

# Exploring The Renovated Vermillion High School

BY SHAUNA MARLETTE

shauna.marlette@plaintalk.net

The Vermillion School District invited the public to attend a grand opening of the newly renovated Vermillion High School on Monday where officials had the opportunity to show of the improved amenities of the school.

The remodel project primarily focused on the aging infrastructure and educational needs in the original 1965 portion of the facility, but improvements were also made to the 2001 addition, said superintendent Dr. Mark Froke.

"The project addressed a large backlog of capital improvements while providing better space utilization and improving the operational efficiency of the high school," he said. "It was funded through our capital outlay fund at a cost of \$5.2 million and in the long run will save the district more than \$22,000 a year in energy costs."

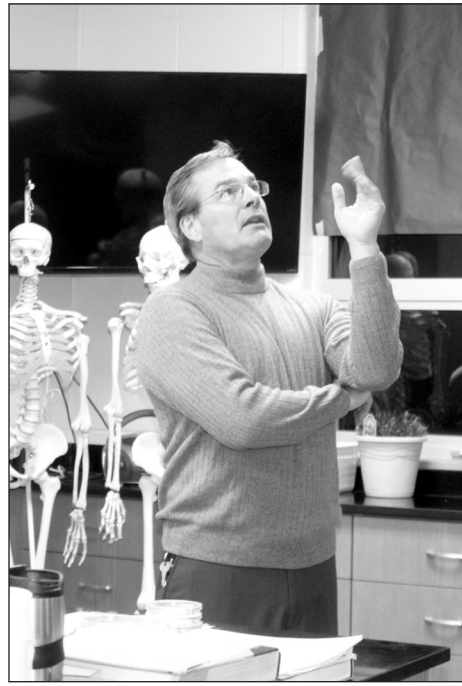
It was noted that the district also received an energy efficiency utility rebate of \$52,583.

The remodel replaced the 1965 building's original steam heating system with a high efficiency hot water system and consolidated the new heating plant with the 2001 addition, eliminating the need to replace the boilers in the 2001 addition.

This improved the high school's heating system efficiency and reliability, noted high school principal Curt Cameron.

During the tour of the facility, it was stressed much of the work completed was not visible now because it was all done in the ceiling and in the tunnels of the school.

"When the workers got in there and started the work they found that a lot of the galvanized water pipes had corroded," Froke said. "We replaced all the galvanized pipe with copper pipe and a high efficiency domestic water heater. It has also been noticed that the air smells clean in the



SHAUNA MARLETTE/FOR THE PLAIN TALK  
VHS principal Curt Cameron talks about a few of the new features in the Biology Lab.

building. That is because the new system is actually circulating the air and doing the job it is supposed to do."

Other projects completed with the remodel including replacing all lighting in the 1965 portion of the building.

Cameron pointed out during the tour that occupancy sensors were installed in the classrooms, as well.

In addition, all of the quartz light fixtures in the 2001 auditorium were replaced and the drop-down mechanism was repaired. This will improve the house light level in the auditorium and will allow burnt-out lamps to be replaced in the future.

The electrical systems in the building



SHAUNA MARLETTE/FOR THE PLAIN TALK  
During Monday's open house at the Vermillion High School the official ribbon cutting dedication the new renovations was held.

were also updated at during the renovations, installing additional electrical circuits. With this update it allowed the zone fire alarm system to be replaced with a new system that indicates the exact location of an alarm instead of a zone of the building.

Each of the classrooms and corridors of the 1965 portion of the building were painted and many windows were replaced, as well.

During the tour Cameron pointed highlighted the updates to the Chemistry and Biology labs.

"The chemistry lab you can see has been fully remodeled," he said. "You can see the new fume hood, which will allow better

safety when doing experiments. There are also new floor tiles and student and teacher work stations."

He pointed out that the work also expanded the classroom area in order to provide more room for student-teacher interaction.

