

Sioux Falls, Businesses Ink Events Center Deal

SIoux FALLS (AP) — Several of Sioux Falls' biggest businesses have partnered to be corporate sponsors of the new events center in Sioux Falls.

The City of Sioux Falls announced Wednesday that First Premier Bank, Premier Bankcard and Sanford Health are the title sponsors of the new events center, which is scheduled to open in fall 2014.

A news conference is scheduled Thursday to announce the name of the events center.

The *Argus Leader* reports that the three companies have formed a 25-year partnership. They will set up an endowment that will make annual payments to the city to help with operational costs of the events center.

The City Council must still approve the businesses as sponsors.

Increase Sought In Mountain Lion Hunting

PIERRE (AP) — State wildlife officials are recommending that South Dakota hunters be allowed to shoot more mountain lions next winter.

Last winter's season set a quota of 70 total mountain lions or 50 females.

The state Wildlife Division recommends that next winter's season allow a total of 100 mountain lions or 70 females to be shot. The season would run from Dec. 26 to March 31, but would end early if the quota is reached.

The state Game, Fish and Parks Commission will propose a season when it meets Thursday and Friday in Milbank. The commission will make a final decision after a public hearing in October.

Some hunters argue more lions should be shot because they kill Black Hills deer and elk. Other people contend too many cougars are being killed.

Judge Deciding On Permit For Disputed Dairy

ALEXANDRIA (AP) — A judge will decide whether a Hanson County permit for a controversial dairy operation should be canceled because of a lack of progress on the project.

A citizen group that opposes the planned 7,000-head Hanson County Dairy is challenging the 2007 permit, saying that under county ordinance the permit is invalid if the project hasn't been completed within two years of the permit's issuance. Opponents want Judge Timothy Bjorkman to make the dairy reapply for a permit before construction can begin.

County Zoning Administrator Mary Wilcox says county officials understood the large project would take longer than two years when they granted the permit.

The citizen group already has successfully appealed a state water permit for the dairy. The state Water Management Board will hold a new hearing next month.

S.D. Police Chief Faces Misdemeanor Charge

WAGNER (AP) — The police chief in the southeast South Dakota city of Wagner is accused of having knowledge of a crime and not reporting it.

State crime bureau agents arrested Jim Chaney on the misdemeanor charge last week. He was released on \$1,000 bond.

State Division of Criminal Investigation spokeswoman Sara Rabern tells *The Daily Republic* newspaper that Chaney allegedly failed to report a drug-related crime early this year. He faces up to a year in jail and a \$2,000 fine if convicted.

Chaney's attorney, George Johnson, told *The Associated Press* on Wednesday that he had just gotten the case and was not prepared to immediately comment. City Attorney Ken Cotton declined comment to *The Daily Republic*, saying it was a personnel matter.

Johnson Vows To Shut Down Synthetic Dealers

SIoux FALLS (AP) — A week after local, state and federal officials busted tobacco shops in Sioux Falls for synthetic drugs, U.S. Attorney Brendan Johnson has vowed to shut down the dealers.

Three Sioux Falls tobacco shops were among shops raided across the country last week as part of a nationwide sweep to seize cash, property and synthetic drugs.

Johnson spoke at a news conference Wednesday with several local law enforcement officials. He says officials are working hard to keep synthetic drugs off the streets.

S.D. Hospital Denies Surgial Scars Say KKK

BY KRISTI EATON
Associated Press

SIoux FALLS — A lawyer for a Rapid City-area hospital being sued by a blind man who says the letters KKK were carved into his stomach during surgery said the accusations were contrived by other people and that every scar "is explained by the medical procedures that he underwent to save his life," according to court documents filed Wednesday.

Vern Traversie, a 69-year-old Lakota man living on the Cheyenne River Reservation in South Dakota, filed a federal lawsuit last month against Rapid City Regional Hospital, its board of directors, several physicians and others. He claims he was left with scars on his abdomen in the shape of the three letters following heart surgery last year.

