

The Press & Dakotan

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OPINION OTHER VIEWS

Daugaard Recognizes College Tuition Issue

RAPID CITY JOURNAL (Dec. 20): It was a relief to see Gov. Dennis Daugaard's budget proposal recognizes that state university students need a break from the most costly tuition in the region and that state government should pay a greater share of the costs for multimillion-dollar campus building projects.

In his budget address to the Legislature, Daugaard proposed a tuition freeze, a 2.7 percent pay raise for university employees and a 0.5 percent faculty salary enhancement.

Instead of raising tuition to cover spending commitments, the governor wants to spend \$33.5 million to pay off bonds issued in 2008 to finance university science facilities. If the Legislature approves that proposal, it will end the state's \$2.9 million annual payment for the next 15 years and provide needed relief for students who have been asked to help retire those bonds with higher fees and tuition.

It is critical that the Legislature support this plan as earlier this month the Regents reported that on-campus enrollment is down 17.3 percent since 2010. One reason cited for that decline is the cost of tuition in South Dakota, where students pay an average of \$8,092 a year compared to an average of \$7,360 in our neighboring states.

As a group, the Regents have made a tuition freeze its top legislative priority. The lone exception is Harvey Jewett of Aberdeen, who apparently has not fully recognized the folly of a policy that wants students to bear the burden of a building binge for facilities even though they may never use them.

Jewett's priorities include building a \$35 million math and science building at Northern State University in Aberdeen, which has an enrollment of 2,600 students. He also complained that a 2.7 percent raise and 0.5 percent enhancement for faculty was not good enough to attract quality professors.

Jewett doesn't seem to understand that if enrollment trends are not reversed at our state universities there will be little need for new buildings and the state will become less competitive when it looks to hire new faculty members.

If our state university system is more about new buildings and faculty recruitment it becomes a recipe for failure that will give taxpayers little in return for their investment in the state's future.

The focus should always be on making college affordable for students, which is the best way to keep them in the state for hopefully many years to come.

Good Tax News ... At A Cost

THE KEARNEY HUB (Dec. 18): Merry Christmas to Gov. Pete Ricketts and Speaker of the Legislature Galen Hadley, who are spreading holiday cheer on postcards to Nebraskans to alert them about reductions in their property taxes. The mailing of 700,000 brightly colored postcards is intended to highlight the beneficial effects of some belt-tightening and shifting of state cash reserves to boost Nebraska's Property Tax Credit Program.

In all, those actions are adding up to a \$204 million tax rebate, but even with all of that money to lower property taxes, it's not producing the kind of "wow" effect Ricketts would prefer when Nebraskans open their property tax bills. Even farmers, who are some of the loudest complainers about property taxes and would welcome any good news on that topic, aren't aware of the substantial break they're getting this year.

According to John Hansen of the Nebraska Farmers Union, about 95 percent of his members say they've not noticed the effect of the governor and Legislature's actions to reduce property taxes.

Hansen said that even with the credit, farmers still think they're paying a disproportionate amount of property taxes, and that the tax load for schools, county government and other taxing entities has unfairly shifted over the years from state sales and income taxes onto local property taxes.

Undeterred by the complaining, Ricketts decided to spend \$274,000 to send the postcards bearing the good news.

With this year's increase in the Property Tax Credit Program, the owner of a home valued at \$150,000 will receive a \$141 credit for 2015. Providing that kind of relief, according to Hadley, accounts for about 5 percent of the state's budget, and Ricketts might push for even more of the state's cash — derived mostly from income and sales taxes — to be funneled into the Property Tax Credit Program.

Lacking further action by legislators to address Nebraska's property tax policies, the governor might be on to something in his use of the Property Tax Relief Program. We're all in favor of shifting the cost of government away from property taxes. Now, if Ricketts could only distribute the good news about tax savings without spending \$274,000.

IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press

Today is Monday, Dec. 28, the 362nd day of 2015. There are three days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On Dec. 28, 1945, Congress officially recognized the Pledge of Allegiance.

On this date: In 1612, Italian astronomer Galileo Galilei observed the planet Neptune, but mistook it for a star. (Neptune wasn't officially discovered until 1846 by Johann Gottfried Galle.)

In 1832, John C. Calhoun became the first vice president of the United States to resign, stepping down because of differences with President Andrew Jackson.

In 1846, Iowa became the 29th state to be admitted to the Union.

In 1856, the 28th president of the United States, Thomas Woodrow Wilson, was born in Staunton, Virginia.

In 1895, the Lumiere brothers, Auguste and Louis, held the first public showing of their movies in Paris.

