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RAVENS: LIGHTS OUT!



MARK CORNELISON/LEXINGTON HERALD-LEADER/MCT
Arthur Jones (97) of the Baltimore Ravens celebrates after sacking Colin Kaepernick of the San Francisco 49ers in third-quarter action in Super Bowl XLVII in New Orleans. The Ravens won the game 34-31. For details see page 7.

HSC Plan Stirs Concern

Demolition Plans Could Begin This Summer

BY NATHAN JOHNSON
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Stressing the need for stewardship of the portion of the South Dakota Human Services Center (HSC) campus that is no longer in use, Gov. Dennis Daugaard has proposed a plan that calls for the demolition of 13 structures and an effort to preserve four others.

The proposal being considered in the Legislature this session has drawn criticism from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, which says demolition of the buildings is the opposite of responsible stewardship of state property. In 2009, the National Trust, a privately-funded nonprofit organization, put the HSC campus as an entry on its "America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places" list and has advocated for the preservation of many of the state buildings.

With the opening of the George S. Mickelson Center for the Neurosciences in 1996, some older buildings were no longer needed by the Human

Services Center. Other structures had been vacated prior to 1996.

"This plan is a result of Gov. Daugaard and members of his team touring the buildings on more than one occasion and many hours of discussion and analysis," Deb Bowman, the governor's senior advisor, told the Press & Dakotan. "The governor believes strongly that one of the responsibilities of those elected to office is to be good stewards, on behalf of the citizens of South Dakota, of the assets the state holds. Frankly, the easy thing to do would be to continue to ignore the old Human Services Center campus — the right thing to do is address it. That is what Gov. Daugaard has decided to do through House Bill 1033."

The bill would authorize the Department of Social Services to dismantle, demolish, preserve or rehabilitate buildings on the HSC campus and appropriate \$6 million to carry out that work.



Daugaard

The legislation was approved in the House on a 64-6 vote, with District 18 representatives Bernie Hunhoff and Michael Stevens offering support. The Senate Appropriations Committee is now considering the bill.

A report, called the "South Dakota Human Services Center Old Campus Stewardship Plan," outlines the specifics of Daugaard's three-phase plan. In the first phase, the governor proposes to:

- preserve the Mead Building through a partnership with the Yankton County Historical Society;
 - demolish the Edmunds Building, which was built in 1951 and has been vacant since 1996;
 - demolish the Haas Building, which was built in 1956 and has been vacant since 1996;
 - demolish the Medical Institute, which was built in 1961 and has been vacant since 1996; and
 - identify a private entity to develop the Secure Treatment Unit Building, possibly as town homes.
- In phase two, Daugaard proposes to:

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Panetta: Politics At Play In Hagel Questioning

WASHINGTON (AP) — Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said "the political knives" came out when Chuck Hagel faced fellow Republicans on the Senate Armed Services Committee during his confirmation hearing to be Pentagon chief.

Panetta said he was disappointed that Thursday's eight-hour hearing focused so much on what Hagel, a former Republican senator from Nebraska, had said in the past about Iran, Israel and other matters instead of what he thinks about today's issues, including the war in Afghanistan, the fight against terrorism, and looming automatic budget cuts and their impact on military readiness.

"We just did not see enough time spent on discussing those issues. And in the end, that's what counts," Panetta told NBC's "Meet the Press" in an interview broadcast Sunday.

"It's pretty obvious that the political knives were out for Chuck Hagel," Panetta said.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, noting the lengthy hearing, said on ABC's "This Week," "give the guy a break. I thought he did pretty good." Reid, D-Nev., said Hagel's party affiliation "should be a plus. We need more."

Panetta said he is confident that Hagel is prepared to succeed him at the Pentagon.

In an appearance on CNN's "State of the Union," Panetta dismissed concerns that Hagel and former Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., who was sworn in Friday as secretary of state, agree with Obama's views to the point that they won't challenge the president.

"I've got to tell you, anybody who knows John Kerry and anybody who knows Chuck Hagel... they push back. Believe me, they push back on the issues," he said. "In the situation room, everybody has to give their honest views. And I think they won't hesitate to give their honest views."

Two Republican senators, Thad Cochran of Mississippi and Mike Johanns of Nebraska, have said they will support Hagel's nomination. Johanns said Saturday his concerns were allayed after Hagel's Senate hearing and after he met with Hagel for an hour.

"Chuck earned this endorsement," Johanns said in an interview with the *Lincoln (Neb.) Journal Star*.

