

Grain Terminal Upgrades Moving Forward

SIoux FALLS (AP) — Millions of dollars of rail line upgrades to the state-owned Britton Line in northeastern South Dakota and construction of a grain terminal near Britton are moving forward, leaders involved with the projects said Wednesday.

The state Department of Transportation and Dakota, Missouri Valley and Western Railroad are weighing materials suppliers for part of the roughly \$9 million in upgrades to the line. Work on the roughly \$32 million Britton Grain Terminal broke ground earlier in April after some drainage issues, and the facility is expected to open in September 2016, said Philip Deal, president of Britton Grain Terminal, LLC.

South Dakota Gov. Dennis Daugaard had previously announced the rail upgrades and new grain elevator in December 2014 as part of more than \$50 million in public and private money for rail improvements.

The rail construction includes an upgrade at Jarrett Junction and improvements to about 30 miles of track over the roughly 77-mile line between Geneseo Junction in North Dakota and Aberdeen, South Dakota, said Bruce Lindholm, of the department's Office of Air, Rail and Transit.

Nathan Sanderson, director of policy and operations for the governor, said in an email that the new Britton elevator is an example of the benefits that building up the state's rail infrastructure can bring.

"This grain terminal should offer farmers greater access to markets, while improving shipping times and reducing freight charges," Sanderson said. "The investments we make in rail infrastructure today will have a positive impact on South Dakota's economy and benefit our agriculture producers for decades to come."

Lindholm told the state Railroad Board last month that the planned Britton Line upgrades were paused because of uncertainty around the grain terminal caused by the drainage issues. Deal said the project is now underway.

The facility is expected to be able to store nearly 5 million bushels of grain and load 80,000 bushels per hour into 120-car shuttle trains.

Neb. Prairie Grass Cleared Through Burns

GRAND ISLAND, Neb. (AP) — Prairie grass at the Nebraska State Fairgrounds has been cleared through prescribed burning.

The *Grand Island Independent* reports that Dave Carr, the prescribed burn coordinator for the Central Platte Natural Resources District, burned grass at the fair grounds on Tuesday. Prescribed burns are conducted to kill non-native cool-weather grasses while promoting the growth of native prairie grasses, flowers and plants.

Carr says the cool-weather grasses usually have roots that extend only a few inches into the soil, which means they are not drought-resistant.

Milt Moravek, retired NRD assistant manager, says that even though the native grass area at the fairgrounds are blackened now, "in three weeks, you won't even be able to tell this area was burned. It will be all green."

Carr says native grasses make excellent habitats for birds, which can roost in the tall stems as they look for insects to eat. He also says the native grasses make good cover for small wildlife species. He says the warm-weather grass, some of which have roots that can reach 3 to 4 feet deep, may not see significant growth until May 1.

The coordinator says Tuesday's prescribed burn was requested by the Groundwater Guardians, which received grants to help develop the native grass area known as the Outdoor Learning Center.

Cement Truck Rolls On Interstate 29

SIoux FALLS (AP) — The driver of a cement truck is at a hospital after the vehicle rolled over on Interstate 29 in Sioux Falls.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol says the driver lost control and the vehicle entered the ditch and rolled. The incident happened in the northbound lane just south of Highway 38.

Traffic was reduced to the passing lane while emergency personnel tended to the driver, who has not been publicly identified. The Patrol wouldn't provide details about the severity of the driver's injuries.

The incident remains under investigation.

Higher Sex Trafficking Penalties Advance

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Convicted sex traffickers would face harsher punishment under a bill that cleared first-round debate in the Nebraska Legislature.

Senators voted 34-0 to advance the measure by Sen. Jim Scheer of Norfolk that would increase penalties for pimps and would allow prosecutors to seize their personal property. The bill also creates a fund for victims.

Supporters called the bill a public health issue and pointed to reports citing weak enforcement in the state.

Sen. Bob Krist of Omaha emphasized the importance of treating trafficked juveniles as victims, not criminals, and making efforts to reunite them with families.

Scheer has designated the bill a priority measure. Attorney General Doug Peterson has also backed the bill.

Survey: SD Hospitals Get High Marks

SIoux FALLS (AP) — Federal health officials say South Dakota hospitals were among a small number of facilities across the nation that received high ratings in patient satisfaction surveys collected over one year.

