

YMS

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there were enough people in the community who felt these programs were vital to the students and therefore made donations. Nobody made a donation unless they believed in the programs."

With the donations accepted unanimously by the board, it does create a new issue for the district. Activities director Wally Bosch said any student who wishes to participate in middle school fall activities must get their information together as soon as possible.

"We have been preparing on the chance these funds would come through by speaking with the coaches who held the positions last year if they were still interested, so I feel I can hit the ground running tomorrow contacting coaches to get the positions filled," Bosch said. "We do have some positions that will be available because the personnel is no longer with the district, but I have contacted some others who might be interested."

Bosch said from the student perspective, seventh-eighth grade students who will be participating this fall need to get their physicals completed as soon as possible.

"We could not pass out the physical forms or recertification forms last year because we did not know if the programs were going to be offered," he said. "So I encourage parents of those students to call the clinic and line up their physicals as soon as possible. We have plans to put the forms online at the school district website

and they can be picked up at the clinic, middle school or high school."

Bosch said the schedules for the fall activities remain, for the most part, intact, thanks to the cooperation of other school districts that were willing to wait and see if the programs would be reinstated.

Also, the school board accepted the continued donation of an athletic trainer for the district from Avera Sacred Heart Hospital.

"We are very pleased to continue this partnership with the school district," said Jean Hunhoff, Avera Sacred Heart compliance officer. "I think the emphasis that you put on sports, that our young athletes are healthy and stay healthy, is very important."

Hunhoff said the donation includes the trainers salary and liability insurance, which is about a \$75,000-\$80,000 donation to the school district.

In addition, Bosch explained that Avera Sacred Heart Hospital would also be donating an online service that does a baseline assessment of every student athlete in case they suffer a concussion during an event, which will help track when they are physically able to return to competition.

Other business at Monday's board meeting included:

- adopting the middle school handbook;
- hearing a report on the school district's annual yearly progress report under No Child Left Behind;
- accepting a request from the Gayville-Volin school district to set up five bus stops within the Yankton School District;
- and hearing a report on the reduction of three daily bus routes at a savings of nearly \$60,000 to the district.

Verizon Workers Hit Picket Lines

BY JIM FITZGERALD
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Thousands of Verizon landline workers took to picket lines Monday from Massachusetts to Virginia, fighting management demands for contract givebacks and disputing that their work is unprofitable.

Verizon Communication Inc. countered that its 45,000 unionized workers in the East should not expect the kind of compensation they were paid when the phone company was a monopoly — and when no one questioned whether a household needed a land line.

Analysts said the strike came at a key point in the evolution of telecommunications: the beginning of the demise of the ordinary wired home phone.

"Fewer and fewer people are using their traditional land lines," said Roger Entner, founder of Recon Analytics in Boston.

The company used managers to replace workers Monday, but said demonstrators at some offices had caused some service disruptions by keeping the managers from getting in; it did not provide details.

Verizon also said it was investigating several instances of possible sabotage by employees, including fiber-optic lines being

cut. It said the damage affected phone, Internet and TV service in Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey and New York.

Union spokeswoman Candice Johnson said it was "a management tactic, rolling out the idea of sabotage." She said the union "does not condone illegal action of any kind."

Strikers claimed two demonstrators were hit by a replacement worker's car near Buffalo.

Johnson and company spokesman Richard Young said management and labor — the workers are represented by the Communications Workers of America and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers — met face-to-face on Monday in New York. They had no word on progress.

The contract expired at midnight Saturday.

Verizon Wireless, the non-union and much more profitable division of which Verizon owns 55 percent, was not affected by the strike. But the wireless operation was a focus of contention anyway.

The company said its "wireline" business, as opposed to wireless, had declined over the last decade both in customer base and profits.

Company spokesman Richard Young said the company wants to

freeze the workers' pensions but is willing to enhance their 401k accounts. He said management is also demanding that workers contribute to their health insurance premiums.

Young said the workers' benefits "no longer reflect today's marketplace."

"The phone company is not a monopoly anymore," he said. "There are dozens of competitors."

CWA spokeswoman Candice Johnson said its best-paid workers get about \$77,000 a year in New York. The company puts the figure at \$91,000 and said benefits average \$50,000.

Johnson said Verizon is asking \$20,000 per worker in annual concessions.

Strikers said it was wrong to separate them from the company's overall profitability — Young said it made \$3 billion in the first half of this year — because they are the underpinnings of the profitable wireless sector.

Paula Lopez, 60, a customer service representative on a picket line in New York, acknowledged that fewer people used land line phones but said land lines were "the stepping stones and building blocks for wireless. ... That's where they got the money to start up the wireless."

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