

Farm Profit Dropped By 14 Percent In 2014

MITCHELL — The average farm in South Dakota experienced nearly an 18 percent increase in net farm profit in 2014 according to data compiled by farms participating with the South Dakota Center for Farm/Ranch Management.

The average farm income in 2014 was \$168,361 compared to the 2013 average of \$141,973. The data was compiled through the statewide program that assists producers with their recordkeeping and management offered through Mitchell Technical Institute.

Though this is an increase from 2013, the amount is still below the prior five-year average net income of \$197,556.

"This increase is somewhat misleading as it was primarily a result of high profits from large livestock producers in 2014. Grain farming was profitable for the most part, but nowhere near the record levels of the past few years as input costs have remained steady or slightly increased while grain prices have remained low," says Jared Hofer, Director of Farm Management Program at Mitchell Technical Institute.

Average gross cash farm income of \$1,065,109 was nearly identical to the



IMAGE: METRO CREATIVE GRAPHICS

prior year amount of \$1,061,552. Similar to last year's 2 percent increase, total operating expenses showed a 1.8 percent increase to \$930,386 resulting in Net Cash Farm Income of \$134,723 compared to \$157,809 in 2013. Net cash farm income does not factor in changes in inventory, depreciation, or capital sales and purchases, rather it is simply the cash farm income less cash farm expenses.

The average age of participating operators was 44.1 years old with an average of 20.8 years farming experience. Total cash family living expense, including investments, for the family averaging 3.7 members was \$84,719 in 2014, which was a decrease from \$87,246 in 2013. The farm families showed \$28,036

in non-farm income, up from \$19,512 the prior year.

Balance sheets again showed improvement with the average increase in net worth or owner's equity of \$216,521 or 9 percent. Liquidity measures such as working capital and current ratio both showed minor changes from 2013, both remain strong at \$417,964 and 1.94 per operation, compared to \$400,977 and 1.96 in the prior year. Working capital to gross income increased slightly from 36.7 percent in 2013 to 36.9 percent in 2014. Other numbers of note from 2014 data include average farm assets of \$2,837,554 and equity of \$2,204,665 resulting in a rate of return on assets of 7.4 percent and return on equity of 8.7 percent. Repayment margin remains adequate with \$133,716 and a strong debt service coverage ratio of 3.04 and replacement margin ratio of 2.27.

More information on the 2014 South Dakota Annual Report will be released soon on the South Dakota Center for Farm/Ranch Management's website at www.sdfrm.com or by contacting the Center at 605-995-7196 or sdfrm@mitchelltech.edu.

Electric Bill Phone Scam Continues In Area

COLUMBUS, Neb. — Nebraska Public Power District officials are keeping a watchful eye on continued attempts by individuals contacting utility customers and businesses demanding that they pay their electric bill or face shutoff within 20 minutes.

On Monday, NPPD reported that the phone scam was occurring in Norfolk and based upon past history, other communities across the state could be targeted within the next few weeks. "Once the public recognizes the ploy, the scammers will take advantage of another community in the state. We expect similar calls may begin occurring in some of

our retail communities such as Kearney and Scottsbluff, but this deceitful scheme may not be isolated to just larger communities," said NPPD's Customer Care Business Manager Robyn Tweedy.

THE RUSE

The individuals, posing as representatives of the power company, will tell the customer that they are overdue on their electric bill and must pay up within 20 minutes or be disconnected. They are then instructed to purchase pre-paid cards in order to make immediate payment.

Tweedy said that several local businesses in the

Norfolk area were unfortunate victims of the deception with the calls coming at busy times of the company's operation.

NPPD'S PRACTICE

"NPPD does not do business this way," said Tweedy. "If a customer is overdue on their electric bill and subject to disconnection, it will be printed on their monthly bill with instructions on what they can do to settle the account. They should call the number printed on the bill, not the phone number of the individual making the phone request."

The malicious practice is not affecting NPPD alone. It has happened in other states

with other utilities, and has occurred in Nebraska several times in the past, as recently as last year. If an individual or business not served by NPPD receives a call demanding payment on their electric bill, they are encouraged to contact their local electric provider to check on their account before making any attempt to pay.

Any customers that receive such a call should not attempt to make a payment and contact local law enforcement and NPPD's Centralized Customer Care Center at 1-877-ASK-NPPD (877-275-6773) to report the request.

