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PLAIN TALK

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The American Visiting Institute for Chinese Real Estate Entrepreneurs – which consisted of approximately 40 participants – received certificates of completion in Farber Hall Saturday morning.

(Photo by Travis Gulbrandson)

Chinese delegation visits S.D.

By Travis Gulbrandson

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The University of South Dakota was the site of a multi-day diplomatic and educational experience last week when it played host to a delegation of approximately 40 Chinese visitors.

They were in Vermillion taking part in the American Visiting Institute for Chinese Real Estate Entrepreneurs, which found them attending lectures, going on tours and viewing demonstrations relating to South Dakota's agricultural capabilities.

Activities took place from April 26-28.

"This is a real unforgettable moment, and unforgettable trip," said Professor Bingquan Lu, leader of the delegation, at the closing ceremony Saturday morning in Farber Hall.

"So here, on behalf of my delegation, we want to say thank you: Thank you,

governor and thank you to the University of South Dakota. This was a wonderful educational opportunity to every single student."

The institute came on the heels of a trip Gov. Dennis Daugaard made to China in March, when he and others went to learn about export opportunities.

China currently is the state's third-largest export market, he said.

Daugaard added he was glad to return the favor for the visiting Chinese delegation.

"Not long ago, our South Dakota delegation was eating Peking duck, sharing stories and laughter with some of you in Beijing, and then Shanghai," he said. "You were very gracious hosts, and my wife Linda and I and the other members of our group can't thank you enough for the hospitality you showed."

"My trip to China gave me the opportunity to realize what a great

opportunity there was for partnerships of businesses in South Dakota and China," he said.

While the delegation was here they attended a number of presentations, including one by Pat Costello of the Office of Economic Development, and another with John Hemmestad – director at Avalon Capital Group – called "Private Equity: An Investor's Perspective."

The delegation also took a tour of South Dakota ag secretary Walt Bones' dairy farm.

"You have all been very busy here in Vermillion. I've seen your schedule, and you have had the opportunity to learn from many intelligent individuals over the past week,"

Daugaard said. "I'm hoping that you enjoy your visit to South Dakota, and that you will return to China excited about opportunities to invest in our state."

For his part, Lu said through

interpreter Diana Li that he hoped to maintain a good relationship with those he met here.

"Please let all of us be the ambassadors between China and America," he said. "This is our responsibility. We're expecting every single guest here will come back to China to visit, and we wish we will become the best of friends. And, we wish our friendship will last forever."

After the members of the delegation received their certificates of completion, Lu was given the title of visiting professor by the Beacom School of Business.

"This is the first time – and only time – we have given this award," said business school dean Mike Keller on bestowing the title. "We invite Professor Lu to come back at any time."

Gifts also were given to each of the delegates, and the Chinese visitors presented many of the state and university representatives with gifts in

return, which included handcrafted boxes and paintings.

Lu concluded by thanking everyone who played a role in organizing the week's events.

"Every student – from now on, the University of South Dakota is our second home," he said. "As everybody knows, we have a saying in China: 'When you drink the water from the well, you need to always remember who dug the water, so if someone helped you, you have to know how to show appreciation.'"

"Of course, we will have to – and we will – thank the University of South Dakota," he said. "We have to thank every teacher of the University of South Dakota with our actions, by bringing cooperation between China and the University of South Dakota, and the state of South Dakota. We also will have to make sure that there will be some kind of cooperation between China and South Dakota."

UNIQUE 'BOARD' MEETING



A young student breaks a board as part of the annual fundraiser Vermillion Taekwondo holds on behalf of St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital. Vermillion Taekwondo has raised approximately \$10,500 for the hospital over the past seven years.

(Photo by Travis Gulbrandson)

Vermillion Taekwondo 'breaks' for St. Jude's

By Travis Gulbrandson

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Students at Vermillion Taekwondo found a unique way to commemorate a unique and raise money at the same time.

Each year, they hold an organized "board break" that serves as a fundraiser for St. Jude's Children's Research

Hospital.

Last Saturday, they broke approximately 2,012 plastic and wood boards.

"We have collected a total of \$10,500 in the last seven years, and historically we get a little over \$1,000 each time we do it," said John Trefz, fifth-degree black belt, certified

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City seeks input to keep traffic flowing smoothly

By Travis Gulbrandson

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Areas along Highway 50, Stanford, Main and Cherry streets could be among those affected when the Vermillion Area Master Transportation Plan is finalized.

