

SUPPORT SPECIAL OLYMPICS MARCH 28 AT POLAR PLUNGE

By Christine Feltes
For the Plain Talk

Every day doesn't hold an opportunity to jump into a tank of icy cold water in support of a good cause, but people will be "Freezin' for a Reason" on Saturday, March 28, as they raise funds for local and state Special Olympics teams, through the Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics South Dakota. "We have two special olympics chapters in Vermillion that we raise funds for and part of the proceeds go to the state office as well," said Officer Jon Cole, one of the event's organizers and the assistant director of LETR-South Dakota. "The state office puts on the events, such as the Summer Games coming up in May that are happening in Brookings this year."

The event will take place in downtown Vermillion in front of the Old Lumber Company. "In years past, we've done it at the High School, this year the community

decided to change that. The idea is to bring it to downtown Vermillion, a more centralized location, and a venue that is going to get more traction and awareness," said Cole. "The High School is a great place, but there isn't as much traffic going by the High School."

The Polar Plunge will begin at 4:00 p.m. Participants can register online at www.plungesd.org or at the event, beginning at 3 p.m. Participants must raise a minimum of \$100 to take the leap.

"It's easy to register online. It's a safe, secure website to use a credit card on," said Cole, noting that same-day registration is also easy. "People can just show up at the event and if they want to write a check for \$100 then they can take the plunge."

Some participants raise money to take the plunge while they are waiting in line to register.

"I've seen people raise the money in the amount of time it takes to do the registration," Cole stated.



Special Olympics

For those who are less bold, there's even a option to raise money as a participant "too Chicken to Plunge", or they can donate in support of another plunger on the website.

"It's a family-friendly event and we encourage people to bring out their families and watch the people plunge," said Cole. "There will be several people in costumes and just having fun with it."

There will be a Post-Plunge party at the Old Lumber Company. Members of the Special Olympics teams in the area will be attending.

"The Post-Plunge Party is time for everyone to gather after the Plunge, to mingle and to eat," Cole said. "It will give people a chance to

interact with the athletes, with the people who raised the money, and with the people who actually work with Special Olympics as well."

The Post-Plunge Party will be another opportunity to raise funds for Special Olympics.

"We'll have some special things going on as well to raise money for the Law Enforcement Torch Run," Cole said, describing the Post-Plunge Party. "We'll probably have some raffles and of course people can donate funds on their own after that."

Similar events are held across South Dakota and even internationally.

"It's fun and it will definitely be a good time," said Cole.



A masked participant in last year's Polar Plunge leaps into the chilly water. Photo courtesy of the South Dakota Law Enforcement Torch Run.

COURTESY PHOTO

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Patrick's Day, a holiday he had forgotten about.

"It was about two o'clock (Tuesday) and I was in a meeting and (his wife) said 'we got to get going, we have to get to Vermillion,'" Daugaard said. "She then said 'where's your green?' One of the guys that was sitting there said, 'take my tie,' so this isn't even my tie."

He added some pro-USD rhetoric at the expense of South Dakota State University which also brought some hearty laughs.

Daugaard said how he was glad to be back in Vermillion and how impressed he was with his visit earlier in the day at Polaris.

"We had a great afternoon and privilege of visiting Polaris prior to coming to this event," Daugaard said. "What (the expansion) says to us is that Polaris is not only impressed with Vermillion and South Dakota to make the investment in that facility, but they are adding more than 50 percent to that facility to make this there home for a longer term period."

The governor also triumphed South Dakota's ability to keep strong business interests in the state and to also facilitate their growth.

"Why South Dakota? Why is Polaris expanding in South Dakota when they could have expanded their Ohio distribution center but they chose to expand here," Daugaard said. "I think it's because South Dakota has the right recipe for business and economic development."

"We don't overregulate our businesses, we try to keep our regulations reasonable, understandable. We don't play 'gotcha' with our businesses. We try to make our regulations simple."

He continued to list the state's merits to the attentive audience.

"We have no personal income tax, no corporate income tax, no business inventory tax, no personal property tax," Daugaard said. "This puts more

money in the pockets of our businesses and our citizens. Also the productivity of our workers is high. We have a tremendous work ethic.

Another keynote was Daugaard's pride in how the state takes care of its retired workers and the South Dakota retirement system.

"We have one public pension plan in a whole state," Daugaard said. "If a state has trouble balancing a budget what do they do...they skip the retirement contribution or give a partial contribution. You look at the top 150 retirement plans only five have made all the contributions that they were supposed to and earned what they were projected to earn, and are fully funded, and South Dakota was one of them. That's something we are really proud of."

Overall Daugaard sees South Dakota's national profile continuing to grow and this could be more of a continuing trend than a flickering fad.

"It's a great time to be in South Dakota to live and work," Daugaard's said. "It's also a great time to be in Vermillion."

Earlier, Vermillion mayor Jack Powell awarded the Mayor's Community Service Award to Senator Tim Johnson and his wife Barbara whom were received with a standing ovation by the gathering.

