

City Approves Increased BID Allocation for VCDC

By Alan Dale
The Plain Talk

On Monday night, Vermillion's City Council unanimously approved the resolution amending the 2015 budget to increase the annual allocation and allocate 2014 receipts to the Vermillion Area Chamber and Development Company (VCDC).

The decision will allow the VCDC to collect 85% of all Business Improvement District (BID) dollars received in 2015.

In 2014, a total of \$39,858 was collected and the Business Improvement District (BID) board recommended and the council approved the transfer of \$15,000 of the receipts to the VCDC to help with visitor and tourism promotion in the community.

Last June, a collection of a \$2 per night, per occupied hotel room charge began.

"(There is) a reality of limited marketing dollars and focus," VCDC executive director Nate Welch said. "We have individuals around the community that want to promote (tourism) but with limited dollars and limited ability to allow us to focus on that. That's why we'd like to be able to allow this type of investment for us to be able to change and to move forward."

"We might be able to devote staff as well as strategic plan efforts when it comes to visitors and tourism."

The VCDC visitor and tourism committee presented their strategic plan to increase visitor spending by promoting Vermillion and Clay County as a destination for targeted visitors.

The strategic plan included five objectives toward accomplishing this goal.

The VCDC requested the BID Board increase the allocation to the VCDC in 2015 as well as allocate part of the unused 2014 funding for a Brand Assessment to help better identify the targeted audience.

It was proposed that the VCDC and Vermillion Now 2 would also help fund the Brand Study.

The estimated cost of the Brand study is \$33,000 to \$39,000 if all of the phases are pursued. Part of the requested two year commitment of \$60,000 per year is so that the VCDC can hire a dedicated

staff person to work on tourism and communications.

The VCDC would use approximately \$17,500 for wages. The balance of the \$60,000 each year will be used for a number of advertising and promotional costs. Several pages with more detail on the projected uses of the BID dollars and proposal are attached. The BID Board voted 2-1 (two members were absent) to recommend to the City Council that the 2015 budget allocation to the VCDC be adjusted as noted and the additional funds from 2014 be provided.

All expenditures must be approved by the City Council.

- The council approved the issuance of the special daily malt beverage license unless further information is provided at the public hearing.

The Vermillion Area Arts Council has submitted an application for a special daily malt beverage and wine license for their St. Patrick's Day Celebration on March 17 at 202 Washington Street.

- The council approved authorization of the airport farmland lease with Nels and Grant Sorensen for \$1,100 per year for a three-year lease.

The proposed lease would provide \$1,100 per year for the general fund to assist with the operating of the airport while controlling the weeds and mowing the balance of the farmland.

The airport property includes some marginal farmland that has been leased by the city to Nels and Grant Sorensen since 1999. Most of the airport land is very sandy and doesn't produce many crops and requires extra attention to keep the weeds down.

Due to FAA regulations there are restrictions on what crops can be planted (no corn as it is too tall) on this land and there are setbacks along the runways.

The last lease was with Nels and Grant Sorensen which was for \$1,000 per year.

For the city to enter into a lease for a term exceeding one hundred twenty days and for an amount exceeding an annual value of five hundred dollars, a public hearing is required

For an extended version of this story visit www.plaintalk.net

Theatre to Get You Thinking

By Sarah Wetzel,
For the Plain Talk

The University of South Dakota Theatre provided the public with some food for thought two weeks ago as they presented "Stand-off at HWY #37" in collaboration with Native Voices at the Aury, a theater company which promotes Native American, Alaska Native and First Nations playwrights.

Cast members consisted of a blend of USD theater students and guest actors from Native Voices.

The play dealt with the continuous struggle of the Native American Indians to protect their land and their culture especially when a land dispute arises.

Problems arise at a protest of a highway bypass site when Thomas Lee Doxdater, a member of the National Guard and also the Indian community, finds himself torn between fulfilling his commitment to his country and honoring the traditions of his people.

Doxdater ends up raising his rifle against his commanding officer in defense of a fellow Indian which culminates in his arrest.

Doxdater's unit had been dispatched to keep the peace at the site of a future highway bypass.

"What I love about this play is it shows us a contemporary view and it really shows we are here, we have survived and we have evolved," said Darrell Dennis, a member of Native Voices and the

Shuswap Nation. "We have continued to fight. We still have our culture because we continue to fight for it every day."

The writer, Vickie Ramirez of the Tuscarora Nation, said the situation presented in the play, though fictional is based on real and current events.

"It's an amalgam of many [events]," she said. "I've sort of squished them together. The thing that triggered it was Bloomberg's speech in New York and that had just happened after a land claim dispute had happened on my home rez."