The *Argus Leader* reports that 14 South Dakota hospitals received at least one five-star rating from patients in one of about a dozen categories that measure patient satisfaction.

The data released by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services come from samples of surveys answered by adult patients between July 1, 2013, and June 30, 2014.

The surveys measured various patient experiences including communication with nurses and doctors, how well a patient's pain was managed and the cleanliness of a hospital room.

South Dakota hospitals along with those in Maine, Nebraska, Wisconsin and Minnesota had the highest average scores.

State Railroad Board Puts Rail Loan Requests On Hold

BY BOB MERCER
State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE — The state Railroad Board delayed action Wednesday on loans that would help finance construction of sidings for three agriculture projects planned in Lyman, Hughes and Brookings counties.

The board decided to wait after opening bids for a rehabilitation project on the Chamberlain to Presho segment of the state-owned Mitchell-Rapid City line.

The approximate cost for the rehab work has been estimated at about \$30 million. The bids received Tuesday appeared to be \$5 million to \$6 million above that amount.

"It is high," Todd Yeaton of Kimball said. He is the railroad board chairman.

He recommended the board allow the state Department of Transportation staff to assemble an analysis of bids for the rehab project. The board meets again in three weeks.

"The simple math doesn't work out,"

Carl Anderson of Aberdeen, another board member, said.

Anderson said the board needs to keep some money in the kitty in case of an emergency such as a rail bridge burning down.

The overage on the rehab project and the three loan requests would tap out the board's funds.

One of the agriculture projects seeking a loan from the board is a \$39 million grain-loading terminal planned by Wheat Growers at Kennebec along the stretch of rehabilitated line.

Wheat Growers applied for a \$4.3 million loan from the state board to use for building the loading circle track.

The South Dakota Pulse Processors LLC of Harrold and the Hughes County Railroad Authority are seeking a state loan of \$696,000, which will be in addition to local financing, for a siding and two switches.

The processors would get service from the Rapid City, Pierre and Eastern railroad. The processors want to handle yellow peas and other pulse crops.

The third loan application before the

state board is from the Brookings County Railroad Authority for \$4 million.

The money would go toward a proposed loop track at the Novita Aurora livestock protein meal and vegetable oil processing facility.

The Novita Aurora project has \$40 million in capital and is seeking \$26 million in commercial bank financing. The plant would be served by the RCP&E railroad.

The bids opened Wednesday marked the second round on the project. The first round of bids came in more than \$12 million above estimates.

The board received only one bid for a major piece of the work on the Chamberlain-Presho rehab project Wednesday. It was substantially higher than the estimate.

Another bid for that part of the work went unopened because the person delivering it arrived at the meeting a few minutes late.

The board members didn't indicate what their next moves might be regarding the loan requests and the rehab bids.

"A lot of things to happen yet. A lot of hurdles to cross," Yeaton said.

Audit Raised Questions About SDHSAA's Practices

BY BOB MERCER
State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE — The executive director for the South Dakota High School Activities Association gave his explanations Wednesday for five financial situations questioned during an official inspection of the association's finances for the past year by the state Department of Legislative Audit.

One of the audit findings: The association was missing \$10,500 owed by a corporate sponsor but the association's management didn't know it.

Executive director Wayne Carney said the missing payment resulted from an oversight and is being corrected.

He said it involved a five-year sponsorship contract with ball-maker Baden.

Carney said SDHSAA didn't send invoices to Baden and the company was on its own schedule of making quarterly payments.

He said Baden didn't notice that a payment was missed, and SDHSAA didn't notice either because there wasn't a practice of SDHSAA sending invoices to Baden.

"We are in the process of getting that from Baden," Carney said.

The contract for \$210,000 began in 2009. The Baden sponsorship was renewed in 2014 for a total of \$250,000.

Another finding involved the purchase of 28 tickets, using the association credit

card, to a Boston Red Sox baseball game on June 30, 2014.

Carney said the ticket purchases should have been reimbursed immediately by the people who received the tickets as part of the trip to the national convention.

They included various members of the association's board of directors and staff as well as others on the trip.

The reimbursements have been made as a result of the audit, Carney said.

"We dropped the ball and didn't bill them back (to the ticket recipients)," he said. "All the money's back."

An unrelated set of findings also involved the credit card.

