

# THE PRESS & DAKOTAN

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## OPINION | OTHER THOUGHTS

# Resolve Problems At The IHS

**RAPID CITY JOURNAL (July 30):** Problems at U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers get all the attention, but similar stories of neglect at Indian Health Services clinics go virtually unnoticed.

Last week, the Unified Tribal Health Board met in Rapid City to discuss failures of the IHS in the Great Plains region. In attendance were members of the Oglala Sioux Tribe, Rosebud Sioux Tribe and other tribes, and representatives from South Dakota's congressional delegation — Sens. John Thune, R-S.D., and Tim Johnson, D-S.D., and Rep. Kristi Noem, R-S.D.

Testimony heard at the July 18 meeting included stories about inadequate treatment at IHS facilities, and allegations about cutting corners and misdiagnosing ailments to save money that could then be spent on IHS employee bonuses.

If that sounds familiar, it's because it is the same type of complaints about treatment and operations at VA medical care facilities.

The Aberdeen Area Office in Aberdeen oversees 19 IHS units and tribal-managed facilities that provide health care to about 122,000 Native Americans in North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska and Iowa, including seven hospitals, eight health centers and several smaller satellite clinics.

For tribal members on and off the reservations, Indian Health Services provides their primary medical care. It's vital that the care they receive is provided to their medical needs, and that IHS doesn't cut corners unnecessarily to save money.

The problems aired at the Unified Tribal Health Board meeting are not the result of recent failings at the IHS, but are representative of complaints that have been raised repeatedly over the years against the federal health care program for Native Americans. In 2008, Sen. Johnson blasted the IHS in an oversight committee hearing of the agency's "Priority One" policy that denies some treatments if they are not life-threatening. It appears that the IHS has not changed its approach to health care.

The VA scandal has prompted promises by members of Congress to ensure that veterans receive the care that they have been promised. The same concern should be provided to ensure that Native Americans receive adequate health care from the IHS.

Congress has oversight over the IHS and South Dakota's congressional delegation should take the lead in helping to improve health care for Native Americans.

## SPEAK UP!

■ Share your thoughts with us. Write to the **PRESS & DAKOTAN** on a topic of the day or in response to an editorial or story. Write us at: Letters, 319 Walnut, Yankton, SD 57078, drop off at 319 Walnut in Yankton, fax to 665-1721 or email to views@yankton.net.

## ON THIS DATE

**By The Associated Press**  
Today is Monday, August 4, the 216th day of 2014. There are 149 days left in the year.

**Today's Highlight in History:** On August 4, 1944, 15-year-old diarist Anne Frank was arrested with her sister, parents and four others by the Gestapo after hiding for two years inside a building in Amsterdam. (Anne and her sister, Margot, died the following year at the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp.)

**On this date:** In 1735, a jury found John Peter Zenger of the *New York Weekly Journal* not guilty of committing seditious libel against the colonial governor of New York, William Cosby.

In 1790, the Coast Guard had its beginnings as the Revenue Cutter Service.

In 1830, plans for the city of Chicago were laid out.

In 1892, Andrew and Abby Borden were axed to death in their home in Fall River, Massachusetts. Lizzie Borden, Andrew's daughter from a previous marriage, was accused of the killings, but acquitted at trial.

In 1914, Britain declared war on Germany for invading Belgium; the United States proclaimed its neutrality in the mushrooming world conflict.

In 1916, the United States reached agreement with Denmark to purchase the Danish Virgin Islands for \$25 million.

In 1936, Jesse Owens of the U.S. won the second of his four gold medals at the Berlin Olympics as he prevailed in the long jump over German Luz Long, who was the first to congratulate him.

In 1964, the bodies of missing civil rights workers Michael Schwerner, Andrew Goodman and James Chaney were found buried in an earthen dam in Mississippi.

In 1972, Arthur Bremer was convicted and sentenced in Upper Marlboro, Maryland, to 63 years in prison for his attempt on the life of Alabama Gov. George C. Wallace (the sentence was later reduced to 53 years; Bremer was released in 2007).

In 1977, President Jimmy Carter signed a measure establishing the Department of Energy.

In 1987, the Federal Communications Commission voted to abolish the Fairness Doctrine, which required radio and television stations to present balanced coverage of controversial issues.

