

This Is Just A Test: Area Emergency Responders Hold Full-Scale Exercise

By Alissa Wockman
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Several area law enforcement and emergency response agencies took part in a full-scale exercise Thursday afternoon in Yankton. Scenarios in multiple locations set the stage for responders to test their abilities in protecting residents during life-threatening situations.

More than 25 agencies and organizations from South Dakota, including Yankton, Bon Homme and Clay counties, had their emergency management tested during the drill.

The group started out the day with a simulated fire at their Emergency Operation Center on Eighth and Douglas. This exercise caused operators to move to their plan B location at the fire station on 23rd st., where they set up a second command center.

The "fire" also caused two of management's leaders, Yankton County Emergency Manager Paul Scherschligt and Yankton Deputy Chief/Fire Marshal Larry Nickles, to be "injured." Both were removed from the line of communication and Chief Deputy Emergency Manager Steve Hermanson was forced to step in as active manager. "We never know what emergency calls are going to come up tomorrow," said Deputy Emergency Manager/Public Information Officer Lee Rettig. "The idea of coming blindly into this and relying on training is really what this is all about."

The exercise also featured "shooters" in the Yankton Police Department, "killing" two of their dispatchers. This caused the group to, again change locations and make sure communications for their officers continued to operate.

"There were several different incidents going on all at the same time that came together and made the complex quite complex,"



ALISSA WOCKMAN/P&D
Emergency responders from surrounding counties gathered in Yankton Thursday for a full-scale exercise that featured crisis scenarios for participants to be evaluated on procedure and protocol. One incident involved a change in command center location where dispatch was given the task of keeping communications operational during a simulation of shooters in the building.

Rettig said. Avera Sacred Heart Hospital was also involved in the simulations. Staff members were given a scenario of five children who had been exposed to airborne bubonic plague. Several classes of antibiotics are effective in treating certain strains but, local responders were given a strain unaffected by current antibiotics.

"We have taken them to our surgical floor to contain them," said Nathan Johnson, public relations representative for Avera Sacred Heart Hospital. "All the employees who are treating them have masks on since the danger zone for plague is three to six feet."

This exercise forces responders to think quickly and adapt to any situation. Protocols are set in place, but in a real emergency, those can only take you so far.

"Some of the things that would have been good in practice may not necessarily work out in a real situation," Rettig said. "It doesn't

really work to triage people inside with everyone else with an airborne disease rather than a contact disease like the flu, so that was immediately changed in the exercise."

The hospital was also given three burn victims and two smoke ventilation victims, all near the point of death, which had to be treated immediately. Nursing students from Mount Marty College were at hand during the exercise and given a crash course in "on the job" training.

"It is a great opportunity to see so many agencies and volunteers come out to do this," Rettig said. "To work with what really is an unrealistic conglomeration of all these incidents happening at one time, gives you peace knowing that, when it comes down to the small things they are reacting to, they are pretty well trained and good to go."

Another important part of this exercise was to prepare for the certain complications that social media throws into the mix of

emergencies. Correspondents trained in effectively relaying messages and making sure correct information was getting out to the right people.

After participants undertook their emergency simulations, they had a chance to be evaluated on their protocol and practices. Emergency managers from Brookings, Hanson and Hutchinson counties offered critiques and suggestions on what details of the plan could be changed.

"The good thing about this is that you get some people who are disconnected, who stand back and watch what people are doing tactically and operationally," Rettig said. "Then that operational review becomes very valuable as we look forward and do this in a real-life situation."

This being the anniversary of 9/11, the exercise came at a good time for participants to evaluate the protocols set in place and be prepared for such a disaster. Many different protocols have become more uniform to allow for better transference.

"Post-9/11 things have become more structured so you can take things from certain jurisdictions and put them in place," Rettig said. "That has been really helpful."

Individual departments hold their own exercises throughout the year. There are two to three different levels of testing until they reach this level of full-scale simulations. Most of the levels involve "table talk" exercises where responders are given a verbal situation in which to act.

Agencies have been planning for several months to set up these exercises. Evaluators research what incidents would be realistic and which ones would be pertinent to the area. FEMA provides training exercises and how to best test these situations which evaluators use in setting up such full-scale emergencies at the local level.

SHIINE To Provide Understanding Medicare Presentation In Vermillion

Senior Health Information and Insurance Education (SHIINE) will provide free unbiased information about Medicare on Friday, September 18, beginning at 1pm at the Vermillion Senior Center, 320 West Main Street.

