of gay marriage," Wahls said. "Or, as my family and I call it, 'marriage.'"

During his address at Aalfs Auditorium on the USD

campus, Wahls pointed out that this is not the first time the United States has found itself faced with questions regarding who can and cannot get married.

"A long time ago in this country, it was illegal to marry someone with a different land ownership status, or of a different religion, and it really wasn't so long ago in this country that it was still illegal to marry someone of a different race," he said.

While Wahls acknowledged those issues are not the same as the one currently being discussed in Washington, the do have something in common: They first became socially acceptable, and then became legally recognized.

Wahls said he has made three main observations regarding the issue over the past two years.

The first is that the dialogue is driven in large part by fear, he said.

"According to Sen. Rick Santorum, this is conversation that is about an assault on religion," he said. "It's an assault on tradition, on traditional morality, on family values, on

church, on religious ideas and beliefs.

"For him, this country is changing in a way that he cannot control, and that's very scary," he said.

However, there is fear on the other side, as well.

Wahls said he realized for the first time that there was opposition to families like his when he saw Santorum's speech on television during the 2004 Republican National Convention.

He was in eighth grade at the time, and said it was frightening to hear someone speak about gay parenting having "dangerous" connotations.

Wahls said his second observation is that when people are scared, they have a tendency to use labels.

An example of this would be the controversy over the Chick-fil-A restaurant, whose CEO came out with statements supporting "traditional" marriage.

"If you supported Chick-fil-A, according to the other side, you were an ignorant, bigoted, homophobic redneck, and if you opposed Chick-fil-A, you were a godless,

colonizing sodomite who would not stop until America had been destroyed," Wahls said. "There really wasn't a whole lot of room in the middle."

However, Wahls said the middle is where a lot of people actually find themselves.

"When we talk about these things, like chicken sandwiches or accusing people of being certain things, we don't do very well," he said.

"When this conversation stops being positive, we stop talking about the things that really matter most: Family, love, recognition.

"When we stop talking about these things, we start moving backwards," he said.

That is the third observation: The importance of positivity.

"When we pull down that level, when we stop having a positive conversation, we will be beaten by people who spend their entire careers engaging in negative politics," he said. "That isn't what this is about. This is about recognition for all people, regardless of who they are."

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Yankton's Sacred Heart Middle School. "In order to do that, you take a stick and attach it to the mousetrap. There's a string on that stick, and you wrap it around your wheel axels, and that pulls the car."

The car is then required to move – but not exceed – a specific length.

Sacred Heart's coach Rebecca Peterson said the school's team participated in the event last year, as well, but that the rules had changed in the interim.

"Last year used one mousetrap, this year used two," Peterson said.

"Last year, it had to go from six meters to 10 meters, and this year it's eight and a half to 12, so you had to adjust the distance you go," Rezac added. "It could go faster with two mousetraps, too, so you have to adjust the speed."

Bennett said it is not unheard-of for changes to be made to events year to year.

"Some of the events tend to rotate in and out," he said. "That's all courtesy of the national office. They decide when an event should move on and when to replace it with something else, and we had some new events this year."

This year's primary new event was a hands-on demonstration of chromosome spreading by Sanford researchers at the USD School of Medicine.

"From what I understand, the kids who attended that –



Lauren Rezac and Kristen Rezac, both eighth-graders from Yankton's Sacred Heart School, prepare their mousetrap vehicle for its run as part of the 29th annual South Dakota Science Olympiad State Tournament Saturday.

(Travis Gulbrandson/Vermillion Plain Talk)

and there were quite a few – really enjoyed it," Bennett said.

Bennett added that he hopes the participants come away with a greater appreciation of science.

"I hope they have fun and that they learn something," he said.

Katie Hauser, a Sacred Heart Middle School eighth-grader, said her favorite part is "the educational challenge of it."

Rezac said she enjoys the social aspects of Science

Olympiad, as well.

"You learn, but it's fun," she said.

Prior to the closing ceremony, Peterson said she was pleased with how the entire 15-member team was performing Saturday.

"I think it's going pretty good," she said. "We seem like we're pretty prepared, so we'll see how it goes."

Bennett said that ultimately, some students may choose to pursue scientific careers based on their experiences with Science

Olympiad.

"One of the parents at this last tournament actually told me that due to Science Olympiad, his son is now an engineer for NASA," Bennett said. "He said, 'I'm almost totally certain it's because of his experience with Science Olympiad that this happened.' So, that's cool."

For a more detailed list of winners, visit <http://sites.usd.edu/sdscienceolympiad/home/sdscienceolympiad-state-tournament-results>.

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