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The County's Road Ahead

Task Force Named For Potential Road Construction Project

BY ROB NIELSEN
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"Roads in Yankton County are an issue." It's been a recurring theme at Yankton County Commission meetings throughout the year and was the catalyst behind an attempt at a levy to help bring in funds for road and bridge repairs that failed in a September referral. It was once again the theme during Tuesday's meeting of the commission, during which Yankton County Highway Superintendent Bruan Gustad made a short presentation on possible options for grinding lower-quality asphalt roads into gravel.

Commission Chairman Todd Woods said it's important to look at alternatives to outright closure first.

"We've got to look at alternatives," Woods said. "There's no money to re-asphalt them. We've got to look at the other alternatives to make them still

passable and do it in the most cost-effective way. It's not a fun decision."

Woods said that before any work happens, there will be a need to look at which roads are in the worst shape.

"We're going to have to evaluate and prioritize which roads need (overhaul)," he said. "We learned about some of the roads' traffic counts. If they have low traffic counts, do you just take it from asphalt to gravel? What do you do with it? ... We've just got to evaluate what roads need, which are in the worst shape and how to do it."

Woods said a few options are present when it comes to evaluating which roads may be subject to grinding.

"That's where the Highway Department comes in," he said. "They're trained to do that kind of thing and look at the traffic counts. Another way

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KELLY HERTZ/P&D
Yankton County Commissioner Donna Freng speaks during a presentation on road and bridge issues in Yankton County during Tuesday's commission meeting.

Winter Canopy



KELLY HERTZ/P&D
Trees in the Yankton area were still covered with a blanket of snow Tuesday afternoon after a slow-moving winter storm dumped at least 6 inches of snow on the community. School was postponed in Yankton for a second straight day as rising winds created visibility issues in open areas.

Storm Caps A Wet, Warm November

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF
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As this week's storm system moves out of the region, the past month will go down as one of Yankton's warmest and wettest Novembers.

Yankton recorded 6 inches of snowfall as of Tuesday morning, with additional light snow falling throughout the day.

That figure comes on top of the Nov. 20 snowfall, which measured 8 inches in downtown Yankton and 12 inches east-southeast of town. The 12 inches tied a Nov. 20 record set in 1975.

The two storms in the final 10 days of November weren't that unusual, according to South Dakota state climatologist Dennis Today.

"Big snows in the late fall aren't that abnor-

mal," he said. "This was just a little later than we often have them here."

The NWS snowfall estimates as of Tuesday morning showed a wrap-around effect. Yankton and parts of northeast Nebraska recoded an estimated 4-6 inches of snowfall, while areas just to the north recorded an estimated 6-8 inches.

At the high end of the scale, an estimated 8-12 inches fell on northern Charles Mix County, Douglas County, and portions of Hutchinson, Turner, Clay and Union counties.

As of Tuesday morning, Bridgewater record 10 inches of snowfall, Beresford 9 inches, Vermillion and White Lake each 8 inches, Salem 7.5 inches, and Yankton, Tyndall and Pickstown each 6 inches.

Mitchell reported 9.6 inches, while Sioux Falls

reporting points ranged from 8.5-9.3 inches.

To the west, Clearfield reported 10 inches, while Kennebec and Ideal each reported 9 inches.

Earlier Tuesday, Nebraska reporting spots found Ainsworth with 7 inches, Verdel 5.8 inches; Bloomfield 5 inches, Wakefield, 4.8 inches and Neligh, 3.3 inches.

Area residents had reason to believe November was a tale of two months. November started unusually warm but then turned more seasonably snowy and cold. The two recent storms dumped heavy, wet snow on southeast South Dakota and northeast Nebraska.

The strong El Nino — the weather pattern

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Contact Center Aims High For Annual Holiday Basket Drive

BY JEREMY HOECK
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The Yankton Contact Center has set its goals high for this year's annual holiday food and fruit basket drive.

A year ago, the project received close to \$12,000 in donations. The combination of more families in need and the community support each year, the center has set a goal of \$17,000 this year, according to Food Pantry Coordinator Kelli Stange.

"Our numbers have been going up in the

food pantry," she said Tuesday. "We've had a lot of new families move to town, so we want to be ready for anything."

"Whether it's little angels or what, I don't know," Stange added, smiling. "We make it work every year."

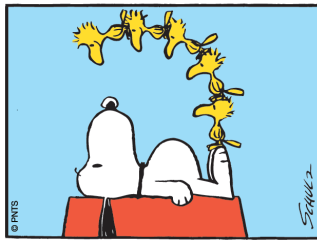
The annual drive — Stange couldn't remember how long the Contact Center had done it — provides the baskets to low-income families and individuals. The Center seeks food items, as well as meat certifi-

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JEREMY HOECK/P&D
Kelli Stange (right), the Yankton Contact Center Food Pantry Coordinator, and Liz Lynch, also with the Food Pantry, stand next to rows of boxes filled with food that will be used to fill Holiday Food Baskets this year.

Happy Holidays



Decorate with the ones you love this Christmas!

Dec. 2
23 shopping
days to Christmas

* * *

State Universities Losing SD Students, Raising Questions About Future Of The Workforce

BY BOB MERCER
State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE — South Dakota's public universities have seen enrollments of South Dakota students fall substantially during the past five years, according to a startling new analysis that the state Board of Regents will discuss Wednesday.

On the surface, enrollments appear to have been flat since fall 2010. But a closer look found the six universities lost nearly 4,500 resident students from 2010 to 2015, according to the report prepared by the regents' central administration.

That plunge of 17.3 percent has been masked by surges in high school students enrolling in dual-credit courses offered through the state universities and by increasing numbers of non-resident students attending the South Dakota campuses.

The report carries a warning that in layman's language questions whether the state universities can produce enough trained graduates to fill South Dakota's needs at a time when a labor shortage already exists in many occupations in many communities.

"These trends imply a dramatic reconstitution of the regental student body, and have clear implications for the university system's capacity to affect macro-level change in the South Dakota labor force," the report states.

The report comes as the regents and university leaders consider how to respond to a sharp rise in two-year degrees granted by the four public technical institutes in recent years.

One step already moving forward within the regents system is changing the focus of the University Center at Sioux Falls to two-year associate degrees and placing the University of South Dakota in the lead role for its management.

Enrollments continue to slip at the center, which was intended as a common site for state universities to deliver courses to students in South Dakota's largest metropolitan center. The regents built similar centers at Rapid City and Pierre during the past decade as well.

The enrollment analysis shows circumstances that need further diagnosis and don't have simple solutions.

Since 2010, high school students enrolled in dual credit courses skyrocketed from 291 that fall to 2,204 this fall, a gain of 1,913. During the same period, all other students enrolled at the universities dropped by 1,914.

There's been a shift too among students in their choices of how to receive courses from the state universities. On-campus enrollments are down system-wide by 741 since 2010

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