

Educators Look To Curb Student Problems

SIoux FALLS (AP) — Sioux Falls education officials are considering whether to expand an existing program in public schools as educators seek more help handling student behavior problems.

The program called Boys Town teaches students good behavior through lessons interspersed in class time, the *Argus Leader* reported. Sioux Falls district elementary special education supervisor Brenda Bernard said more schools are adopting the Boys Town model amid increasing behavior problems.

Ten schools in Sioux Falls have adopted the model, and the district expanded it to four more schools this year after increasing trainers who can show teachers and staff how to use teachable moments with students.

"It empowers students to manage their own behaviors," Bernard said. "It really focuses on teaching them skills that they don't have right now."

Behavior is treated like a learned skill in the Boys Town's curriculum. Apologizing, accepting "no" as an answer, sharing and listening are all learnable skills, said senior national training consultant Denise Pratt.

"If we have a student who perhaps is disagreeing inappropriately, they argue, they whine, they call names, we simply would teach them how to disagree," Pratt said.

School board member Doug Morrison said the problem with the program is judging whether it works and should be used districtwide. He said educators need to come up with a way to track progress.

"I think it's one of the things that's hard to gauge," Morrison said. "If you have less (office) referrals, it doesn't mean your behavior's going away."

Special Doll On Display At Heritage Center

PIERRE (AP) — A special Japanese doll that was sent to America as part of friendship gesture in the 1920s is being displayed at the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre.

The doll, Miss Tottori, belongs to the South Dakota State Historical Society. It is one of 58 dolls that were sent to the United States in 1927 as good-will gifts to American children from the children of Japan. Japanese children received American "blue-eyed" dolls in exchange.

The Historical Society says that after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, the Japanese ordered the destruction of the American dolls, but 335 survived. Meanwhile, in the U.S., the Japanese dolls went into storage and were lost. Only 45 of the original dolls have been located.

Miss Tottori will be on display through December.

Colleges Seek To Offer New Degrees

SPEARFISH (AP) — The South Dakota Board of Regents has given initial approval for Black Hills State University and the University of South Dakota to explore new baccalaureate degrees.

Black Hills State in Spearfish is looking to offer bachelor of fine arts degrees in photography, graphic design and studio art.

USD in Vermillion is considering bachelor of business administration degrees in innovation and entrepreneurship and in operational analytics.

Both universities will return to the Board of Regents later for official approval of these degrees once they complete further planning for the new programs.

Birding Event Set At Lake Minatare

SCOTTSSBLUFF, Neb. (AP) — A special birding event has been scheduled this coming weekend at Lake Minatare State Recreation Area in the Nebraska Panhandle.

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission says birders of all ages and skill levels are invited to participate on Saturday after gathering at the lighthouse on Lakeview Point between 8 and 11 a.m. Binoculars, spotting scopes and blinds will be provided.

Employees of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will lead the program. Lake superintendent Dan Thornton says many birds are expected to be at the lake, including a variety of migratory waterfowl species and possibly bald eagles.

The event is free, but vehicles entering the area must have 2015 park permits.

Man Opens Private Membership Strip Club

HASTINGS, Neb. (AP) — A man who has been battling Hall County officials in his effort to open a strip club there has done so in a neighboring county.

Shane Harrington debuted a private membership gentlemen's club Thursday at The Shed, a bar in Hastings, half an hour away from Hall County in Adams County, the *Grand Island Independent* reported.

From 8 p.m. until 1 a.m. Tuesday through Saturday, the business operates as a bar, charging \$5 for entry and serving alcohol. Servers aren't nude, but do wear lingerie or pasties and are not allowed to touch customers, Harrington said.

After 1 a.m., the liquor is locked away, and only private members can enter to watch fully-nude dancers.

Hastings has local regulations about when and where sexually-oriented businesses can operate. But Harrington said he's skirted those laws, because the operation is membership-only club.