YouTube videos featuring Traversie went viral in Native American communities earlier this year. In them, Traversie talks about being mistreated at the hospital and shows his abdomen.

Although he is blind, Traversie said he was told by others that the scars form the letters.

A May rally in support of Traversie drew hundreds of people, many of whom said his story exemplifies the racism that Native Americans experience in Rapid City. But others said they couldn't make out the letters, including police who investigated his allegations. No criminal charges were filed.

The defendants in the lawsuit said there is no medical evidence to suggest that anyone burned or cut letters into Traversie.

"Every mark on Plaintiff's abdomen is explained by the medical procedures that he underwent to save his life," Jeffrey Hurd, one of the defendant's lawyers, wrote in response to the lawsuit. "Indeed, the allegations of a 'KKK' scar were apparently created by a group of unqualified people in Plaintiff's home town, who simply discussed why Plaintiff had certain surgical scars."

The lawyer noted that the people who told Traversie about

his scars considered several possibilities, including a single "K," a bite mark, the word "oink," or four "K"s, before settling on the three-letter acronym.

"After reaching this decision through speculation and conjecture, and with no attempt to consult with Plaintiff's healthcare providers ... they told Plaintiff that he had been victimized," Hurd wrote.

The hospital also refutes claims that Traversie was denied pain medication, and noted that he was told to have a home health nurse inspect and care for the incisional wounds after he got home.

Reached by phone at his home Wednesday, Traversie said he could not comment on the case and referred questions to his pastor, Ben Farrar, who is acting as his spokesman. Farrar said he wasn't aware of Wednesday's filing but that he expected the hospital to deny the claims.

Farrar said heart surgery patients can expect to be left with a vertical scar down the sternum

and a few horizontal scars where drainage tubes would be inserted — as can be seen in photos of Traversie.

"What we cannot expect is haphazard slashes all over the abdomen as well as some cuts that seem to form letters of the alphabet. This is not what can be considered normal," Farrar said, adding that Traversie and his attorney will decide what action to take next.

In the past, Traversie told *The Associated Press* that he believed his lawsuit was targeting people who make up only a small segment of the South Dakota population.

"I think the Native people have been fighting racial hatred for many years in South Dakota, but you know, it's not all the people that are hateful toward Native Americans," he said shortly after the lawsuit was filed in July. "We have a good segment of our society — white society — in South Dakota that are Christian people and they get along good with the Native Americans."

N.D. Lawmakers Review Proposed Property Tax Cuts

BY DALE WETZEL
Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. — Weeks after North Dakota voters thrashed a proposal to abolish all property taxes, state lawmakers are mulling ideas to cut residential property taxes and restrict local governments' ability to dole out tax breaks.

Some proposals would apply property taxes to farm homes, which are now exempt, while extending a partial exemption to any North Dakota residence if the owner uses it as his or her primary home.

One bill would give a partial property tax exemption to North Dakota homeowners who are at least 65 years old. Another would distribute state "block grants" to counties to finance local property tax cuts.

Each of the proposed bills would require the Legislature to replace the money that local governments would lose from state-ordered property tax exemptions, an expense that would exceed \$350 million over two years. The proposed exemptions would affect only homes;

commercial and farm land would not be included.

The Legislature's interim Taxation Committee, which is reviewing more than a dozen tax bills, should begin deciding on its favorites in early September, said its chairman, Sen. David Hogue, R-Minot. The panel has authority to introduce bills in the 2013 Legislature.

The Legislature has long been preoccupied with property taxes, but a proposed constitutional amendment to abolish them sharpened the focus this spring. The amendment was overwhelmingly defeated, with 77 percent of voters opposed. Critics of the measure said it would weaken the ability of local governments to set their own spending priorities.

For the new round of suggested legislation, a popular approach is to exempt part of a home's market value from property taxes.

One bill offers a maximum property tax exemption of \$80,000 of a home's market value. For homes worth less, the break would be capped at 80 percent of its value.

