

Earth

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seen for some time, Pesek said.

"You'll spread out wildflower seeds, but they don't grow overnight," he told them. "It takes two years before they show up. In a couple of years, you can drive by and see what you've pollinated."

The "field work," held about three miles northwest of Tabor, concluded an afternoon that started with educational presentations and games at the school.

Appropriately, the pollination project was held on Earth Day.

GETTING READY

Before the Tabor students headed out to the plot, they received instructions – and a pep talk – from Mike Stephenson, regional representative for Pheasants Forever in South Dakota.

"You have the opportunity to go outside and plant pollinating habitat," he told the students. "We don't need big equipment – just you (students) to help out. It's not going to be a big acreage, but it's perfect for what we're going to accomplish."

Stephenson talked to the students about the importance of pollination and the interaction of plants and animals in the process.

He talked about the dwindling number of butterflies and the impact of colony collapse disorder on honey bees.

"There has been a decline in honeybees," he said. "We have seen a decline because of the weather, loss of habitat, pesticides and the fragmentation of land (broken up for multiple uses)."

The trend holds a definite impact for South Dakota, which ranks among the top five states for honey produc-



Tabor students and staff, along with Pheasant Forever members and Game, Fish and Parks staff, pose for a photo following Wednesday's work session at the former Zdenek property now owned by GF&P. The students learned about the pollination and its importance. The students and some staff members are wearing orange Pheasants Forever T-shirts.

RANDY DOCKENDORF/P&D

tion, Stephenson said. The annual value of honeybee pollination to U.S. agriculture stands at \$20 billion, he added.

The pollinator habitat is good for wildlife, he said, citing that 90 percent of a pheasant's diet is tied to insects. "Otherwise, we wouldn't have a good pheasant hunting or wildlife species," he said.

Tall plants fill a number of important roles for pheasants, including valuable cover, he said.

Pesek is no stranger to the Game, Fish and Parks property where the planting took place. He grew up five miles north of Tabor, near the land that Joe Zdenek sold to GF&P.

Pesek described the transformation that the local flora and fauna has seen throughout history.

"Before there was prairie grass, there were these wildflowers," he said. "We're putting in the pollinators because farming took it out."

He quizzed the students. "How tall do you think the native prairie grass was in places?" he asked.

Someone guessed three feet.

Using an illustration of the correct answer, Pesek

pointed to the nearby basketball hoop that stood 10 feet tall in the side of the gym.

"Just shorter than that," he said. "9 feet, 7 inches – that's how tall the prairie grass used to be. It was so tall you couldn't see many men as they were riding horses."

GF&P conservation officer Todd Crownover dubbed the Zdenek property "Heritage Area" in a salute to Tabor's Czech Days and the Czech Heritage Society, Pesek added.

LEARNING LESSONS

At the start of the afternoon, the Tabor students were divided into three groups and rotated among three stations in the school gym.

At one station, Stephenson asked students to create "meals" with cut-out pictures. "We'll see what food has to be taken away without pollinators," he said.

How important are honey bees? "Once you take out the foods that are pollinated, you mostly have the meats and breads," he said.

The ice cream sundae lost its ice cream, syrups, fruits, Butterfingers, almonds and other nuts.

"By the time they get done, all they've got left of the pizza is the meat and the

crust," he said. "And what's left (of the third food item) isn't a very good taco."

Another station created a "beehive" by cutting plastic pop bottles in half.

At the third station, GF&P habitat biologist Ryan Wendinger helped students create a "mudpie."

"We're mixing the mud balls with native wildflower seed," he said. "The kids can plant the mud balls in their backyard or flower garden and water it at home."

Later at the plot, Yankton area Pheasants Forever president Kevin Heiman emphasized to the students the importance of bees and the need to support their populations.

As the afternoon ended, Heiman said the project was a true learning experience.

"It's a great day for the kids to go out and enjoy this opportunity," he said. "It's a different type of activity. We're putting out the pollinating plants, and the insects are doing the pollinating."

Pheasants Forever member Don Lepp agreed.

"These kids will remember this (moment) 10 years from now. It's an experience you can never teach (in a classroom)," he said.

"It's great they're learning

it today because they're so enthusiastic. They can get in contact with the Earth and see how Mother Nature is supposed to work."

Tabor elementary principal Mike Duffek said he appreciated the Pheasants Forever invitation to his students.

"Mike Stephenson and Ron Pesek asked if our students wanted to be part of this project because the land is so close to the Tabor school," he said. "This all worked out with the timing of the land sold to the GF&P. And the location is only two miles away from the Tabor school."

The weather cooperated, and the end result will offer something for students to view with pride for years to come, Duffek said.

"Hands-on (experience) is actually the best way to learn, and this is something the kids did by themselves," he said.

"Now, the kids can drive past (the plot) with their parents and their brothers and sisters, and (the students) can say, 'Look what we did today!' I think it's fantastic."

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Authorities Seize Wrong Mexican Girl

MEXICO CITY (AP) — A 14-year-old Mexican girl who was taken by authorities and sent screaming to live in the United States was returned home Wednesday after DNA tests showed she is not the daughter of the Houston woman who claimed her.

The case of Alondra Luna Nunez drew international attention after a video of the distraught girl being forced into a police vehicle last week circulated in media and on social networks.

The Foreign Ministry said Mexican officials were carrying out a court order to send Alondra to Dorotea Garcia, a Houston woman who claimed the girl was her daughter who had been illegally taken to Mexico by her father years ago.

Alondra's family insisted authorities were mistaken but their pleas were ignored. "They stole my daughter," Susana Nunez told Milenio Television on Wednesday. "I didn't know this woman existed."