The information includes an overview of basic Medicare, the differences between Parts A, B, C, and D, how and when to apply for coverage, covered services, Medigap, Medicare Advantage plans, and who may be eligible for extra help with prescription drug costs. The information is free and open to the public.

Administered by the SD Department of Social Services, SHIINE is a federally-funded program that advocates for, educates and assists consumers with Medicare and related health information, to allow consumers to make timely and informed decisions and access necessary resources. The program is free. SHIINE does not sell nor recommend any product or service.

For more information on SHIINE or the Understanding Medicare presentation, contact SHIINE Regional Coordinator Tom Hoy, at 1-800-536-8197 or locally, 333-3314 or visit www.shiine.net.

S.D. Soybean Crop Should Set Record

The U.S. Department of Agriculture expects South Dakota farmers to produce a record soybean crop, but less corn.

USDA's latest production report forecasts the state's soybean crop at 233 million bushels, up 1 percent from last year. Acres for harvest are down slightly, but average yield is forecast at a record 46 bushels per acre, up 1 bushel from 2014.

The corn crop is expected to be 755 million bushels, down 4 percent from last year. Sorghum production in South Dakota is forecast at 11.7 million bushels, up 24 percent.

'Get To The Point' Sept. 26

The Get to the Point half marathon is planned for Saturday, Sept. 26th in Elk Point, and it's drawing runners from a long distance. Entries from California, Iowa, Nebraska, Minnesota and New Hampshire will be at Casey's, exit 18 off I-29 for the race. Register online at runsignup.com under get to the point.

Walk in entries are welcome. The walkers leave at 8:15 am, and runners leave at 8:30 am. Call John at 605-421-5050 for more information. All proceeds support the Clay-Union foundation, the local mentoring program.

USD Ranks Among College Factual's Top 150 Best Colleges for Your Money

The University of South Dakota has been ranked 75 among the top 150 best colleges for your money nationwide by College Factual (www.collegefactual.com), a trusted resource that uses customizable tools and outcomes-based rankings systems to guide students through the college selection process.

In addition to University of South Dakota's ranking as an institution delivering top value for your educational dollar, the school has also ranked well in several other categories. All of these reflect University of South Dakota's high quality of education as compared to other schools on the list, which includes both research universities and liberal arts colleges. A number of outcomes-based factors were used to determine these rankings, including how well the institution retains and graduates students, the average loan debt per student, the boost in expected earnings, the percentage of full-time teachers, and the average student loan default rate.

- These rankings include:
- Best Value for Psychology - # 17 of # 763
 - Best Value for Education - # 12 of # 413

You can view all of University of South Dakota's rankings here: <http://www.collegefactual.com/colleges/university-of-south-dakota/rankings/badges/>.

Classic Pop Music Set For Saturday

GAYVILLE – Gayville Hall and veteran Sioux Falls musicians Boyd Bristow, Mike Connor, and Guy Gullickson present "A Blast from the Past: An Evening of Classic Pop and Rock" at 8 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 19, in Gayville.

The show will celebrate popular music of the 1950s and '60s from such stars as Tennessee Ernie Ford to Bobby Darin and from Sam Cook and Elvis to the Beatles. The Sioux Falls musicians grew up during that era and love to perform great tunes of those times.

Gullickson was an original member of the legendary 1970's South Dakota rock band, Dry Mustard, and performed in many other bands in South Dakota and Colorado. He performed with Connor in the Midlife Crisis Band in recent years.

Connor, who attended the Berklee School of Music in Boston, has performed in the "S.D. Acoustic Christmas" concerts for 20 years and in many folk and rock groups. He is on the board of directors of the S.D. Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

Bristow was in two S.D. Rock-and-Roll Hall of Fame bands, Blueberry Buckle and Red Willow, as well as the 1980's Nashville group he founded, The Travelin' Band, which backed country music stars on the road.

Gayville Hall is at 502 Washington Street in Gayville. Call 605-267-2859 for ticket information.

Library special Event With Author William Kent Krueger Set For Monday

BY SARAH WETZEL
For the Plain Talk

The Vermillion Public Library is constantly bringing in talented individuals to the community and this month is no different.

