

KIDS

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"I think a lot of the agencies have been pulling up their boots and helping out more than past years," said United Way executive director Pam Kettering.

She noted the Contact Center and Sack Pack program have seen a substantial increase in participation in contrast to past years. Parent layoffs and unemployment are huge favors in child poverty, Kettering said. While she remembers a similar situation back in the 1980s, Kettering is unsure whether or not the Yankton community was hit as hard as today.

Other agencies, especially ones that help low-income families find housing, have seen a change in the last couple years.

Denise Cody, an advocate at the Yankton Women's and Children's Center, said she has seen the effects of rising child poverty in the housing market. She said that while domestic violence does not follow economic guidelines, the average stay length at the center has increased in the past year because women and families cannot find affordable housing.

"They don't want to stay here any longer than they have to," Cody said. "But people aren't moving out of the government-

assisted programs and it's harder (for these families) to get into those housing programs."

"Women with two or three kids are having a more difficult time finding housing. There's even less two- or three-bedroom apartments," she added.

Two years ago, the average stay for a woman and her family was approximately two weeks long, while last year was much longer. In 2009, the center sheltered 55 women and 38 children, for a total of 1,071 nights.

"We get quite a few kids here," Cody said.

The center, which recently moved to a new location, is now furnished with a backyard playground and rooms big enough to house up to six people. Each room has a bathroom, too.

Altogether, the center can house about 25 people at one time.

Jennifer Larson, the Yankton Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing (HPRP) coordinator, has seen the increase, too. She said she has helped nearly 20 families since January find affordable housing or helped them not get evicted in Yankton County.

To qualify for the HPRP grant, families must be 50 percent below the median income for Yankton County, Larson said.

Yankton Housing and Redevelopment Commission Executive Director Ann Horton said that the waiting list for hous-

ing applications has spiked for more than just single people, but also for families.

"People who'd not been in need of assistance before suddenly found themselves looking for a way to stay in a rental unit or in their homes, in some cases," Horton said.

Today, more than 240 sit on the waiting list for Yankton's housing program.

"I've been doing this for almost 14 years, and the need has just steadily been growing," she said. "There are a lot of children in the program currently, and a lot more children on the waiting list."

The following are South Dakota, Nebraska and national statistics from the Kids Count Data Book released by the Annie E. Casey Foundation:

Percent of low birthweight babies
S.D. - 7 percent
Neb. - 7 percent
U.S. - 8.2 percent

Infant mortality rate
S.D. - 6.4 percent
Neb. - 6.8 percent
U.S. - 6.7 percent

Child death rate (per every 100,000 children ages 1-14)
S.D. - 27 children
Neb. - 20 children
U.S. - 19 children

Teen death rate (per every 100,000 children ages 15-19)

S.D. - 83 teens
Neb. - 65 teens
U.S. - 62 teens

Teen birth rate (per every 1,000 females ages 15-19)
S.D. - 42 females
Neb. - 36 females
U.S. - 43 females

Percent of teens (ages 16-19) not in school and not high school graduates
S.D. - 6 percent
Neb. - 4 percent
U.S. - 6 percent

Percent of teens (ages 16-19) not attending school and not working
S.D. - 6 percent
Neb. - 1 percent
U.S. - 8 percent

Percent of children living in families where no parent has full-time, year-round employment
S.D. - 23 percent
Neb. - 19 percent
U.S. - 27 percent

Percent of children in poverty (income below \$21,834 for two adults and two kids in 2008)
S.D. - 18 percent
Neb. - 13 percent
U.S. - 18 percent

Percent of children in single-parent families
S.D. - 30 percent
Neb. - 26 percent
U.S. - 32 percent

Economist: U.S. Must Avoid Mistakes Of Past

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — The success of Congress' financial reforms depends on how well regulators implement them, the head of the Federal Reserve's 10th District said Friday.

Thomas Hoening, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, spoke in Lincoln about the new reform law and the state of the U.S. economy. His office provided a copy of the text of his speech.

Hoening said the reform law includes important provisions, such as prohibiting banks from engaging in risky trading. But he says that restriction needs strong implementation to work.

"Regulatory agencies have been given a mandate and authority to strengthen oversight of the largest firms," Hoening said. "Success will depend on whether we choose to make hard calls and to use the new authority with integrity, fairness and resolve."

The financial overhaul law that President Barack Obama signed last month gives the government new powers to break up companies that threaten the economy, creates an agency to guard consumers in their finan-

cial transactions and strengthens regulation of complex financial instruments such as derivatives.

It was aimed at preventing a repeat of the 2008 financial meltdown that pushed the country into a severe recession.

Hoening said the economy is recovering at a modest rate, as predicted, even though short-term results are mixed. He predicted 3 percent growth of the nation's gross domestic product through the end of 2010.

Hoening, who also serves on the Federal Open Market Committee that sets interest rates, reiterated Friday that he thinks it may be dangerous to leave interest rates at exceptionally low levels too long. Hoening has expressed that concern at several recent FOMC meetings, where he has been in the minority.

The recession and economic turmoil followed what Hoening said were years of too-low interest rates, too-much borrowing and lax supervision. The committee this week kept its benchmark interest rate at record-low levels near zero.

School's Starting... Send Your Kids Back To School Safely

Commuting & Travel Safety Tips for Parents and Students

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 24 million students nationwide start their school day with a trip on the school bus. Although NHTSA reports that riding on a school bus is nearly eight times safer than riding in a passenger vehicle, an average of 11 school-aged pedestrians are killed by school transportation vehicles each year.

