

# A DAY in the LIFE OF... A Gas Station Attendant in Vermillion

**By Sarah Wetzel**  
For the Plain Talk

When a car pulls up to the pump of Brunick Service Station, a bell sounds inside the small shop.

"That way when we're working in the back room we know they're there," said owner Dave Brunick who also runs the counter.

Brunick's day starts about 7:30 a.m. when he gets to the shop on Main St. and opens up.

Thus begins a day of fueling and fixing, towing and treating.

"This is full service," Brunick said. "They pull in and we go out and wait on them and see what they want."

During the weeks where the temperature is in the single digits, drivers are especially grateful for this service.

"There's a lot of people that appreciate it on a day like this," Brunick said. "They don't even have to get out of their vehicle."

Along with fueling drivers up, Brunick also spends his workday fixing cars in their service shop and delivering fuel.

"Sometimes I go out delivering fuel at night when I get off work and get home at 8 or 9," Brunick said. "I was delivering fuel at the Dome last night."

Brunick said the fuel

was to power the generators and other machines working on the new basketball arena which should be done in another year or so.

Brunick, who has been working at the station for 40 years, said he's seen plenty of interesting situations during his workdays.

"You run into stuff you can't figure out sometimes that makes your life difficult," he said. "We have had to send them somewhere else. Sometimes they take more technology to figure out what's wrong."

Most of the time, Brunick said, they are able to figure out the problem based on information from the customers.

"We always thought it would be nice to have a tape recorder sitting here for when people come in and explain the problems with their vehicles," he said. "They come in and make the strangest sounds what their vehicles doing, whooping and hollering and making funny noises."

As far as customer service goes, Brunick said his number one tip is to be friendly to everybody even if someone isn't in the best mood.

"You just try to get by that and move on," he said. "You just have to try to be nice to everybody and be patient. Otherwise

you're not going to be in business too long."

Whatever Brunick and his crew are doing, it works because the family-owned business has been around for quite a while.

"We've been here since 1932," Brunick said. "My grandpa started the place and my dad took it over after him and then I took it over after him. My boys are working here now too."

The shop even boasts an old-fashioned cash register that has been there for as long as Brunick can remember, possibly since the founding of the business.

"We kind of do things the old fashioned way around here," he said. "There's lots of paper work. That's the way I grew up. Maybe when my boy takes it over it'll change. He's a lot more computer savvy than I am. He grew up in a different era."

Customers have stuck around too. Many who are on a first-name basis with Brunick have been doing business with Brunick Service for 50 years.

"We had a college girl sitting here one day waiting to get her car worked on," Brunick said. "Another person came in and signed a check and gave it to me and said, 'When you get done with my car fill it in and leave



Dave Brunick, who owns and operates Brunick Service Station on Main St., meets a lot of interesting people at his job, many of whom have given him foreign currency which he displays on the cash register that has been at the store for as long as he can remember.

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the statement with what you did and how much it cost so I know how much it was."

"That college girl couldn't believe someone would leave you a blank check. That happens all the time. It's trust. They know we won't ever cheat them."

Though the customers and hardware have

remained the same, plenty of things have changed according to Brunick.

"There has been a lot of changes in vehicles and how to fix them," he said. "Every year they come out with something new. We do a lot of oil changes and things like that. Even that has changed throughout the years."

Brunick said they

attend seminars every once in a while to learn about the changes and how to fix them.

Brunick and his wife have three children.

One who is graduating from the University of South Dakota this spring, another who works for him and his youngest is a sophomore at Vermillion High School.

## Lookin' Left, Right: Trial Looking Good Downtown

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All things considered, it looks like the intersection under study at Main St. and Center/Court Streets is best left light-less.

"The great majority of the comments we're receiving are complimentary," said City Engineer Jose Dominguez. "People are commenting that they like it, it's more efficient, it takes time off their daily commute and it's easier for them to make turns."

According to Dominguez, only two or three negative comments have been received by the city.

"Those typically have to do with it being more difficult or dangerous for pedestrians, vehicles having trouble backing from parking spots on Main St. and there's a notion that speeding has also increased."

Several of these

problems, Dominguez said, will correct themselves once the intersection project is actually completed.

"We are going to increase the size of the bump-outs (curb extensions)," he said. "When you do that, drivers have a perception that the road is narrower and they slow down automatically. That should take care of the speeding issue. It should also help the pedestrian crossing issue because we decrease the crossing distance because the bump-outs are larger."

The issue of backing out of parking spots, Dominguez said, is not a problem with the lights, but more of a bad habit of the driver.

"They weren't looking at the traffic to see if it was open," Dominguez said. "They were looking at the signal and if there was a red light, they would back out. They're not doing what they're supposed to do which is looking for another

car coming."

The solution for this, Dominguez said, is for drivers to simply get used to the change. This learning curve has been expected since before the initiation of the trial run.

The city is making the most of the trial run and learning as much as they can themselves.

"Once this whole thing is done we'll have a lot of data," Dominguez said. "We'll have data on speed, accidents and volume to see if they have changed in the area."

Several different methods are being used to collect this data.

"Me and another person are going to be sitting out at all three of the intersections counting pedestrians, cars and trucks all day long," Dominguez said. "That's going to happen probably in a month or so. As for speed count, we have a little black box tied to one of the signal posts. That's collecting data

continuously. As far as accidents, we've already talked to the police department and whenever there's an accident or anything they just let us know and we tally it up."

Dominguez reported no accidents so far and only a slight increase in speeding. "All in all I think everything's going pretty well," he said. "That's why we're doing this study to see if what we're doing will actually work."

