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# RIVERBOAT DAYS 2015 **A Grand Salute!**





LEFT: Future Look Salon recreated the flag-raising at the Battle Of Iwo Jimo for its Riverboat Days parade float. The entry won first place in the commercial di-vision. TOP: Kaiser Heating and Cooling offered this float that lived up to the 2015 Riverboat Days theme of "Red, White and Blue: We Salute You." BELOW: The colors of the nation waved in a northwestern bree-zwe Sunday at the Tr-State Old Iron Tractor Association display at Riverside Park. (Kelly Hertz/P&D)



# South Dakota Legislators **To Weigh Education Dept. Audit**

**BY BOB MERCER** State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE — The Legislature's Government Operations and Audit Committee will hear from state Department of Education officials Tuesday regarding a cooperative that handles much of the department's Indian education programming and employs two former department top officials.

The legislators want to consider the department's responses to the six pages of findings from a state audit of the department's activities in 2014.

One of the findings from the state Department of Legislative Audit involves two former top officials from the state Department of Education who went to work for the cooperative in the past three years.

They are former Education Secretary Rick Melmer and the state's former Indian education director, Keith Moore

The audit found Melmer and Moore didn't submit required logs of their efforts for Mid-Central Educational Cooperative at Platte during their first four months of work in July through October of 2013.

The cooperative received fed-eral pass-through funds from the state Department of Education. The department should have required the records, the audit found.

Melmer and Moore provided outside oversight for Indian education programs under an arrangement approved by state Education Secretary Melody Schopp

The audit found that \$31,258.51 of expenses could be questioned without the logs.

Melmer became the dean of education at the University of South Dakota in 2008 and resigned in May 2013. He has since worked as a consultant. One of Melmer's current activities is co-director for Leadership South Dakota with another former state education secretary, Tom Oster, who succeeded him at the state department. Melmer also held various other contracts and grants including work for the state Board of Regents. He is on the board for the cooperative's South Dakota Innovation Labs project involving different systems of teaching. Moore became chief diversity officer at USD in 2009 and was appointed as the director for the federal Bureau of Indian Education in 2010. He left the agency in 2012 amid an investigation into a contract matter that also involved Melmer and Moore's chief of staff at the federal agency, Brian Drapeaux.

### WWII Vets, Vendors Come Out In Full Force For RBD '15

#### **BY REILLY BIEL**

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Another year, another successful Riverboat Days.

On Saturday, World War II vets were given special recognition for the 70th anniversary of the end of the second World War, as part of Riverboat Days theme of "Red, White and Blue: We Salute You.'

To commemorate this event, a display was put together of war memorabilia donated by veterans and their families in The Old Mill during Riverboat Days.

One of these families was the family of Luvern Cwach, who served in the Navy from 1943-1946 as a diesel mechanic in England and a truck/jeep driver in France. He also worked as a minesweeper in Japan.

Cwach passed away in 2008. It was his

wife, Leona Cwach, and also daughter, Renee Becker, who donated his war memorabilia Riverboat to the display.

Days 2015 Was For the event, Becker wore A Sea Of Colors a Bolo tie with a pendant And Fun. For containing an old photograph more photos, see of her father. pages 12-13.

"It's a good tribute to my father and uncles," she said of the display, which contained

photos of them as well as uniforms, an old flag, French currency from the 1940s and an ID tag, as well as other mementos. "It's cool to do this for them, and to volunteer and help out."

Becker's mother, Leona, had several relatives in the war. One of them, her cousin, Joseph Straka, Jr., was drafted the same day he received a letter of acceptance to join the St. Louis Cardinals baseball team. He chose to be a soldier the military and was killed in combat in October, 1942. Leona's other cousins and brothers were able to return home.

Using the memorabilia prompts stories that people unfamiliar with the war can hear, including one Becker heard her father tell many times.

'Ĥe always told us about how he rode home on the Queen Mary in a bunk in a drained swimming pool," she said.

Becker plans to donate the memorabilia to the Meade building.

Saturday's display wasn't contained to indoors. Two military vehicles, a 1944 DUKW and a 1942 Dodge three-ton truck, were on hand for people to pose and take pictures. Both vehicles belong to local resident David Nelson.

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Moore and Drapeaux tried to steer a contract to review the bureau to

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### **Missouri River Kayaker Sets His Sights On The Gulf**

#### BY REILLY BIEL

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You could say Scott Hite isn't afraid of a little exercise, which only partially explains his current fun trip: a kayaking journey from Montana to the Gulf of Mexico.

Hite, from Kalamazoo, Michigan, started from Twin Bridges, Montana, June 13 and reached Yankton this last Friday.

The hardest part of the trip is over," he said confidently, despite the choppy waters

that awaited him Monday. But Hite is looking to get as much exercise as he can, especially since he soon won't be able to so.

Hite was born with a club foot, resulting in him having to get his leg broken twice and reassembled. The condition also gives his trouble with his sacroiliac joint, the part of the bone that connects the spine to the pelvis. Hite has already had one surgery to have screws inserted into the

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Sunday to continue his one-man kayaking journey to the Gulf of Mexico.

## **Transition: USD Greets New Students**

#### **BY SHAUNA MARLETTE**

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VERMILLION — For nearly 1,600 families, Vermillion was the epicenter of big changes in their lives this weekend, as the University of South Dakota freshman class of 2015 moved into the residence halls located in Vermillion.

With the move parents and new students alike stepped out of their comfort zones, as parents had to leave their babies behind and students faced the reality that it is their time to reach for their futures.

The process began early with a finely choreographed move-in plan.

Scott Pohlson, vice president of enrollment and marketing in University relations, said the weekend's events

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TOMORROW: Will Yankton See A Highway 50 Bypass?