"Once it's a private event, generally we'll lock the door because it's a private party," he said.

But Hastings city officials aren't so sure.

City Attorney David Ptak said the Hastings Police Department and developmental services department are currently investigating and will determine what, if any, action needs to be taken.

"When we have the information, we'll see how it applies to our code and take the appropriate action if necessary," Ptak said.

In the meantime, Ptak said, Harrington can continue to operate.

Harrington has filed lawsuits against Hall and Seward counties over zoning laws that he contends are too restrictive and intended to keep him from opening strip clubs there. He said he is willing to work with Hastings officials and law enforcement regarding his new venture.

"We do plan on staying open and doing whatever it takes to continue staying open," he said. "I hope it doesn't come to another lawsuit."

Farmer Finds Body Sealed Inside Barrel

BAYARD, Neb. (AP) — Authorities are investigating a man's death after a Western Nebraska farmer found his body sealed inside a 55-gallon barrel.

The farmer spotted the barrel floating along Red Willow Creek about four miles east of Bayard on Friday afternoon. He called the Morrill County Sheriff's office after opening the barrel and seeing the body inside.

Morrill County Attorney Travis Rodak said the farmer initially thought he could make use of the barrel.

"He saw the barrel, floating in the creek and he thought it would make a good burn barrel," Rodak said.

But once the farmer opened the barrel, he immediately called authorities. Rodak said it's clear foul play was involved in the death because the lid was screwed on the barrel.

"It's obvious that it was not a suicide, or an accident," he said.

Sheriff Milo Cardenas said there were no signs of trauma on the body, and it appears the man had been dead for only a couple days.

Cardenas said there are no missing people reported in the area.

An autopsy will be done Monday at Regional West Medical Center in Scottsbluff. DNA tests may be needed to determine the identity of the middle-aged man who was found inside the barrel.

States Encouraged To Mull South Dakota Sobriety Program

BY JAMES NORD
Associated Press

PIERRE — Twice a day for three years, Chris Mexican has showed up at the county jail in Pierre to blow into a tube and prove he hasn't been drinking.

After several drunken driving convictions, it has allowed him to remain free and to become a better, more clear-headed father to his kids. The 43-year-old carpenter worries about losing the routine when he completes the program as early as Christmas Eve.

"If I do ever drink again, I get all that misery back. I get refunded that if I want, and this if I want," Mexican said, motioning toward the locked building.

South Dakota's 24-7 sobriety program has helped curb drunken driving and domestic violence, and some incentives for states that adopt the model were included in the \$305 billion transportation law that President Barack Obama signed Friday.

The program offers those accused or convicted of an alcohol-related crime an alternative to jail. The provision in the highway law, pushed by U.S. Sen. John Thune, creates an incentive grant totaling

about \$18 million over four years for states that implement the sobriety program.

It's akin to existing funds for states that have adopted seatbelt requirements or ignition interlock laws.

"This will give other states a chance to find out if it works as well," said U.S. Sen. Mike Rounds, who was South Dakota governor when the program began.

The new transportation law also allows states that implement a 24-7 program to avoid a penalty that routes construction funds to highway safety.

An independent study released in 2013 by the RAND Corp., a nonprofit think tank, found that South Dakota's program cut the rate of repeat DUI arrests at the county level by 12 percent and domestic violence arrests by 9 percent in its first five years.

"These are large reductions when you consider that we're talking about the community level," said Beau Kilmer, who conducted the study and continues to research the program.

Experts say incentive grants are an effective way to encourage states.

"When it's a federal law,

the word spreads and other communities that are looking for solutions find out about it, so they're much more likely to adopt it themselves," said safety advocate Joan Claybrook, a former National Highway Traffic Safety Administration chief.

South Dakota started the practice in 2005. Participants come to a site each morning and evening to blow into an alcohol breath test. Those who live farther away or who have difficulty remaining sober wear alcohol-monitoring bracelets or have ignition interlock systems in their vehicles.

