

# School Board Accepts Funding To Add Safety Measure

BY SARAH WETZEL  
For the Plain Talk

Vermillion schools might soon have a step up in security thanks to a new grant received.

According to Superintendent Mark Froke, the Vermillion School District has received an offer for a Homeland Security Grant to half fund an Immediate Access System in Vermillion's schools which the School Board voted to accept.

The system is basically a panic button linked to a web-based system monitored by a home base.

"It has some excellent features," Froke said. "A basic one is we wouldn't have to pay a monthly charge to have it monitored."

The buttons would be located in the school offices and the resource officer's office. The phone and intercom system in the schools would ensure that anyone could immediately access the buttons remotely.

"The Homeland Security Office has had quite a number of requests and applications submitted," Froke reported. "Even though I asked for full funding they came back and said they could do half, \$5,287, and they wanted to know if that was okay."

It is yet to be decided when the actual purchase will be made and the system installed.

The board determined it to be a fair price for the comfort in knowing that the schools are that much safer.

"In Harrisburg they have a



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**Pam Hansen of the Vermillion Area Dance Organization requested and was granted the use of the High School theater for VADO's May recital at the school board meeting Tuesday.**

31-second response time from the police by using this system," Froke said. "I don't know if it's this specific system but certainly one that's similar."

The School Board also approved the use of the high school's theater for the Vermillion Area Dance Organization's spring recital in May free of charge.

Pam Hansen of VADO appeared before the board to make the request and expressed gratitude in being allowed to use the facility in the past.

VADO is in its sixth year of operation with 185 students ages one to adult currently enrolled

according to Hansen.

Hansen also pointed out that 95 percent of the dancers are members of the Vermillion community and enrolled in the Vermillion school district, making the school an appropriate place to perform.

According to Dr. Froke, the school district has received a \$29,466 rebate on the high-energy efficiency boilers, another plus of the remodel done this summer.

"The cost of the boilers themselves were over \$100,000 so roughly one fourth of that cost was given back in a rebate," Froke said.

Froke does not believe that the rebate is part of the predetermined savings of the project.

It is unsure to which fund the rebate will be added to.

Froke also reported that the school district library title retrieval is going smoothly with Jolley Elementary School completed, the Middle School almost completed, the high-school about 80 percent done and Austin Elementary still with a ways to go.

"With Austin as well as all the other schools students are able to check out books," Froke confirmed. "It's going well."

In a previous school board meeting there was a question as to what caused the district to lose 109 students over the summer.

According to Froke and based on statistics from school principals, the vast majority of students who left the district did so because of parental occupation changing.

"Many USD graduates have students in our schools," Froke pointed out. "Over the school year there were about 90 students who came in. I'm sure that the reasons they're coming in are very similar to why we're having those depart."

"This is all helpful information and i'm glad we have it," commented board member Doug Peterson. "With 10 students leaving for school choices that's \$47,000. That would fund soccer, that would fund tennis."

## Other Business:

- In regards to the recent discovery of the accidental over-charging of the *Plain Talk* for the legal advertising, the board moved to decline the publisher's offer to pay the cost over the past two years of \$1,198.04 and instead take a closer look at the past six years and request that sum.

- Teachers who lost data in the recent district computer crash will be given the next in-service day to work on recovering that data. If more time is needed, substitutes will be provided in order for them to have more time.

- Quotes have been requested for a replacement large van for the school district fleet.

- The van will be 8-passenger with luggage room in the back.

- The first Reading of policies "Vacancy on School Board" and "Veteran's Preference" took place.

- A five-year agreement for Johnson Controls Lease and Service was approved by the board since the last five-year agreement was up.

According to Dr. Froke the agreement with Johnson Controls allows the company to make repairs to the HVAC system.

A few deep-fryers were declared surplus property because of not being used for a few years due to new nutrition regulations.

- One early high school graduation was approved for an unnamed individual.

## Festival

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"We only found out about this two weeks ago probably and we got to put this all together," he said. "Don't vote for Trump," he added.

Sophomore Elias Vidler enjoyed the preparations.

"We did a lot of preparing for this instead of class-work which I liked and I like the food especially," he said. "We had a day where we just baked the cookies. It was really fun. I like baking. It was something i'd never baked before. I like the different foods."

Both Cliff and Vidler hope to go on the trip.

German teacher at the high school, Kamden Dibley was excited for the opportunity that the Oktoberfest presented for the kids to get an authentic German experience.

"It's a fun night," she said. "It's so different in Germany. The teenagers can go to festivals and enjoy themselves. Here there's such a line between adult fun and kids and you don't have a chance just to linger and chat."

Dibley is even more enthusiastic about the chance Vermillion high-schoolers have now to actually experience Germany first-hand.

"The fundraising from this event is going to fund our upcoming trip," she said. "We have a partnership with our sister city, Ratingen. I have been teaching a long time and taken children on trips but this GAP program is the German American Partnership program. It's funded partially by the US Congress and the German version of Congress. It's the only short-term exchange program in the US that has any funding from Congress and it's very long lasting. There were like 7000 kids last year who traveled through this."

According to Dibley, as part of the GAP program, students stay with host families for two weeks and attend school there for 10 days.

It goes the other way around as well.

"It's a reciprocal program," Dibley said. "We were there in 2014 and



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**Last weekend's Oktoberfest included fun for all ages including pumpkin painting for the youngsters which turned out to be a huge success.**

stayed with families. They were here in April and stayed with our families. Then in May we'll be back again."

