

Fighting The Flu Bug



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**A COLUMN BY
GOV. DENNIS DAUGAARD:**

Last January, our most recent granddaughter, Greta, was born. She joined her sister, Stella, and has two cousins, Henry and Elizabeth. Linda and I love to spend time with our grandchildren, when we can, and we want them all to be happy and healthy. As one way to help insure that, Linda and I received our flu vaccination this past week. It's something we do every fall to make sure we protect our health and that of our grandchildren.

This year I'm encouraging all South Dakotans to help stop the flu bug by getting a flu vaccination. The flu is nothing to sniff at. Last year was South Dakota's deadliest flu season in modern surveillance history, with 1,703 lab-confirmed cases, 793

hospitalizations and 63 deaths.

Surveillance data shows that children account for a significant number of flu cases and related hospitalizations every year. They also help spread influenza in community settings like schools and child care centers. That's why the state offers free flu vaccine for those who are between six months and 18 years old.

An annual flu vaccination is the single most important thing we can do to prevent the flu. And we need it every year because the flu virus changes every year. Flu vaccine, like any medical treatment, is not 100 percent effective. However, if you do get vaccinated and still catch the flu bug, that vaccine could mean a shorter and less severe illness.

South Dakotans have a history of taking care of themselves when it comes to vaccination. We have some of the highest

childhood vaccination levels in the nation and I'm proud to say that our overall flu vaccination rates are also among the best. Last season 59.6 percent of us got vaccinated for the flu, the highest rate in the nation for the second season in a row. In fact, South Dakota had the nation's highest flu vaccination rate for four of the last five seasons.

The doctors, nurses and other providers who work hard every year to ensure people get vaccinated can rightly be pleased that South Dakota's coverage rates lead the nation. But we recognize that there are still too many people who aren't getting vaccinated.

Don't make the mistake of thinking the flu isn't a serious illness. The headache, fever, chills, coughing and body aches can be very severe and for some people, can lead to complications like pneumonia that

may require hospitalization.

The medical community recommends yearly flu vaccination for everyone over the age of six months. Vaccination is especially important for those who are at higher risk for flu complications – pregnant women, people over age 50, people with chronic medical conditions like heart disease and health care workers.

Infants are too young to be vaccinated, so we can best protect infants by getting vaccinated ourselves, especially if we have infants in our households. For your own health and the health of those you love, contact your local clinic today about getting vaccinated for the flu. Let's all do what we can to stop the flu bug.

Learn more about what you can do to stop the flu at flu.sd.gov.

Painting For Pets

BY SARAH WETZEL
For the Plain Talk

Last Thursday Yankton's Heartland Humane Society held an encore 'Paws and Paint' or 'Paint and Sip' fundraising event at Infinite Variety in Vermillion after a previous successful turnout in Yankton.

"We held this event in Yankton last spring and sold out," Shelter Coordinator Christa Kranig said preceding the event. "Paint and Sip is about having a bit fun, raising a bit of money, and supporting a local organization working to keep stray and unwanted animals off the streets."

Nearly all of the 25 spots were filled at last week's painting event.

Participants notably were enjoying themselves as they partook of tasty potluck items provided by the Heartland Humane Society board of directors and sipped wine, eagerly awaiting the start of the instruction in front of blank canvases.

Sponsored by the Yankton Area Arts, canvases, paint, brushes, and easels were provided to participants and everyone left with a unique work of art.

"Finding an artist to do it was the biggest challenge," said Julie Becker, volunteer at the shelter and organizer of the Vermillion event. "I just sent an email to the USD art department and they sent it out to students to see who would volunteer their time. I was at the one in Yankton and Shawn volunteered her store so we kind of worked together, found the girls, had a few little meetings and worked it out. I think everyone's having fun."

Heartland Humane Society's director Kerry Hacecky also had a positive review of the night.

"We had a good turn out so we had a suggestion to do it in Vermillion so here we are," she said. "It's a good turnout. I'm excited to watch."

According to Hacecky, the shelter holds smaller activities and fundraisers like Paws and Paint throughout the year.

"While we do raise a little bit for the shelter we do consider these more of an opportunity to support Heartland, get together, have a good time, raise some awareness about responsible pet ownership,"

she said. "Our largest fundraiser is coming up November 14 in Yankton. Its called 'Wine and Whiskers' and we'll be raising about \$50,000 for the shelter at that event."