Over the past decade, nearly 40,000 people have participated in South Dakota's twice-daily program, compiling a pass rate of more than 99 percent.

North Dakota and Montana have started similar monitoring systems, and more states are running or planning pilot programs.

South Dakota's attorney general, Marty Jackley, has also discussed the program with his counterparts in other states.

And West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey said South Dakota's "very positive"

results warrant examination by his state, where a program would require legislative support.

"One of the benefits of having 50 states serve as experiments is you can learn from states that are applying new laws successfully," Morrisey said.

Some national organizations don't favor 24-7 used on its own. For example, Mothers Against Drunk Driving's priority is pushing for strong ignition interlock laws in every state because the measure is proven to be effective, Chief Government Affairs Officer J.T. Griffin said.

The 24-7 program isn't perfect. Some people still drink by calculating how much they can consume between tests without getting caught, though many are eventually busted.

At the Hughes County Jail on the east side of town, Brian Drapeau, 44, said he blew about twice the legal driving limit at an evening test for the program about a month ago. He said drinking vodka alone in his apartment led to half a day in jail.

"It was pretty tough on everybody," he said. "Sitting in there for 12 hours is just like, 'what am I doing?'"

Republican River Disputes Could Cost Nebraska Another \$1.2M

BY GRANT SCHULTE
Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — Disputes over the Republican River continue to cost Nebraska millions in legal expenses despite new glimmers of cooperation with fellow river states Kansas and Colorado.

The Nebraska attorney general's office is seeking another \$1.2 million to defend the state against a class-action lawsuit filed by farmers and to hire consultants for its ongoing settlement negotiations with Kansas, according to a budget request to lawmakers.

Nebraska and Kansas fought for decades over water entitlements provided under the Republican River Compact, an agreement between the two states and Colorado. The compact has triggered lawsuits among the states as well as from local farmers who say they were cheated out of water they should have received.

The 1943 compact entitles Nebraska to 49 percent of the river's water, while Kansas receives 40 percent and Colorado gets 11 percent. The Republican River originates in Colorado, crosses the northwestern tip of Kansas into Nebraska, then runs through Nebraska before re-entering

Kansas in its northeastern corner.

Without the money, the attorney general's office said it won't have the resources to fight the newest lawsuit by southwest Nebraska farmers who are seeking \$219 million in damages for lost irrigation water that flowed into Kansas. Republican River litigation has cost the state nearly \$4 million over the last seven years.

Costs have also increased because of Nebraska's ongoing negotiations with Kansas, although water regulators say the negotiations could save both states money in the future. In August, the states announced a one-year extension of an agreement that allows Nebraska to pump more than its share of water out of the river next year as long as it places water in storage for Kansas this winter and spring, when it's not being used for agriculture.

Both states are now trying to secure a longer-term agreement so that northern Kansas farmers can get the water they need and Nebraska can meet its obligations under the compact.

The lawsuit was filed on behalf of roughly 150 farmers within the Frenchman Cambridge Irrigation District. The farmers argue that state regulators

improperly deprived them of water in 2013 and 2014 by ordering it released downstream to Kansas to comply with the compact. Doing so prevented the district from storing water within its lakes, reservoirs and canals, the farmers said.

James Uerling, one of the lead plaintiffs, said diverting the water forced him to spend \$330,000 on feed corn for his Indianola cattle operation because he didn't have enough water to grow his own.

"The state of Nebraska didn't do me any favors by running all my water down the river," Uerling said.

The Department of Natural Resources referred questions about the lawsuit to the Nebraska attorney general's office. Suzanne Gage, a spokeswoman for the attorney general's office, said the office could not comment about the lawsuit.

In February, the U.S. Supreme Court ordered Nebraska to pay Kansas \$5.5 million for using more water than it was entitled to in previous years. Nebraska officials hailed the decision, noting that the award was far less than the \$80 million Kansas originally sought.

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