



PRESS & DAKOTAN

YANKTON DAILY



Volume 140
Number 296

The Dakotas' Oldest Newspaper | **14 PAGES** | www.yankton.net

75¢



Remembering Lincoln



ROB NIELSEN/P&D

Father Ken Lulf of the St. Benedict Catholic Church leads the opening prayer Saturday evening at a memorial vigil for 6-year-old Lincoln Hilt of Hurler. Hilt died Easter Sunday during a fishing outing in Riverside Park. His body was recovered from the Missouri River Friday afternoon. Dozens of friends and family gathered around a makeshift memorial erected on the softball field fence.

These Losers Dropped More Than 370 Pounds

BY JORDYNNE HART
jordynne.hart@yankton.net

A group of Yankton people did what most of us fail to do: They followed through with their New Year's resolution to lose weight.

Rita's Biggest Losers, a weight loss challenge put on by Rita Houska at her shop Rita's Purse-O-Nalities, lost more than 370 pounds in their 90-day challenge this year.

"Because of the group, 22 people followed through on their resolution," group member Heather Thomas said. "How cool is that?"

Thomas found out about the weight loss group after seeing a sign in Houska's store advertising the competition last winter.

"I had been saying I wanted to lose weight, so when I saw it, I thought to myself 'Oh, crap,'" she laughed. "But I saw it as an opportunity to capitalize on what I was going to do."

Thomas said she had been struggling with her weight since she was 18 years old. At one point, she weighed more than 250 pounds.



COURTESY PHOTO

Pictured are some of Rita's Biggest Losers at the end of the 90-day weight loss challenge. The group of 22 lost a total of 370 pounds. Rita's Biggest Losers started again on Saturday.

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Nebraska

Tax Break Dispute Raises Old Question For Lawmakers

BY GRANT SCHULTE
Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — A dispute over taxes is drawing new attention to an old question that Nebraska lawmakers have to answer every year: Who gets a break, and who has to pay?

The issue surfaced last week as lawmakers debated sales tax exemptions for zoos and an \$800,000 property tax break for the Woodmen of the World Insurance Society, a prominent insurance firm in downtown Omaha.

Critics say the narrow exemptions deprive state and local governments of revenue and force other Nebraska taxpayers to make up the difference. Sen. Ernie Chambers of Omaha railed against the Woodmen bill and accused lawmakers of "licking the boots of the big shots."

"We've got a tax problem in Nebraska, and some people are jumping ship and getting a lifeboat — and the rest of us are left holding the bill," said Sen. Mike Groene of North Platte.

Supporters of the zoo tax bill said the extra money would help pay for infrastructure improvements to draw even more visitors to Omaha, Lincoln and Scottsbluff. The Woodmen tax bill advanced amid concerns that the group — which employs more than 500 people — has talked about moving to Council Bluffs, Iowa.

The Revenue Committee hears dozens of pitches each session. More than half of the 92 tax bills introduced this year involved some form of tax break, but very few were voted out of committee, said Sen. Mike Gloor, the committee chairman.

"I think the Legislature tries to be discerning, but most of the public doesn't realize how many requests we get," said Gloor, of Grand Island. "We let a few trickle out, but not a lot."

Gloor said some breaks are necessary to keep Nebraska competitive with other states.

He pointed to a sales-tax exemption passed last year on repair parts for farm equipment. Farm implement dealers along the state border were losing jobs because most of Nebraska's neighbors already exempted the products, allowing them to offer cheaper prices.

Senior committee members have grown increasingly skeptical anytime one specific group seeks a tax break, said Sen. Paul Schumacher, of Columbus. Lawmakers have repeatedly rejected efforts to reinstate a sales tax exemption for car washes, which was eliminated during a 2002 budget crisis on the promise that it was temporary.

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Sports



USD Slugs Way To Sweep • 7

Today



Chat With The P&D Sports Staff From 3:30-4:30 p.m.

www.yankton.net

Decision 2015

Centerville Voters To Weigh In On Opt-Out On Tuesday

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF
randy.dockendorf@yankton.net

Unlike other southeast South Dakota schools and towns, Centerville voters won't decide candidate races in Tuesday's elections.

Instead, Centerville voters will decide whether to extend the \$225,000 annual opt-out currently in place. The opt-out allows the Turner County school district to exceed the state property-tax limit.

The Centerville district has opted out for the past 10 years, and voters will decide Tuesday whether to continue the opt-out for another five years for \$225,000 annually, according to school business manager Angie Poll. The district uses the additional money for general expenses.

The opt-out election requires a simple majority to pass, Poll said. The last opt-out election passed with 80 percent approval, she said.

A number of cities and schools have cancelled elections because candidates are running unopposed or because the number of candidates matches the available openings.

In Lesterville, the city election was cancelled because no certificates of nomination were filed for one three-year term as trustee. Under the

VOTING | PAGE 12

Service Members Want To Refer Veterans Bill To The Voters

ABERDEEN (AP) — Some military service members in South Dakota are still fuming over a bill passed this year by the state Legislature that allows more members of the military to be considered a veteran and eligible for certain benefits under state law.

A group of about two dozen military members gathered at Northern State University on Friday to protest during Gov. Dennis Daugaard's visit, *The American News* reported.

The measure in question changes the definition of "veteran" under state law to include military reserve members and members of the National Guard, which means they can qualify for certain additional benefits. The law previously only included

members of the military who served on active duty for at least 90 straight days, not including training.

"It makes things more difficult for legit combat veterans," Fowler said. "If this were high school, what they'd be doing is passing out letterman jackets to junior varsity players who have never seen any varsity action. Those folks haven't earned the title."

Daugaard said Friday that he respects their right to object to the legislation, but believes the measure respects all service members.

"The majority of the Legislature did not agree with them," he said. "We want to show the kind of respect that we show to those

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Clean Up Yankton

Volunteers representing the Yankton Boys & Girls Club help to pick up trash along the railroad tracks Saturday morning. The volunteers were participating in Keep Yankton Beautiful's Great American Cleanup. (Rob Nielsen/P&D)



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