

OUR TOWNS

Gayville
Mission Hill
Volin

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TRAVIS GULBRANDSON/P&D
Bread Ministry volunteer Barbara Egbert helps to sort through boxes of bread Tuesday morning in Wakonda. The Bread Ministry provides area residents with the opportunity to receive various kinds of baked goods at no charge.

Bread Ministry Distributes Baked Goods To Many In Area

BY TRAVIS GULBRANDSON
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In today's economic climate, many people are counting every penny when it comes to day-to-day expenses.

That's why an area bread ministry is such a welcome development for Gayville, Volin and Wakonda families.

Since last winter, the Bread Ministry — headquartered in Wakonda — has been receiving baked goods through the South Dakota Food Bank in Sioux Falls, which has been distributing the products statewide with help from Wal-Mart and Feeding America.

At 8:45 a.m. each Tuesday, a truck carrying approximately 600 pounds of bread arrives at Wakonda Baptist Church, which can then be distributed throughout the area.

"They come in with pallets of stuff," said John Wilkinson, who, along with his wife Connie, helped bring the program to the area. "The stuff hasn't even hit the (sales) floor, most of it. It's all extra-ordered food."

The food is distributed at the church from 9-11 a.m., after which time it is taken to various area distribution sites, some of which include Gayville's CoTrust Bank and the Volin Cafe.

Bread and baked goods can be picked up at any of these sites by any interested person.

"It's available to anybody who needs it," said volunteer Mike Gaidelis. "We're not going to check your tax return."

The ministry has gone on long enough now to where the volunteers have a system of getting everything ready for distribution.

"People need this. In this economy, it just fills the need, because everybody is stretched so tight. Everybody is just stretched paper-thin. I think it's absolutely wonderful that it's here."

JOHN WILKINSON

"The trucks will come in and they'll give us some boxes," Wilkinson said. "The boxes are all different, so we'll have to go through all of them to find out what is in them."

The volunteers then take the contents and make individual packages to be picked up.

"We usually put a pastry in them, a cake, a couple loaves of French bread, a couple loaves of bread, hotdog buns, hamburger buns and dinner rolls," Wilkinson said.

Occasionally, the ministry will also receive larger items, such as sheet cakes.

"Sometimes we even get the decorated ones that people pay \$25 for," Wilkinson said. "We've been saving some of the sheet cakes for people who might need a cake for a little boy who's having a birthday or something like that. We might just happen to have one. And it saves them \$25."

Although it seldom happens, some items arrive damaged. But that doesn't mean these aren't used, as well. While they aren't fit for human consumption, Wilkinson said they will often be given to farmers who can feed them to their livestock.

He said he was "amazed" the first time the delivery truck arrived with such a large amount of product.

"I don't know what they did before we got the food banks," he said. "They had to have just thrown it away."

Although the Wilkinsons started the area program last winter, they are no longer as actively involved, leaving much of the work to volunteers like Gaidelis and Barbara Egbert. However, John Wilkinson said he and his wife hope to get back to it soon.

Egbert said the couple deserved a lot of credit for the program's success.

"They are very humble people, and they have worked so hard with this," she said.

Wilkinson said he's glad to see the program flourish.

"We figured one day that it's more than 100 families that (the program) touches," he said. "Barbara comes and gets between five and six boxes of it, the Irene Food Bank gets boxes of it. It's just word-of-mouth. It's filling a need that the community has."

Other communities are filling that need now, as well, with Centerville and Beresford establishing similar programs.

"People need this," Wilkinson said. "In this economy, it just fills the need, because everybody is stretched so tight. Everybody is just stretched paper-thin. I think it's absolutely wonderful that it's here."

Egbert agreed. "This program is such a blessing," she said.

People who are interested either in receiving bread or volunteering to help with packing or distribution are encouraged to contact Egbert at 267-4336.

Lifetime Learning Helps Communities

BY BETH DAVIS

South Dakota Rural Enterprise

There's always more to learn — and that lifetime learning can yield major dividends by growing economic opportunity in South Dakota.

Earlier this year, Lin VanHofwegen, Vice-President of Operations for South Dakota Rural Enterprise, along with a dedicated group of our state's economic development professionals from the Governor's Office of Economic Development, USDA Rural Development, Small Business Development Center, Small Business Administration and local and regional development groups, received the Economic Development Finance Professional certification from the National Development Council.

This national training course, sponsored by CITI in Sioux Falls, is specially geared to developing knowledge and skills essential to making deals happen here in South Dakota. The certification program is a rigorous, four-week

training series that explores the skills essential for the successful practice of economic development: business credit and real estate finance analysis techniques, loan packaging procedures, negotiating and problem solving skills and deal structuring techniques. Participants in the training course build the capacity to translate development opportunities into results for our communities and our state.

In addition to lessons drawn from actual projects, these certified professionals completed hands-on exercises, spent four weeks in classroom coursework and passed comprehensive examinations to receive this professional designation. We're proud of Lin and the other South Dakotans who went back to school to learn more about advancing prosperity in our state. And there are so many more who continue to learn-in addition to the many opportunities for YOU to help find solutions to the challenges that face us in our communities today.

Programs offered by the South Dakota Cooperative Extension Service, by the Rural Learning Center and by South Dakota Rural Enterprise, to name just a few, can build leadership skills, enhance community cooperation and jumpstart economic planning and evaluation in YOUR community. For a list of resources or to be connected to some of these programs, contact us at info@sdrei.org, or visit our website at sdrei.org. There is so much to learn, and this is the perfect time to energize your learning curve.

Partners in Policymaking Funds Available

PIERRE — Applications for South Dakota Partners in Policymaking, a leadership training program for self-advocates and parents of children with disabilities, are now ready for Year 19.

Partners in Policymaking provides state-of-the-art knowledge about disability issues and builds the competencies necessary to become advocates who can effectively influence system change. Applications are due Sept. 20.

South Dakota Advocacy Services (SDAS) is currently seeking applications from interested people who have disabilities or who are parents of children with

disabilities to participate in Partners in Policymaking.

Applications for Year 19 can be obtained by contacting Sandy Stocklin Hook, South Dakota Advocacy Services, 221 S. Central Ave., Pierre, SD 57501 or by calling 1-800-658-4782. Applications are also available on the SDAS website at www.sdadvocacy.com or e-mailing hooks@sdadvocacy.com.

The training program is designed to provide information, training, and skill building so

those who participate may obtain the most appropriate state-of-the-art services for themselves and others.

The training initiative is funded in parts by grants from the South Dakota Council on Developmental Disabilities, Children's Care Hospital and School, USD Center for Disabilities at Sanford School of Medicine at USD and South Dakota Parent Connection.

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Pictured from left: Greg Erickson, MD; Michael Schurrer, MD; Scott Hiltunen, MD; Mark Doohen, MD.

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