

# S.D. Task Force Eyes Plan For Hiring Disabled

BY BOB MERCER  
State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE — South Dakota adults with disabilities were somewhat more likely to be employed than the national averages for their types of disabilities, according to 2011 data presented Tuesday to a state task force.

But that relative success masks a broader problem.

Adults with disabilities were much less likely to have paying jobs than people without disabilities, roughly 30 percent vs. 70 percent nationally, and pay frequently was poverty level.

Gov. Dennis Daugaard sees people with disabilities as an important source of workers for South Dakota employers.

He is asking all departments and bureaus in state government to focus on hiring more people with disabilities.

He also appointed a 35-member task force of parents, employers, service providers, non-profit representatives, legislators and state officials.

That group met Tuesday for the second time and has a possibly final meeting scheduled for Sept. 16.

The governor's emphasis is part of a country-wide initiative under way.

In the past year Daugaard was co-chair for the National Governors Association panel that developed a blueprint for states called "A Better Bottom Line."

Daugaard's parents were born deaf and held jobs to raise their family. He and his two sisters learned sign language at home before they learned spoken language.

The task force is building a South Dakota version of the plan using four of the main points from the NGA model:

- Make employing people with disabilities part of the state workforce strategy;
- Find and support businesses to employ people with disabilities;
- Prepare youth with disabilities to work; and
- Make the best use of limited resources.

"Right now, the way they're written,

they're equal," said Laurie Gill, who is chairing the task force for the governor.

Gill, who is the mayor of Pierre, is transitioning from her current job as state secretary of human services in the Daugaard Cabinet to being his state commissioner of human resources.

There she'll be in the pilot's seat for the disability-hiring effort by state government.

The task force listed about 30 ideas and goals under those four headings. One has something of a head start.

The youth-preparation effort is already in the second year of a three-year \$2 million federal grant through the state Department of Labor and Regulation.

The pilot project is focused on people ages 18 to 24 in the Black Hills region of Butte, Custer, Fall River, Harding, Lawrence, Meade and Pennington counties.

South Dakota will be short 49,000 workers by 2020 based on current growth trends in jobs and workers.

Gloria Pluimer, who is involved in the youth-preparation work as director

for the Career Learning Center of the Black Hills, suggested that job analysts be made available to employers.

She said they could look for ways that duties can be realigned to make the most of each employee's education and ability levels.

Pluimer and others on the task force said businesses have to see how they can benefit financially through hiring workers with disabilities. Participants also talked about the need to share success stories among employers.

State Rep. Fred Romkema, R-Spearfish, said 43 percent of the cognitively-disabled adults who receive services in his community are employed. "I'm proud of that," Romkema said. "So there are some successes in the state."

The NGA report notes that businesses are willing to hire people with disabilities but they need a long-term partner in their state governments. "I think if we don't make that shift, we're going to miss the mark," said state So-

cial Services Secretary Kim Malsam-Rysdon.

One set of patterns is that greater proportions of people report they have disabilities in many of the same western South Dakota counties that have the highest rates of unemployment.

Outfitting RV-type vehicles to serve as mobile offices could be a way to reach rural, less-populated areas, said Rep. Don Haggar, R-Sioux Falls.

"I just have to find someone to pay for it," Haggar said. "That might be a slick way to deal with some of the problems we've been talking about."

Donna Leslie, representing the South Dakota Retailers Association, watched the proceedings from the audience. During the public comment period Leslie said retailers recognize the value of the effort and her office will be hosting a webinar for members of the association this fall and she will be writing articles.

"I absolutely agree it's important to get success stories out there," she said.

## Chapter 7 Sought For Beef Plant

SIoux FALLS (AP) — A federal trustee asked a judge Tuesday to convert a troubled South Dakota beef processing plant's bankruptcy to a Chapter 7 liquidation.

Assistant U.S. trustee James Snyder said in a petition that he believes that Northern Beef Packers, which filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection last month, is "administratively insolvent" based on company reports and statements.

"Based on currently available information, it appears the plant represents the only asset by which Debtor may generate funds to pay creditors," Snyder wrote.

Northern Beef had been trying to obtain post-petition financing so it could proceed with hiring an investment banking firm to pursue a sale of the plant.

Snyder said Northern Beef withdrew its financing plan and has not filed a replacement motion. The change from Chapter 11 protection is necessary to protect the interests of creditors and the estate and to prevent further delay and default, he said.

Land for the \$109 million plant was first secured in 2006, but the company wasn't able to slaughter its first animal until late in 2012 and has since struggled to reach anywhere near its production target of 1,500 head per day.

