

## Guest Commentary:

# Support small business this holiday season

By Sen. John Thune

Small business is the lifeblood of South Dakota communities. Across the state, small businesses sponsor baseball teams, support fine arts fundraisers, contribute to development projects, and make the conscious decision to keep their business in our community to help stimulate our local economies. These business owners often treat their customers and their employees like family, because in small towns, ensuring customer satisfaction is vitally important to keeping their doors open.

Over the past several years, the economic climate has been difficult for many small businesses to navigate. Economic uncertainty has led to revenue and job loss, and many small businesses wonder how they will weather the economic storm. The hope for any small business during the holiday season is that members of their community will first choose to shop local for their holiday gifts. The loyalty and patronage of customers in small towns and in small businesses across the state injects money into local establishments, helping them to lower prices and provide a

greater array of products and services.

In Washington, I believe we must do more to provide certainty and support for our small businesses. Unfortunately, proposals put forward by the president and Democrat-led Senate would increase taxes on small businesses. It is estimated that under the Democrats' plan, tax hikes would hit nearly one million businesses that employ 25 percent of the nation's workforce. If the president and Senate Democrats are serious about growing our economy and preventing our country from heading over the fiscal cliff, they should provide certainty to small businesses by extending the current tax rates for all Americans.

Congress has a lot of work to do over the next month to ensure that we protect small businesses and get our fiscal house in order. I will continue to work across the aisle to protect our job creators and cut spending. As the holiday season continues, don't limit your small business patronage to Small Business Saturday. Support your friends; support your community; support small businesses by shopping locally this holiday season.



## Guest Commentary:

## Supporting small business

By Rep. Kristi Noem

As South Dakota families gear up for the frenzied holiday shopping season that begins for some after the last bite of turkey on Thanksgiving Day, it's important to remember the role our small businesses play. Nov. 24 is "Small Business Saturday," a day to celebrate small businesses and the impact they have on our communities.

South Dakota is home to more than 78,000 small businesses that account for almost 62 percent of the private-sector jobs in the state, according to data from the Small Business Administration. While the national economy has struggled over the past few years, South Dakota's economy has grown, due in large part to the success of small business. In fact, South Dakota continually ranks as the friendliest state for small businesses.

Unfortunately, many small businesses in South Dakota and across the nation are facing unprecedented uncertainty about where our economy is going. Looming at the end of the year is what has become known as the "fiscal cliff," a combination of across-the-board spending cuts and tax increases that economists tell us could send America back into a

recession. According to a recent survey by the National Federation of Independent Business, a record high number of small business owners are uncertain about whether business conditions will be better or worse in six months.

That's why I am continuing to fight for policies in Congress that will provide some confidence and certainty for our job creators. We still have time to avert the fiscal cliff and keep tax rates low for hardworking Americans. Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle need to come to the table to find common sense solutions, and I am hopeful that we can come to an agreement.

Showing support for our state's small businesses through initiatives like "Small Business Saturday" is a great way to give South Dakota employers a confidence boost. I encourage South Dakotans looking to purchase gifts this holiday season to see what their local small businesses have to offer. For my part, I will keep up the fight in Congress to give our small businesses the certainty they need to keep on hiring and growing. To learn more about the businesses celebrating Small Business Saturday, please visit: <http://www.shopsmall.com>.

# Muted reservations for two...

"Piglet sidled up to Pooh from behind. 'Pooh,' he whispered. 'Yes, Piglet?' 'Nothing,' said Piglet, taking Pooh's paw, 'I just wanted to be sure of you.'" — "Winnie the Pooh"

When my sister leaned in to whisper in my ear, her cupped hand curled sideways at the corner of her mouth, freshly swiped with mint lip gloss, producing a sleepy satisfying smile on my face, she was as an artist reflecting my soul.

What is more organically intimate than having someone dear whisper words into your ear, expressing messages of which no one else is privy?

A soft-spoken private expressway, not to announce or broadcast, this intensely personal method of communication embodies an uncommon connection.

Quietly articulated thoughts, whispered feelings and aspirations are muted reservations for two who share a history. Only for bonded sojourners who go way back, for lovers and friends, brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers, teammates and classmates.

Rarely, if ever, do strangers share whispers, an increasingly seldom-used form of communication these days.

Possessing a lifelong fascination with how people communicate, I had no other choice but to take this fearfully trodden path for my career, going on 30 years now. Over time, I have observed that some of the most powerful forms of communication are like prayers, quiet and silent in nature.

And then there are handwritten signs held by hitchhikers and panhandlers on roadsides and street corners; urban messages in a do-it-yourself advertising

## MY STORY YOUR STORY



PAULA DAMON  
paula.damon@iw.net

genre. Ones I've seen locally on fair weather days... "Homeless - live in car." "Can you spare \$5 for gas?" "Hungry." "Will work for food."

Coming by my interest quite honestly, as a youngster I observed with keen exasperation either from far corners or glancing back over my shoulder at how my parents communicated, or did not. In summation, if they weren't arguing, they weren't talking, leaving long periods of silence for me to fill in the blanks.