In 1917, the New York Evening Mail published "A Neglected Anniversary," a facetious essay by H.L. Mencken supposedly recounting the history of bathtubs in America.

In 1937, composer Maurice Ravel died in Paris at age 62.

In 1944, the musical "On the Town," with music by Leonard Bernstein and book and lyrics by Betty Comden and Adolph Green, opened on Broadway.

In 1945, Fritz Lang's film noir, "Scarlet Street," starring Edward G. Robinson and Joan Bennett, was released by Universal Pictures. Author Theodore Dreiser, 74, died in Hollywood.

In 1975, the Tennessee Williams play "Night of the Iguana" opened on Broadway. Former first lady Edith Bolling Galt Wilson, the second wife of President Woodrow Wilson, died in Washington at age 89.

In 1975, the "Hail Mary pass" entered the football lexicon as Dallas quarterback Roger Staubach tossed the ball to Drew Pearson for an improbable 50-yard touchdown with 24 seconds left to help the Cowboys come back to edge the Minnesota Vikings 17-14.

In 1981, Alexander Dubcek, the former Czechoslovak Communist leader who was deposed in a Soviet-led Warsaw Pact invasion in 1968, was named president of the country's parliament.

Ten years ago: Former top Enron Corp. accountant Richard Causey pleaded guilty to securities fraud and agreed to help pursue convictions against Enron

founder Kenneth Lay and former CEO Jeffrey Skilling. (Causey was later sentenced to 5 1/2 years in prison.) Barry Cowsill, a member of the popular 1960s singing family The Cowsills, was found dead on a New Orleans wharf nearly four months after he disappeared when Hurricane Katrina flooded the city.

Five years ago: Eight young people were killed in a fire that swept through an abandoned New Orleans warehouse (some of the victims were squatters who had been living inside the building). Agathe von Trapp, the real-life inspiration for eldest daughter Liesl in the musical "The Sound of Music," died in Towson, Maryland, at age 97.

One year ago: AirAsia Flight 8501, an Airbus A-320, crashed during a flight from Indonesia to Singapore, killing all 162 people on board. A fire broke out aboard the ferry MS Norman Atlantic off the coast of Albania, leaving at least 11 people dead and 18 missing. The war in Afghanistan, fought for 13 bloody years and still raging, came to a formal end with a quiet flag-lowering ceremony in Kabul that marked the transition of the fighting from U.S.-led combat troops to the country's own security forces.

Today's Birthdays: Comic book creator Stan Lee is 93. Former United Auto Workers union president Owen Bieber is 86. Actress Nichelle Nichols is 83. Actress Dame Maggie Smith is 81. Rock singer-musician Charles Neville is 77. Sen. Johnny Isakson, R-Ga., is 71. Former Sen. Tim Johnson, D-S.D., is 69. Rock singer-musician Edgar Winter is 68. Funk musician Joseph "Zigaboo" Modeliste (The Meters) is 67. Actor Denzel Washington is 61. Country singer Joe Diffie is 57. Country musician Mike McGuire (Shenandoah) is 57. Actor Chad McQueen is 55. Country singer-musician Marty Roe (Diamond Rio) is 55. Actor Malcolm Gets is 51. Actor Mauricio Mendoza is 46. Actress Elaine Hendrix is 45. Comedian Seth Meyers is 42. Actor Brendan Hines is 39. Actor Joe Manganiello is 39. Actress Vanessa Ferlito is 38. Rhythm-and-blues singer John Legend is 37. Actor Andre Holland is 36. Actress Sienna Miller is 34. Pop singer Kasey Sheridan (Dream) is 29. Actor Thomas Dekker is 28. Actress Mackenzie Rosman is 26. Pop singer David Archuleta is 25. Actor Miles Brown (TV: "black-ish") is 11.

Thought for Today: "There is no luck except where there is discipline." — Irish proverb.

FROM THE BIBLE

He died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for Him who for their sake died and was raised. 2 Corinthians 5:15. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.



Capitol Notebook

In Pierre, A Year Of Progress, Scandals

BY BOB MERCER

State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE — Here are just some of the folks who had noteworthy roles in state government during 2015.

• **Marty Guindon** — The state's auditor general and staff at the Department of Legislative Audit conducted the first review of the GEAR UP program and found trouble.

• **Sen. Mike Vehle** — Refusing to give up, his work led to the Legislature finally approving and the governor signing the first highway-tax package in two decades.

• **Rep. Brian Gosch** — The House Republican leader showed his legislative savvy once again when he had the 80 mph speed limit for I-90 and I-29 added to the highways and bridges package.