ICE ACTION IN YANKTON



KELLY HERTZ/P&D

The Yankton Miracle's Justin Christensen (2) battles a Sioux Center player for a puck during Saturday action of the Yankton Miracle Squirt B Hockey Tournament, held this weekend at the Kiwanis 4-H Ice Arena. The two-day, six-team tourney also included teams from Aberdeen; Ames, Iowa; and Omaha, Neb. Sioux Center won its match with Yankton 5-0. No other results were available at press time. To see or purchase images from the Yankton-Sioux Center game, visit spotted.yankton.net.

Schools Feel Squeeze In SPED Funding

BY GRANT SCHULTE
Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — Nebraska schools are keeping a close eye on a state budget proposal to increase funding for special education, a growing expense that has forced them to divert money away from other priorities.

School districts welcome the increase after years of flat-lined funding, but they say the proposal still fails to cover the increased costs of federally mandated services for disabled students, as well as those with mental and behavioral health problems.

"It's a start," said Brad Schoeppey, the superintendent of Chase County Schools in southwest Nebraska. "Is it where it needs to be? No. But obviously, it's better than nothing at all."

Lawmakers will consider the funding boost for Nebraska's 249 school districts as they craft a new two-year state spending plan. Gov. Dave Heineman has proposed a \$29.6 million increase in special education funding, a 5 percent bump for each year.

Nebraska reimburses about 50 cents for every dollar that local districts spend on special education, a rate that has declined since the 1970s.

Chase County Schools spend about \$719,000 per year on special education, out of a \$9 million budget. The money helps pay for contract services, including a teacher for a visually impaired student and speech therapists. The cost of those services has risen for the district of 588 students.

"We have to use quite a lot of general fund money," Schoeppey said. "It takes funds away from other kids to support the special-ed funding, because we don't get enough to cover our costs."

The Gordon-Rushville Public Schools in northwest Nebraska have also struggled to cover the treatment costs for students with mental and behavioral health problems, said Merrell Nelsen, the district's superintendent. In some cases, he said, the district has to pay to drive students from Gordon to treatment centers in Scottsbluff — a 130-mile, one-way trip.

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Sheehy Ouster Shakes Up Nebraska's 2014 Contests

BY GRANT SCHULTE
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Nelsen said the district maintains an \$8.8 million budget, and spent \$992,000 on special-education serv-



Sheehy

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Yankton Fire Fighters Saw Busy Year In 2012

BY NATHAN JOHNSON
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With the area enduring the driest year in recent history, the Yankton Fire Department had its busiest year fighting blazes in more than a decade.

The total calls for 2012 was 250, and that includes fires, accidents and other miscellaneous causes. That compares to 231 in 2011.

"We haven't had a year that busy with fires since the fall of 1999 and the spring of 2000," Deputy Fire Chief Larry Nickles said. "It wasn't as dry back then as it is now, but it was dry and we had a lot of grass fires."

Of course, grass fires were a major factor in the high number of calls in 2012.

"One of the biggest problems we had last year was discarded cigarettes (that sparked grass fires)," Fire Chief Tom Kurtenbach noted.

Of the calls within the city limits of Yankton, 39 required a full department response, while 87 calls required only the chief or deputy chief.

Kurtenbach expressed his gratitude to the dozens of volunteers that comprise the department.

"The amount of work we get out of our volunteers is very impressive," he said. "If we didn't have them, we would need paid employees to work all those hours."

Total man hours for the calls was 3,400, which averages to more than 82 hours per member of the department. The average turnout per call was 29 members.

"Employers were very accommodating. We were glad for that," Nickles said. "We were never short of help because of lack of turn out. If we needed to call in mutual aid (from another fire department), it was because of the size of the fire."

The department also devoted 2,165 man hours, or an average of 52 hours per member, to training.

The average time it took to arrive at the scene was 3 minutes, 24 seconds. It was slightly higher

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P&D FILE PHOTO: KELLY HERTZ

This mobile home fire last May was part of a very busy 2012 for the Yankton Fire Department. Last year, firefighters answered the highest number of calls they had received in more than a decade, due in large part to the dry conditions.

Vermillion Building Incurs Fire Damage

From P&D Staff Reports

VERMILION — A structure fire in Vermillion Friday night prompted a call for support from Yankton units.

Smoke was reported coming from the Midwest Ag building in the 1400 block of E. Cherry St. at 8:40 p.m. Friday. Units that arrived on the scene found heavy smoke conditions in the rear of the building. Upon entry, crews moved equipment, including a skid steer loader, to a safe area and extinguished multiple fires, including a large burning oil tank.

The Yankton ladder and support air trucks were called in to assist.

Vermillion city police and Clay County sheriff's deputies were also on the scene. No injuries were reported.

In a press release, the Vermillion Fire Department estimated the damage to the Midwest Ag building at \$50,000.