



Windy, Turning Colder, P.M. Showers

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SATURDAY ■ DECEMBER 31, 2011



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VOLUME 137
NUMBER 211

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County OKs 3% Raise For Workers

Budget Examined At Year-End Meeting

BY NATHAN JOHNSON
nathan.johnson@yankton.net

The Yankton County Commission finalized a 3 percent salary increase for employees Friday.

In a special year-end meeting, commissioners analyzed the budget and concluded the tentative raise budgeted for 2012 could be carried out as planned. The motion received unanimous approval.

After transferring \$350,000 into a contingency fund that can be used for needs such as road projects in 2012, approximately \$1.5 million will be left in the county general fund as it enters the new year. That is a fairly typical carry-over.

"We've been very blessed as a county," said Commission Chairman Bruce Jensen.

"We've got a real strong budget, and it all goes back to the employees and department heads. Over the years, they have watched what they spend. We still keep up with the times as far as technology, so it is a good balance."

It also approved a motion to borrow \$800,000 from First Dakota National Bank via a lease buy-back to help pay for the new \$1.5 million county highway shop.

"If we have the resources, we can pay forward on it next year," Commissioner Garry Moore said. "I think it makes good fiscal sense to do it this way. You're not cutting yourself short, and you're not going to wonder where you're going to find 10 cents to pay your bills or fix the road. We're not going to sell ourselves short."

Jensen said the county may have enough funds to pay the project off in the next year.

The commission had previously set aside approximately \$609,000 for the shop, but some of that will be needed for expenses not included in the bid like furniture, hoists and fuel tanks.

Additionally, the county will take in approx-



Jensen

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Thinking Of Drinking And Driving Tonight?

DON'T!



PHOTO: METRO GRAPHICS

Officials Urge Motorists To Stay Safe Over Holiday

BY DEREK BARTOS
derek.bartos@yankton.net

While New Year's is one of the most jubilant times of the year, the holiday also becomes one of the most dangerous when many of those celebrating hit the roadways.

According to the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, drunk driving deaths double on New Year's Eve compared to any other day in December.

To help prevent such tragedies from occurring, officials are urging motorists to stay safe during this weekend's celebrations.

"Follow the rules of the road, and don't drink and drive," said Sgt. Paul Gerken with the South Dakota Highway Patrol. "Don't become one of the statistics."

"My advice always is if you can have a designated driver or use a taxi, take that avenue," added Yankton Police Chief Brian Paulsen. "We're not looking for the business of arresting drunk drivers. If we find them, obviously we have an obligation to handle them. But if folks can make arrangements beforehand, it works a lot better."

Gerken said the highway patrol will be taking extra measures this weekend to deter drunk driving and to arrest offenders, with several sobriety checkpoints and saturation patrols scheduled for the district.

"The troopers out there are going to be looking for the impaired drivers," he said.

Local authorities are not the only ones pushing for safer roads, as earlier this month the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) announced a nationwide crackdown on drunk driving this holiday season.

"Safety is our focus year-round at DOT. But this holiday season, we're stepping up our efforts to get drunk drivers off our roads and reminding Americans 'drive sober, or get pulled over,'" U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood said in a press release. "We're making gains in our

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EAGLE EYES



KELLY HERTZ/P&D

This bald eagle was spotted lurking in the branches near the south end of the Meridian Bridge earlier this week. Since the bridge's conversion project was completed and it was opened for pedestrian use, hundreds of people have checked out the new walkway, and many have been rewarded with marvelous views of eagles perched in the trees overhanging the river on the Nebraska side.

Parade, Tasting Event Spark Small Town New Year's Eve

BY ELIZABETH "SAM" GROSZ
P&D Correspondent

DELMONT — This year, New Year's Eve comes on a Saturday — which is today — making it easier for area residents to attend a 10-year tradition in Delmont, a Main Street parade.

While most years it has been a snowy, cold day with everyone bundled up against the wind, today promises to be 50-degree-almost-shirt-sleeve weather... and nobody appears to be complaining.

The New Year's Eve Parade begins at 2 p.m., and immediately afterward parade watchers are invited to slip inside the Delmont Community Building to take part in the Simply South Dakota Tasting Event.

There, for a donation at the door, attendees can sample the wares of 11 vendors, and perhaps buy some of those items that tickle their palate.

The vendors attending this year include the local Bluebird Locker, which

also will be providing Dimock Cheese. Strawbale Winery is traveling to Delmont from Renner. Winery owner Don South said he wouldn't miss showcasing his wine at the tasting event except for last year when the event was snowed out, one of the hazards of a winter event.

Other vendors include the Historical Society of Delmont with its famous kuchen; Cherrybean Coffee from Parker; Mount Vernon Honey, and three bakeries—Spitzer's Bake Shop, Parkston; Ladybug Bakery, Tripp; and Rollin' Inn Dough, Armour, each with their specialties.

Two other Delmont businesses — Farmer in the Dell Raspberry Farm and Black Ink Farms — round out the list of taste tempters.

The event lasts until 5 p.m. The Delmont Community Club sponsors the parade, and one of its long-time members is this year's parade marshal. Lorraine Vavruska has been a quiet, behind-the-scenes worker

in numerous community projects. She also is an official at the local First State Bank, and is planning to cut back to part-time after the first of the year.

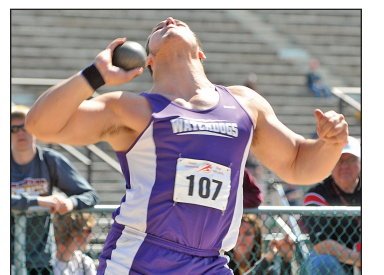
The Delmont Non-Profit Development Corp. sponsors the Simply South Dakota Tasting Event. It was started by the group as its only fundraiser, but also showcases the local South Dakota products that are available.

A raffle, featuring prizes from 16 local businesses, also is offered at the door to raise money for the Development Corporation's promotional projects.

In a small town, volunteers often wear more than one hat. Earla Strid, who is vice president of the Development Corporation, also is the Historical Society's President.

"We invite everyone to come to Delmont for a fun afternoon," said Strid, "to taste kuchen like Grandma used to make, and try all of the other products from South Dakota that will be available."

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