The audit said hundreds of dollars in receipts for meals charged on the credit card were lump sums and were lacking details about the purposes of the meals and who received the meals.

Carney said detailed receipts are now being filed for meals, including board gatherings at restaurants and for quick-lunch purchases of pizzas and sandwiches delivered to board meetings.

Another audit finding reported the association failed to remit \$8,890 of unclaimed property to the state treasurer and therefore didn't comply with South Dakota law.

The amount reflected the total of 36 outstanding checks issued as far back as 2005.

No money has been sent to the state treasurer yet,

Carney said.

Instead the issue is still being worked on. He said a staff member is trying again to contact the various people who have been given checks by SDHSAA but haven't cashed the checks.

"We try. We needed to try harder," Carney said.

Another finding relates to the management's practice of transferring money between accounts to cover the cash-flow deficits during part of the year.

During the 2014 fiscal year, a total of \$250,000 was moved out of investments into operations and then moved back to investments.

A similar practice is again under way this fiscal year. The audit calls for the money to be clearly identified on the investment side.

The audit can be found on the association website at <http://www.sdhsaa.com/Portals/0/PDFs/BoardofDirectors/AuditReports/13-14.pdf>.

The association held a board of directors meeting Tuesday and Wednesday and its annual meeting for general membership on Tuesday afternoon.

The audit wasn't listed as an item on the agendas for the two meetings. Carney brought up the audit during the general annual meeting. He didn't mention the specific findings but said he would take questions. No one asked.

On Wednesday, Carney discussed the audit with the eight directors during the "Board Sharing" item on the agenda.

Neb. Wastewater Well Wins Approval Despite Opposition

BY GRANT SCHULTE
Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — State regulators approved a disposal well Wednesday that would allow a Colorado energy company to discard oil and natural gas wastewater underground in northwest Nebraska — a project that's drawn more opposition from landowners and environmental groups than similar past plans.

The Nebraska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission voted 2-0 in favor of the project at a ranch north of Mitchell. The panel's third member, Robert Goodwin of Sidney, recused himself because his law partner represented opponents of the project.

While Nebraska already has 121 active saltwater disposal wells, this project has drawn objections from environmental groups and nearby landowners who worry that leaks or spills could contaminate the Ogallala Aquifer, which supplies drinking water to about 2 million people in eight states and supports irrigation. The production water is considered waste because of its high salt content and industrial chemicals.

Under the proposal, Colorado-based Terex Energy Corp. would truck in salty groundwater from oil operations in Wyoming, Colorado and, eventually, Nebraska, to an old oil well on the ranch in southern Sioux County.



With Fondest Memories

We remember those who have passed away and are especially dear to us.

On Saturday, May 23rd we will publish in print and online at Yankton.net a Memorial Day section devoted to those who are gone but not forgotten.

Aneta Burrows
Dec. 30, 1960-Nov. 8, 2002

Your courage and bravery still inspire us all, and the memory of your smile fills us with joy and laughter.

Dan, Ann & Sarah

Select one of the verses below to accompany your tribute.

- We hold you in our thoughts and memories forever.
- May God cradle you in his arms, now and forever.
- Forever missed, never forgotten. May God hold you in the palm of His hand.
- Thank you for the wonderful days we shared together. My prayers will be with you until we meet again.
- The days we shared were sweet. I long to see you again in Gods heavenly glory.
- Your courage and bravery still inspire us all, and the memory of your smile fills us with joy and laughter.
- Though out of sight, you'll forever be in my heart and mind.
- May the light of peace shine on your face for eternity.
- May God's angels guide you and protect you throughout time.
- You were a light in our life that burns forever in our hearts.
- May God's graces shine over you for all time.
- You are in our thoughts and prayers from morning to night and from year to year.
- We send this message with a loving kiss for eternal rest and happiness.
- May the Lord bless you with His graces and warm, loving heart.
- I have written my own message and it is included.

Name of deceased _____

Date of birth _____ Date of passing _____

Number of selected verse _____ OR Personal message (25 word limit)

Your Name _____ Phone _____

Address/City/State/Zip _____

To remember your loved one in this special way, send \$12.00 per listing, up to 25 word verse and \$5 for photo. (One Name Per Ad)

Fill out the form and mail to: Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan/With Fondest Memories 319 Walnut St., Yankton, SD 57078

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