## Rural RC Residents Worried About Lion

RAPID CITY (AP) — Residents of a canyon area just outside the Rapid City limits are pressing for state wildlife officials to remove a mountain lion they say has killed a deer and dozens of cats, but the Game, Fish and Parks Department says its hands are tied.

Linda Eddy said after the lion killed the deer she found the carcass in her yard and blood on her deck. Area residents are concerned for their safety and that of their children and pets, she said.

"It's just getting too close for comfort," Eddy said.

Game, Fish and Parks Regional Supervisor Mike Kintigh said he understands the concerns but that rules bar the agency from killing the lion. If it was attacking pets or livestock, was threatening people or was inside the city limits then wildlife officials would act immediately, but for now all they can do is monitor the situation, he said.

There also might be more than one lion, which would not be unusual for the Black Hills, he said.

Lion attacks against people are rare and attacks leading to death are even rarer — most lions scamper away as soon as humans stand up or make noise, according to Kintigh.

"More people are killed every year by lightning strikes," he said.

## Bull Riding To The Extreme



PHOTO: DOUG JORGENSEN

The action was intense last weekend during Vermillion's 20th annual Extreme Bull Riding Tour Bull-A-Rama. The event drew a large crowd as riders tried their hands with some very energetic animals, including this critter here. The Bull-A-Rama was held at the Clay County Park's rodeo arena.

## Regulators Discuss Future Of Nebraska Nuclear Plant

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — The idle Fort Calhoun nuclear power plant is loaded with fuel for the first time in more than two years, and utility officials say it will operate safely if regulators allow it to restart.

Nuclear Regulatory Commission officials made it clear when they met Tuesday with the Omaha Public Power District that they haven't decided whether to allow the plant that sits on the Missouri River 20 miles north of Omaha to restart.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss how OPPD and the company it hired to run Fort Calhoun, Exelon Corp., would continue improving the plant if it gets permission to restart the plant, which has been idle since 2011.

## Same-Sex Couples Challenge Neb. Foster Parent Rule

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Three same-sex couples challenged a Nebraska policy on Tuesday that prevents them from serving as foster parents, setting up a legal battle in a state with a shortage of eligible families.

A lawsuit filed by the state and national American Civil Liberties Union argues that the rule discriminates against would-be foster parents based on their sexual orientation. The administrative policy, enacted in 1995, prohibits unrelated, unmarried couples and openly gay people from becoming foster parents.

The lawsuit argues that the rule ex-

cludes couples who are willing to become foster parents. Nebraska had more than 3,800 children who were in out-of-home care in April, according to the state Foster Care Review Office.

More than one-fourth of those children were placed in environments more restrictive than a traditional foster home, such as group homes, boarding schools, medical facilities, youth detention centers and emergency centers. The couples argue that a larger pool of foster and adoptive families will allow more children to avoid the trauma that bouncing from placement to placement can cause.

"Nebraska's policy on gay and lesbian foster parents does nothing to help children," said Amy Miller, legal director of the ACLU of Nebraska. "The individual review process already screens out the unsuitable parents. All this policy does is throw away people who would make good parents."

A Department of Health and Human Services spokesman on Monday referred questions to the Nebraska Attorney General's office. In a statement, attorney general spokeswoman Anita Scheuler said: "Our office is tasked with defending the state and we will do so vigorously."

## Kid Scoop

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## WHAT IS? LABOR DAY?

Every year, on the first Monday in September, the U.S. and Canada observe a holiday. Many get the day off from their jobs. Children get the day off from school. On Labor Day, (Labour Day in Canada) we honor working people and the dignity of labor.

The first Labor Day was held just over 100 years ago in New York City.

To **labor** means to work. In 1882, many kinds of workers lived in New York City. There were carpenters, bricklayers, furniture-makers, jewelers, printers and more.

While they were proud of their work and what they made, many laborers were unhappy with their long hours, unsafe workplaces and low pay. Many worked seven days a week and 12 or 14 hours a day. Pay was so low that even young children had to work.

## WORKING FOR CHANGE

In the 1880s, New York workers formed groups called craft unions. Bricklayers had their own union. The carpenters had theirs and so did the printers. After a while, these small unions formed a larger union called the Knights of Labor. The Knights of Labor fought for workers' rights. Their "weapons" were words and votes. They fought to get children out of the factories and the mines. They fought for better pay and safer working environments.

Standards Link: History/Social Science: Students understand working conditions and the rise of the labor movement. Students understand events honored in commemorative holidays. Students understand the difficulties populations have faced in the American culture.

## THE FIRST LABOR DAY

In 1882, a New York City union called the Central Labor Union (C.L.U.) decided to hold a parade and picnic for workers on September 5. The parade would be a chance for workers to show off their work. More than 10,000 marchers showed up that day. Thousands more watched the parade. Many of the people carried signs that told what the workers wanted to change.

