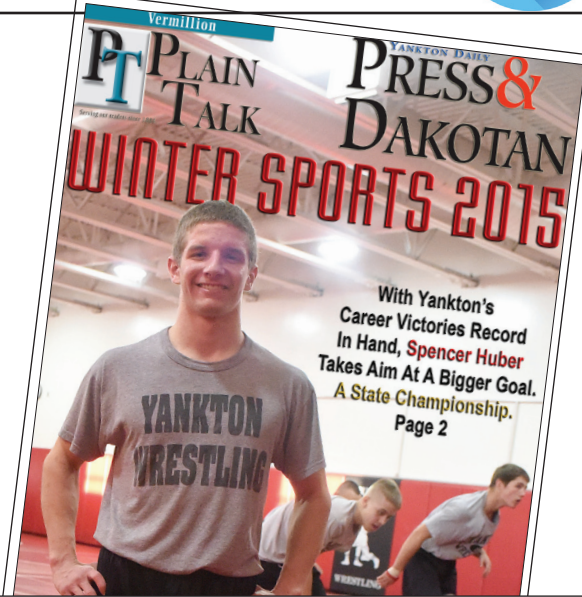




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ALISSA WOOCKMAN/P&D

Yankton Sacred Heart School fifth graders Frannie Kouri and Maddie Gutzmann press the call button on the school's buzzer system as part of a security measure enacted more than a year ago. Both students travel to Webster Elementary School for band and orchestra practice and are used to having to re-enter their school this way. This is an effort to keep all doors within and around the school locked throughout the day for student protection.

Sacred Heart Security

School Reacts To YHS Incident With Confidence

BY ALISSA WOOCKMAN
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Following an intruder last week at Yankton High School, many schools in the area have been concerned with their own security measures.

But principals at Yankton's Sacred Heart School feel they are prepared, thanks to both the middle and elementary schools' current layout.

Last year, the school received a Homeland Security grant. That allowed administration to install camera/buzzer

security systems on the front entrances of the schools.

Similar to the system recently installed at Yankton High School, all doors remain locked until a button is pushed, which dials a phone and the security camera feed to both the secretary's and the principal's offices.

"Both of our buildings were very secure at all of our exits, except our front doors," said Sacred Heart Middle School principal Dr. Tim Mulhair. "The opportunity came up and we just wanted everything to be a little safer."

Although the different measures implemented may present hassles for students and staff, Mulhair has confidence in the new system and knows it is worth the extra time.

"When changes were made, I think people a year ago were a bit apprehensive," he said. "They thought it may be a bother, but they all found out that it is great that we have it. The kids are used to it now. They know it's locked. I think they all feel very secure where they are at."

SECURITY | PAGE 9A

D18 Legislators Meet With Vermillion School Board

BY SARAH WETZEL
Vermillion Plain Talk

VERMILLION — District 18 State Sen. Arthur Rusch and Rep. Ray Ring met with members of the Vermillion School District Board Thursday to discuss various issues facing the district.

Though the discussion was not open to the public, Rusch said he hopes the public feels they can communicate with him personally on issues they feel strongly about.

"I hope the community gets out of this meeting that the legislators really try to do their best," he said. "It's a lot of stuff that comes up in a nine week period in Pierre. Criminal justice, I think I know something about that, but education funding, I don't know as much about that. Voters or people who have some sort of expertise about areas that are willing to talk to us about it, that's really beneficial to me."

Major topics focused on during the discussion Thursday included state aid funding and teacher to student ratios.

"I learn a lot about this," Rusch said afterwards. "I'm not an expert on school funding so the greatest thing is probably that I learn a lot about the impact out there. Then, of course, the schools are important. I have kids who went through so Vermillion schools are important to me and I want to try to do something for them. I need to make further effort to get to other schools in my district, but that's a lot harder to do than here in Vermillion."

One of the challenges recognized by both the legislators and the board members was the fact that all the school districts operate under the same budget though they carry different needs.

"I guess my goal is to get the funding that they need and clearly that's going to involve some proposals that are going to impact schools," Rusch said. "I don't want to hurt any schools too badly but the efficiency issues, the teacher ratio impacts every one of these and every one of my school districts is under that \$600 figure so they're going to have different numbers than you."

One thing agreed upon was the need for more funds, and not just pulling from Capital Outlay.

"We need to get new state money funding education,"

BOARD | PAGE 3A

Programming Fun



ALISSA WOOCKMAN/P&D

Webster Elementary School participated in the nationwide "Hour of Coding" to celebrate Computer Science Education Week. A student from Mrs. Chrisensen's fourth grade class is working with his buddy from Mrs. Graveholt's first grade class on code.org's Minecraft coding game. The buddy program allows older students to help with some of the more intricate aspects of computer coding. In this game, students use coding blocks to move a character through a simulated level of Minecraft.

Wausa Claims Ninth State Title In One-Act Play Competition

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF
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WAUSA, Neb. — Wausa didn't quit honoring its Swedish heritage with last summer's 125th anniversary celebration.

Wausa High School theater coach Sheila Hoelsing used the Vikings — the school's mascot — as the theme when she wrote the play "Fall Of The Valkyrie" for this year's one-act competition.

Sheila Hoelsing has written Wausa's entry the last four or five years, said husband and co-coach Brad Hoelsing. She tied this year's play to the community's heritage and celebration.

"Sheila started working on it last summer," Brad said. "She did some research on Norse mythology and wrote the play based on it."

This week, Wausa brought home the Class D1 state championship trophy with the production. The Nebraska State Activities Association (NSAA) contest is being held

at Norfolk's Johnny Carson Theatre.

Wausa won the trophy with 180 points while runner-up Paxton received 176 points from the judges. The Class D1 state championship has found a perennial home at Wausa. The school has qualified for the state contest the last 10 years, bringing home the top trophy nine times.

Sheila Hoelsing couldn't be reached for comment. However, Brad Hoelsing said his wife based her cast and story on the actual mythological characters.

"It's based on what they call the Valkyries, or spirits, that usher the slain into the after-world called Valhalla," he said. "One of the queens of the Valkyries (named Freyja) has a dispute with the King Odin. She falls in love with one of the slain warriors. The story is about the feud between those two (Freyja and Odin) and the ultimate civil war."

Sheila Hoelsing draws upon her theater and writing background in writing the original plays, her husband

THEATER | PAGE 3A



Lincoln School's World Tour

First-graders at Yankton's Lincoln Elementary School take to roofing as the sing "Up on the Housetop" in a medley with "Jolly Old St. Nicholas" during the school's winter concert Thursday night at the YHS/Summit Activities Center theatre. Students in grades 1-3 presented "Celebrate Around the World," looking at wintertime holiday traditions in various cultures and religions. Selections included "O Christmas Tree," "The Day of Eid," "The Eight Days of Hanukkah" and "A Kwanzaa Carol." (Kelly Hertz/P&D)

River City



Cramer-Kenyon Home Opens Up For Holidays

RIVER CITY

Sports



Freeman Tops Parker In Basketball Action

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Inside Today



Happy Holidays



Dec. 11
14 shopping
days to Christmas