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Under Construction

Sanford Vermillion Begins Three Phase, \$11M Construction Project

BY SHAUNA MARLETTE
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With the roar of a backhoe and the sounds of a jackhammer, phase one of Sanford Vermillion's \$11 million construction project began early last week.

According to Timothy Tracy, chief executive officer Sanford Vermillion, it is a three-phase project that he expects to be finished in just more than two years.

In all, the project is expected to cost nearly \$11 million, \$2 million of it funded by the Dakota Hospital Foundation and the balance funded by Sanford Health System.

Although the demolition began last week, Tracy said work was going on before that.

"Some of the preparatory work we did was going before the Planning and Zoning Commission to develop this area into a planned development district for health care," he said. "All the property around here was split up into different lots; even within our own property, we would have had to get variances. Our own property had four lots, so now it is considered one. It was also a process of supplying water and electrical variances for the city and doing those kinds of things."

"We have been in the planning process for probably seven years or more, really thinking about what long term is best for the facility here given all the changes in health care. Through that process and a number of studies, we have come up with our current plan."

The three-phase plan includes adding on to the emergency room department with a drive-through



SHAUNA MARLETTE/FOR THE PLAIN TALK

A three phase construction project at Sanford Vermillion is underway and facility officials say the public needs to be aware of the changes to entrances to the emergency room because of it. The old emergency room entrance at 17 Walker Street has been closed and the public is asked to use the main entrance of the facility. Signage has been posted on the property to notify the public. Below: The current emergency room facilities have been closed off to the public and a wall is being built to keep construction dust from entering the hospital.

ambulance bay and expanded emergency treatment rooms, family rooms, private council rooms for families – all in the emergency department – and a place for all of the facility's disaster management supplies and decontamination supplies.

"The other part of the project we are undertaking right now – this is all on the east side of our building – is the addition of a new pharmacy and a new laundry," Tracy said. "Part of the reason for those is that we picked a location that is central to our nursing home, our hospital and our clinic. So, it will be more efficient for what we do."

Those services are currently located in the old hospital building, which was built in 1933.

Phase one is expected to be completed by the end of the year, he said. "Then we will physically move our laundry and pharmacy. Once we have the 1933 building vacated then we will begin demolition this winter. If everything goes right we see it happening in the winter,"

he said.

Currently, the old hospital building houses offices, material management and clinical therapists. However, Tracy said the bulk of the building is unused.

"It used to house all of our medical records, and those have all been moved to permanent storage because now our medical records system is completely electronic," he said. "We no longer have paper records, which cleared up a tremendous amount of space in there. Some of the other things we have done is, we built the new maintenance shop across the street and that came out of there; they used to work out of the basement of that facility. We expect that the old hospital building will pretty much be a skeleton by the first of the year."

Tracy said he has heard some comments regarding the old building coming down – the typical "my children, wife, mother, were born there" things – but the request he



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CFCF Wins \$5,000 Grant

BY SARAH WETZEL
For the Plain Talk

Last week the winners' names were released for the community outreach project contest hosted by Navigant and Vermillion's own Center for Children and Families (CFCF) came out on top, earning them a \$5,000 grant to further improvements at their facility.

"I went on the Navigant site and saw when they posted all the names," director Sarah Sherlock recounted. "Then a rep from our local Alleviant called the following day and asked who they should make the check out for and said congratulations. It is very exciting."

Dozens of Alleviant companies around the country participated in community service projects which they submitted to Navigant, the larger company.

Locals were encouraged to vote online for their favorite project with a limit of one vote per device.

"We have a lot of supporters," Sherlock said. "I know all the folks at Alleviant voted as much as they could and shared with their friends and family. We put it on our Facebook page and a lot of our staff members shared it on their personal facebook pages. A lot of the families from our center shared it. We had a lot of people supporting it which was amazing. Looking at the states we were number one in votes."

CFCF came in first with 1814 votes, about 400 votes over the second placer.

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Honoring Our Fallen Heros



ELYSE BRIGHTMAN/ FOR THE PLAIN TALK

Members of the VFW Post 3061 Honor Guard salute to honor the dead during the Memorial Day ceremonies on Monday at the First Baptist Church on Main Street.

