



Partly Cloudy

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SATURDAY ■ FEBRUARY 25, 2012



**Bucks Sit In 18th In Class A Wrestling • 7**

# YANKTON DAILY PRESS & DAKOTAN

**YES We Listened**  
Look for all the facts on the insert in Monday's Press & Dakotan  
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## Local Spring Election Slate Is Set

From P&D Staff Reports

The spring races for the Yankton City Commission and the Yankton School Board were finalized Friday as the deadline for candidate entries closed at 5 p.m.

The City Commission has five candidates running for three 3-year terms.

All three incumbents — Pauline Akland, David Carda and David Knoff — are seeking re-election.

Also hoping to join the commission are



Filing their petitions with the Yankton

Lola Harens, who ran for a seat last year, and newcomer Chris Ferdig.

Carda and Knoff won terms on the commission in 2007, while Akland joined in 2009.

Meanwhile, five candidates are vying for two open seats on the Yankton School Board.

School District were current school board president Kathy Greenway, as well as Michael "Moose" Welch, D.G. "Butch" Becker, Mark Westerman and Matthew Pietz.

Greenway is finishing her first term. Verlin Ailts is finishing his third term on the board and has chosen not to seek re-election.

The deadline for voter registration for the April 10 election is March 26.



## ANOTHER ONE IN THE NET

Members of the Brookings Rangers celebrate scoring a goal against Yankton in the opening round of the state JV tournament. Brookings won 7-0. For more results, see page 7. (Jeremy Hoeck/P&D)

# Opting Out II

### Arguments Abound As Second Vote Draws Near

BY SHAUNA MARLETTE  
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As Tuesday rolls ever closer, one thing is clear: the community is still debating whether or not to approve the Yankton School District's opt-out request for up to \$1.4 million, for two years, that the Yankton school board and administrators say is needed to keep the district intact.

Currently, nearly 800 people have either cast their ballot or requested a mail in ballot for Tuesday's vote, about half of what had been cast at this point in the first opt-out attempt. No matter the turnout, however, the opt-out will pass or fail on a simple majority — 50 percent plus one vote.

Looking at the issues, several facts are clear. Facing a huge deficit, district officials have crafted an opt-out plan that aims to build a bridge for the next two years, in hope of help at the state level.

"We have a \$2.2 million projected shortfall for next fiscal year," said business manager Jason Bietz. "The opt-out package that we crafted in response to last spring's failed attempt took a lot of things into consideration by trying to craft a proposal that still produces new revenue to the district in direct response to the loss in revenue that we received due to cuts in funding."

Bietz said even if the opt-out passes, the district still has a lot of work to do.

"It is a two-year bridge that hopefully, with the economy seemingly improving, there will be more funding at the state level, as well as the sales tax measure to be voted on in the fall," he said. "Without revenue, we will be forced to make adjustments on spending. We already implemented the \$1.2 million in cuts from last year. Under any circumstance, we are going to be continuing to look for ways to operate more efficiently, as we always do. But you can't just carve out a couple of spots and fix it. It won't go unfelt. Bottom line for the school district — this is a big question — how we shape the budgets going forward and what revenue sources, total sources are available."

We The People Yankton group, of which Charles Murphy is chairman and Mike Lemon the treasurer, say in several mailings to the community that the district has not done enough to balance the budget based on the revenue the school already has, specifically pointing to what they consider overspending on health care coverage and not responding to declining enrollment.



County auditor Paula Jones is pictured with ballots for the upcoming opt-out vote scheduled for Tuesday. As of noon Friday approximately 800 absentee ballots had been requested or turned into officials, about half of what were counted in May's opt-out attempt.

Repeated attempts to contact the group for comment were unsuccessful.

In a mailing that was sent out to the community on Friday, the group stated, "We hope voters see the fundamental prob-

lem YSD is facing and is trying to pass off to the little guy, the taxpayers. With the continued declining enrollment (which the

KELLY HERTZ/P&D

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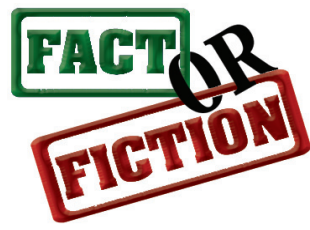
## Where Does YSD Get Its Tax Levy Numbers?

BY SHAUNA MARLETTE  
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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The Press & Dakotan series "Fact or Fiction," is our attempt to clarify the issues surrounding the Yankton School District opt-out. By checking with state and local authorities, as well as other resources, we hope to give you the best answers from as independent sources as possible.

