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## INSIDE TODAY



**Take Steps  
To Feel Better  
USA WEEKEND**

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## Property Tax Info Still Not Available

From P&D Staff Reports

Property tax bills were not available to Yankton County taxpayers Thursday. County Auditor Paula Jones was still getting information to the Yankton County Treasurer's Office needed to make them public. Treasurer Pam Marchand said she will issue a media release when her office is prepared to share tax bills with property owners.

## Daugaard Signs First 2013 Bill

PIERRE (AP) — South Dakota Gov. Dennis Daugaard has signed his first bill of the 2013 legislative session. House bill 1066 continues the current tax rate on tourism-related businesses during the June-September period. The governor's office says the tax on the gross receipts of most tourism-related goods and services was 1 percent until it was raised to 1.5 percent for two years in 2009. A two-year extension that was granted by the Legislature in 2011 was due to expire this coming June 30. The measure makes the 1.5 percent rate permanent. It passed the state House 64-4 and the Senate by a 33-2 margin.

# GOP Rips Hagel In Hearing

## Senators Attack Defense Nominee's Views

BY ROBERT BURNS AND DONNA CASSATA  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Republican senators hammered former GOP Sen. Chuck Hagel at his confirmation hearing Thursday on issues ranging from Israel and Iran to his support for a group that advocates the elimination of nuclear weapons. But with most Democrats in his corner, an unflustered Hagel seems headed for approval as defense secretary. Hagel, a former two-term senator from Nebraska, described his views as mainstream and closely aligned with those of President Barack Obama, the Democrat who nominated him. But several GOP members of the Armed Services Committee

sought to portray him as radical and unsteady. Sen. Deb Fischer, R-Neb., called his ideas "extreme" and "far to the left" of Obama.

Hagel said he believes America "must engage — not retreat — in the world," and insisted that his record is consistent on that point.

He pointed to Iran and its nuclear ambitions as an example of an urgent national security threat that should be addressed first by attempting to establish dialogue with Iranian rulers, although he said he would not rule out using military force.

"I think we're always on higher ground in every way — in-



Hagel

ternational law, domestic law, people of the world, people of the region to be with us on this — if we have ... gone through every possibility to resolve this in a responsible, peaceful way, rather than going to war," he said.

He pushed back on the notion — first raised by one of his harshest Republican critics, Sen. James Inhofe of Oklahoma — that he favors a policy of appeasement.

"I think engagement is clearly in our interest," Hagel told Sen. Saxby Chambliss, R-Ga., who denounced the idea of negotiating with a "terrorist state."

"That's not negotiation," Hagel said. "Engagement is not appeasement. Engagement is not surrender."

After the daylong hearing, committee Chairman Carl Levin, D-Mich., said the panel could vote as early as next Thursday if

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## Paper Benefit Checks To End March 1

BY ANDREW ATWAL  
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By March 1, all Social Security checks and other benefit recipients who are receiving their checks by mail must register for direct deposit or the direct express deposit card.

"In January 2011, we sent out about 11 million checks each month," said Treasury Department spokesperson Walt Henderson, director EFT strategy division of the U.S. Department of Treasury Financial Management Service. "As of this January, we are down to only about 5 million checks a month. This shows that people are listening and are making the switch. We hope to get the remaining recipients registered by the March 1 deadline."

One of the main reasons for the switch is that sending checks out by mail is significantly more expensive than electronic payments. It costs about \$2 a check to be sent by mail, but only about 10 cents for an electronic payment.

"This is really good savings for taxpayers," Henderson said. "There is also added safety and convenience of doing electronic payments, and it's the best way for Social Security and other benefit recipients to get their payments."

It is estimated that converting the remaining paper check recipients to electronic payments will save American taxpayers about \$1 billion over the next 10 years.

Henderson added that there are no lost, stolen or delayed checks, or issues delivering checks in bad weather, with the new electronic payments.

Although it is the law to switch, if someone doesn't switch by the March 1 deadline, Social Security officials said they will be sensitive to the fact that these are needed payments for many people.

"We won't interrupt their payments if they don't comply with the deadline, but we will reach out by mail to them to get them to switch," Henderson said. "However, there are waivers for people in certain situations, including geographic barriers, like people living in a remote place without access to an ATM or infrastructure for electronic payments. There is also a waiver for someone with a mental impairment and anyone over 90 years old."

