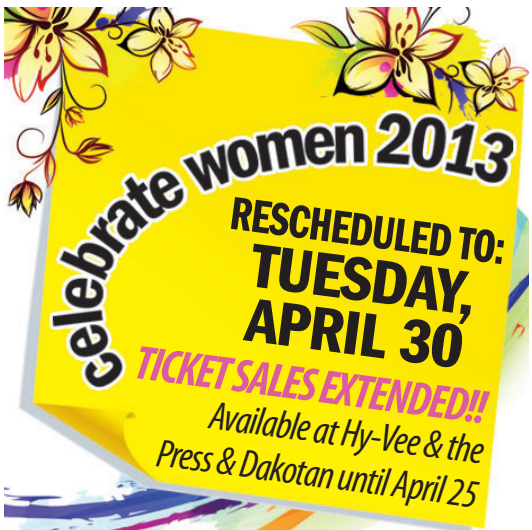




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Hospital Leaders Support Medicaid Expansion

Would Reduce The Number
Unable To Pay For Medical Care

BY CHET BROKAW
Associated Press

PIERRE — An expansion of South Dakota's Medicaid program to provide health insurance to thousands of additional low-income people would reduce the number of people unable to pay their bills for medical care, hospital executives said Tuesday.

South Dakota hospitals were unable to collect about \$90 million last year from people who had no insurance or otherwise did not pay their bills, according to the South Dakota Association of Healthcare Organizations.

Fred Slunecka, chief executive officer of the Avera Health System, said patients with private health insurance now pay extra to offset hospitals' losses in charity care and other unpaid bills. Businesses that provide insurance for their employees should support an expansion of Medicaid because providing coverage for an extra 48,000 low-income people would reduce the costs subsidized by private insurance, he said.

"They are the ones bearing the burden of bad debt and charity care," Slunecka told a state task force studying Medicaid expansion. "Right now it falls to the private business that provides insurance to their employees."

Gov. Dennis Daugaard appointed the 29-member task force of state lawmakers, doctors, health care executives and others to study the issue. The panel will not recommend whether Medicaid should be expanded in South Dakota, but instead will identify the advantages and disadvantages of doing so. Its report must be submitted by Sept. 15 to the governor and the Legislature, who will have the final say.

The Legislature this year agreed with the governor's recommendation to delay a decision on expanding Medicaid, the state-federal program that provides medical care to low-income people.

Daugaard has said he is uncertain whether the federal government will be able to meet its pledge of paying most of the costs of expanding Medicaid.

"That is probably Gov. Daugaard's most serious concern about expanding Medicaid. He is so frightened by the level of debt at the federal level," said Deb Bowman, a senior adviser to the governor and chair of the task force.

The federal health overhaul seeks to provide more low-income people with health insurance through subsidized

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PHOTO: PATRICK CALLAHAN/MSAC
This aerial photo, taken in November 2011 by Patrick Callahan, shows the sedimentation creating a marshy delta at the mouth of the Niobrara River southwest of Springfield. The Missouri Sedimentation Action Coalition (MSAC) held its annual meeting Wednesday night in Yankton and examined the future of Lewis and Clark Lake, which has sedimentation gradually encroaching from the west.

Recent Floods Rapidly Worsened Sediment In Lewis And Clark Lake

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF
randy.dockendorf@yankton.net

Two major floods within 15 years have rapidly worsened the march of sediment down Lewis and Clark Lake, according to a Missouri River Institute (MRI) official.

MRI director Tim Cowman warned Wednesday night that sediment moved nearly a mile downstream during both the 1997 and 2011 flood years.

"The delta migrated downstream an average of 400 feet a year from 1978 to 2012. But during each of those two flood years, the high flows pushed the delta 4,800 feet," Cowman told the Missouri Sedimentation Action Coalition (MSAC) audience at the Riverfront Event Center in Yankton.

Because of sediment, the groundwater levels for the delta area will increase an average of seven feet a year for the next 50 years, he said. In addition, the region will lose water storage capacity, which could worsen future flooding.

However, Cowman offered hope for reducing sediment — both the incoming and existing amount. He noted three possible solutions:

- regional sediment management along the lower Niobrara River, which accounts for 50-60 percent of the load entering the delta;
- movement of existing new sediment to below Gavins Point Dam near Yankton;
- pursuit of the Lewis and Clark Watershed project;

At Wednesday's meeting, Cowman presented photos and artwork of the Lewis and Clark delta, with MSAC providing funds for the project. He talked about the delta's evolution since the formation of Lewis and Clark Lake, the delta's predicted future progress and the sediment's source.

The MRI team studied the delta's history since 1941, when the free-flowing Missouri River moved sediment downstream, Cowman said. Gavins Point Dam closed



KELLY HERTZ/P&D
Tim Cowman, director of the Missouri River Institute in Vermillion, discussed the future of the Lewis and Clark Lake area in regards to sedimentation during Wednesday night's annual Missouri Sedimentation Action Coalition meeting in Yankton.

the river in 1955, and sediment issues were developing by 1964.