In 1991, the Greek luxury liner *Oceanos* sank in heavy seas off South Africa's southeast coast; all the passengers and crew members survived.

**Ten years ago:** Richard Smith, a Staten Island ferry pilot, pleaded guilty to manslaughter in a crash that killed 11 in October 2003, acknowledging that he'd passed out at the helm after

arriving at work with medication in his system. (Smith was sentenced to 18 months in prison.) Former teacher Mary Kay Letourneau, convicted of having sex with a sixth-grade pupil, was released from a Washington state prison after 7 1/2 years behind bars.

**Five years ago:** North Korean leader Kim Jong Il pardoned American journalists Laura Ling and Euna Lee for entering the country illegally and ordered their release during a surprise visit by former U.S. President Bill Clinton. Taliban militants unleashed a wave of rockets at Kabul's international airport and government buildings less than three weeks before Afghanistan's presidential election. A gunman opened fire in a health club in Bridgeville, Pennsylvania, killing three women before killing himself.

**One year ago:** Security forces closed roads, put up extra blast walls and increased patrols near some of the more than 20 U.S. diplomatic missions in the Muslim world that Washington had ordered closed for the weekend following warnings of a possible al-Qaida attack. Missy Franklin claimed her record sixth gold medal on the final day of the world championships in Barcelona, becoming the most successful female swimmer ever at a world meet. American Stacy Lewis won the Women's British Open, finishing with a pair of birdies and closing with an even-par 72. Pro Football Hall of Famer Art Donovan, 89, died in Baltimore.

**Today's Birthdays:** Singer Frankie Ford is 75. Actress-singer Tina Cole is 71. Actor-comedian Richard Belzer is 70. Football Hall-of-Famer John Riggins is 65. Former Attorney General Alberto Gonzales is 59. Actor-screenwriter Billy Bob Thornton is 59. Actress Kym Karath (Film: "The Sound of Music") is 56. Hall of Fame track star Mary Decker Slaney is 56. Actress Lauren Tom is 55. President Barack Obama is 53. Producer Michael Gelman (TV: "Live! With Kelly and Michael") is 53. Retired MLB All-Star pitcher Roger Clemens is 52. Actress Crystal Chappell is 49. Author Dennis Lehane is 49. Rock musician Rob Cieka (Boo Radleys) is 46. Actor Daniel Dae Kim is 46. Actor Michael DeLuise is 45. Actor Ron Lester is 44. Race car driver Jeff Gordon is 43. Rapper-actress Yo-Yo is 43. Country singer Jon Nicholson is 41. Rhythm-and-blues singer-actor Marques Houston is 33. Actress Meghan Markle is 33. Actress Greta Gerwig is 31. Country singer Crystal Bowersox (TV: "American Idol") is 29. Rock singer Tom Parker (The Wanted) is 26. Actors Cole and Dylan Sprouse are 22. Singer Jessica Sanchez (TV: "American Idol") is 19.

**Thought for Today:** "How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world." — Anne Frank (1929-1945).

## FROM THE BIBLE

*But He said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!" Luke 11:28.* Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