In order to make the switch to electronic payments, there is a call center setup to help

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## 'A SIGN OF HOPE'



COURTESY PHOTO

A group of residents from the Yankton area recently attended the March for Life, a pro-life rally in Washington, D.C. More than 500,000 demonstrators joined in on the activities this year in recognition of the 40th anniversary of the Roe v. Wade decision.

## Area Residents Eye Future At Pro-Life Rally In Washington

BY DEREK BARTOS  
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Last week, Fr. John Rutten departed on a 24-hour bus ride, determined to "convert some hearts."

The associate pastor at Sacred Heart Parish in Yankton joined 13 others from the Yankton area on a trip to Washington, D.C., to take part in the March for Life, a pro-life rally held each year to challenge abortion. This year's event, held Jan. 24-26, saw more than 500,000 participants gather in recognition of the 40th anniversary of the Roe v. Wade decision.

"To see that many people share the same beliefs was really powerful," Rutten said. "For me, it was a sign of hope."

While the ultimate goal of many participants is to have the decision to legalize abortion reversed, Rutten said it is just as important to open the minds of others.

"What we really hope for is a conversion of hearts," he said. "That I think is just as important as getting the law reversed. We can get the law reversed, but what's important is that we all come to understand the dignity of people at all stages of life."

The event's activities included prayer vigils, masses, various rallies, film screenings, a 5K run, numerous speakers and testimonies of abortion experiences. For the featured march, demonstrators traveled from the National Mall up Pennsylvania Avenue to the steps of the U.S. Supreme Court, where the landmark abortion ruling was made in 1973.

Jan Everson of Yankton said of the numerous memorable moments she experienced during the event, the most impressionable was getting to meet an adoptive family.

"At the vigil mass on Thursday night, Sean Cardinal O'Malley, Archbishop of Boston, stated that only 1 child out of 100 in unwanted pregnancies are given up for adoption. The other 99 babies are aborted," she said. "I met the one child out of 100 and his adopted parents. I will never forget the sheer joy they shared as they told me their story."

Everson added that she also was overwhelmed by the number of youth among the demonstrators.

"I assumed a large portion of it would be middle-aged adults, but the majority was actually junior high through

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## Geddes Fights To Preserve Historic Home



COURTESY PHOTO

The Geddes historical society is working to preserve the boyhood home of the late Peter Norbeck, who pioneered many achievements as South Dakota governor and later as U.S. senator a century ago.

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF  
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GEDDES — In the early 1900s, Peter Norbeck gave much to South Dakota even before becoming its governor and U.S. senator.

He started his adulthood as a well driller, providing important water supplies for rural areas and eventually drilling 10,000 wells. As a public official, he played key roles in promoting agriculture, conservation and the Black Hills.

Norbeck's childhood home remains on display in Geddes, but time has taken a toll on the structure. Now, local residents are fighting to preserve the two-story wood house as a testament to his life.

"It's just been gradual, but the house has deteriorated so much the last few years. It really needs a lot of work," said Sharon Ackley, treasurer of the Charles Mix County Historical Restoration Society (CMCHRS).

The historical society has raised about \$2,000 of the estimated \$40,000 cost of the restoration work. The members plan fundraisers and are seeking grants and donations.

"There are so many people who don't know about the Norbeck house," she said. "We are hoping awareness of the project will bring us more funds."

Norbeck's boyhood home was moved to the Historic Village in Geddes from the Norbeck homestead seven miles northwest of the town. The foundation and floor must be repaired and stabilized, and the roof needs new shingles. Other needed work includes Sheetrock on the walls and ceilings, along with repair and replacement of windows.

The challenge remains immense, Ackley said. "It would be nice if we could get this done in one year, but I think that's unrealistic," she said. "We are hoping for two years, and it will more likely be three."

Visitors come to see the Norbeck house but aren't allowed to enter it, Ackley said.

"We had a lady stop this past summer. She was living in California and stopped to see the Norbeck house because Peter gave her dad a job so (the father) could go to the doctor," Ackley said.

"But we haven't been giving tours of the house

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