"Moving 20 years ahead to 1984, the delta was growing full force and moving into the head waters of Lewis and Clark Lake," he said. "By 2012, we saw a fully mature delta moving its way into Lewis and Clark Lake."

The two major flood events created a significant shift in sediment, Cowman said. The 1997 flooding created releases of 70,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) at Gavins Point, while the 2011 flooding created unprecedented Gavins Point releases of 160,000 cfs for several months.

"During the late 1990s and early 2000s, the (visible) delta actually receded. By 2010, it was visible that it

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Proposals Sought For HSC Structures

BY DEREK BARTOS
derek.bartos@yankton.net

The State of South Dakota is accepting proposals for development and restoration of five buildings on the former South Dakota Human Services Center (HSC) campus, Gov. Dennis Daugaard has announced.

"During the 2013 legislative session, I proposed and the Legislature approved House Bill 1033, which authorizes the state to dismantle, demolish, preserve or rehabilitate buildings on the old Human Services Center campus," Daugaard said in a news release. "The majority of the buildings have been vacant for decades and are in extremely poor condition. However, I wanted to provide one final opportunity for interested parties to submit restoration plans for the show barn, dairy barn, Herreid building, Mellette building and Ordway building. If we don't receive viable proposals, the only responsible course of action is to demolish them."

Through May 31, the state government will be working with the Yankton Office of Economic Development to solicit proposals for the redevelopment of those five structures, which are also being called the "last call buildings." Criteria for the proposals includes financial sustainability, compatible use, appropriate liability insurance, a performance bond and indemnity.

Mike Dellinger, executive director of the Yankton Office of Economic Development, stressed that funds also must be presently available for a proposal to succeed.

"The state has waited long enough for these buildings to be tended," he said. "If a redevelopment proposal put forth is to be accepted, it has to have financing capabilities now. The state is not going to wait to allow a developer another year or two to raise money."

Rich Jensen, a historic preservation consultant who is working with Yankton City Commissioner and Mead Committee member Paul Lowrie on a proposal for the HSC campus, called the state's latest action a move in the right direction.

"It's a good first step to putting the campus back to work and to

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Auditor Marks Fifty Years On The Job

BY NATHAN JOHNSON
nathan.johnson@yankton.net

When Lois Eli began working in the Yankton County Auditor's Office in 1962, she thought perhaps she would be there for five years.

"I guess a zero was added to that," Eli told the *Press & Dakotan* earlier this week while reflecting back on her more than 50 years in the auditor's office.

The chief deputy auditor will retire at the end of the month as the longest-serving employee in the 151-year history of Yankton County.

An open house will be held for Eli from 2-5 p.m. Friday at the Yankton County Government Center Commission Chambers.

In honor of Eli, Gov. Dennis Daugaard has issued an executive proclamation designating Friday as "Lois Eli Day" in South Dakota.

"Lois has devoted her life to

the betterment of her community, the caring and sharing with family and friends, and the day-to-day giving which makes South Dakota a great state in which to live and work," the proclamation states. "The citizens of South Dakota wish Lois A. Eli a healthy, happy and prosperous retirement from the Yankton County Auditor's Office."

Yankton County Commission Chairman Bruce Jensen said that Eli is a wonderful employee.

"She is a lovely, sweet lady, and she will be missed," he stated. "Her retirement will be a big loss to the county."

Eli's first day in the office was Nov. 26, 1962, a mere two weeks after her 18th birthday.

"I got a call from a county commissioner, who said there would be an opening in the auditor's office," she recalled. "If I

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KELLY HERTZ/P&D
Lois Eli, the chief deputy auditor for Yankton County, will retire at the end of the month as the longest-serving employee in the 151-year history of the county. She marked her 50th year in the auditor's office last November.

Long Tenures Mark Service To County

BY NATHAN JOHNSON
nathan.johnson@yankton.net

Lois Eli will have the distinction of being the longest-serving employee in the 151-year history of Yankton County when she retires at the end of April, but she joins the ranks of many others who have contributed more than three decades of work to the county.

"Longevity of service has been something of a tradition in Yankton County government," said Yankton County Register of Deeds Brian Hunhoff.

On the occasion of Eli's retirement, Hunhoff took it upon himself to research the county's longest-serving employees. It involved hours of poring through newspaper archives and Yankton County meeting minutes.

However, Hunhoff believes he has a pretty accurate list of those individuals who have worked 33 years or more for the county.

Hunhoff provided the list and some other historical notes to the *Press & Dakotan*.

THE LIST

1. **Lois Eli:** 50 years and five months (1962-2013), deputy auditor;
 2. **Frank W. Smith:** 47 years (1925-1972), highway superintendent;
 3. **Carol Peterson:** 44 years, auditor and director of equalization;
 4. **Robert "Bob" Oien:** 43 years, highway department;
 5. **Allan Sathe:** 42 years and six months, highway department;
 6. **Lynette Larson:** 42 years (1965-2007), register of deeds;
 7. **Judge Cyrus C. Puckett:** 39 years (1934-1973), circuit judge;
- "Judge C.C. Puckett may not be considered an 'official' county employee, but he presided over the

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