The same bill would replace an existing tax exemption on farm homes with one covering up to \$75,000 of each home's value. The new exemption should ensure that most rural North Dakota farm homes would not be taxed, legislators said.

The measure would require legislators to distribute \$371 million to local governments over two years to make up for the lost revenue.

Other bills offer a \$125,000 exemption for North Dakota homeowners who are at least 65 years old, and a \$75,000 exemption for those who are younger.

Sen. Dwight Cook, R-Mandan, wondered whether it was justified to offer older homeowners a larger exemption.

"Property tax places a burden on everybody," Cook said. "I know a lot of young families, buying their home for the first time, they're raising kids, they've got them in school, and trust me, property tax is a burden on them, too."

Homeowners would have to fill out a form each year attesting that they were eligible for the tax breaks, a provision that county

tax administrators said would be a logistical nightmare.

"There is going to be some pushback from the taxpayer," predicted Kevin Ternes, the Minot city assessor. "It's really, really, really difficult to get forms back from people, even when you're trying to provide them tax relief."

Not all of the bills being considered would cut property taxes. One would eliminate the ability of local governments to offer any property tax exemptions, which they use to give breaks to businesses and other favored groups. It also would abolish "renaissance zones" that several cities use to encourage downtown development.

No legislator spoke up Wednesday in favor of the wholesale abolition of property tax incentives.

Rep. Mike Nathe, R-Bismarck, said he wanted to retain an incentive for child care centers, saying it is needed to help encourage the creation of new ones in the oil patch.

"I think that would still be a very useful tool for communities out west that are growing," Nathe said.

Disaster

From Page 1

be eligible for emergency haying and grazing, subject to certain conditions.

It was also announced that crop insurance companies have agreed to provide a short grace period for farmers on insurance premiums in 2012. As a result, farmers and ranchers will have an extra 30 days to make payments without incurring interest penalties on unpaid premiums.

"President Obama and I will continue to take swift action to get help to America's farmers and ranchers through this difficult time," Vilsack said in a media release. "The assistance announced today will help U.S. livestock producers dealing with climbing feed prices, critical shortages of hay and deteriorating pasturelands. Responding to my request, crop insurance companies indicated that producers can forgo interest

penalties to help our nation's farm families struggling with cash flow challenges."

Sens. Tim Johnson (D-S.D.) and John Thune (R-S.D.) had previously called upon the USDA to relax restrictions on the CRP wetland and farmable wetland areas.

"I applaud Secretary Vilsack for taking action that will help South Dakota producers now get access to feed for their livestock," Johnson said in a media release. "Using his administrative authority to ease restrictions on CRP emergency haying and grazing is crucial. With so many areas of our state battling this drought, I am also pleased that USDA has designated many of our counties as disaster areas so they will be able to access important assistance."

In a telephone conference with news reporters Wednesday, Thune acknowledged that the drought is worsening.

"You look at the crop conditions out there, and you can see it's a very difficult year for agriculture in South Dakota," he said. "We need to take every step we possibly can and utilize those emergency

authorities that are available."

South Dakota Farmers Union President Doug Sombke said Vilsack's decision is good news for some farmers.

"Those wetland acres in some of these counties, those are the only acres that really have anything growing," he stated. "It's been so hot and dry that the other CRP acres aren't as bountiful as those lowlands."

Sombke said the disaster declaration will help some farmers, but said they need more than additional loans. Congress needs to find a way to reinstate livestock disaster programs that expired last year, he said.

South Dakota Sen. Frank Kloucek of Scotland thanked South Dakota's federal delegation and Vilsack for assisting farmers during this difficult time.

"They say government doesn't work, but it did work in this case," he told the *Press & Dakotan* Wednesday. "By contacting the people in Washington, people at the grassroots level got their concerns addressed."

Trial

From Page 1

years prior to the fire.

(2) In order to assist counsel in preparation of a defense and to ensure that the court hears expert testimony other than just that presented by the state, and to ensure the defendant receive a fair trial, it is necessary that experts be retained both in the areas of fire investigation and causation, and financial accounting.