Though the intersection has been a high area of concern, Dominguez said there will likely never be an excessive amount of traffic heading through downtown.

Most of the traffic, Dominguez predicts, comes from local commuters and some business traffic.

"I myself use Main St. to go to the schools and drop off the kids and pick them up," he said. "I think a lot of traffic you would see on Main St. would be similar to that."



City Engineers and local police are currently collecting data like speed, volume of traffic and accidents at the intersection under study downtown but so far everything looks good.

**SARAH WETZEL / FOR THE PLAIN TALK**

## TAX

From Page 1A

Cherry Street Grille, the county will continue forward with its Jail Meal agreement with Roadhouse Vermillion.

Last week, Robertson told the board that they had not followed 'Robert's Rules of Order' and felt the commissioners had acted "inappropriately" in changing the original bid from Cherry Street Grille to the Roadhouse.

"This is not law, you understand that," States Attorney Teddi Gertsma told commissioners as she held up a copy of 'Robert's Rules.' "It's a guidebook to run your meeting in an orderly fashion."

On Feb. 3 the board voted 4-1 to agree to exit out of a verbal contract agreed upon the previous week with Cherry Street Grille and accept a lower jail meal bid by Roadhouse Vermillion once representatives of both businesses agreed to allow for the latter's to be read instead of going through the entire process again.

The advertisement posting for a jail meal bid for the county did not mention where interested parties could drop off their proposals, thus causing the

mix-up in the first place.

Neil Chapman of Roadhouse Vermillion explained how on Monday, Jan. 26, he had dropped off his bid at the Clay County Sheriff's Department office and it never found its way to the auditor's office.

The following day county commissioners approved the only bid in their possession - from Cherry Street Grille for \$5.75/person for lunch and dinner meals and cereal at \$3.30 a person - and entered into a verbal contract.

However Chapman's bid, it was confirmed, had been submitted in time and should have been given a chance to be put into consideration. His still sealed bid of \$3.50 per afternoon and evening meals and \$.30 a person for breakfasts was read and discovered to be the lower one on Feb. 3 and Roadhouse Vermillion was granted the jail meal bid at the expense of Cherry

Street Grille.

"You had the authority to (make the change)," Gertsma told the board. "Once you have reconsidered, you cannot reconsider again. You did it at the next meeting, which was proper. (Sheriff Andy Howe) came and told you that the (Roadhouse) bid was submitted on time. I see nothing wrong. If (Robertson) has a beef he can take whatever legal action he wants to if that's what he wants to do."

Howe said that he spoke to the legislative audit and was told the steps taken were "correct." Howe also apologized for his office's role in the mix-up when Chapman dropped off his bid at the Sheriff's office and not with the county leading to the delay.

Howe had been out of the office when the bid was dropped off and it has been accidentally placed with bills until being discovered after Cherry Street Grille

was first awarded the bid.

The move to the Roadhouse ultimately saved the county approximately \$30-35K according to Gertsma.

Commissioners read all bids made toward providing the county with highway materials and voted 5-0 to allow Highway Superintendent Rod Polley to review them all and come back with the final tally on which bids the county must accept.

The next board meeting will be on Tuesday, March 10.

### University of South Dakota and National Music Museum selected to exhibit rare Shakespeare First Folio

Folger Shakespeare Library announces 52 host sites across the country for 2016 Traveling Exhibit to mark the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death. One of the world's most treasured books is coming to Vermillion.

The University of South Dakota and the National Music Museum have been selected as the host site for

the state of South Dakota for First Folio, The Book that Gave Us Shakespeare, a national traveling exhibition of the Shakespeare First Folio.

The Folger Shakespeare Library, in partnership with Cincinnati Museum Center and the American Library Association, is touring a First Folio of Shakespeare in 2016 to all 50 states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico. Finalized touring dates will be announced in April 2015.

- Courtesy of National Music Museum

### MECKLING TOWNSHIP MEETINGS

**Monday, March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015**  
7:00 PM  
Township Hall  
Tax Appeals

**Tuesday, March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2015**  
7:00 PM  
Township Hall  
Road Maintenance  
Contracts Awarded

Tax appeals must be submitted to Clerk

Jane Larson  
31377 454<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Meckling, SD 57069

**Vermillion Public Schools  
Kindergarten Round-Up**

**What:** Kindergarten Round-Up    **When:** Wednesday, March 18<sup>th</sup>  
Thursday, March 19<sup>th</sup>  
Friday, March 20<sup>th</sup>

**Who:** Any child who will have their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday on or before September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015 and their parents    **Where:** Austin Elementary School  
300 High Street

Parents, if your child is going to be 5 on or before September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015, please call Jayme at 677-7010 to register for a round-up session. Parents will have a question and answer time with school personnel while the incoming students will be screened.  
*Please plan to spend the morning or afternoon with us.*

PLEASE BRING A CERTIFIED COPY OF YOUR CHILD'S BIRTH CERTIFICATE TO ROUND-UP. IF YOUR CHILD WAS BORN IN SOUTH DAKOTA, YOU MAY PURCHASE A CERTIFIED COPY FROM THE CLAY COUNTY COURT HOUSE FOR \$15.00. **HOSPITAL CERTIFICATES OF BIRTH WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.** IF YOUR CHILD'S IMMUNIZATION RECORDS INCLUDE THE KINDERGARTEN SHOTS, PLEASE BRING THE COMPLETED IMMUNIZATION RECORD TO THE ROUND-UP.

Please visit our website at [www.vermillion@k12.sd.us](http://www.vermillion@k12.sd.us) for additional information, look under "Kindergarten Screening Scheduled".