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# PLAIN TALK

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## Vermillion High School Changing With Times

By Sarah Wetzel  
For the Plain Talk

In light of modern developments in online education, Vermillion High School is preparing to take the next step.

"What we're looking at doing with next year's schedule is operating an online class of 12th grade government that will be run through Blackboard Learn and Shannon Fitzsimmons will be the director of that class," Prin-

icipal Curt Cameron said to the school board at their Monday meeting. "It will run throughout the week but on Thursday mornings the kids will come in and do their tests and that sort of thing."

Cameron said they have been looking for other options to expand educational opportunities for the students since things often get in the way like scheduling and a reduction in the number of students.

"We used to be able

to offer two AP Calculus classes and two AP Chemistry classes," Cameron said. "Now we're just down to one of each. Then we have band which is first period and choir is fifth period. It just really when a student has to take government their senior year it limits their options as far as being able to take an AP class."

According to Cameron, a pilot program will be run limited to a specific group of students.

"First of all, ones that have GPAs of 3.0 or better," he said. "Students can also come to us and appeal if they need it for a certain reason."

Cameron said administration has found that other schools, including Sioux Falls districts, have been doing this type of class for a few years.

Another benefit of these online classes is to experience something many students will see in college.

"We feel the experience when they go to the University of South Dakota, Blackboard Learn is really similar to the program they use at USD," Cameron said. "We're excited about it and looking forward to implementing it. We really think it will be a positive thing for our school."

Higher education seems to be something many students at Vermillion High School already have their sights set on.

"Dual credit has been

phenomenal," Cameron reported. "We've had almost 40 percent of our juniors and seniors take dual credit courses at the university. It's catching on."

Though online education isn't the first choice for Cameron, he said he is willing to be flexible.

"I struggle with online classes," he said. "I'm old school. I like face to face but I think society is going to win on this one. There's

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Four groups of Vermillion High School freshmen, composed of 14 students, advanced in the 'Shark Tank' competition last week. Those students are, Back row (l-r) Joey Sweeney, Colton McNear, Devin O'Neil, Carter Larsen, Gabe DeJong, Riley Johnson, and Nicholas Lubbers; Front row (l-r) Shinayne Whipple, Madisen Martinez, Haleigh Melstad, Madisen Lavin, Madison Abbott, and Tristen Mallory. COURTESY PHOTO

## Frosh Point of View

*Editor's Note: Due to concerns regarding the trademark protection of the students' invention ideas, The Plain Talk will not give full detail of each of their projects. Our simple descriptions are out of respect for the Vermillion High School freshmen and their work.*

By Alan Dale  
The Plain Talk

They stood tall in the face of challenges and never flinched.

Vermillion High School freshmen English students took on the 'Shark Tank' last Thursday and were able to work their way through

choppy waters as 13 teams tried to convince five judges why their inventions were worthy of support.

After over two hours of presentations ranging from 5-7 minutes at the high school auditorium, four teams and 14 total students advanced to Wednesday's "i2i Competition" at the "Wire Me Awake" conference set for 12:30-4 p.m. where they took teams composed of college students and Yankton-area competitors. Read next week's story on how things ended up.

The conference is for entrepreneurs, business leaders and students.

The four teams that advanced were, Ground Hog (Carter Larson, Gabe DeJong and Riley Johnson), Gum Numb (Haleigh Melstad, Madisen Lavin, and Madisen Martinez), Spoil Alert (Madison Abbott, Nicholas Lubbers, and Tristen Mallory) and EZ Brush (Shinayne Whipple, Devin O'Neil, Colton McNear, and Joseph Sweeney).

The competition is based on the television show version of "The Shark Tank."

The show features a panel of potential investors, called "sharks", who consider offers from aspiring entrepreneurs seek-

ing investments for their business or product. The sharks do receive money for their participation, but they invest their own money. The entrepreneur can make a deal on the show if a panel member is interested. However, if all of the panel members opt out, the entrepreneur leaves empty-handed.

The five sharks that brought plenty of firepower to the proceedings included, Dr. Venky Venkatachalam (Dean of the University of South Dakota Business School), Michelle Maloney (a Vermillion real

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Vermillion's Owen Dudley is headed to the National Spelling Bee after winning the state competition last weekend at the University of South Dakota. THOMAS HATZENBUHLER / FOR THE PLAIN TALK

## Deja Bee for Champ Dudley

Same Top Two Competitors from Vermillion, Identical Result for Title

By Sarah Wetzel  
For the Plain Talk

It's official. Vermillion will be represented in the National Spelling Bee in the form of Vermillion Middle School's eighth-grader Owen Dudley.

After over 30 rounds, Dudley won the state spelling bee on the University of South Dakota campus Saturday with the word 'nondescript'.

Even more amazing was the way the way the final rounds in the state competition almost exactly mirrored the final rounds of the regional competition.

Both in the regional and state bees, Dudley and fifth-grader Hari Kadarkaraisamy of Jolley Elemen-

tary were the final two contestants.

Also similar was the way Dudley came out on top.

From round 26 on, it was all between Dudley and Kadarkaraisamy. Dudley misspelled 'besotted' on round 30 with Kadarkaraisamy correctly spelling 'mediate'.

However, Kadarkaraisamy misspelled 'exquisite' for his championship round putting Dudley back in the running.

After the next round with Dudley correctly spelling 'woodruff' and Kadarkaraisamy misspelling 'orienteering' Dudley correctly spelled his championship word, 'nondescript' successfully securing first place.

"I'd like to thank every-

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## art OF VERMILLION

### A Look at Historic Ufford Farm

By Sonia Hernandez  
For the Plain Talk

Local residents Alex and Stephanie Ufford have always wanted to contribute to the community of Vermillion in a positive way. In an effort to promote family oriented entertainment, the couple began using their 500 acres of farmland to offer fall and Halloween activities at their annual October Harvest Festival and haunted maze.

"I've always had a dream and a passion of trying to offer something different for people to do," says Stephanie.

The family's history in the area spans many generations of Uffords residing in Clay County. Their two-year old son, Brayden,

is the sixth generation of Uffords born and raised in the area, and the fifth generation Ufford to live in their current home.

"We both grew up in Vermillion," says Stephanie. "Alex could give you a long history lesson if you wanted," Stephanie jokes.

As a family whose roots run deep within the community, the couple have a strong desire to build a place for locals and visitors alike to engage in fun, productive and educational activities.

"We felt like there wasn't a whole lot for families to do in Vermillion," says Alex. "There really isn't much for people to do

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The Ufford's petting zoo teaches visitors about the origins of their food. The children get a chance to hang out and pet the cows who seem more than willing to socialize. SONIA HERNANDEZ / FOR THE PLAIN TALK

## New System Making Library More User-Friendly

By Sarah Wetzel  
For the Plain Talk

Patrons visiting the Vermillion Public Library's online catalog should notice a pleasant difference as they browse their favorite literature.

"Patrons will notice when they search our online catalog from home on the computer, it's already hooked up to the new system interface so it looks a little different," said library adult programming coordinator Susan Heggstad. "My hope is to get some online tutorials posted in the next month that will introduce people to this new system and how

they use it"

The change came as part of a requirement according to Heggstad.

"The library among many South Dakota libraries was essentially required to look into finding a new system because the one we have used for a long time was not going to be available to us," said Heggstad. "The system is the way we catalog all our holdings. We keep track of renewals, we check out, keep patron information, all of that is all together in the system."

According to Heggstad a number of libraries are already using the same new

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