• **Gov. Dennis Daugaard** — The Republican zigged into new territory for him with acceptance of funding hikes for roads and with studies on teacher pay, Medicaid expansion and child abuse.

• **Sen. Deb Soholt** — With the governor's support she kept alive the Jolene's Law task force on child sexual abuse and there's now funding recommended by the governor for a state center to study the problem.

• **Rep. Jacqueline Sly** — She and Sen. Deb Soholt co-chaired the governor's Blue Ribbon task force on teachers and students, helping the group find a target of \$85 million more for teachers.

• **Rep. Jim Bolin** — He took the Legislature to the edge of voiding the transgender-acceptance policy for high school athletics.

• **Sen. Gary Cammack** — The third-year legislator and first-year senator prevailed within a split Senate Republican caucus to become president pro tem after a series of unexpected resignations.

• **Sen. Corey Brown** — The seventh-year sena-



Bob

MERCER

tor stepped from president pro tem to Senate Republican leader after Sen. Tim Rave became second in row to resign post mid-term.

• **Rep. Kristin Conzet** — The Legislature's Executive Board chose the sixth-year lawmaker to chair the interim study on county government finances where some big funding ideas emerged for 2016.

• **Pat Costello** — The governor's commissioner of economic development found his office under scrutiny as the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services notified South Dakota its status in the federal EB-5 foreign investors program would be terminated.

• **Joop Bollen** — The president of SDR Inc. found himself back in the EB-5 boil with the USCIS notice of termination and the Daugaard administration suing him for money that had been promised in his company's 2009 state contracts.

• **Melody Schopp** — After years of shifting South Dakota's state Indian education program to Mid Central Education Cooperative, the governor's secretary of education made the phone call to Mid Central administrator Dan Guericke terminating the GEAR UP contract.

• **Scott Westerhuis** — The now-dead Mid Central business manager stands accused by investigators as the killer of his wife, their four children and himself at their house south of Platte within hours of Schopp's phone call.

• **Angela Kennecke** — The KELO television veteran chased the GEAR UP saga hard into a statewide news story.

• **Shantel Krebs** — The new secretary of state put the office back in order.

• **Rep. George Mark Mickelson** and Attorney General Marty Jackley — Running hard already for statewide office, presumably Republican nomination for governor, in 2018.

• **James Nord** — He proved a promising successor to venerable (and now retired) Chet Brokaw as The Associated Press reporter in Pierre.

Michelle Malkin

How To Create An Anti-Muslim Hate-Crime 'Epidemic'

BY MICHELLE MALKIN

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Step one: Find an expert with an impressive-sounding academic title to legitimize shoddy advocacy propaganda.

Meet Brian Levin. He's the one-man band behind something called the "Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism" at California State University, San Bernardino. The "center" (that is: Levin) claims to be "nonpartisan" and "objective." But he is a former top staffer of the militant, conservative-smearing Southern Poverty Law Center, leaving in 2002. SPLC was forced to apologize earlier this year after including famed black neurosurgeon and GOP 2016 candidate Ben Carson on its "extremist watch list" of hate groups.

At SPLC, Levin infamously posited that the 2002 Beltway jihad snipers were Angry White Men, a fatal error echoed by politically correct law enforcement officials whose wild-goose chase needlessly cost lives. A decade later, the SPLC's target map and list of social conservative groups were used by convicted left-wing domestic terrorist Floyd Lee Corkins to shoot up the Washington, D.C., office of the Family Research Council.

The radical left-wing SPLC, whose annual "hate and extremism" report spawned Levin's sham "center," brazenly declared that its mission is to "destroy" its political opponents. Harper's Magazine writer Ken Silverstein called the SPLC and its work "essentially a fraud" that "shuts down debate, stifles free speech, and most of all, raises a pile of money, very little of which is used on behalf of poor people."

Step two: Enlist gullible, lazy, biased and complicit journalists who recyle the "expert's" sweeping pronouncements as proven facts, backed up by other ideologically vested advocacy group spokespeople.

NBC News, *The New York Times*, the *Daily Mail* and *Slate* all quoted Levin over the past week hyping his new "study" (published in esteemed academic journal *The Huffington Post*) on an alleged "increase," "surge" and "spike" in "crimes against Muslims and mosques" this year.

Levin's "methods" of "analysis"? Stringing together "apparent hate crimes reported in the media and by civil rights groups across the United States." The Council on American-Islamic Relations' jihad-apologizing frontman, Ibrahim Hooper, was quoted by both NBC and *The New York Times* as backing Levin's "research."

"We're seeing so many of these things happening that it's unbelievable," Hooper told the *Times*.

Indeed, it is.

In his list of "Sus