Johnson shared memories of his time as an athlete at Vermillion High School. "It is here as a Tanager, playing sports that I learned about teamwork and cooperation," Johnson said. "...and that losing gracefully is as important as winning...well almost as important."

"I am also proud of what we have accomplished together for our city and for the university. With the help of many of you in this room, a muddy cow pasture, was turned into a beautiful, historic site. We finally built a bridge to Nebraska, opening up new sources of commerce, we reconstructed streets and highways, built walking trails, and biking paths... we have done these and so many other projects for the

past 56 years. It has been my pleasure to serve you and South Dakota."

The banquet, kicked off with VCDC executive director Nate Welch thanking everyone involved with the set-up of the event, those who help make the organization thrive and advance, and the community itself.

"We continue to grow, we continue to evolve, and we continue to get more involved," Welch said. "One of the things we worked on in the chamber is how do we make it beneficial for a chamber member. How do we drive that involvement? How do we drive that passion? If you are not involved as an individual member you are wanted, you are a part of this community. What makes this community is the chamber."

Video presentation celebration Vermillion and all its draws and virtues, such as the ability to see kids be able to walk home, stay out later not fearing for their safety, and being able to know one's neighbors while raising a family.

Prior to the governor's time to speak, the night included a number of recognitions including that of VCDC board president Jim Brady and past board president Gerry Tracy who helped pay tribute to the outgoing VCDC board members.

They also took time to pay respects to VCDC Gold Members.

Brady quipped about his daughter Jessica's trip to Pierre and her future goals in politics.

"She said (her trip) 'Was amazing! I want to be governor,'" Brady said. "I said 'that's great, but there's two things you are going to have to do: You are going to have to run as a republican and don't be mad if

the only two people in Clay County that votes for you are your parents."

John Prescott, Vermillion's City Manager, introduced the VCDC Brick Award winners.

Those who were named included Anytime Fitness (Jason White), CorTrust Bank (Alan Fritch), First Bank & Trust (Glenda Schempp), Polaris (Paul Eickhoff), The University of South Dakota Foundation (Field Glover), Vermillion Public School District (Mark Froke), and Vermillion Wine & Liquor (Gregg and Nikki Peters).

These winners were recognized for making "significant contributions in our community," Prescott told the audience which includes investing in the brick and mortar of their business such as expansion on their current structures.

Deb Christensen awarded Marion Kryger with the United Way Volunteer of the Year Award.

Kryger is known for his peanut brittle and he was happy to share a fun thought on his sweet side.

He told of his one trip to the grocery store to make some more brittle.

"I have my cart loaded with about 75 pounds of sugar and this comes up behind me, looks in the cart, and says 'you got a still some place?'" Kyger said as he made his exit with laughter accompanying him back to his seat.

Beth Adamson, director of the Prairie Family Business Association, presented the Vermillion Area Family Business of the Year Award to Schoellerman Trucking, with Rich Schollerman accepting the award.

Ted Muenster presented the VCDC Community Leadership Award to Maxine and Allan Johnson.

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because of all the parts and accessories that are contained within it."

Both the governor and Eickhoff reported that construction on the addition will hopefully be completed this fall, weather permitting.

"This was a long time coming," Eickhoff said. "If you didn't know we have 5,000 pallets stored outside the building in three other states because we don't have room in this building. That's one of the reasons for this addition is to get all our product under one roof. You can imagine the inefficiencies it takes to shuttle trucks every day to three different states just to store."

"The employees are extremely excited," Eickhoff continued. "They are also very excited about the new conveyer belt. They were tired of pushing all those boxes around and now we have the new system and we'll have enough space to hopefully house the product for the next few years."

According to the Governor who toured the facility, the conveyer belt will make things easier for everybody.

"The conveyer system is extremely sophisticated with a lot of bar code readers and automated path creators and computer-driven selection location," Daugaard explained. "Those parts that are retrieved more frequently have a great amount of automation to them. The boxes will travel along the conveyor and the bar code reader will cause the boxes to stop and move over."

"If I'm at that station I put a couple of things in the box and put it back on the conveyer and the bar code reader will stop at the next correct station where someone else will be and very quickly it gets filled and sent over to the shipping area where it will be competed in terms of packing and shipping."

According to Daugaard, the computer also keeps track of how many boxes are completed and how much they weigh and how much of a truckload has been accumulated.

Daugaard tipped his hat to the employees working through the upgrades.

"I was talking earlier with some of the staff here and said the concept was begun a year ago last January and over the course of 2014," he said. "They had to work while they were installing the new equipment so I can imagine there was a lot of logistics to get the work done while they were filling all those orders."

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Join us for coffee and cookies
Friday, March 20 from 9:00AM - 4:00PM



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The children of
**John & Barbara
Bernard**
are hosting a celebration in
*honor of 65 great years of
marriage.*

We will be having an open house for
friends and family on Sunday, March
22, 2015 from 1-3 pm at St. Agnes
Parish Hall, 416 Walker Street
in Vermillion.
No gifts please.