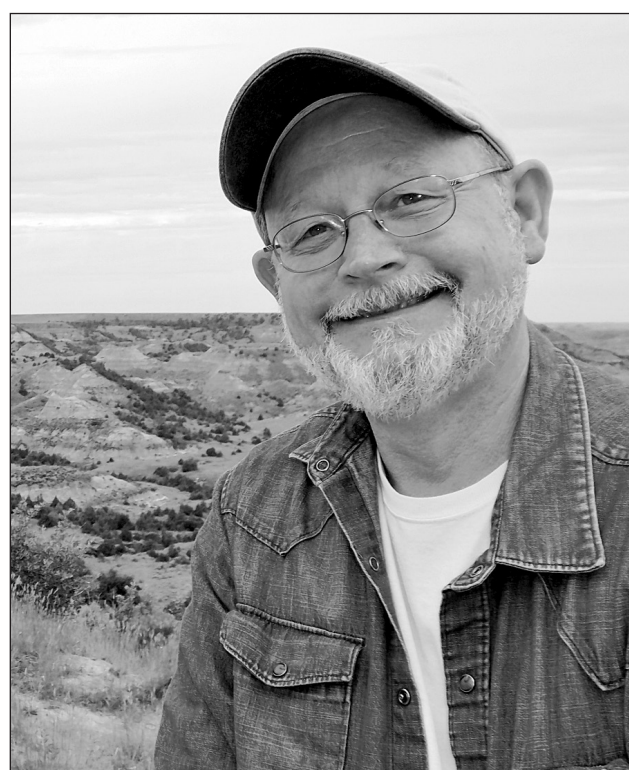
Monday the library will host 2015 One Book South Dakota author William Kent Krueger in a three-part event.

"One Book South Dakota is a state-wide reading event promoted by the South Dakota Humanities Council," said the library's adult programming coordinator Susan Heggstad. "They pick the book each year. We generally participate each year, making multiple copies of the book available to our patrons to read ahead of time, and hosting a book group discussion. This year, we were also selected by the Humanities Council to host the author. This is why we have additional events for our patrons this year. It's going to be a really lovely, literary evening with William Kent Krueger."

The evening will begin with a discussion of Krueger's book, "Ordinary Grace," facilitated by Cyndy Chaney on behalf of Osher Lifelong Learning Institute.

Chaney, who stated that Krueger is one of her favorite authors, believes almost anyone would enjoy "Ordinary Grace."

"They'll find it's very easy reading and they'll be able to identify with a lot of the characters and when we get together they can share how they feel about them," she said. "It reads very quickly because there's a lot to identify with. I think



COURTESY PHOTO
William kent Krueger will visit Vermillion Monday as part of the 2015 One book South Dakota Tour. Events will begin at the Vermillion, Vermillion Public Library, 3:30 p.m. (discussion of book before meeting the author); Raziels Restaurant, 5:30 p.m. (reception); Vermillion Public Library, 7 p.m. (book talk and signing).

the interaction between the different characters and their personalities all go together to make the book."

Chaney who has read a number of Krueger's books finds this one unique.

"It is hopeful and it is interesting because it deals with such a variety of people," she said. "Most people will be able to identify with somebody in the story."

Krueger will be available

afterwards from 5-6:30 p.m. for a meet-and-greet at Raziels in downtown Vermillion.

Later at 7 p.m. Krueger will give a special presentation at the library.

For those who have not read the book, there is still a chance and not everyone needs to have read the book to attend at least part of the event according to Heggstad.

"One needn't have read

the book to participate in the Meet & Greet or author presentation, but a person is not likely to get much out of the facilitated book discussion without having read the book," she said. "Anyone who would like to read the book before hand still has the chance to check one out. We have multiple copies available at our Circulation Desk."

"Ordinary Grace" has received multiple awards including the Edgar award given by the Mystery Writers of America in recognition for the best novel published in 2013, the Barry Award, Anthony Award and Macavity Award for Best Novel. It is also a New York Times bestseller.

The book is set in southern Minnesota and the plot revolves around a young man learning to deal with tragedies that come into his life.

"It is an unforgettable novel about discovering the terrible price of wisdom and the enduring grace of God," the book's website reads.

"I really appreciate the door that 'Ordinary Grace' has opened for me," Krueger is quoted on the South Dakota Humanities Council website. "It's probably my favorite book that I've written; it's very unique."

For more information on the book or South Dakota Humanities Council visit <http://sdhumanities.org/aboutonebook.htm>.

To learn more about the library event call the circulation desk at 605-677-7060.

605-624-6291

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