The characters also stemmed from Ramirez's personal experience.

"There's a lot of military in my family," she said. "My dad's a WWII vet. I have several cousins on my mom's side who had careers in the military. Native Voices provided a military consultant for us and we researched with JAG what actually would have happened to Thomas if he had raised his rifle against his CO."

Other issues in the play such as the personal struggle against American Indian prejudice rang true for several of the actors.

"I denied I was Native American Indian until I was 21 because in our area in Seattle where we grew up it was awful to be Indian and there were awful signs that said 'the only good Indian is a dead Indian,'" said LaVonne Rae Andrews of the Tlingit-Raven Clan. "So I didn't

admit it. It took an article in a magazine in a beauty salon that said to own who you are, to be authentic, to be real, to say who you are. I told someone I was Indian and she thought it was cool. It was like this huge weight came off of me because I was denying it for so long and even denying my father who was a wonderful loving man. It was just sad that I did that. I feel bad about it now even though he's long gone. It's nice to work it out in a way like this."

"I think In the 50's and 60's there were full generations that denied they were Indian and hid it very carefully and strategically," said Tonantzin Carmelo, a member of Native Voices and the Tongva and Kumeyaay tribes. "It wasn't seen as something good. Nowadays it's a little more accepted. The native population is few and far between [in LA]. We do have our native communities such as our artistic community and powwow community and the educational community. It's who you are but when you're an urban Indian it changes in a certain way."

Ramirez said it took her about three years to complete the play which actually started out as a one-act which began at the point Doxdater raises his gun against his officer. Ramirez expanded the play to explain the circumstances leading up to that.

Because the play, in

essence, blended two theater companies, it created a unique experience for the actors.

"It was a very interesting process," said director Jon Lawrence Rivera. "We have four actors from Los Angeles and three from USD. For two weeks, both the LA cast and the University cast were rehearsing in their own area based on a video of the first production we did last year."

Rivera said once the Native Voices arrived in Vermillion, they began rehearsing together, making adjustments as needed.

"It was very seamless," Rivera said. "The actors from the university were really quite remarkable when we came in and very prepared so it was a very easy transition."

Actors from both sides had good things to say about the process.

"It was just such a remarkable experience working with these incredible people," said Steve Schaeffer, a USD Acting Major and member of the Chumash tribe. "It was also a huge privilege to roll with the punches if you will. Because we would get rewrites and then we'd learn new lines and stuff like that and when the LA cast came in we would kind of modify things and being able to, as an artist, accommodate for everybody else and kind of being selfless in the process."

For an extended version of this story visit www.plaintalk.net

Having Dinner, Show with the VCT

By Zach Wetzel,
For the Plain Talk

Vermillion Community Theatre offered dinner and a show to hungry theatergoers during its recent production of Love, Loss, and What I Wore. The performances were this past weekend at the Vermillion Event Center.

According to VCT's website, the show was very successful during its Off-Broadway run.

"This play is organized as a series of monologues and uses a rotating cast of women," said the website. "The subject matter of the monologues includes women's relationships and wardrobes and at times the interaction of the two, using the female wardrobe as a time capsule of a woman's life."

According to Erin Burrow, the director of the play, this was a different type of show for her to direct because she had previously directed many children's theatre productions. Directing the play was a fun and exciting experience for Burrow.

"My favorite moments during production were the conversations I had with all of the actresses about motivation and what we could do to present the show in the most honest way possible," said Burrow.

According to Burrow, watching the cast work together and discover their characters was also her favorite part of the show. Each individual actor brought a different contribution to the production.

Burrow hopes that this show provided the audience with important topics to talk and think about.

"I hope that the women who came to the play could relate to some or all of what the characters talk about and find humor and comfort in their stories," said Wess Pravecek, who played the role of Gingy. "For the men who attended, I think the stories can offer some insight as to how women handle joy, sorrow, and the stress of buying clothes. This show can help men discover how to appreciate, even more, the woman or women they love."

According to Pravecek, the rehearsal process was incremental. The actors met one-on-one with the director and in small groups before coming together to rehearse with the entire cast.

"During the final week we rehearsed every night with our costumes, props, and wireless mics," said Pravecek. "It was fun to see everything come together."

Pravecek and the rest of the cast had a great time performing in VCT's winter show.

"I grew to really care about each one of the characters and the stories they told," said Pravecek. "Every time we practiced, I would laugh, feel compassion for, and relate to the experiences of the characters. It's a part of being a woman."

For theatergoers who were unable to make the performances, VCT's production of Mary Poppins will come to life this summer. For more information, visit vermillioncommunitytheatre.org.