If you have a question or concern about the opt-out that you want clarified, send the question to: Fact or Fiction, c/o Shauna Marlette, 318 Walnut, Yankton, SD 57078; or e-mail the question to news@yankton.net.

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**Q:** How can the Yankton School District say what our tax levies will be when the state Legislature has not set them yet?

**A:** "The (person asking the question) is absolutely correct," said Yankton School

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District business manager Jason Bietz. "(The levy amounts for fiscal year 2012 payable in 2013) won't get finalized until usually one of the last days in the state legislative funding process. As part of that appropriation, the Legislature actually calculates out what that will mean to the dollar-per-thousand levies."

To offset the unknown and be as accurate as possible in presenting the potential value of impact on the three different levy types, the district chose to base its projections on the 2011 values payable in 2012.

If the community passes the up-to-\$1.4

LEVY | PAGE 14

## Ft. Randall Casino Watches Fate Of Bet Limit Measure

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF  
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PICKTOWN — Fort Randall Casino officials are watching with interest whether Gov. Dennis Daugaard signs legislation raising the bet limit at Deadwood casinos from \$100 to \$1,000.

The bill, SB108, first passed the Senate 24-10 and then passed the House 39-29. The measure now heads to Daugaard's desk.

Under South Dakota's gaming laws, SB108 would raise the state's bet limit ten-fold not only in Deadwood but also at Fort Randall — owned by the Yankton Sioux Tribe (YST) — and other Indian casinos.

SB108's progress has been followed by the Fort Randall interim co-managers Pam Aungie and Ward Zephier.

"When the state initiated the process (for the higher bet limit), we thought, 'OK,'" Aungie said. "We talked about, what if Deadwood gets the \$1,000 bet limit? It's different. It might bring in some high rollers."

In the meantime, both Deadwood and tribal casino owners await Daugaard's decision on whether to sign SB108.

"Like every other bill, the governor will review it and weigh the pros and cons," Lt. Gov. Matt Michels told the Press & Dakotan on Friday night.

State-Tribal Relations Secretary J.R. LaPlante has not heard from the tribes on the subject of higher bet limits, Michels said. However, the tribes have a high stake in the legislation.

"Just like the Deadwood casinos, adopting the higher bet limit could allow tribes to be more competitive with casinos in other states and bring in new customers that wish to bet larger amounts," Michels said.

Tribes could automatically adopt the higher bet limit, if passed, said Larry Eliason, executive secretary of the state's



RANDY DOCKENDORF/P&D  
The front entrance of the new addition welcomes visitors to Fort Randall Casino near Pickstown. If Gov. Dennis Daugaard signs a bill for Deadwood casinos, Fort Randall could likewise raise its \$100 bet limit to \$1,000.

gaming commission.

"Back in 2000, when the bet limit was raised from \$5 to \$100 by ballot measure, the tribal casinos could raise their bet limits to \$100 without renegotiating the compacts," he said.

When it comes to \$1,000 bets, Fort Randall wouldn't necessarily jump on the bandwagon even though it would be entitled to the higher limit, Aungie said. The casino management is in transition, and major decisions will likely wait, she said.

In addition, major changes in casino operation require approval from the general council, comprised of the tribal membership, Aungie said.

"If the opportunity is out there (for higher bet limits), then yes, we would look into it," she said. "But right now, we're an interim management team. We are currently advertising for a general manager."

Even if Fort Randall pursued the higher bet limit, it might not begin offering the \$1,000 limit on the July 1 date when the law would take effect, Aungie said.

If it becomes law, the \$1,000 bet limit would legally apply to black-

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## Oil Prices Rising To Near 2011 Highs

BY CHRIS KAHN  
AP Energy Writer

NEW YORK — Oil prices are approaching last year's highs as tensions increase over Iran's nuclear program. The rise pushed gasoline prices on Friday to a national average of \$3.65 per gallon, the highest ever for this time of year.

Western nations fear Iran is building a weapon and have been trying to force it to open its facilities to inspection. Iran has refused, turning away international inspectors this week for the sec-

ond time this month.

As tensions rise, investors are snapping up oil contracts in anticipation of a protracted standoff with one of the world's top oil exporters.

Benchmark West Texas Intermediate crude rose by \$1.42 to \$109.26 per barrel in New York. Brent crude rose by \$1.28 to \$124.90 per barrel in London.

WTI peaked near \$114 a barrel last May, while Brent rose above \$126 per barrel.

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