

SD National Guard Medical Company Changes Command



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VERMILLION, S.D. - Capt. Whitney Bruinsma, of Parkston, took command of the South Dakota Army National Guard's 730th Area Support Medical Company during a ceremony, Oct. 4, at the Vermillion armory.

Bruinsma assumed command from Capt. Joshua Paull, Rapid City, who commanded the unit since July 2013.

"You're one of the top ASMC units in the nation," Bruinsma said to the Soldiers during the ceremony. "I want to continue our journey leading you."

As commander, Bruinsma

will lead the medical company comprised of 94 Soldiers with a mission to provide basic emergency medical services. The unit is composed of combat medics, medical doctors, physician assistants, nurses, lab technicians, radiologists, dental technicians, mental health technicians, and maintenance and support staff.

Bruinsma enlisted into the 730th ASMC in 2003, while a junior in high school. In 2010, she commissioned as a Medical Service Corps officer and held leadership positions in both the 730th ASMC and 881st Troop Command in Sturgis.

Paull first enlisted in the 730th in 1998, serving as a combat medic for nine years. He then attended the Army's Individual Physician's Assistant Program and became a physician's assistant. He's served on two deployments with multiple units during his 17 years in the SDARNG. He will continue his military career as a physician's assistant with the SDARNG's Medical Command in Rapid City.

"You made my job easy," Paull told the Soldiers. "I can't thank you enough. It's kind of like leaving a family. The Soldiers in this unit are what makes this unit great."

Contractor Works Back Into 9-1-1 Board's Favor

**BY BOB MERCER
STATE CAPITOL BUREAU**

PIERRE – The contractor installing South Dakota's new 9-1-1 emergency dispatch system has performed better since a July payment was temporarily withheld, members of the state board overseeing the project said Thursday.

The company updated software for the Pennington County public service answering point in August, shortly after the South Dakota 9-1-1 Coordination Board sent a letter expressing dissatisfaction and refusing to make its \$259,067 payment for July services.

Board members said the company, NextGen Communications Inc. and its corporate parent, TeleCommunication Systems Inc. of Annapolis, Md., quickly responded. The updated software is being installed as each community is brought onto the new system.

TCS has since been fully paid for July, August and September, according to state 9-1-1 coordinator Shawnie Rechtenbaugh.

She said installation of the new technology is progressing. Rapid City, Sioux Falls Metro, Brookings, Winner and Mitchell are complete and Pierre is scheduled for conversion Oct. 21.

The board's vice chairman, Perkins County Sheriff Kelly Serr, said the company is meeting expectations.

"Personally I've seen a change and a difference.

They want to be good partners," Serr said.

Ted Ruffedt Jr. of Rapid City, the board's chairman, said the relationship in Pennington County improved during the past two months.

"I've been pleased with TCS's response to the August letter and I think they've worked hard to get back on track," Ruffedt said.

Serr noted that public service answering points are diverse and each problem that's been solved is helpful to the next ones.

The conversion at Mitchell went "reasonably well," board member Marlene Haines said. She is communications director for the Mitchell Department of Public Safety.

"We are still working through some issues," she said.

Haines praised Ruffedt and Rechtenbaugh for their help. "Very glad we weren't the first. It just gets better the more we move along," Haines said.

Brown County's turn comes in early November and Huron would follow in mid-November, according to Rechtenbaugh.

December is open because of the weather and the holidays, she said, with Canton scheduled for January. Altogether 28 public service answering points – PSAPs in 9-1-1 lingo – will be done.

The schedule has been fluid, Rechtenbaugh said. She noted the plan given to the board for the meeting Thursday was version No. 33.

Prentis Park Renovations Continuing This Fall

**BY ELYSE BRIGHTMAN
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Prentis Park is in the middle of major renovations and Vermillion residents can expect to see more as "work continues" into the fall months.

"We're continuing to move along," said Jim Goblirsch, director of Vermillion Parks and Recreation. "This time of the season is when we can do a lot of the work because the sports aren't going on and the park is a little quieter."

Currently, most of the work is being done on electrical lines for the new community pool being installed next year.

"If you see right in front of the pool, between Plum (Street) and the pool, there's kind of a dugout area where we're putting the transformer in for the new pool, so they can start construction for the new pool next year and still have power for the old pool," Goblirsch said.

The department is also working on the new sewer system that will be installed.

The new restroom facilities and a new fence next to the baseball field have been completed recently. The restrooms now serve individuals on the outside and those on the inside of the fence to the field.

"It's a dual sided restroom facility," Goblirsch said. "One for the park, which will feed over by the playground where people can get into it — it's a unisex handicap accessible facility — and the other side, for the baseball field."



ELYSE BRIGHTMAN/ FOR THE PLAIN TALK

A new fence, new bathrooms and a new gate are just a few of the completed improvements at Prentis Park with work continuing this fall.

Park visitors may also notice a new roof on the pioneer cabin, or Girl Scout house, as well as a new paint job done by the city, with help from some Vermillion Girl Scouts.

"We're real happy with some of the progress we're making there," Goblirsch said.

The immediate future plans will see a new backstop for the baseball field. Currently, the backstop is a net reaching down to the ground. The new backstop will be cement making it safer for spectators of the games.

"We weren't pleased with the way the nets were going all the way to ground," Goblirsch said. "We put a permanent cement backstop in, so that's been a plus over there."

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