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Ditch Closure OK'd

Off-Road Vehicles Banned From Two Highway Areas Near Yankton

BY BOB MERCER
State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE — The South Dakota Transportation Commission closed three more sets of state highway ditches Thursday to protect them from people driving off-road vehicles, this time in the Yankton and Chancellor areas, even though there isn't a specific penalty in state law for violating the bans.

South Dakota law authorizes off-road vehicles to be used in most highway ditches by persons age 12 and older. But there also is a mechanism in state

law for shutting specific segments of ditches against off-roaders' use except for agricultural and utility purposes.

The closures Thursday came in response to damage complaints that surfaced last fall. The newly closed segments result from negotiations in the past months between DOT staff, landowners along the routes and other local people involved in ATV use.

"I think this is a great solution and I promote it 100 percent," commission member Ralph Marquardt of Yankton said.

"It won't be good for everybody but it's good for a majority," he said.

The closed segments will be prominently marked. The closures don't apply to snowmobiles. The problem with closing some ditches is off-road riders then will become more concentrated in other places that are still open, said commissioner Don Roby of Watertown.

"There ought to be a plan here, thinking

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KELLY HERTZ/P&D
Yankton High School Principal Jennifer Johnke discusses proposed guidelines for the school's homecoming parade next month during a special meeting of the Yankton School Board Thursday. The guidelines were adopted 5-0.

Guidelines For YHS Homecoming Parade Set

Waivers Allow Students To Build, Ride Floats

BY DEREK BARTOS
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The Yankton School Board approved limited waivers of liability Thursday for participants in this year's Pioneer Days Homecoming Parade, which will allow students to build floats for the parade during homeroom and ride them during the celebration.

In response to safety and liability concerns stemming from two injuries suffered by students during the celebration the past two years, a committee made of school officials and community members earlier this month proposed a list of revisions to the parade. The most controversial change proposed by the group was the elimination of float-building and float-riding by students, with the exception of homecoming royalty.

After numerous community members voiced displeasure over the changes, the committee worked with school attorney Mike Marlow to draft waivers for the parade's participants so that the activity could continue similar to how it has in the past.

"We went back and looked at the proposal and the changes we could make — most specifically to get the homerooms involved if they so choose, while still protecting our teachers' liability and keeping our students safe," said YHS Principal Jennifer Johnke, who heads the parade committee.

At Thursday's special meeting, Marlow presented the board with two options — a full waiver and a limited waiver. The full waiver would have removed all liability for anyone involved in an accident or injury, whereas the limited waiver only removes liability over and above any insurance coverage.

The board agreed that the limited waiver was the appropriate choice, even if that meant that fewer people might volunteer to drive in the parade or offer

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USA Weekend

Something Bigger?



RANDY DOCKENDORF/P&D
Fred Binder, a District III Planning and Development staff member, works with the governor's homes, with one displayed in the background on the District III grounds in Yankton.

District III Wants To See Larger 'Governor's Homes' Built

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF
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SPRINGFIELD — If area officials have their way, the houses built at Mike Dufree State Prison in Springfield would begin offering three-bedroom units.

Currently, the inmate-built models — referred to as "governor's houses" because the program was created under the late Gov. Bill Janklow — consist of two-bedroom homes. Larger models are used for daycare centers, which are also constructed at Springfield.

However, the Planning and Development District III's committee has passed a resolution supporting construction of three-bedroom homes. The committee, representing the planning district's 16 counties and three tribes, acted during last week's meeting in Yankton.

District III executive director Greg Henderson

sought input during the committee meeting. "Do you see a need for these larger homes?" he asked.

Committee members, many of them from western counties, answered with a resounding "yes."

District III currently displays a governor's house on its grounds along Summit Avenue in Yankton. Displays have also been set up at county and state fairs, in communities and at other venues.

"Nothing beats seeing it to understand," Henderson told the *Press & Dakotan*, noting the displays fuel interest.

The committee's resolution has been forwarded to the South Dakota Housing Development Authority (SDHDA), said District III community development specialist Fred Binder.

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Obama Seeks New College Rating System

BY JULIE PACE AND PHILIP ELLIOTT
Associated Press

BUFFALO, N.Y. — Targeting the soaring cost of higher education, President Barack Obama on Thursday unveiled a broad new government rating system for colleges that would judge schools on their affordability and perhaps be used to allocate federal financial aid.

But the proposed overhaul faced immediate skepticism from college leaders who worry the rankings could cost their institutions millions of dollars, as well as from congressional Republicans wary of deepening the government's role in higher education.

The president, speaking to a student-heavy crowd of 7,000 at the University at Buffalo, said he expected pushback from those who have profited from the ballooning cost of college. But he argued that with the nation's economy still shaky and students facing increasing global competition, making college affordable is "an economic imperative."

"Higher education cannot be a luxury," Obama said during the first stop on a two-day bus tour through New York and Pennsylvania. "Every American family



Obama

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It's No Cool Day In The Shade

Yankton County Requires Removal Of Patio Shades At Larson's Landing Campground

BY NATHAN JOHNSON
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The Yankton County Commission shined a spotlight on Larson's Landing this week, and now the campground's residents will have a lot more sunshine to contend with while staying there.

At issue during the meeting was whether a patio shade, consisting of four poles and a roof and the personal property of the camper, is a structure according to the definition of the county zoning ordinance. If so, a building permit is needed to construct them in the Moderate Density

Rural Residential District (R-2) where Larson's Landing is located.

Zoning Administrator Patrick Garrity ruled that the more than 30 patio shades built without a permit in the 94-unit campground would have to be removed within 30 days. Doug Larson, owner of Larson's Landing, appealed that decision to the County Commission, acting as the Board of Adjustment.

Garrity said that Larson could build just one 120-square-foot or less accessory building without a sub-grade foundation in the



KELLY HERTZ/P&D
The Yankton County Commission, acting as the Board of Adjustment, ruled this week that more than 30 patio shades like the one pictured here are a violation of the zoning ordinance and will have to be removed within 30 days.

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