

# THE PRESS & DAKOTAN

THE DAKOTAS' OLDEST NEWSPAPER | FOUNDED 1861

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**OPINION | OTHER THOUGHTS**

## Voting Center Agreement Fair

**RAPID CITY JOURNAL (Feb. 12):** When Secretary of State Jason Gant refused to OK federal funds to set up voting centers in Native American communities, we joined others in questioning his decision.

We were pleased to learn that Gant recently reached an agreement to spend federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA) to establish voting centers in Wanblee, Eagle Butte and Fort Thompson. Four Directions Inc., a Native American voting rights group, had asked to set up the satellite voting centers because the towns are too far from the county seat for area residents to drive and cast a ballot.

The agreement ends an impasse in which Four Directions had asked the U.S. Department of Justice to investigate Gant and the state Board of Elections, which voted 4-3 in July to deny the use of federal funds for the centers.

Gant said he didn't think he had the authority to use HAVA funds for the voting centers, and he wrote to the Election Assistance Commission for clarification. The fact that the commission's seats are vacant and it hasn't met for years raised questions about Gant's motives for denying the funds and appealing to a non-existent board for guidance. Gant knew, or should have known, that he was never going to receive an answer.

We have believed that the secretary of state and Board of Elections could have made a decision without appealing to an authority they knew didn't exist.

Under the agreement, the early voting centers funded with HAVA funds would have to reimburse the state if the federal board ever rules that South Dakota acted improperly.

While we agree with Gant that any South Dakota voting-age citizen can request an absentee ballot, denying federal funds for early voting centers because a non-existent board hadn't given its permission was a dodge that was too obvious.

We are glad to see Gant agree to releasing the HAVA funds for the reservation voting centers in time for the centers to be ready for the 2014 elections.

### OUR LETTER POLICY

The **PRESS & DAKOTAN** encourages its readers to write letters to the editor, and it asks that a few simple guidelines be followed.

■ Please limit letters to 300 words or less. Letters should deal with a single subject, be of general interest and state a specific point of view. Letters are edited with brevity, clarity and newspaper style in mind.

■ In the sense of fairness and professionalism, the **PRESS & DAKOTAN** will accept no letters attacking private individuals or businesses.

■ Specific individuals or entities addressed in letters may be given the opportunity to read the letter prior to publication and be allowed to answer the letter in the same issue.

■ Only signed letters with writer's full name, address and daytime phone number for verification will be accepted. Please mail to: Letters, 319 Walnut, Yankton, SD 57078, drop off at 319 Walnut in Yankton, fax to 665-1721 or email to views@yankton.net.

### ON THIS DATE

**By The Associated Press**

Today is Monday, Feb. 17, the 48th day of 2014. There are 317 days left in the year. This is Presidents' Day.

**Today's Highlight in History:** On Feb. 17, 1864, during the Civil War, the Union ship *USS Housatonic* was rammed and sunk in Charleston Harbor, S.C., by the Confederate hand-cranked submarine *HL Hunley*, which also sank.

**On this date:** In 1863, the International Red Cross was founded in Geneva.

In 1865, Columbia, S.C., burned as the Confederates evacuated and Union forces moved in. (It's not clear which side set the blaze.)

In 1897, the forerunner of the National PTA, the National Congress of Mothers, convened its first meeting in Washington.

In 1904, the original two-act version of Giacomo Puccini's opera "Madama Butterfly" received a poor reception at its premiere at La Scala in Milan, Italy.

In 1913, the Army Show, a landmark modern art exhibit, opened in New York City.

In 1933, Newsweek magazine was first published by Thomas J.C. Martyn under the title "News-Week."

In 1944, during World War II, U.S. forces invaded Eniwetok Atoll, encountering little initial resistance from Imperial Japanese troops. (The Americans secured the atoll less than a week later.)

In 1947, the Voice of America began broadcasting to the Soviet Union.

In 1959, the United States launched Vanguard 2, a satellite which carried meteorological equipment.

In 1964, the Supreme Court, in *Wesberry v. Sanders*, ruled that congressional districts within each state had to be roughly equal in population.

In 1972, President Richard M. Nixon departed the White House with his wife, Pat, on a historic trip to China.