The funds are sorely

and Vermillion is just a wonderful place to be in the nonprofit community," she said. "Both communities are so giving and so supportive. Heartland is one of the many organizations in pursuit of a good cause but

Heartland staff look forward to finding many of the animals homes in the near future.

"Traditionally, October is one of our busier adoption months for the shelter," Shelter Coordinator Christa

In celebration of the season and the 'Adopt a shelter dog' month, all shelter animals with black or orange in them will be half price along with some other deals applying to all the animals.

Humane Society in October you get a \$15 gift card to go get a drink or have food at the Landing and then if that animal has any orange or black in it, that animal is also half price."

Hacecky is excited to see the animals find forever homes.

"Right now we have some great animals that are available for adoption that have some pretty good stories," she said. "Several of our dogs are lost and found and had several health issues that were minor that we're taking care of. We also took in this week five little puppies that were found in a box in a ditch. They'll be available towards the end of the fall and we're really excited to get them healthy and cute and adorable and they're probably right now 5-6 weeks old. They're some large breed of some sort. We'll be able to tell better as they get older."

For more information on future Heartland Humane Society events or deals or to view adoptable animals visit heartlandhumanesociety.net.

To volunteer at the shelter, please contact Christa at 605-664-4244 or email her at hhs3@midconetwork.com.



SARAH WETZEL/FOR THE PLAIN TALK

Art students from the University of South Dakota volunteer their time at a Heartland Humane Society fundraiser last week where donors were treated to an art lesson as well as a wine and finger food buffet. The shelter is in the middle of deals and promotions to encourage adoptions.

needed to help around 400 animals who come through the shelter every year, mostly dogs and cats from Vermillion, Yankton and the surrounding communities.

"Once they're with us we make sure they're healthy," Hacecky said. "We vet them, spay and neuter them and then we'll put them into the shelter or Foster Care program until they're adopted."

Hacecky is enthusiastic about Heartland's past service and future plans.

"2016 will be our 15th year of service for the area so we're excited," she said. "Big things are coming up the next year. We will be expanding on our property and be able to have even more animals in 2016. This is important to us to just remind the community that we are here and we are a public service nonprofit. We're also privately fundraised so everything out of our donations come out of private donors and businesses in the community."

This specific community is one of the reasons Hacecky remains so optimistic.

"I think Yankton

we're happy to be here and help keep the animals off the streets."

According to Hacecky, once the shelter's renovations are completed, the estimated capacity of pets will probably rise to around 500 per year.

"We are not a kill shelter," she said. "We are a limited admissions shelter so every animal we take we take in with the expectation of keeping it until it's been adopted. We've got a wonderful staff of volunteers and foster homes that make that happen for us. We very rarely euthanize animals which we do for health reasons and we're talking a handful a year. If they're in pain and suffering and it's not something we can fix at the vet then we'll look at that as an option but right now every animal that enters has a very good chance at going to a loving home and we hold onto them until they do."

Hacecky and the

Kranig said. "We want to celebrate our new pet parents with discounts and deals and say thank for adopting, not shopping."

Becker herself has five pets, all adopted, and encourages anyone thinking about adopting a pet or volunteering for the shelter like her to do what they can.

"I would say go ahead and give it a try," she said. "Any little effort you can put forth to help works."

It depends on your household and your activity. I used to foster for the humane society but one of my dogs is a little bit temperamental so I don't do that anymore."

Heartland Humane Society is taking several measures to encourage adoption this month specifically.

"October is actually 'Adopt a dog at a shelter' month at the national level," Hacecky said. "It's kind of a national push. A lot of shelters and rescue centers jump on board."



THE CITY OF VERMILLION IS SOLICITING QUOTES

The City of Vermillion Code Enforcement is seeking quotes for snow removal for public sidewalks. If you are interested in providing this service please stop by City Hall to apply.



REAL ESTATE AUCTION

Saturday, October 24, 2015 • 12:00 PM
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Edward J (Red) Nelson Estate

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Terms & Conditions: \$10,000 non-refundable down payment day of auction with balance due at closing. 2015 real estate taxes pro-ratable to closing. Title, insurance and closing fees split 50/50 between buyer and seller. Closing agent: Yankton Title Co. Possession upon receipt of final payment. 2014 taxes: \$567.40.

This information is deemed reliable but not guaranteed by seller or Harts Auction Service. Property will be sold as-is with seller confirmation and NO warranty as to property boundaries. Announcements made day of auction take precedence over printed material. Harts Auction Service Leo Harts RE#278 is representing the seller. Property can be viewed by appointment.

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