

# City Seeing A Large Number Of Fall Building Projects

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As you have driven around Vermillion the past few weeks and months you may have noticed there are a lot of changes going on. From renovations and remodels to new construction, it is clear Vermillion is a city on the grow: O'Reilly Auto Parts near Walmart, a new First Dakota National Bank on Cherry Street, an addition at Polaris and the cement plant, not to mention all of the new residential construction going on, Vermillion is building for the future.

According to executive director of the Vermillion Chamber and Development Company (VDCD) Nate Welch, it is all part of the strategic plan of the community.

"I think we often forget how much really great progress we have in this community and it is fun that you hit certain cycles where all of a sudden you get to see all that activity going on," he said. "Polaris is finishing their addition, which is 225,000 square feet which is an amazingly large building project. Next to them there are some new storage units in that area, it is an exciting time. At Bliss Point we have a number of houses that are going up and a few that are almost completed. There are duplexes on Cherry Street. It really is fun to consistently see activity going on."

What is unusual is all of this new construction is taking place in late October.

"We are doing a very good job at good consistent growth," Welch said. "With that consistent growth, sometimes you do hit that cool time when a lot of

different streets and roads you go down in town you do see that new construction. That is really a great sign of a healthy community and a community that is moving forward. I don't know that I am surprised at the date they are starting, because I was aware of them going on, but it is nice to see them continuing and not slowing down in October. Better yet, to see them say 'I am not going to let the option or fear of cold slow me down.' That is a fun thing to see."

Welch said another fun thing to see is the growth in all sectors of the community.

"When you look at all the different industries and construction, some of them are built with specific purposes, some of them are built for expansion and some of them are built with the specific purpose of expectation and forward thinking that we will be able to fill it," he said. "With all of that mix it helps us so next year we will see the results of that and, hopefully, have more projects going."

### Sharing The Success

Welch said a unique aspect of the community of Vermillion across the region is that almost everyone has a reason to have visited the community.

"When you think about it, Vermillion is one of the few communities in South Dakota that everyone has an experience with because of having the University of South Dakota here, because of having the DakotaDome, because of having state high school football, there is a reason to visit Vermillion, not to mention all the graduates that USD produces,"

he said. "So many people in South Dakota have a perception of Vermillion. Our job is to update that perception and as we update them, we are surprising them. They don't know all the changes that have been going on."

He said sharing the changes and how the community has grown is one of the fun aspects of his job.

"Think of how many people go on Highway 50 and all the little changes they get to see," he said. "When all of a sudden they really notice and see the changes. When Walmart goes up and all of a sudden Polaris is here, your perception of Vermillion changed and you realized you needed to update your opinion of Vermillion. It is really fun not only to see a lot of in-town changes, but it is fun when you have activity on the north side of town because it isn't just a sign of growth, it is also a great way for people to see the changes in Vermillion."

Welch noted that people are pleasantly surprised by what they are seeing.

"One of the reactions that we are seeing – that I wasn't expecting – has been genuine happiness for the town," he said. "You meet so many people who see the potential of the community and when they see that growth they get genuinely happy for you. It is like seeing that person you were cheering for succeed and grow. When you have people who have a special place in their heart for Vermillion and they see it growing, not only are they pleasantly surprised, they are genuinely happy for you."

### Looking To The Future

"I think that Vermillion

has had fantastic potential, it has had great leaders that have had a great vision for the community, but what is great is we are starting to realize that potential and starting to believe that we can do it," Welch said. "There is real validity to believing that you can do it. You have to be able to execute, to have that strategic plan to look forward, but sometimes it starts with believing we are a town that has a lot of potential."

Adding that development of people is a huge component of growth, Welch said Vermillion is in a very unique position.

"We do have a unique community with the University here where it brings a lot of people in, but at the same time a lot of people leave the community each year," he said. "So, how can we set up a system when someone comes to town for whatever reason it might be, that they can be engrained into the community as quickly as possible and want to stay. That will make a difference."

He said a key to that success will be identifying what roles are needed.

