

Principal

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Principal of the Year, now compete for national honors.

Brinkman and Rieckman will be recognized in September in Washington. This event salutes principals and serves as a forum to share their experience and expertise with other selected principals, with national leaders in education and with legislators.

While in Washington, the two men will enter the National Association of Secondary School Principals/MetLife National Principal of the Year Program.

"This is the first time that I have ever been to Washington, D.C., and I am really excited about it," Brinkman said.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Ironically, Brinkman entered education as more of a mid-life career change.

He graduated with a bachelor's degree in education from Dakota State College (now Dakota State University) in Madison. His wife was offered a teaching job at Fairfax, so they moved to the area and he worked in non-teaching jobs for 16 years.

"But it wasn't what I wanted to do, or what I went to college to do," he said.

Brinkman got his foot back into the school arena by coaching at Bonesteel-Fairfax.

"While I began coaching, I redeveloped my interest with students, so I renewed my teaching certificate," he said. "After renewing my certificate, I substitute-taught at Andes Central."

Brinkman found himself thrown into an unusual situation.

"I was teaching at Andes Central but coaching at Bonesteel-Fairfax, so I was coaching against the students I was teaching," he said with a chuckle.

Brinkman eventually joined the Andes Central teaching staff in 1994 when he was hired as a language arts instructor and coach.

"I ended up with a career here

and haven't gone anywhere else," he said.

He has served as a principal for 10 years. He earned his master's degree in educational administration at the University of South Dakota. He later earned his specialist degree from the University of Sioux Falls.

Brinkman has remained in touch with students and staff on a daily basis. The coaching has provided a natural connection, and he remains active in community affairs. He won the Community Leadership Award in 2010 from the state principals' association.

"I enjoy the interaction with students and staff a lot," he said. "I love teaching and education, and the issues that go with it. I am always looking at how to improve student performance."

Brinkman believes his longevity with the Andes Central school district has built a strong chemistry with those around him. He also believes it has built an importance sense of teamwork, trust and continuity.

"I don't believe in telling people that it's my way or the high-way. I believe in collaboration and working with the group," he said.

"Now, at some point in time, they need to realize that I'm their boss and what needs to be done. But I like to think I have developed a strong working relationship with the staff."

Brinkman doesn't want to see any students fall through the cracks.

"All the teachers are assigned a certain group of kids that they stay with all year," he said. "We have teachers who are here at 8 a.m. There are always students who are visiting with teachers before the school day starts. They laugh, joke and get ready for the day."

Brinkman has worked with the students and staff to improve reading and math scores. He commends the district's Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) program with building students' speaking skills and confidence.

The Andes Central school district also offers a transition program for sixth graders so they feel comfortable making the move to

the secondary level, Brinkman said.

The commitment continues through junior and senior high school, Brinkman said. The school offers online learning programs from a number of states so students can take specialized courses not otherwise available to them.

"We offer personalized learning plans," he said. "We have offered medical terminology, auto mechanics and even a marine biology course that was available from Florida."

Andes Central students must also complete a senior project prior to graduation, Brinkman said. On this particular day, Joy Kirkpatrick stopped by the principal's office to discuss her senior project.

As part of the project, the high school seniors experience a career, conduct research and give a presentation, Brinkman said.

"They go through the whole process and decide if it's the career they want to go into," he said. "It's priceless. It can steer them to a different career and can save them a lot of money in college."

"BE ALL YOU CAN BE"

Brinkman believes in encouraging students to reach their potential.

"I encourage students to 'be all you can be,'" he said. "I know that sounds like an Army promotion, but that's what I believe. I don't want our students just to get by. I want them to be the best. Sometimes that works, sometimes it doesn't."

Andes Central Superintendent Darrell Mueller surprised Brinkman with the announcement of his state award and presentation of a plaque during a girls basketball game.

But Brinkman doesn't measure success in terms of awards that hang on the wall.

"It's great to see the smile on the kids' faces when they get an 'A,'" he said. "It says, what I do here is working. I think I'm doing something right, doing something good."

You can read Randy Dockendorf on Twitter at twitter.com/RDockendorf

Senate

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alive, arguing that it was a way to begin considering a badly needed, broad revamping of the entire tax code.

The lone defecting Democrat was Sen. Mark Pryor of Arkansas, who said making the rich pay a fair share of taxes should occur as part of an overall tax overhaul, "not as a political ploy meant to score points."

