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Vermillion

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A spooktacular time



Friends and neighbors enjoyed one last weekend of camping at the Clay County Campground west of Vermillion at an event designed to usher in the fall season, and ultimately the end of camping season, in a fun way. A Halloween celebration at the campgrounds proved to be so popular that all of the pads were filled, and special accommodations were made to make room for additional campers. While kids enjoyed miniature train rides and playing on inflatables, the "bigger kids," like Jen Prasek of Vermillion, carved pumpkins and decorated their camp sites.

(Photos by David Lias)

Food pantry usage increases

By Travis Gulbrandson

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The number of people served by the Vermillion Food Pantry has increased over the past several years, and the trend shows no signs of stopping.

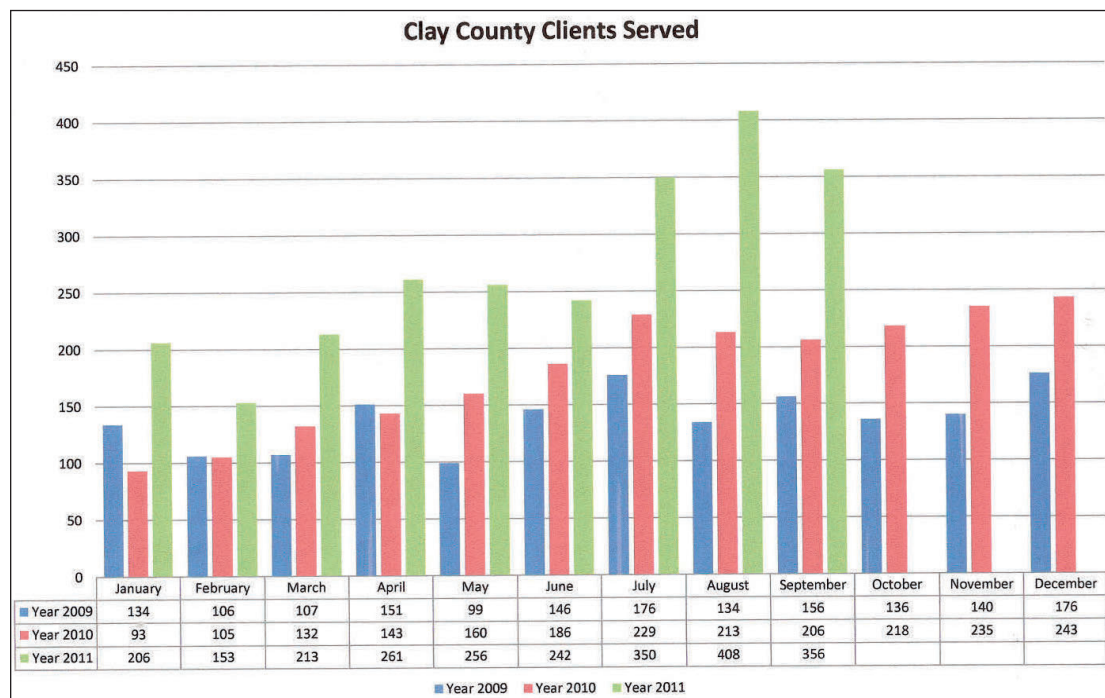
"We served 2,400 people last year, and that's nothing to sneeze at for a town of this size," said pantry director Mary Berglin. "This year we have already passed that mark, and we're up to 2,500 people. And it is only mid-October. So, it's going to be a big year for us."

As of press time, the exact number of people the Vermillion Food Pantry has fed this year is 2,648.

For more than two decades the pantry has been housed at Trinity Lutheran Church.

Initially housed in the church's kitchen, the pantry has expanded its occupancy to three rooms - one of which is double-size - that contain a multitude of shelves, five freezers and two refrigerators.

"I'm thankful that Trinity provides this space for us," Berglin said. "Altogether we have about 92 staff. Nobody gets paid, including me, but that's the way I want it for now. Eventually, this is going to get so big that they're going to have to pay somebody to do this, because it's getting bigger and bigger and bigger."



This graph illustrates the number of Clay County residents served by the Vermillion Food Pantry from 2009 through 2011. So far, the number of individuals seeking assistance in each month of this year has been greater - at times significantly more - than the trend in the previous two years.

(Graphic courtesy of Vermillion Food Pantry)

"I've been doing this 22 years. When we started, one person filled the sacks in the kitchen, and one person gave away the food as people came who were in need," she said. "Then we just got too big for the kitchen." The number of users continues to rise. This past summer the pantry saw higher numbers than ever before.

"In July we (served) 350 people, and I went, 'Wow!'" Berglin said. "We've never had those kind of numbers. Then in August it was 408." In comparison, the Vermillion Food Pantry served 134 people in August 2009 and 213 people in August 2010. To keep up with demand, pantry volunteers work

varying amounts of time weekly or monthly picking up donations, organizing them on the shelves and packing them into boxes for single people, couples and families of four. The boxes are then distributed based on the needs of the food pantry users,

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Heritage edition celebrates local history of education

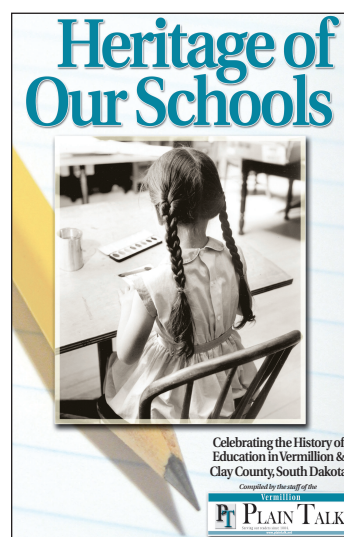
By David Lias

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We encourage our readers to find a quiet time to sit down so they may fully immerse themselves in the reading of the *Plain Talk's* special Heritage edition this week that celebrates the history of education in Clay County and in Vermillion.

The goal of this publication is to take a close look at how our local school system has evolved over the years. In the process, we have learned that the headlines of today concerning education in South Dakota have a familiar ring to them.

We are a state that has never been flush with cash. Our



■ SCHOOL, Page 16

Assault investigation continues

The Vermillion Police Department continues its investigation into an assault that occurred early Sunday, Oct. 9.

The incident occurred just outside the residence at 403 E. Main St., at the corner of Yale and Main streets.

The victim was a 20-year-old male from Dakota Dunes who was visiting town for Dakota Days. He was hit over the head with a glass container, sustaining injuries to his neck and head that required hospitalization.

According to a press release, witnesses stated that approximately 20 people were outside the residence participating in a house party when the alleged incident occurred.

The Vermillion Police Department now is requesting information from anyone who may have witnessed the assault. Those with information may contact Det. Crystal Brady at 605-677-7070, or by e-mail at cbrady@vermillionpd.org.

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