## YOUR LETTERS

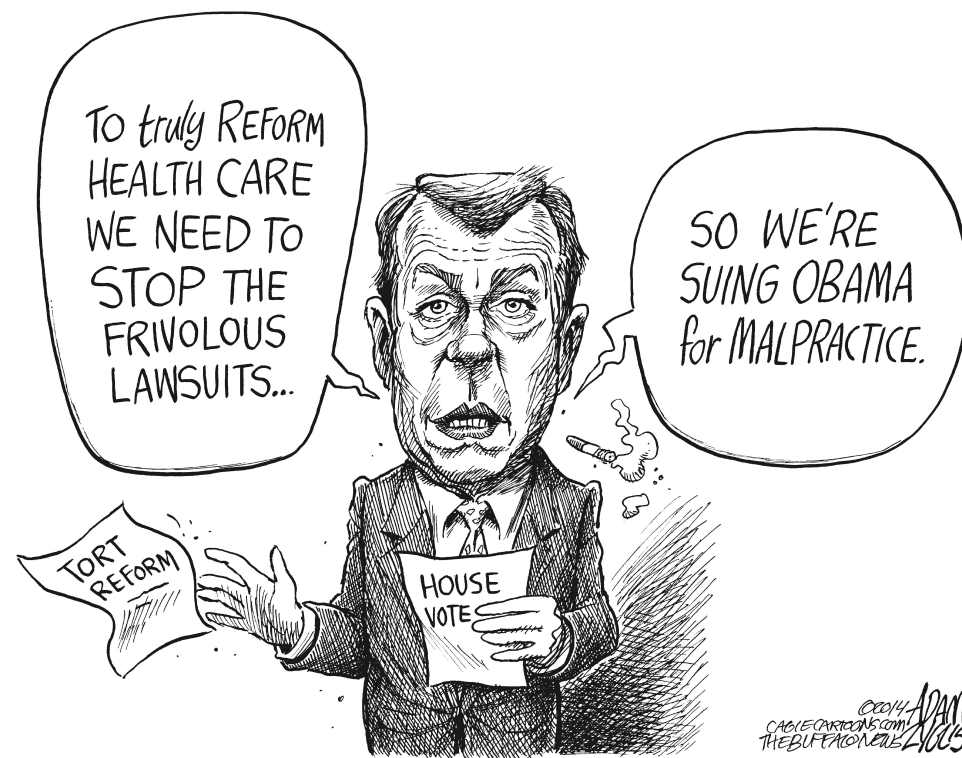
### Generous Act

Jess Jussel, Yankton

Recently after a Boy Scout fundraiser, I was shopping at Hy-Vee while still wearing my Boy Scout uniform. Another

customer came up to me, gave me \$10 and said "Boy Scouts eat for free."

This generous act was a nice surprise and I will be paying it forward. Thanks again to that man.



## Capitol Notebook

# Shedding More Light On State Tax Refunds

BY BOB MERCER

State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE — State government awarded \$113,985,231.94 in construction tax refunds for projects in South Dakota between July 1, 1996, and June 30, 2014.

More than \$67 million of those refunds came since early 2009.

Those were under a state program that expired at the end of 2012. Projects were allowed to continue collecting their refunds through this year.

We know the names of the companies and the amounts they received but nothing more. They fit on a two-page document published by the state Department of Revenue. (You can find it at [http://dor.sd.gov/Taxes/Business\\_Taxes/Statistics/2014/PDFs/ConstructionStats.pdf](http://dor.sd.gov/Taxes/Business_Taxes/Statistics/2014/PDFs/ConstructionStats.pdf) on the Internet.)

Until 2009, we weren't allowed to even know the names or the amounts.

That information was specifically kept confidential under a state law. A reporter for this newspaper and several other daily papers found a flaw that allowed the public to learn the names of companies that applied for the refunds.

At that point the Legislature, already concerned about the \$46 million of refunds that had already been handed out, decided the names and amounts should become public knowledge.

And with that knowledge came a second decision by the Legislature to set an ending date for the program.

The Legislature then made another decision at the suggestion of Gov. Dennis Daugaard to create a replacement program. Democratic Party petition carriers successfully referred the legislation to the 2012 ballot and voters rejected it.

In 2013 the Legislature created another state refund program. It made several important changes.

Refunds aren't automatic. The state Board of

Economic Development decides whether a project needed the refund as an incentive to be built in South Dakota.

Projects such as oil pipelines wouldn't be eligible any longer. The TransCanada Keystone pipeline received \$14.3 million, the largest single refund under the old program.

Four legislators would serve in non-voting monitoring positions on the state board. And the board would receive broader responsibilities over new state grant programs intended to assist specific projects and local economic development organizations.

Under the new tax-refund program, the state board awarded \$8,746,697 in "reinvestment payments" to seven projects during the 2014 fiscal year that ended June 30.

For the first time, legislators and citizens can see details about each of the projects.

Those include the amount of refund sought, the number of full-time equivalent positions expected to be created, the average hourly wage for those positions, the project's location, local property taxes to be paid by the project and other government assistance received by the project.

The Legislature's Government Operations and Audit Committee received that first-ever report Tuesday.

The state board received nine applications. Two were rejected totaling \$482,000 in reinvestment payments sought. Three were approved at 100 percent of the amounts requested. Four were approved at 38 to 84 percent of the amounts sought.

There will be 367 FTEs created: 3M Brookings 17; Marmen Energy at Brandon 250; Novita at Aurora 28; B&H Wind in Campbell County 30; Polaris Sales at Vermillion 20; Consumers Supply Distributing at Dakota Dunes 16; and Campbell County Wind Farm six.