MARRIAGES

Here is the record of Yankton County marriage licenses for March 2015

Jared Schwans (31) and Stephanie Schmidt (24), both from Yankton, were married in Yankton

Dermaine Davis (37) of Yankton and Cheri McGhee (37) of Omaha, were married in Yankton

Mitchell Erickson (54) of Rapid City and Jennifer Morkve (45) of Yankton, were married in Yankton

Kyle Klein (43) of Yankton and Renee Chapman (39) of Phoenix, were married in Yankton

Andrew Sparks (25) and Brandi Roberson (26), both of Yankton, were married in Yankton

Jacob Crisman (39) and Jillian Dickerson (32), both from Yankton, were married in Yankton

Marcus Campbell (21) and Morgan Flying Hawk (20), both of Yankton, were married in Yankton

Christopher Brandt (22) and Kari Prickett (25), both of Gayville, were married in Yankton

Landrey Leonard (25) and Lindsey Yeager (27), both of Yankton, were married in Yankton

Michael Sanford (51) and Tammy Norrgard (46), both of Lincoln, Nebraska, were married in Yankton

Andrew Broer (26) and Karmen Brockmueller (39), both from Yankton, were married in Yankton

David Sibrat (27) of Yankton, and Micaela Hult (24) of Volin, were married in Yankton

Christopher Schurman (33) and Tammy Hall, both of Fordyce, Nebraska, were married in Yankton

Caucus

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Legislative leaders play a key role in negotiating policy positions. During the 2015 Legislature, that meant fighting for the Senate stance on issues such as road and bridge funding hikes and mandating that certain insurance plans cover a costly but effective treatment for children with autism.

Rave left to take a new job at Sanford Health. Lederman said in a blog post that he wants to spend more time with his family but didn't return a follow-up request for comment.

Republican political observers say a credible bid for either leadership post could come from one of the caucus' three majority whips or from a rank-and-file member.

Brown said further votes to fill majority whip positions could be necessary if

any of the lawmakers holding the lieutenant-style posts successfully secure one of the vacant top leadership spots. Brown said he has heard of interest from members of the caucus, but declined to discuss the names of potential candidates.

"I don't think there will be a shortage of candidates," he said.

Brown said he hasn't decided yet if he will run. The three majority whips are Sens. Ried Holien, Ernie Otten and Deb Soholt.

Holien said he is considering running for majority leader. Otten said he is weighing a bid for the assistant spot. Soholt said in a text message that she's "considering all options at this point" but said her main concern is the collective strength of the caucus.

Former Senate Majority Leader Russell Olson, who preceded Rave, said the Senate has a "whole room full of leaders." Like Rave, Olson left the Legislature for a new job: to serve as CEO of

Heartland Consumers Power District.

Olson said that's part of serving in South Dakota's citizen Legislature.

"Life changes," Rave said. "People come and people go, but the process moves on, and that's how it was designed from the beginning."

Minority Leader Billie Sutton, who leads the eight-member Democratic caucus in the Senate, said he's sad to see Rave, a friend, leave the Legislature. Sutton said Rave was able to unite the conservative and moderate camps of the Senate Republicans to ensure the body got its work done.

"Moving forward, my concern would be that someone would get elected that isn't able to bridge that gap," Sutton said. "That's pretty important to us being effective as a body, is having leaders that can bring the caucuses together, and I'm hopeful that whoever they elect can do that."

OBITUARIES

Roy Braunesreither

Roy Braunesreither, Yankton, passed away Tuesday, April 7, 2015, at his residence.

Funeral services are pending with the Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Home & Crematory, Yankton.

Beatrice Gant

Beatrice "Boots" Gant, 94, of Geddes died Tuesday, April 7, 2015 at the Lake Andes Health Care Center. Mass of Christian Burial

will be 10:30 a.m. Saturday, April 11, at St. Ann Catholic Church in Geddes, with burial in the parish cemetery, rural Geddes.

Visitation will be from 5-7 p.m. Friday at the church, with family present, followed by a 7 p.m. wake.

Crosby-Jaeger Funeral Home of Wagner is in charge of the arrangements.

Helen Severson

Helen M. Severson, 93, of rural Volin passed away Easter Sunday, April 5, 2015,

at Avera Sister James Care Center, Yankton.

Funeral services will be 10:30 a.m. Saturday, April 11, at Vangen Lutheran Church in Mission Hill with the Rev. Phil Lint officiating. Burial will be in the Vangen Lutheran Cemetery.