Workers all over the country liked the idea of a workers' holiday. By the 1930s every state in the U.S. celebrated Labor Day.

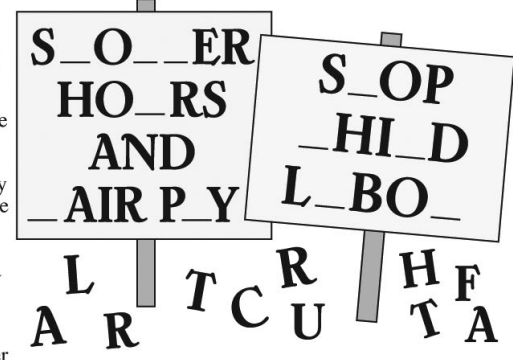
Today we celebrate Labor Day to remember that working people help make our country strong. All workers are important!

Standards Link: History/Social Science: Students understand working conditions and the rise of the labor movement including bargaining, strikes and protests over labor conditions. Reading Comprehension: Follow simple directions.



This year's Labor Day parade is off to a strange start. Find at least 10 things wrong in this picture.

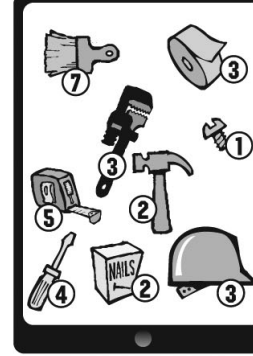
Standards Link: Visual Discrimination.



Use the letters above to complete the messages on the signs from the 1880s.

**Extra! Extra!**  
**Labor Day ABC**  
Clip from the classified section five or more different job titles. Glue them onto a piece of paper in ABC order. Decorate your paper with pictures of people doing the jobs you selected.  
Standards Link: Spelling: Arrange words in alphabetical order.

## Kid Scoop Puzzler



Today, almost every job requires using computers or tablets in some way.

Dawn needs a score of 17 to win this computer game. What is the largest number of tools she can capture? Put a blue ring around these.

What is the least number of objects she can capture? Put a red ring around these.

Standards Link: Mathematics: Combining numbers to compare sums.

## Double Double Word Search

Find the words in the puzzle, then in this week's Kid Scoop stories and activities.

LABOR	C E L E H O U R S B
SEPTEMBER	R C H I L D R E N T
CHILDREN	C I N C I P P S O E
UNION	L S L O O T A B I L
PARADE	L R J D E F R Y N O
PAY	A A O M E Y A D U O
TOOLS	B O B R W D D N T H
PICNIC	O E S M I N E S O C
DAY	R F A C T O R I E S
MINES	
SAFER	
FACTORIES	
SCHOOL	
JOBS	
HOURS	

Standards Link: Letter sequencing. Recognizing identical words. Skim and scan reading. Recall spelling patterns.

## FROM THE Kid Scoop LESSON LIBRARY

www.kidscoop.com

## Article Mix-Up

Cut out a newspaper article. Cut the article into four pieces. Give the pieces to a friend to see if he or she can put the article back together in the right order.

Standards Link: Reading Comprehension: Use reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret informational text.

## Write On!

## Eat like a plant?

Would you like to "eat" like a plant—meaning have the ability to turn sunshine, water and CO<sub>2</sub> into food through photosynthesis? Why or why not?

Send your story to:  
Press & Dakotan  
C/o Noelle Schlechter  
319 Walnut Street  
Yankton, SD 57078  
605-665-7811, ext 112

Deadline: September 22 Published: Week of Oct. 20  
Please include your school and grade.

## Weekly Writing Corner

## School Days

Can you come up with ways to make school fun?

I like school. I'm glad to be back in school because I can see my friends every day now. I think that my friends are the best part of school. And they make school fun.

Angela, 3rd grade

Recess is how to make school fun. I want to have a longer recess and maybe two times in the morning and another two times after lunch.

Gregory, 2nd grade

School is more fun when you are ready for everything. This means that you have all the right things for class. It also means that you do your homework on time. If you listen to the teacher and not talk, that will also make school fun because that way, you won't get into trouble.

Raelyn, 4th grade

School would be fun if we had ice cream and pizza every day.

Josh, 3rd grade

I think that I would be happy in school if I had my own teacher who would explain everything just for me and help me with my homework. Sometimes I don't want to tell the teacher that I don't understand but if I had my own teacher, that would make it much easier.

Megan, 4th grade

It would be more fun if we played games or had longer time to do art. I like to paint but sometimes there isn't enough time to finish and we have to go to library or lunch. Sometimes I would like to have more time to finish.

Sara, 1st grade

It would be more fun if there were no girls in the class. They can be annoying.

Leo, 1st grade