TALENTS From Page 1A

and go.

"Aaron was always going to be involved in the arts because of upbringing. His work is well-thought out and beautiful on an aesthetic level," Banasiak fondly recalls.

Jeff Freeman has been a Professor of Art at USD for 31 years, and is also very familiar with the Packard family.

"His Dad always said that everyone should be made to take time off before college and have life experiences – and that's what Aaron did."

"In 1989, I joined the Navy out of rebellion," Packard jokes. His particular brand of defiance was unconventional, but had unexpectedly led him back to photography.

"While I was in the Navy, I met a photojournalist for the New York Times who was doing a piece on a windjammer cruise ship. I thought that was something I could do," says Packard.

He bounced around a bit before settling back in

Vermillion.

"I spent ten years in San Francisco working under a photographer, but I went out on my own in 2003 and started doing commercial work for CDW Corporation and other web companies. I decided it was time to move back here."

Packard did portraits for some time, but was not particularly fond of it and began to build up his work slowly. He considers himself a professional corporate industrial lifestyle photographer.

"I do mainly corporate type of photography and advertising, but lately I've been working with traditional processes."

His biggest commercial client is Black Hills Ammunition, located in Rapid City. He has done advertising with them for five years.

Packard also currently shoots photos for USD. "I do everything from athletics to commercial advertising and collateral (brochures)."

In the past year, Packard's work has been featured in the New York Times on three occasions, and he has also shot for the

Huffington Post, Outdoor Life, and eWeek.

"He does his commercial work with such feeling. It really sets him apart," Banasiak notes.

In 2005 Packard and his mother opened Lumo Studios, located on Main Street, where they showcase family art as well as art from students and the community.

"They're always willing to exhibit work, and would do anything for the community – especially if it infuses elements of the arts," says Banasiak.

His mother continues her work as a fiber artist, selling her work and yarn supplies at the studio alongside Aaron's photos.

Packard is currently pursuing his Masters of

Fine Arts in Photography at USD. He is an adjunct instructor, and hopes to continue teaching in the future.

"It's great to see the spark of inspiration in people and seeing them succeed," says Packard.

Rayna Hernandez, an art student at USD, has taken Packard's photography class and has spent time with him in the art school.

"He's a good teacher. He's helpful and willing to let you get creative, even in lower level classes."

Hernandez also appreciates his current projects.

"His work is really good because he takes a lot of old processes and incorporates them with technology. He's interested in a wide range of

things."

Banasiak also reflects on Packard's work.

"His work is involved in the rediscovery of things. He appreciates the craftsmanship and tradition of quality."

"He's like a visual alchemist, matching subject matter with appropriate

visuals so it becomes poetic and powerful."

Packard has undoubtedly continued his parents' legacy of enriching the artistic culture of Vermillion.

"Vermillion is a great base, and it's also a really supportive community, creatively."



Build Your New Home for as little as \$1,000 down & lock in the interest rate of a lifetime!

Homestead has helped thousands of families build their new home for less.

The Next Home Show will be:
Council Bluffs, IA: March 6th-8th at the Council Bluffs Home Show
Sioux Falls, SD: March 6th-8th at the Sioux Empire Home Show
Norfolk, NE: March 20th-22nd at the Northeast Nebraska Home Show

NOTICE

Norway Township Board of Equalization will meet **March 17, 2015** at 7:00 p.m. at the Clay County Highway Shop. Appeals must be submitted to the clerk by **Thursday, March 12, 2015.**

Jay Bottolfson, Clerk
45723 Timber Road, Vermillion, SD • 624-8249

2015

Edith B. Siegrist Vermillion Public Library
Adult Programs For

MARCH

WEDNESDAY
7 pm
Artists & Authors presents
Phyllis Packard, Fiber Artist,
Kozak Community Room

SATURDAY
2-4 pm
Picture This presents
Block Printing Workshop,
Kozak Community Room
*Please call or stop by the Circulation Desk to register.

11 Long Overdue Series presents
Miss Representation Film Screening and Facilitated Discussion, Kozak Community Room.

WEDNESDAY
3 pm
Technically Speaking Series presents
Social Media 101,
Tech Center

WEDNESDAY
7 pm
Non-Fiction Book Club: Factory Girls, by Leslie T. Chang
*Book Club selections available for checkout at the Library Circulation Desk



677-7060
or
vermillionpubliclibrary.org
for more information

TAKING APPLICATIONS!

ALL SHIFTS!
PRODUCTION POSITIONS!



We offer a competitive benefits package. For inquiries, call Mary Mulder at 605-764-4000 or email resume to mmulder@amesbury.com

515 Noid Rd., Canton, SD 57013