Representatives from the city, the state department of transportation and the URS Corporation – a provider of engineering, construction and technical services – were on hand in the Council Chambers of Vermillion City Hall to seek input regarding the plan Monday night.

This week's meeting marked the second time public opinion was sought regarding possible areas of improvement, the first being last year.

"The issues that we had received during that meeting have kind of set the direction of where we wanted to look at the transportation system," said Bill Troe, vice president of surface transportation for URS.

Many of the issues focused around parking at the university, pedestrian/vehicle conflicts and traffic congestion.

"The other thing that we really want to focus on in the transportation planning process is safety, so we also gathered all the crash records over the last three or four years," Troe said.

According to the acquired data, some of the most crash-heavy areas can be found along the intersections of Highway 50 and Stanford, Cherry and Dakota, Cherry and Plum and Main and Center, each of which saw between eight and 10 collisions between 2008 and 2010.

The biggest crash site was at Cherry and Rose streets, which saw more than 10 collisions during the same period.

Troe said there could be a number of solutions to the problem, including the installation of more stoplights.

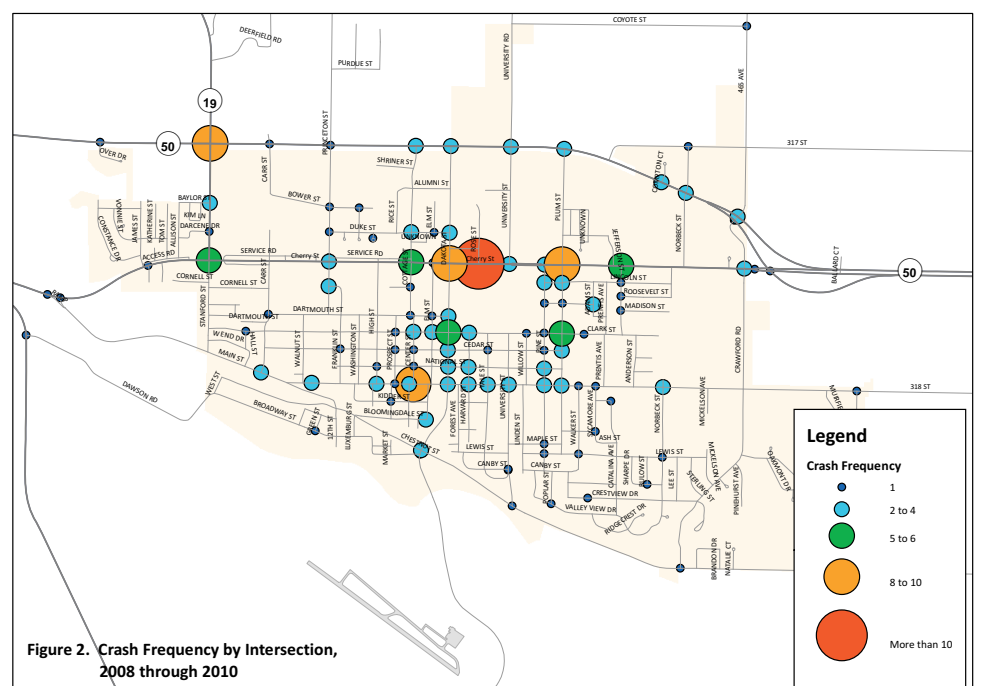


Figure 2. Crash Frequency by Intersection, 2008 through 2010

Traffic safety was among the issues discussed during a meeting Monday regarding the city's master transportation plan. This graphic shows the most crash-heavy areas in Vermillion between 2008 and 2010.

In laying out the plan, the traffic problems of today are not the only ones explored. Among the other data that is taken into account is the locations of future residential and job growth, estimates of future traffic conditions and potential changes to future roadway, bus/transit, bicycle and pedestrian systems.

One area that could see commercial growth is the northwest part of town near Wal-Mart and Hy-Vee.

When this is coupled with possible southern residential growth, more vehicles could be added to Cherry Street, which

could then increase the likelihood of vehicle/pedestrian conflicts.

"When you think about the investment we make with the infrastructure, we want to also be thinking about where we want to be in 20 years from now, 25 years from now, relative to where development is occurring, so we can plan for the future, not try to react as development comes in," Troe said.

For more information on the study, visit vermilliontransportation.blogspot.com.

An opportunity to present written comments will be provided until May 14.