In 1988, Lt. Col. William Higgins, a Marine Corps officer serving with a United Nations truce monitoring group, was kidnapped in southern Lebanon by Iranian-backed terrorists (he was later slain by his captors).

**Ten years ago:** John Kerry won the Wisconsin Democratic presidential primary, with John Edwards placing second and Howard Dean coming in

a distant third. Cingular Wireless agreed to pay nearly \$41 billion in cash to buy AT&T Wireless Services. Former Mexican president Jose Lopez Portillo died in Mexico City at age 83.

**Five years ago:** President Barack Obama signed a mammoth, \$787 billion economic stimulus package into law in Denver; he also approved adding some 17,000 U.S. troops for the war in Afghanistan.

**One year ago:** Danica Patrick won the Daytona 500 pole, becoming the first woman to secure the top spot for any Sprint Cup race. (Patrick covered the 2 1/2-mile Superspeedway in 45.817 seconds, averaging 196.434 mph.) The Western Conference beat the East 143-138 in the NBA All-Star game. Mindy McCready, 37, who'd hit the top of U.S. country music charts before personal problems sidetracked her career, died by her own hand in Heber Springs, Ark.

**Today's Birthdays:** Actor Hal Holbrook is 89. Mystery writer Ruth Rendell is 84. Singer Bobby Lewis is 81. Actor-comedian Barry Humphries (aka "Dame Edna") is 80. Country singer-songwriter Johnny Bush is 79. Actress Christina Pickles is 79. Football Hall-of-Famer Jim Brown is 78. Actress Mary Ann Mobley is 77. Actress Brenda Fricker is 69. Actress Rene Russo is 60. Actor Richard Karn is 58. Actor Lou Diamond Phillips is 52. Basketball Hall of Famer Michael Jordan is 51. Actor-comedian Larry, the Cable Guy is 51. TV personality Rene Syler is 51. Movie director Michael Bay is 50. Singer Chante Moore is 47. Rock musician Timothy J. Mahoney (311) is 44. Actor Dominic Purcell is 44. Olympic gold and silver medal skier Tommy Moe is 44. Actress Denise Richards is 43. Rock singer-musician Billie Joe Armstrong (Green Day) is 42. Actor Jerry O'Connell is 40. Country singer Bryan White is 40. Actress Kelly Carlson is 38. Actor Ashton Holmes is 36. Actor Jason Ritter is 34. TV personality Paris Hilton is 33. Actor Joseph Gordon-Levitt is 33. TV host Daphne Oz (TV: "The Chew") is 28. Actor Chord Overstreet (TV: "Glee") is 25. Singer-songwriter Ed Sheeran is 23. Actress Meaghan Martin is 22.

**Thought for Today:** "Life resembles a novel more often than novels resemble life." — George Sand, French author (1804-1876).

### FROM THE BIBLE

*A truthful witness saves lives. Proverbs 14:25.* Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

### YOUR LETTERS

**Blood Drive Success**

**Rachel Fernandez, Sioux City, Iowa**

*LifeServe Blood Center*

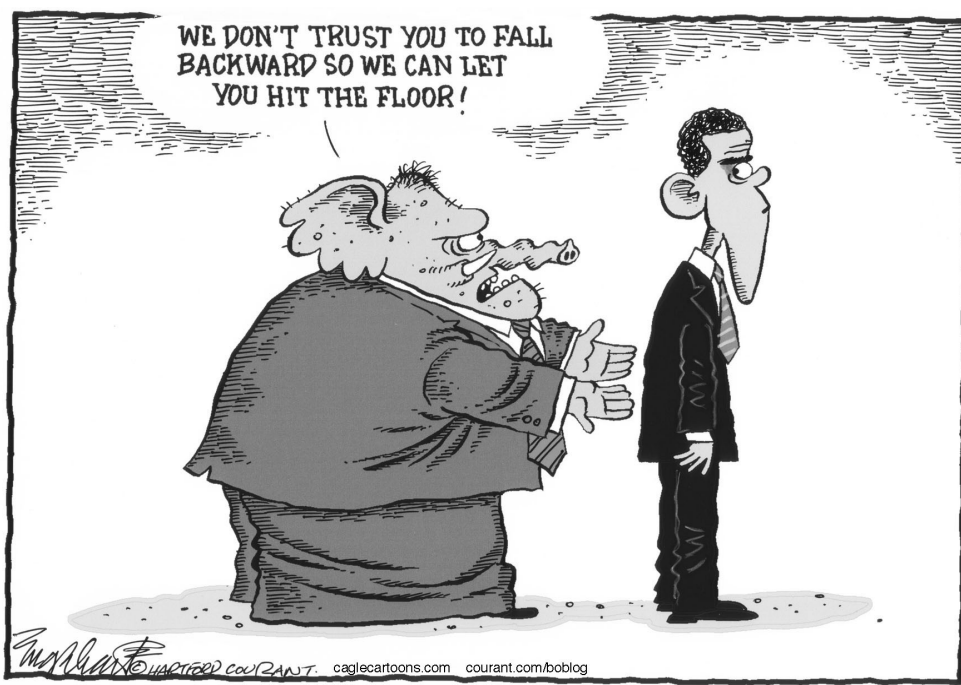
The LifeServe Blood Center blood drive held in Yankton on Feb. 11 was a HUGE success!