BY ELYSE BRIGHTMAN
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A little rain didn't stop Vermillion from putting on its Memorial Day remembrance ceremonies.

The First Baptist Church on Main Street was packed as the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 3061 hosted the event that honored those of Clay County who have died serving the country.

"I think we had about 20 some more people (attend) than we normally do," said Andy Howe, who served in the Marine Corp from 1980-1983 and is a member of the VFW Post. "We had 118 people and normally I've always estimated around 75. Even with it being a rainy day we had a big

turnout."

The faces in the crowd were a mix of young and old and Howe points out the service is for more than the veterans and VFW members, it's for the public to honor the veterans who couldn't be there.

"It's great when you see younger people," Howe said. "Generally you look out in the group and you have veterans showing, and ideally it's people other than veterans showing up. Veterans made a commitment, it's part of our duty as a member of the VFW to honor those that have died, so we're going to be here anyway, but we want to see that the citizens come and the public come."

The ceremony lasted about an hour and included an

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Rolling Out The Welcome Mat

BY SHAUNA MARLETTE
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For South Dakota American Legion Auxiliary Girls State director Cheryl Hovorka, the week leading up to the annual event is one of organizing and prepping final details as the community of Vermillion and the University of South Dakota (USD) prepare to welcome this year's class June 1-6.

The W.O. Farber Center for Civic Leadership at the University of South Dakota will host the event for the 14th consecutive year. The South Dakota American Legion Auxiliary chose the 388 girls for the 69th annual Girls State, which teaches participants about every aspect of American government, from the local and state to the federal level.

"We will have 388 girls attend this year," Hovorka said. "This number is up a bit over last year, which is good to see. Typically, Girls State is held during the week of Memorial Day but this year we had to move it back a week."

Girls State will begin on Monday as the attendees arrive on the USD campus and are separated into 14 cities. From there they will be assigned dorm rooms in Bede and Mickelson Hall.

"It is always a fun and hectic time," Hovorka said. "The girls will meet their Senior and Junior counselors and will get situated. Then there will be the city mixers where they get the chance to meet the girls in their city. That night there will be a general assembly in Aalls Auditorium in Slagle Hall."

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Pumping It Up For Heartland Humane Society

BY SHAUNA MARLETTE
For The Plain Talk

Heartland Humane Society (HHS) welcomes the community to meet their dogs available for adoption on Saturday, from 10 a.m.-noon at Pump 'N Pak in Vermillion. Pump 'N Pak is located at 629 Stanford Street.

"We will have several different sizes, ages and breeds of dogs available for the general public to meet and possibly adopt," Christa Kranig, shelter coordinator said in an interview with the Plain Talk. "There will be a booth with information for those considering adopting or volunteering, along with other various activities, such as a free-will donation doggie wash, doggie treat bags and a merchandise table."

Kranig said that the event is the perfect opportunity for anyone looking to adopt a pet to see a few of those available to adopt, but she added it is a great time for anyone who loves animals to help support the Heartland Humane Society, as well.

"This will be a great chance for everyone to meet our dogs in foster homes, but also come out and enjoy a fun gathering," she said. "We will have treat bags, merchandise and you can bathe your dog! Bring the whole family for a couple hours of fun."

Staff at HHS encourages anyone interested in adopting the day of the event to fill out an application prior to Saturday, that way if you do find an animal you wish to adopt the process will go quicker as applications must be reviewed and approved before adoption.

Kranig noted that donations are always welcome and can be dropped off at Pump 'N Pak.

"We can always use clumping kitty litter," she said. "We also have a large need for kitten food and napkins."

You can pick up an application at the shelter or find one on the organization website www.heartlandhumane.org.

For more information on this event, contact Heartland Humane Society at 605-664-4244 or



COURTESY PHOTO

Sadie is one of the dogs currently up for adoption through the Heartland Humane Society.

email hhs@midconetwork.com. You can view all animals available for adoption on the shelter's website or on Petfinder.com.