Neither Collins nor Pryor face re-election until 2014.

Monday's vote was the first time a "Buffett rule" proposal has come to a Senate vote this election year, though Democrats have tried unsuccessfully in recent months to impose modest surcharges on the

Threat

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Clinic has not had any positive tests this year, either.

"Heartworms cannot be spread from dog to dog, or from dog to stool to dog," Teachout said. "The mosquito actually has to bite the dog and pick up the heartworm larvae. When it goes and bites another dog, that is how the heartworm spreads."

Teachout said the recent cases shouldn't alarm dog owners, but it is a reminder that heartworms are in the Yankton area and preventive measures should be taken with pets.

"The biggest concern we had this year was our long, dry and warm winter," he stated. "We had mosquitos clear through Thanksgiving last year. We started seeing mosquitos again a month ago. We really didn't have a normal winter to keep the mosquito population under control."

"Just like any year, we're recommending to get dogs tested and getting them on a preventive during the mosquito season," Teachout added. "Normally, our mosquito season lasts about six months. But this last year it was seven to 7 1/2 months."

income of the wealthy.

With presidential and congressional elections approaching in November, it was also a microcosm of the broader battle the two parties are waging over an economy that is still having a tough time creating enough new jobs. And the fight isn't confined to the Senate floor.

On Thursday, the House plans to vote on a plan by House Majority Leader Eric Cantor, R-Va., to provide 20 percent tax deductions to all businesses with fewer than 500 workers — a threshold that includes 99.9 percent of all U.S. companies.

Republicans say that plan would spur job creation, while Democrats call it a giveaway to business because firms would not have to hire employees to receive the reduction. That bill is expected to pass the GOP-run House but die in the Democratic-led Senate.

The Senate vote was on a meas-

ure by Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, D-R.I., that would impose a minimum 30 percent income tax on people making over \$2 million yearly and phase in higher taxes for those earning at least \$1 million. The measure is nicknamed for billionaire Warren Buffett, who has called for higher taxes on the rich.

The fight has been politically irresistible for both sides.

It allows Democrats to take shots at Mitt Romney, the wealthy, all-but-certain GOP presidential nominee. He has released data showing he paid an effective tax rate of only around 14 percent in 2010 and about 15 percent last year, both years earning around \$21 million.

For Republicans, it's a chance to accuse its Democratic backers of pressing for tax increases that will divert money employers could otherwise use to expand and hire more workers.

He said some in his profession are advocating for year-round preventive treatment regardless of the mosquito season.

"Up here, with our last winter, it is making me a believer in that," Teachout said. "If we're not going to have our normal hard-frost winters, then we want to prevent 12 months a year."

Preventives kill the larvae right away so they can't develop into an adult heartworm.

According to the American Heartworm Society, at a mild level, signs of the disease can include a cough, exercise intolerance and abnormal lung sounds. When it becomes severe, symptoms can include a cough, exercise intolerance, difficulty breathing, abnormal lung sounds, enlargement of the liver, temporary loss of consciousness due to poor blood flow

to the brain, fluid accumulation in the abdominal cavity, abnormal heart sounds and even death.

Teachout said that one of the problems is that the dogs that really should be tested for heartworm do not get that kind of attention.

"The dogs that should be tested are the ones running loose, nobody owns or no one gives good veterinary care," he stated. "Those are the dogs that are probably going to be the reservoir for heartworms. We've seen it in the past, such as years and years ago when we had a bad outbreak in Mission Hill. It was dogs that had been dumped off on an elderly lady, and she didn't have the money for veterinary care."


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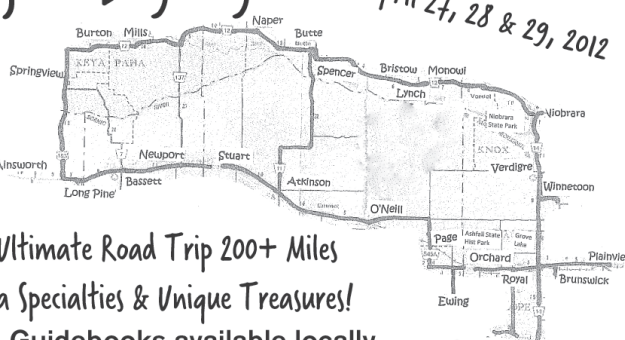
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