

YSD superintendent: I'm 'embarrassed' by incident

BY NATHAN JOHNSON
nathan.johnson@yankton.net

The superintendent of the Yankton School District is expressing regret over a weekend incident that resulted in his arrest for driving under the influence of alcohol.

Joseph Gertsema was arrested at approximately 1:20 a.m. Sunday after failing a sobriety test at a South Dakota Highway Patrol checkpoint about three miles east of Vermillion along Highway 50, according to Capt. Kevin Joffer, commander of the Sioux Falls district of the Highway Patrol. Gertsema was later booked into the Clay County Jail.

Gertsema, who has served as the Yankton superintendent for

23 years, contacted the Press & Dakotan about the incident Monday night.

"You have to take responsibility and own your problem. That's exactly what I'm doing," Gertsema said. "I'm terribly angry with myself, and it's going to take me a while to forgive myself. I want to apologize to my family and the community for my bad decision."

Although he had consumed alcohol, Gertsema said he did not believe he was over the legal limit when he made the decision to drive near Vermillion.

In retrospect, Gertsema stated that was a poor choice. "People shouldn't drive after

they drink," he said.

Gertsema said the Highway Patrol treated him professionally, and he cooperated with officers fully.

He added that he had spoken individually with all five members of the Yankton School Board.

A message left by the Press & Dakotan with school board president Chris Specht was not returned by press time Tuesday.

"There is nothing that anybody would say to me that would make me feel any worse than I already do," Gertsema said. "I'm going to own this problem, this mistake and this bad decision."

You can follow Nathan Johnson on Twitter at twitter.com/AnInlandVoyage

Pink Out at Tanager game Friday

The community of Vermillion is invited to participate in a PINK OUT at the VHS Tanager Football game vs. Madison High School at the Dakota Dome on Friday, October 12. Sanford Vermillion is hosting the PINK OUT to promote breast health awareness and to remind everyone of the importance of breast cancer screening in the fight against breast cancer.

VHS players and coaches will wear pink shoelaces to show their support. The first 100 in attendance will receive a breast cancer awareness gift. Audience members will also have a chance to catch some pink footballs to be thrown out during the game.

"We are very excited to cheer on the Vermillion Tanager Football team and promote breast cancer awareness at the same time," said Mary Merrigan, director of public relations, Sanford Vermillion.

"We hope to have a sea of pink throughout the Dome!"

"Early detection is so vitally important in the battle against breast cancer. Hosting an event like this helps us to bring more awareness to the topic in a fun way," said Dr. Anastasia Searcy, Sanford Clinic Vermillion. "I visit with my patients regularly about the importance of annual mammogram screening. Hopefully the Pink Out event will serve as another reminder to reinforce that message."

Sometimes the decision to make that screening appointment is met with concern about the costs involved. While most insurance plans cover the entire cost of a mammogram screening, the reality is there are many that have little or no insurance to help with these costs.

"The Pink Out event is also a great opportunity to talk about the financial assistance that is

available for mammography screening through Dakota Hospital Foundation," said Susan Tuve, president, Dakota Hospital Foundation. "We are constantly seeking ways that we can support local health and wellness needs and this is an excellent way to do that. The DHF Board made the commitment to bring the latest in breast health screening technology when they purchased the digital mammography equipment for Sanford Vermillion in 2009. Setting funds aside to also assist in the cost of the screening for those with little or no health insurance took that commitment to the next level."

For more information regarding mammography screening and the availability of financial assistance for mammography costs, please call Sanford Vermillion at 605.624.2611

\$500 gift card winner



Julie Fallon (center) is presented a \$500 grocery gift card by Steve Parker of the Vermillion Hy-Vee, and Steve Dick, executive director of Ag United. South Dakota Farm Families offered up this opportunity for South Dakotans to win big. Throughout the month of September South Dakota residents registered on the "South Dakota Farm Families" Facebook page to win a \$500 grocery gift card to purchase their favorite foods for fall barbecues and tailgate parties. By liking the Facebook page, not only were South Dakota residents able to register for the \$500 grocery gift card but they also receive links to recipes, cooking tips and interaction with South Dakota Farm Families through videos, blogs and farm tour details through-out the year. Fallon's name was drawn at random, and she was presented with the \$500 grocery gift card Oct. 3. (Photo by David Lias)

STATUE

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like, but Stalheim decided to include an additional item – a small model of the statue itself.

It was not an easy process, he said.

"My first attempt at sculpting a coyote looked pretty much like a horse," Stalheim said. "I was absolutely horrified. After hours of researching anatomy, my second attempt looked far more like a canine, but definitely still not coyote enough."

"It turns out, hands down, the most awkwardly-proportioned species within the canine (family) is the coyote," he said.

Stalheim made another model when he was named as one of the finalists, and yet

another to address safety concerns when it looked as if he might win.

It took three and a half months to complete the final statue, a process Stalheim called "the most rewarding journey of my life."

The coyote statue project was made possible through the leadership of the Student Government Association and a student philanthropy initiative administered by the USD Foundation.

More than 500 student donors each gave an average of \$30 to see the project through to completion.

"What began as an idea to memorialize fallen students morphed into a vision of a new campus tradition that would serve as a lasting symbol of pride and unity for every member of our community," Carr said.

Abbott agreed, saying, "Not

everybody thought it would be of necessary importance (but) the fact is, points of pride, symbols of our university, are always important, always necessary and always a great thing to have."

He thanked Carr, Schou, the Coyote Statue Committee and everyone else who helped see the project through.

Current Student Government Association president Alissa VanMeeteren concluded Friday's ceremony by asking the attendees to think about what the statue means.

"Although the purpose of this day was and is to dedicate legacy, I believe it was also designed to inspire each person here to consider the personal legacy that exists within each of their hearts as a result of enrolling in and graduating from the University of South Dakota," she said.



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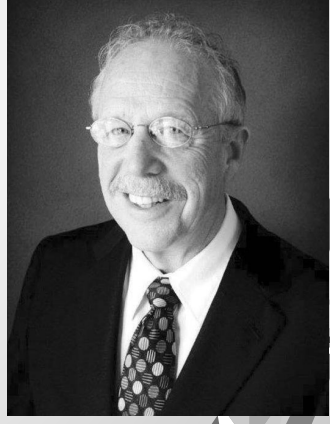
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