Visitations will be from 5-8:30 p.m. Friday, April 10, at

the Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Home and Crematory, Yankton with a 7 p.m. prayer service. Visitations will resume one hour prior to the service at the church.

Arrangements are under the care of the Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Home and Crematory, Yankton.

Send an on-line sympathy card at
www.wintzrayfuneralhome.com

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USD Alumni To Get In-State Tuition

VERMILLION — Children of University of South Dakota alumni can pay in-state tuition for their undergraduate degrees regardless of where they live under a program recently approved by the South Dakota Board of Regents.

"We see this as an opportunity to attract students who already have a connection to South Dakota back to South Dakota," said Jim Moran, USD provost and vice president of academic affairs. "This tuition incentive program encourages them to return to the state not only for a top quality education but also for their professional and work-related futures."

Qualification is simple. If the child of an alumnus is accepted at USD, his or her tuition will be at the in-state rate of \$138.80 per credit hour rather than the \$208.20 per credit hour paid by other out-of-state students. That's a savings of \$79.60 per credit hour, which makes a 120-credit degree program cost \$16,656 instead of \$24,984.

"If you are already accepted at USD, give me a call at 605-658-6220 or send me an email at mark.petty@usd.edu to see whether you qualify for the child of alumni rate," said Mark Petty, dean of enrollment. "And if you haven't considered USD, we'd love to talk to you about getting a great liberal arts education for the same price as a South Dakota resident."

S.D. Municipal League Meeting Held

More than 110 municipal officials representing 19 cities gathered at the South Dakota Municipal League's annual District 3 Meeting, held in Yankton on April 1, 2015.

Yvonne Taylor, South Dakota Municipal League executive director, spoke about the outcome of the 2015 Legislative Session, and the effect new laws will have on South Dakota municipalities. Taylor also discussed the direction and future of the Municipal League and services offered to the municipalities.

"More and more we are seeing the need to get better information out to the citizens and legislators. Municipal government provides a vast array of services, and people need to be informed of where their tax dollars are going. This type of education can only benefit municipal government. The taxpayers would be very proud of their local government if they were fully aware of how much service a municipality provides at a relatively low cost," Taylor said.

Jeanne Duchscher, SDML President for 2015 and Finance Officer for the City of Parker, was also on hand to discuss her priorities for the current year as well as to conduct the election of District 3 officers for the upcoming year. Others in attendance were representatives of various state agencies and representatives of groups affiliated with the Municipal League.

Amy Nelson, City Manager in Yankton, was re-elected as District 3 Chair and Dawn Murphy, Finance Officer in Tea, was re-elected as Vice Chair.

In other business, those attending voted to hold the 2016 District 3 Meeting in Elk Point.

Rental Issues To Have Ombudsman

PIERRE — Renters and landlords across South Dakota now have an additional place to turn when disputes arise, especially those involving Fair Housing Act issues of discrimination.

Paul Flogstad of Sioux Falls has contracted with the South Dakota Housing Development Authority to act as a statewide Fair Housing ombudsman. His official start date is April 1, which coincides with the beginning of Fair Housing Month. He will work with landlords, tenants and agencies across South Dakota.

Under the Fair Housing Act of 1968, it is illegal to discriminate in housing against anyone based on race, color, religion, sex, disability, familial status or national origin. Flogstad has a similar role with the City of Sioux Falls. He said disputes often arise when landlords or tenants don't understand their rights and responsibilities.

That's why Fair Housing education is a big part of his ombudsman role, he said. Flogstad is available to informally answer questions from landlords, property managers and renters.

In addition, SDHDA is developing a website (fairhousing.sd.gov) that offers information about housing issues and will assist Flogstad in his work. "Fair Housing is a human right, and we want to be sure that all South Dakotans are protected," said Mark Lauseng, SDHDA Executive Director.

When a dispute arises, Flogstad will act as a mediator to help find an answer that both parties can accept. If the dispute is unresolved, and it potentially involves housing discrimination, Flogstad forwards the case to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

He stressed that he is not an advocate for either landlord or tenant. "Even the thinnest pancake has two sides," he said.

Before becoming the Sioux Falls Fair Housing ombudsman, Flogstad spent a number of years in property management for regional and national property management companies.

Through the years, Flogstad has dealt with a variety of issues such as assistive animals for people with disabilities, tenant harassment, sexual harassment and discriminatory practices in the way prospective renters are treated.

For questions about Fair Housing in South Dakota, contact Flogstad at 877-832-0161.

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