During the tour it was also explained that the restrooms in the facility had been updated and modified to meet all ADA requirements, as well as receiving all new fixtures, wall tile and stalls.

"This remodel is going to serve our district well into the future," Froke said.

## Ambassadors Program Highlights Work Of Vermillion Teacher

BY SHAUNA MARLETTE

Shauna.marlette@plaintalk.net

Sanford Research has recognized Vermillion's Brandy Wallin for her work developing the next generation of scientists and improving science literacy as part of its inaugural Sanford PROMISE Ambassadors.

The Sanford Program for the Midwest Initiative in Science Exploration (PROMISE) connects research scientists, educators, community partners and students. The program includes opportunities for both students and teachers to experience authentic science and collaborate with Sanford Research scientists.

Wallin and the other Sanford PROMISE Ambassadors have partnered with Sanford Research to engage students in science and advance the cause of science literacy across the region and beyond.

Wallin teaches biology and anatomy at Vermillion High School.

"I have been engaged with the Sanford Research and The Sanford PROMISE program since 2011," she said via email with the Plain Talk. "Some of my engagements include: Sanford Promise Workshops, Sanford Science Discovery Days, Sanford PROMISE Advisory Board, It's All About Science Festival, and the implementation of Sanford PROMISE science investigations."

She noted that she has attended several Sanford Promise Workshops, and has been bringing students to the Sanford Science Discovery Day for several

years.

"I have been integrating laboratory investigations designed by the Sanford Promise into my classroom since 2011," said Wallin. "The Sanford PROMISE has significantly impacted my career as a science teacher. I have been given the opportunity to broaden my knowledge and have access to scientific investigations and equipment that I normally would not have. The Sanford PROMISE has also provided opportunities for my students to come and learn more about the field of Biomedical Research and many other realms of science."

She noted that that access has helped her in the classroom and because of that, has helped her students.

"Science concepts can be difficult to understand and comprehend," Wallin said. "However, the Sanford PROMISE scientific investigations and the exposure to the Sanford Research Center have helped my students to better understand science. Experiments promote hands-on-learning and higher ordering thinking. By having students conduct scientific investigations, they are able to see science in action and develop a deeper understanding of a particular concept and how it may impact themselves and the world around them."

"The Sanford PROMISE has helped me to be a more effective science teacher that is capable of scaffolding students in to becoming reflective decision makers and skilled problem solvers."

When asked why science is important to her students she said what they learn

will affect them daily.

"While the importance of science in our daily lives may not always be obvious, we actually make countless science-based choices each day," Wallin said. "Humans need to be able to analyze and think about what they have done and determine what they could do differently. Science literacy helps citizens understand and shape their daily lives. It assists them as they interact with the environment, asking questions and seeking answers. The question-and-answer process lies at the heart of knowing and doing science."

"Science literacy plays a key role in managing our health and well-being. Whether we're choosing products to consume in our daily routines, considering their impact on the environment, or making informed decisions about our health care, science plays a part."

Wallin added that science doesn't just affect critical thinking, it can also impact the culture of the student's future lives.

"Science not only shapes our daily lives, it is also the foundation of an innovative culture and can be found at the core of significant political decisions," she said. "Understanding science is crucial for all members of society. It's a way of thinking and knowing about the natural and physical components of the world we live in."

For more information on the Sanford PROMISE, visit [sanfordresearch.org/education](http://sanfordresearch.org/education).



COURTESY PHOTO  
As part of the Sanford PROMISE program the Vermillion School District received a \$500 donation.

## Charges Considered In Rape Case

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF

randy.dockendorf@yankton.net

The Clay County state's attorney is determining what charges, if any, may be filed into an alleged sexual assault last September on the University of South Dakota campus.

Vermillion police chief Matt Betzen told the Press & Dakotan he has referred his investigation to State's Attorney Teddi Gertsma for her action.

Gertsma could not be immediately reached Thursday afternoon for further comment.