"In a community different people serve different purposes," Welch said. "You do have to have a community of optimistic engaged citizens. They have to be able to see the challenges and surmount them. That really starts with engagement and really having people feel engaged, whether that is with a church or a community organization. On the Chamber side, we want to be that nucleus for the business community, for the professional community, because we like carrying that burden of helping promote the

community. The development really does start from within and it is not a quick turn. It isn't a year change, it is a progress step-by-step change that takes commitment and it takes everybody understanding what their role is and committing to it."

After identifying the needs and roles of the community then it is time to help businesses grow.

"When it comes to the development of the businesses entrepreneurship, it is helping people figure out what businesses do you want to start?" Welch said. "What business do you want to grow in? How do we get good, strong businesses that can grow for them and take care of their employees and be great places to work? That is what it comes down to. We are not going to be able to create 10,000 CEOs out of here, but we are going to be able to create good, strong companies that we can support both them and their employees. We want to invest in those companies that are going to invest in their employees because it is their employees that will be the members of the community and will give back to the community."

He said VDCD is trying to determine what are the best strategies for growing entrepreneurship in Vermillion. "We are, right now, looking at what is the best way to make this a very entrepreneurial friendly, start-up friendly community," Welch said. "The city and the state are both very business friendly, so we have that going for us, but we have to ask how can we support the businesses and help them be successful."

"A study that was done out of the University of Min-

nesota did a density study of each county in the country and if you look at the map, the denser the growth the darker the color. As you can guess if you look at the overall growth in the country, the denser growth was on the coasts. But, if you look at the 30 to 35 year-old range, it completely inverted the map. Which means that range is when people are starting to settle down, they are moving back home. They recognize the quality of life is the best part about it. That is what we have. What we need to do is not only create it so that when you are welcomed and engaged to a community, there is a lot less chance they are going to move on. That is the type of stuff that is going to help us grow."

While the population of Vermillion is Stable, Welch said he would like to see it grow in that critical age group.

"I see this as an opportunity to go back to the 30-35 year olds who want to move back and tell them our story," he said. "We have the feeder system here; we want to figure out how do we keep them in the community. We have refocused on trying to find jobs for the students that the university has trained them for. Now is an opportunity to go try to find those jobs so they stay right here."

"The VDCD in general is doing very well, we have had challenges but have also had great investments and successes coming into the community. I am very excited about the future of Vermillion and am glad to be a part of it."

## Golf 13<sup>th</sup> At OBX Invitational

POWELLS POINT, N.C.— South Dakota's men's golf team placed 13th out of 18 teams at Old Dominion's OBX Invitational held Sunday thru Tuesday at Kilmarlic Golf Club. The 54-hole event featured 93 golfers and served as the fifth and final fall meet for the Coyotes.

South Dakota senior Jordan Rykal finished at 6-over par and tied for 26th place in the individual standings. Rykal opened the tourna-

ment with a 3-under 68, which was his sixth round in the red this fall. He shot 75 and 76 in rounds two and three, respectively.

Rykal finished the five fall events with a stroke average of 72.8 and a record of 290-60 (.829). He was South Dakota's top finisher in each of the final three meets.

Campbell shot 267 as a team on day one and cruised to a 13-shot victory over the rest of the field. The

Fighting Camels had the top two place finishers in Craig Hornberger and Gaston Bertinotti. Hornberger tied the program record with an opening round 64 Sunday. He finished at 12-under to win by seven strokes over Bertinotti and Drexel's Christopher Crawford.

Bowling Green (854) and Old Dominion (857) finished second and third, respectively, in the team standings. South Dakota shot 897 as a team. North Dakota State, which placed 10th at 892, and Omaha, which finished 18th at 911, also represented the Summit League.

Coyote junior Cody Seal finished two strokes behind Rykal and placed 35th. Junior Grant Campbell finished in 62nd place at 14-over. Sophomore Matt Swanson and freshman Andrew Brown tied for 78th place at 20-over.

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Three new members joined the Foundation board: Joel Portice, USD '87, Fort Lauderdale, Fla. is chief executive officer at Intermedix Corp.; Ryan Taylor, USD '95, '99, Sioux Falls, S.D., is an attorney/partner with Cutler Law Firm LLP; Wagner; Sylvia Wagner, USD '71, Lees Summit, Mo., was an executive vice president with Assurant Employee Benefits prior to retirement.

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