(3) The motion includes the background, expertise and fee schedule of Michael A. Schlattman, president and senior special investigator for Fire Consulting & Case Review International of Shawnee Mission, Kan. Schlattman has worked for the company since March 2005, and the motion includes his background in security, fire investigations and as a police officer and detective since February 1969.

(4) The motion also includes the background and letter from Lawrence S. Harden, the Certified Public Accountant (CPA) that the defendant desires to retain, setting forth in the letter his estimated fees for the initial evaluation and consultation.

(5) Based on information currently available to the defendant, it is believed the state will also call an electrical engineer to testify that this fire was not due to an electrical fault. Therefore, based on consultations with the defendant's fire expert, there may be a need to hire an electrical engineer to act as a

consultant and expert witness. Such an electrical engineer has not yet been identified.

The Johnsons were indicted in First Circuit Court in Tyndall. The indictments charge the couple with allegedly starting the fire to collect insurance.

Warrants were issued for the Johnsons, and they were arrested April 4 by the Knox County, Neb., sheriff's office. The Johnsons each posted \$5,000 cash bond and were released. The Johnsons waived extradition at a Knox County hearing.

The Johnsons owned Libby's Steakhouse, one of the buildings damaged by the October 2010 fire, according to Bon Homme County Sheriff Jason Bechtold. The state Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) handled the case, the sheriff said.

The Springfield fire department responded to a call of smoke coming out of Libby's around 2:30 a.m. Avon, Lesterville, Tabor, Tyndall and Yankton fire departments were called in to assist with the blaze.

Libby's Steakhouse was a one-story building, as was the adjoining Boschma Legal Services building also destroyed in the blaze. Bon Homme Insurance received smoke and water damage. Mr. Golf Car, Inc., was reported to have received minor damage.

No one was injured during the incident. The state fire marshal's office investigated the cause of the blaze.

You can follow Randy Dockendorf on Twitter at twitter.com/RDockendorf

OBITUARIES

Evelyn Riehle

Evelyn "Evie" Riehle, 90, died Tuesday, July 31, 2012, at the Prairie Estates Care Center, Elk Point.

Funeral services are at 10 a.m. Friday at First Baptist Church, Vermillion, with Pastor Elmer "Sandy" Aakre officiating.

Visitation is at 6-7 p.m. tonight (Thursday) at Kober Funeral Home, Vermillion, with a prayer service starting at 7 p.m.

Condolences may be posted online at www.koberfuneralhome.com.



Riehle

Delmont area, will be held at 10 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 4, at Crosby-Jaeger Funeral Home, Wagner. Burial is in the ZCJB Cemetery, rural Wagner.

She died April 3, 2012, in El Paso. She was born Dec. 5, 1909.

George Smith

George Schafer Smith died peacefully in Mesa, Ariz., on June 13, 2012. He was born August 6, 1919.

A memorial service will be held at 1 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 4, at United Methodist Church following his burial.

Crosby-Jaeger Funeral Home, Wagner, is in charge of arrangements.

KYNT
AM 1450

MORNING COFFEE
WEEKDAYS MONDAY-FRIDAY

Thursday, August 2
7:40 a.m. Yankton Chamber (Carmen Schramm)
8:15 a.m. Yktn Conv/Vis Bureau (Lisa Scheve)

Friday, August 3
7:40 a.m. Yankton Area Progressive Growth (Mike Dellinger)
8:15 a.m. Yankton Area Arts (Amy Miner)

Friends Of The
Yankton Community Library

Used Book Sale!

Saturday, Aug. 4th
10am-12:30pm
at the Library
See You There!

2 Room

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www.wintzrayfuneralhome.com

WINTZ & RAY FUNERAL HOME and Cremation Service, Inc. 605.665.3644

WINTZ FUNERAL HOME INC. Hartington, Coleridge, Crofton 402.254.6547

It's the first of the month...

AUGUST

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