"I have sent the case to the state's attorney," Betzen said. "Basically, at the time, the University released the pictures of three people. One of the people wasn't involved. The other two people were involved with the alleged event."

Betzen said the alleged incident occurred in a USD dorm, but he declined to provide other details or the names of possible suspects.

He emphasized this case is unrelated to another alleged incident of sexual assault which occurred at about the same time off the USD campus.

"They just occurred close together in the same time frame," he said. "There was a lot of speculation that the two were related, but they're not. We didn't believe they were related, and we don't believe they are (at this time)."

Follow @RDockendorf on Twitter.

## Host Families Needed

Global Student Housing (GSH) is currently seeking host families who have a spare room to rent to international students.

Our new online platform is open to individuals and families throughout the United States who have an interest in hosting students or interns. Hosts not only gain additional income, but the chance to expose their family to new cultures and make lasting friendships. Hosts have the freedom to set their own price for their room and even to decide which services, including meals and transportation, they want to offer.

Getting started hosting is totally free and as easy as visiting our website at [www.globalstudenthousing.com](http://www.globalstudenthousing.com) and signing up! The opportunity is nation-wide, so please share with your friends and family.

## Diwali

From Page 1A

programming schedule and what we would do, I started looking at various cultural events and I remembered my dear friends Naveen and Kalyana and decided that Diwali would be on our fall programming calendar for the first time," Sellers said. "So I reached out to Naveen and asked if he would assist in helping to plan this event which I thought was going to be smaller but I'm glad to see it has blossomed to be what it is going to be tonight."

Co-event coordinator and USD student Kalyana Mondreti created hand-written thank you cards for every guest as well as educating those in attendance on Diwali and performing traditional songs and dance.

Mondreti was the recipient of the prestigious President's award for outstanding leadership in Diversity for 2015 at USD.

"While Diwali is known as the festival of lights, the most significant spiritual meaning behind it is the awareness of the inner light," she shared. "The celebration of Diwali is victory of good over evil, referring to the light of higher knowledge, dispelling all ignorance. While the story behind Diwali and the manner of celebration of the festival is different depending on the region, the essence of the festival remains the same, the celebration of life, its enjoyment and the goodness."

While the USD celebration was one night, Diwali is actually celebrated for five days.

"Girls dress up during the festival," Mondreti said. "They wear colorful clothing, new jewelry and their hands are decorated with beautiful



SARAH WETZEL/FOR THE PLAIN TALK  
(L-R) Dean Venky Venkatachalam, Naveen Rakkam, Kalyana Mondreti, Lamont A. Sellers, all instrumental in putting on the USD Diwali celebration.

henna designs. Hindus get up before dawn and clean their houses, take a fragrant bath and dress up in festive clothes."

Jayandra Chiluwal, a graduate student in the department of Biology from Nepal, shared how Diwali is celebrated in his country.

"We call Diwali Tihar in Nepal," he said. "It is also one of the most important festivals and it is celebrated across five days. The first day starts on the 13th day of the waning moon. This is basically acknowledging the bond between gods, animals and humans. The youngsters dance to traditional songs and go from door to door asking for treats. It is like

Halloween but there are no tricks. It is believed that if these people come to your doors and they ask for money it is basically asking for charity and charity brings prosperity, that's the basic idea behind it."

According to Chiluwal

## TELEMARKETER

Telemarketer to work 10-15 hours per week. \$11.00 per hour plus production bonus. Must have telemarketing experience.

Please call  
507-370-1857

**BERESFORD'S 31ST ANNUAL Christmas Craft Fair**

**Saturday, Nov. 28, 2015**  
**9am - 3pm**  
Located at the High School Gym  
301 West Maple

- 104 Booths
- Lunch Served
- Door Prizes

**Admission: Adults \$1**

**Sponsored by: The Beresford Lions Club**

**For Booth Information: 763-8349**