Mom went about her day-to-day business of running our household of eight with as few words as possible. I suppose this was to conserve energy for our brood of six children. Don't get me wrong - she most definitely had things to say. However, hers was a universal language we could easily translate.

Like her repeated pounding on the floor when she was trying to nap upstairs - a non-verbal and clearly understood command for our rowdy bunch below to "Keep it down!" At any given time when one of us misbehaved, we resigned to the fact that all would undergo a shared punishment. Mother, chasing us around the house, wearing her customary exhaustive look turned fierce, became a speechless charging

warrior, wielding her weapon of choice, a thick yardstick from the local hardware store. Not heeding her angry call to stand still for a good spanking, we ran with daring just out of her extended reach.

My siblings and I navigated through life securely relying on Mom's wordless vernacular, as we did Dad's.

For a good portion of my childhood, my father made his living on the road. That's why fresh avocados smothered with mayonnaise; juicy peaches and soft-served custard are among my comfort foods. After being away five days out of seven, Dad quite often brought these expressive goodies home, as if to say, "I love you but can't find the words..." or "I missed you and hope this will make up for my absence."

And then there's body language: Elbowing, shouldering, winking, nodding or even stonewalling. Abruptly leaving the room or turning back. Cheerlessly grimacing or sheepishly grinning. Rushing toward or jerking away. Lumbering along or pacing frenetically. Abruptly standing or quietly whispering.

All telegraph without a word where we've been, where we are, where we're headed and what we're feeling.

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A resident of Southeast South Dakota, Paula Bosco Damon is a national award-winning columnist. Her writing has won first-place in competitions of the National Federation of Press Women, South Dakota Press Women and Iowa Press Women. In the 2009, 2010 and 2011 South Dakota Press Women Communications Contests, her columns have earned eight first-place awards. To contact Paula, email [boscodamon.paula@gmail.com](mailto:boscodamon.paula@gmail.com), follow her blog at [my-story-your-story.blogspot.com](http://my-story-your-story.blogspot.com) and find her on Facebook.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Proposed water access could hurt ranchers

My grandparents are ranchers, so my family knows how important access to water can be, especially in tough years.

That's why I'm so worried about Powertech, Inc.'s proposed Dewey-Burdock uranium mine in Fall River County.

Powertech is applying to drain more than 9,000 gallons per minute from the Inyan Kara and Madison aquifers. Rapid City and neighboring communities depend on these aquifers for water. When SD farmers and ranchers are struggling through one of the worst droughts in recent memory, allowing a foreign corporation to

drain our precious resources seems like a disaster in the making.

Moreover, according to a USA Today study (9/28/2012), water costs are rising all across the U.S. Sioux Falls has seen costs increase by 140 percent in the last 12 years! The average annual income for Pennington County is \$18,938. For our West River neighbors earning less than \$20,000, hikes like this might mean having to choose between running water or heat next winter.

Powertech's water permit hearing is scheduled for Dec. 5 in Pierre. Before that hearing takes place, let our legislators know that South Dakota can't afford this mine.

Tom Emanuel, Vermillion  
Executive Director of the South Dakota Peace and Justice Center

### Sweet & Treats Cookie Walk is town treasure

Vermillion is a town rich in treasures, and it was about one year ago that I discovered yet another unique town treasure. Familiar with several of the well-known treasures - the National Music Museum, the W.H. Over Museum and the Austin Whittemore House - I wasn't expecting to find another town treasure when I arrived at the 2011 Clay County Historical Society's Sweet & Treats Cookie

Walk. I expected to find the usual yummy bake sale goodies, but what I did find was more than a mere bake sale with its usual fare.

The first hint that I was onto something beyond the usual was the row of paper plates topped with generous stacks of the world's thinnest, tastiest and most brittle of peanut brittle. Trays on the next table were filled with tiers of the most crisp, delicious, perfectly-formed rosette cookies. And those were only the beginning of the walk.

There were varieties of every sweet and treat imaginable: Rolled cookies, pressed cookies,

powdered cookies, cut-out cookies, drop cookies, filled cookies, decorated cookies, bar cookies with chips, nuts, jams and/or fruit bits, fudge with or without nuts, brownies, blondies, meringue cookies and macaroons. Treats without categorical headings, such as krumkake and almond bark-dipped pretzels also filled the tables.

All the cookies, sweets and treats I knew from childhood, plus more, appeared on these tables. It was an amazing sight to behold!

What is even more amazing is that all of these sweets, treats and cookies are made by the

people of Vermillion, most by Clay County Historical Society members. In my thinking, this makes the Clay County Historical Society as much of a town treasure as the Sweet & Treats Walk they sponsor.

I saved this letter for a year to send so it could serve as a heads up to the townspeople of Vermillion to schedule the Sweet & Treats Cookie Walk into their holiday calendar. The 2012 Sweet & Treats Cookie Walk is being held Saturday, Dec. 8 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Austin Whittemore House, 5 Austin St.

Go. You will be happy you did.

Kate Stewart

Send Letters to the Editor to [david.lias@plaintalk.net](mailto:david.lias@plaintalk.net) or mail to 201 W. Cherry St., Vermillion, SD 57069.

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