Mexican agents assigned to Interpol took Alondra from her middle school in the central state of Guanajuato on April 16 and transported her to a courtroom in the neighboring state of Michoacan, according to a statement from the federal Attorney General's Office.

In court, Alondra's parents and Garcia each presented birth certificates and gave testimony, then the judge ruled in favor of Garcia, ordering the girl into her custody, according to the court in Michoacan. A court official, who was not authorized to speak to the press, said on condition of anonymity that Alondra's parents didn't present proper documents.

Advice

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November's election.

"I think that was a real wakeup call and I was thrilled by it," he said. "I'm not going against the women and the men that had served before ... my views though were just different than some of those county commissioners. I like where you're going with your new County Commission."

Some of his strongest critiques were reserved for the two failed opt-outs for Yankton schools.

"I think the greatest failure of this town (was) the opt-outs," he said. "I grew up with nothing. The way that I succeeded was not only because of my loving mom — it was the schools of Yankton. We competed at the highest level in Yankton when I was here in the '80s. If there was one place where we never failed to invest, it was in our schools."

Huether also got into the spirit of the recently launched Onward Yankton contest and pitched a few of his own ideas for what the

city could do to invest in its future, including aggressive incentives for downtown Yankton.

"You need to figure out how you can get dollars invested in your downtown," he said. "What I would do, you have a housing issue in town, you've got a lot of great places and I would convert downtown Yankton into housing. Because then, if you've got some people living downtown, you can actually have a coffee shop downtown, or another one. Then you'd get people working down there and playing down there."

Heuether said, at the moment, the city's downtown is lacking.

"Folks have to understand that any community across America, their heart, or that heartbeat, is their downtown," he said. "Right now, I'm worried about Yankton's heartbeat — that downtown — because it's not pumping at the level I think it needs to."

He also suggested an emphasis on bringing in tourists for short trips from around the region.

"There are people in Sioux Falls who don't know that you've got a lake in Yankton," he said. "They don't know

that you've got a river in Yankton. If I were you, I would market day trips to Yankton."

Huether said there should also be efforts to bring in bigger and higher-paying jobs to the city.

"You've got to make white-collar jobs a priority here," he said. "I don't even know if you know this, but you used to just hire a person to go out and just get manufacturing jobs. That was the way you did economic development in Yankton. It was all about manufacturing jobs. ... I was so pleased when I found out that now you were willing to kind of change that up a little bit and maybe go for all good jobs."

He emphasized while manufacturing jobs aren't a burden, continued growth depends on white-collar opportunities.

"I love the manufacturing sector and I love blue-collar jobs," he said. "But if you want to grow and you want to bring in more dollars, you need to bring in more white-collar (jobs)."

Additionally, Huether made suggestions for a new Memorial Park pool and a concert pavilion for the city.

Huether said there's one thing, above all, this city and others need to do to be



KELLY HERTZ/P&D

Sioux Falls Mayor Mike Huether gets help from Yankton Middle School sixth grader Ashley Langdon about the importance of a firm grip and listening when meeting other people. Huether spoke to students Wednesday afternoon at Yankton Middle School, which was the high school when he graduated from YHS in 1980.

successful.

"Get some stuff done — and you are," he said. "Look at this worldwide archery tournament that's coming here. Look at the Boys & Girls Club. Look at these

things you're doing. I love it. I'm thrilled by it. I'm just going to challenge you to do more."

In addition to his appearance at One Million Cups, Huether also spoke

to students at Yankton High School and Yankton Middle School.

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Ace

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keep its downtown doors open, with Yankton's population growth came more competition for area businesses.

"It puts some extra strain on those who are still in business," Leo Kopetsky said. "There has been some other businesses that have unfortunately disappeared from downtown."

Besides increased competition, Ken and Leo Kopetsky said the two stores created

confusion for everyone.

"We never knew what place our customers were going to buy merchandise from," Ken Kopetsky said. "So we would ramp up inventory on certain things in certain stores, but then they would buy it downtown one time then come up here. We were just confusing ourselves, our staff and our customers, because sometimes we would have too much here and then they were buying it downtown so we would have to haul it over there."

Leo Kopetsky said he wants to thank the community and Kopetsky's Ace

Hardware customers for all their support.

Kopetsky's Ace Hardware downtown store manager, Vicki Galvan will be moving to the North Broadway location along with two other downtown employees.

Galvan, who has been with the store since 1998, couldn't be reached for comment.

"We are treating the closing as more of a move because we are moving the merchandise and staff," Ken said. "We assured everyone they would have a spot in the move."

Though the downtown store is closing, Ken Kopet-

sky sees it as an opportunity for a new business in the downtown district.

"We are not going to sell the building, but we are looking to rent out the building," Ken Kopetsky said. "We are also looking into doing lofts or apartments above the store. We have some ideas. The building is still a great building. We would like to get a tenant who won't have to split their business in town and that's able to put 100 percent of their energy instead of 50 percent like us. We have been saying 'Shop Us,' trying to get people to go to either of our stores here in town. But that isn't

working. We want to get someone in there who really loves and cares to grow a business because it is a great spot."

Though the move into one location makes financial sense for the family business, Ken said the decision is bittersweet.

"It's exciting for the stores, but for our family, it's a little sad," he said. "We have operated out of that location since the year I was born. It's been fun."

Ken Kopetsky said he wants to keep the family business going for another 40 years so he and his brother Gregg, who is also

involved with the operation, have a place they can possibly pass onto their children to work at like their father did for them.

"In order for that to happen, this was a move that needed to happen," Ken said. "Instead of splitting our talents in one town, it will now be under one roof. The numbers speak, and they said we should do this. Yankton has been great, so I have a bright hope for the next 40."

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