



Concert Set To Benefit
Mercy Meals • **1B**

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County Weighs State Grants

Meetings Held In Effort
To Acquire Funding For
Roads And Bridges

BY ROB NIELSEN
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In the midst of a budget crunch on county roadways, Yankton County officials are taking aim at getting another new source of funding introduced with the passage of Senate Bill 1 during the 2015 legislative session.

This week, the Yankton County Commission hosted two special public meetings with members of the county's township boards to discuss the county's five-year road and bridge plan in order to qualify for funds from the state's Bridge Improvement Grant (BIG) grant.



Woods

Brian McGinnis, Community Development Specialist with Planning District III, was at both meetings, held Tuesday and Thursday of this week. He said legislation has opened up a new channel for funds during Thursday night's meeting.

"With increases in gas taxes and such, there's now money available which is a new fund for counties and townships to secure grants to improve bridges," McGinnis said. "It's an 80/20 split."

Additionally, eligible counties must also have a wheel tax in place in addition to meeting with townships and having a five-year road plan.

Yankton County Highway Superintendent Brian Gustad said that the funds the county would have access to are limited, however.

"We can only access, I believe, \$4 million over three years," Gustad said. "The county puts in) 20 percent, or could elect to put in more."

Commissioner Donna Freng said there will be stiff competition for the funds throughout the state.

"We have to compete with all the other counties in the state," Freng said. "It's not like it's a given that we're going to get this."

McGinnis said that some factors about Yankton County do add to their chances.

"To be eligible for the grant and apply for the grant, you have to have a wheel tax," he said. "Some counties don't have a wheel tax, so in other words, the state says, 'Don't come to us for money if you're not trying to raise your own locally, so you'd better

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Yuletide Mission



ALISSA WOOCKMAN/P&D
RTEC-NOIDs team member Samuel Kampshoff works on programming a Lego forklift robot for the annual First Lego League (FLL) competition on Dec. 19. This year's theme is Trash Trek. Teams are to form a presentation to find a solution to limit the country's waste.

Lego League Assembles Yankton's Green Thumb

BY ALISSA WOOCKMAN
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For a change of pace, recycle your holiday waste.

Yankton's First Lego League (FLL) team, the RTEC-NOIDs directed this year's FLL challenge project towards the holidays – a good idea considering Americans throw away 25 percent more trash during the Thanksgiving to New Year's holiday period than any other time of year, according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This extra waste amounts to about 1 million tons per week.

"What they are looking for this year is something that focuses on recycling," said the RTEC-NOIDs team advisor Josh Svatos. "FLL follows the mantra of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math). It's another way to make kids think critically."

The U.S. is the top trash producing country in the world, at 1,609 pounds of trash per person per year. About one-third of an average landfill is made up of packaging material.

From their research, the FLL team

LEGO | PAGE 9A

Incident Reported At YHS Thursday

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF
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Yankton school officials and law enforcement authorities are investigating an incident in which two unauthorized persons were found Thursday at Yankton High School.

Supt. Wayne Kindle made the announcement in an automated phone message and statement to Yankton School District parents.

In the meantime, a law enforcement officer will be stationed today (Friday) at each building in the school district, he said in the message.

Kindle told the *Press & Dakotan* that school officials and the authorities will confer Friday to discuss the investigation. A press conference is expected to be held after the conclusion of that meeting, he said.

No further information was

INCIDENT | PAGE 2A

Inside



Relish

Happy Holidays



Dec. 4
21 shopping
days to Christmas



ALISSA WOOCKMAN/P&D

Holiday Sounds

Music was in the air across Yankton Thursday night with a pair of holiday concerts. ABOVE: Sacred Heart Elementary School presented "A Shepherd's Story" at the YHS/Summit Activities Center theatre. Here, Mary, Joseph and all the shepherds gathered around the manger paying homage to a Christmas tradition as third- and fourth-graders sang a rendition of "Immanuel, Immanuel." The students also sang popular holiday tunes to kick-off the season. RIGHT: The Yankton Middle School Orchestras presented a holiday concert at the YMS Theatre. Selections covered several holidays, starting with Thanksgiving and including New Year's.



KELLY HERTZ/P&D

Hatch Furniture Contributes Bears To Banquet

BY REILLY BIEL
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Those who stop in at Hatch Furniture in downtown Yankton will encounter a special Christmas display.

For 19 years, Hatch Furniture has taken part in "Dress A Bear," an event for children who attend the Banquet at the United Church of Christ on Thursday, Dec. 17. The children present will be able to select a stuffed bear, or any other animal plushies available, to take home as an early Christmas gift.

The bears are currently on display in the store. The event, started by Jolene Williamson, began in 1996 as a "Christmas Dress A Doll" event in which volunteers would dress dolls to be given out. There was also a judging contest to pick the best doll. The dolls were then taken to the Yankton Middle School where the students would gift wrap them for their delivery to the Contact Center.

Eventually, stuffed bears and other plush animals replaced the dolls, allowing both boys and girls to take part in the giveaway.

Now Ron Hatch, owner of Hatch Furniture, purchases the stuffed animals. Then volunteers from the local community and businesses select their animals, dress them in baby or toddler clothes and



REILLY BIEL/P&D

Jolene Williamson and Hatch Furniture employees with the stuffed bears that will be given out at the Banquet held at the UCC Church in Yankton Thursday, Dec. 17. The bears are currently on display at the store.

return them to the store by Thanksgiving, where they remain until the Banquet.

According to Williamson, the event has an enduring influence on the community.

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