Whether they walk, ride the bus or travel by car, teach your kids these few tips to ensure they get to and from school safely.

Tips for School Bus Riders

- Line up facing the bus, not along side it.
- Do not play in the street while waiting for the bus.
- Carry all loose belongings in a bag or backpack.
- Never reach under the school bus to get anything that has rolled or fallen beneath it.
- The bus driver may be sitting too high up to see you.
- After getting off the bus, move immediately onto the sidewalk and out of traffic. If there is no sidewalk, try to stay as far to the side of the road as possible.
- Wait for a signal from the bus driver before crossing the street. Walk at least 10 steps away from the front of the bus so the driver can see you.
- Never cross the street or play behind the school bus.

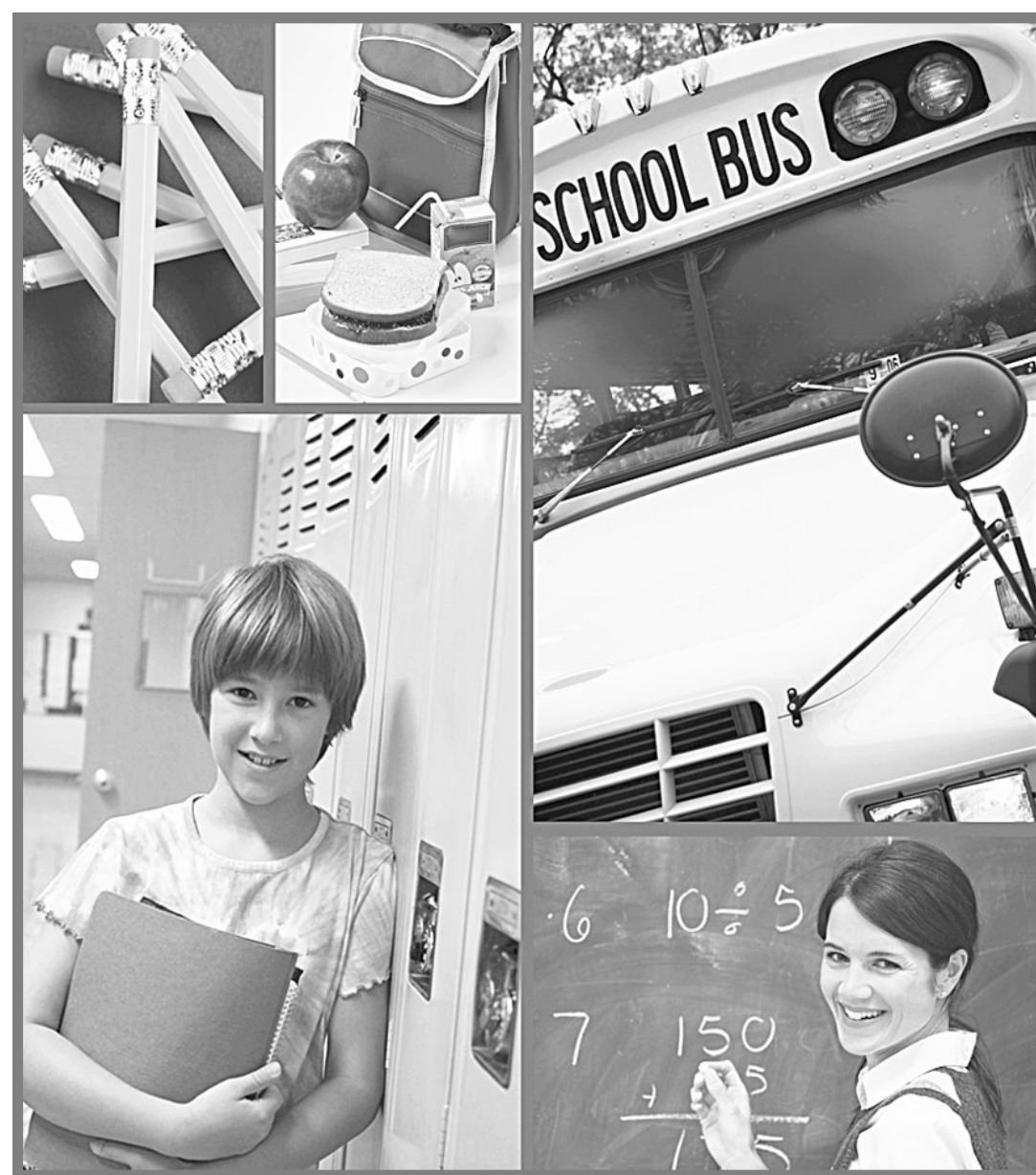
Tips for Pedestrians or Bike Riders

- Never walk alone—always travel with a buddy.
- Pay attention to all traffic signals and crossing guards along the way. Never cross the street against a stop light.
- Always wear a helmet when riding a bicycle.
- Avoid ill-fitting clothing that could get caught in spokes or pedals or restrict movements, and wear reflective colors and material to be more visible to street traffic.
- Walk your bicycle across all intersections.

Tips for Car Drivers and Passengers

- Everyone in the car should wear a seatbelt, as they lower the risk of injury in the event of a crash by 45 percent.
- Make sure babies and young children are in safety seats at all times, and that safety seats have been properly installed.
- Read your car's manual for safety precautions specifically relate to the car and its airbags.
- Remind teenagers to take extra precautions if they are driving to school or riding with another teenage driver.

**Information courtesy of American Red Cross



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