The effects on the students are amazing according to Dibley.

"It's an awesome experience," she said. "They create long-lasting relationships because the students get to understand them as people. It's to promote that feeling between the countries. It gives you a different perspective on things. You come back and you start to rethink yourself and what has always been normal to you."

It is an experience that is invaluable according to Dibley.

"You try and teach and teach a class but they can't internalize it until they experience it themselves," she said. "They get to know kids their own age the get to know the families, they get to experience daily life. Then it's not just me telling them about it, it's them wanting to pursue these friendships and relationships. I have kids that ten years later they're still keeping in contact with their friends in Germany."

Though the program got

off to a rocky start, it has only grown since then.

"The first trip it was very hard to convince kids to go and live with random families. I took five kids and we had a wonderful time. Those five kids that we stayed with came over here and they brought 10 more kids. So we had 15 here this year. So those newer 10 will be going back with me plus another five."

Dibley has created a rule that the kids have to be in at least their second year of German before they travel with her.

"They have to work for it and they will be more comfortable for the language," she said. "I think it's ok to wait till you're at least a sophomore to travel overseas. They need to know themselves a little more first. It's such an eye-opening thing when you're suddenly by yourself and have to depend on yourself to figure things out."

Though the students have to wait till May for the real thing, the Vermillion Oktoberfest celebration last weekend gave everyone a

literal taste of parts of the culture.

"This is Gluvine," Dibley said, indicating a hot-cider-type brew the high-schoolers were selling. "Typically it's red wine and you make it like cider with cinnamon sticks, cloves and oranges in it. At winter festivals they have this. Here we just use grape juice. Then we have the gingerbread hearts and that's something very common in Germany. They'll put them on little strings."

Dibley and History teacher Shannon Fitzsimmons worked together to make the Oktoberfest a memorable experience.

"I want my kids to get an authentic feel for it," Dibley said. "I think with Spanish you have a lot more local uses for the language and authentic cultural experiences which is great but for German it's a little harder to find here. I heard about this and thought this is something I need to have my kids doing so they can start making it their own thing too."

The kids pulled their own weight as well, using personal interests like the

Lego set to make the experience fun and educational.

"The kids made the informational things, they helped prepare all this different stuff and planned what we're going to do," Dibley said. "Some of them sewed their own dresses. That's what I want to see, them taking it into their own hands and making it something that they're interested in. I have one kid who loves cars and he called around and has a friend of a friend or boss or something who has a German car who's going to bring it in and put it on display here."

Some high-schoolers even participated in the live polka band at the Oktoberfest.

Dibley herself founded

the performing group which includes both herself and various family members with community members and high-school students coming and going.

"It was kind of created by my family," she said. "My husband plays the trombone and I play the French Horn tomorrow night. The gal who's playing tonight is a USD grad student. Two years ago we had a German night for the first night at Raziel's. Last year when the Germans were here we had German at Old Lumber Company. We created this because we play lots of brass instruments and it's my thing and I could make my family do it pretty easily. My father in law plays the Tuba, my sister in law plays the French horn so we had our own little group."

With family members out of town for the weekend, VHS students and others came to the rescue.

"When we found out that Jeremiah's dad who normally conducts the group wasn't going to be here I called Tim and said I don't think we can do it because we're missing half of our group, he said bring on some high schoolers because he really wanted us to play," she said. "One by one others volunteered including professional musicians so it turned out great. It's some authentic German stuff and then some more American polkas. It's really fun to play."

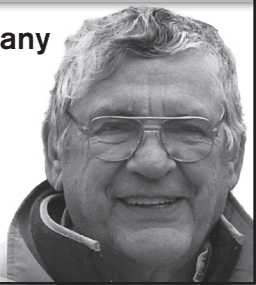
Dibley hopes that the Oktoberfest and the German club are both here to stay.

"We want to make our department, especially our travelling department known to everybody," she said. "This is a normal part of what the school does. It's hard to get rid of German programs when they show up everywhere."

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## Executive Director Position

The Watertown, SD Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) is currently seeking a candidate to fill a full time position. The CVB is responsible for researching and generating tourism opportunities for Watertown statewide and nationally.

The Director will be the primary contact with the City of Watertown, Mayor's Office, Chamber of Commerce, media and other entities as needed including SD Tourism and other regional organizations in the tourism and visitor industry.

**Qualifications:** A Bachelor's degree in sales, marketing, hospitality, communications or a related degree plus 5 years experience with a CVB, Chamber or nonprofit organization. An equivalent combination of work experience and education considered. Hours vary including evenings and weekends.

Send resume, cover letter and salary requirements to:  
Venerts Hotel Management, Inc. c/o Jodi R.  
15 8th Ave. SE, Watertown, SD 57201  
or e-mail: jodi@venerts.com, Fax: 605-886-1943

Applicant DEADLINE: Wednesday, Oct. 21, 2015



## Vermillion Area Farmer's Market

THURSDAY'S  
3-7pm  
Clay County Fairgrounds

THURSDAY  
October 29th  
Trick or Treat  
@ the market &  
pumpkin bowling

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605-659-3399  
VAFarmersMarket@gmail.com  
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## Surplus Property Sale

The University of South Dakota will be offering for sale bicycles, tables, chairs, desks, benches, & miscellaneous on

**Friday, October 16th from 9am to 4pm**

Location of the sale is at the USD Quonset located north of the Dakota Dome on Hwy 50, next to the Vucurevich Day Care Center.

**Any questions call 605.677-5669**

**Terms of Sale: Cash Only**