The next step should be posting the report on a state government internet site that people can find.



Bob

MERCER

## Michelle Malkin

# Corruption Reigns At The EPA

BY MICHELLE MALKIN

Creators.com

The lofty motto of the Environmental Protection Agency is "protecting people and the environment." In practice, however, EPA bureaucrats faithfully protect their own people and preserve the government's cesspool of manipulation, cover-ups and cronyism.

Just last week, Mark Levin and his vigilant Landmark Legal Foundation went to court to ask federal district judge Royce Lamberth to sanction the EPA "for destroying or failing to preserve emails and text messages that may have helped document suspected agency efforts to influence the 2012 presidential election." The motion is part of a larger Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) lawsuit to force EPA to release emails and related records from former EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson and others "who may have delayed the release dates for hot-button environmental regulations until after the Nov. 6, 2012, presidential election."

Thanks to Levin and Landmark, Jackson and other EPA officials admitted in depositions that they used personal, nongovernmental email accounts to hide communications about official EPA business sent and received on their government-issued BlackBerries and smart phones. The agency has continued to drag its feet for two years in response to Landmark's FOIA requests.

Levin minced no words: "The EPA is a toxic waste dump for lawlessness and disdain for the Constitution." Not to mention disdain for the public's right to know. As Levin added: "When any federal agency receives a FOIA request, the statute says it must preserve every significant repository of records, both paper and electronic, that may contain materials that could be responsive to that request."

The agency is legally obliged to notify all involved in the suit to preserve everything in their possession that could be discoverable in the litigation. But the feds have bent over backward to delay and deny. "(T)he people at the EPA, from the administrator on down, think they're above the law, that no one has the right to question what or how they do their jobs," Levin blasted. "Well, they're wrong. The laws apply to everyone, even federal bureaucrats."

That's a bedrock principle the EPA has defied over and over again. As I first reported 13 corruption-stained years ago in 2001, former EPA head Carol Browner oversaw the destruction of her computer files on her last day in office under the Clinton administration — in clear violation of a judge's order requiring the agency to preserve its records. Browner ordered a computer technician: "I would like my files deleted. I want you to delete my files." In 2003, the agency was held in contempt and fined more than \$300,000 in con-

nection with another email destruction incident under Browner's watch.

It was Levin's Landmark Legal Foundation — upheld by Judge Lamberth — that held the corruptocrats accountable then, as they are now.

As President Obama's energy czar, Browner went on to bully auto execs "to put nothing in writing, ever" regarding secret negotiations she orchestrated on a deal to increase federal Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards. She was also singled out by Obama's own independent oil-spill commission for repeatedly misrepresenting scientists' findings and doctoring data to justify the administration's draconian drilling moratorium.

Browner previously had been caught by a congressional subcommittee using taxpayer funds to create and send out illegal lobbying material to more than 100 left-wing environmental organizations. She abused her office to orchestrate a political campaign by liberal groups, who turned around and attacked Republican lawmakers for supporting regulatory reform.

The names may change, but the politicized rot stays the same. The GOP staff of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee issued a detailed report this week on the secretive "Billionaire's Club" behind EPA. The analysis exposed how a massive network of left-wing foundations, activists and wealthy donors exploits IRS-approved "charitable" status and tax-deductible donations to lobby illegally on behalf of the EPA and operate a "green revolving door" between government and far-left groups.

Among the key players: the Environmental Grantmakers Association, which coordinates green grants and refuses to divulge its membership list to Congress, and Democracy Alliance, the dark-money outfit led by Philip Gara LaMarche that does not disclose its members or donor-recipients.

"These entities propagate the false notion that they are independent citizen-funded groups working altruistically," according to the report. "In reality, they work in tandem with wealthy donors to maximize the value of the donors' tax-deductible donations and leverage their combined resources to influence elections and policy outcomes, with a focus on the EPA."

Saving the planet? Ha. The leftist-controlled Environmental Corruption Agency is only in business to serve its pals and subvert its political enemies, while endangering resource security and sabotaging the deliberative process. Real environmental protection starts with draining this fetid swamp.

Michelle Malkin is the author of "Culture of Corruption: Obama and his Team of Tax Cheats, Crooks and Cronies" (Regnery 2010). Her e-mail address is [malkinblog@gmail.com](mailto:malkinblog@gmail.com).