Forty-four donors registered and 47 life-saving units were donated. We also had several milestone donors, which are listed below. Thank you to everyone that came

out to help! The units donated at the Yankton blood drive can save up to 141 lives!

**Milestone Donors:** Sally Ann Schroeder — 1 gallon; Caitlin Crandall — 1 gallon; Lamont Cain — 3 gallons; Allen Schroeder — 9 gallons; Laverna Ulmer — 12 gallons.

The next community blood drive held in Yankton will be Tuesday, Feb. 25, from noon-6:30 p.m. at the Avera Sacred Heart Benedictine Center.



**Capitol Notebook**

## 2 Legislators To Watch On Video Lottery

**BY BOB MERCER**

State Capitol Bureau

**PIERRE** — Will this be the legislative session when the backers of video lottery overcome the opponents of expanded gambling?

The South Dakota Lottery Commission and the hundreds of business involved in video lottery hope so.

They held several strategy sessions in the past year, outlining their goals to increase the money they get from players.

A better bottom line for video lottery means three things.

The state treasury and the businesses will split more money. The players will lose more money.

Every dollar lost in the privately owned machines is split 50-50 with state government.

The 2014 legislative session lands in an election year. Gov. Dennis Daugaard is up for a second four-year term and all 105 legislative seats are up for their usual two-year terms.

There isn't any question after the past three years that the Daugaard administration wants more money from video lottery.

That can best be seen from the appointments the governor made to the commission, the hiring of a new assistant director for the lottery's central office and the regular visits that state Revenue Secretary Andy Gerlach makes to the commission meetings.

The days of easy growth ended about 10 years ago, and the sit-back approach was scrapped after the 2010 smoking ban took effect.

The commission didn't offer legislation this session. Instead the commission is openly backing two bills that are pieces of the agenda to make more money from video lottery.

The Senate and the House of Representatives will take their first votes on those measures in the coming days.

The Senate Commerce Committee voted 5-2

Thursday to endorse legislation from Sen. Dan Lederman, R-Dakota Dunes. It would increase to 15 the maximum number of video lottery machines in an establishment.

The limit since video lottery began in the late 1980s has been 10. Lederman's bill would require that any machine above 10 had to use new software technology.

The second piece moving to a vote in the House in the next few days would allow the Lottery Commission to increase the \$2 bet limit to as much as \$5.

The commission also would be allowed to set rules for free play, similar to Deadwood casinos and tribal casinos. It also would remove the \$1,000 maximum award.

In this instance, the commission is trying to make video lottery more competitive with other gambling locations in South Dakota and neighboring states. Rep. Dick Werner, R-Huron, is prime sponsor of the bet-limit bill, HB 1246.

Werner previously served on the Lottery Commission. He was part of its new wave of members who wanted more aggressive approaches to making more money for state government from the lottery's array of products.

The House Commerce Committee endorsed Werner's bill 9-4 Wednesday.

Last year the Legislature gave authority for penny machines.

The Senate agreed with the South Dakota Lottery's proposal 30-5. But it wasn't the easiest sell in the House, where representatives approved it 39-28. They needed 36.

If the Werner bet-limit bill makes it through the House in the next few days, its lead sponsor in the Senate next will be Lederman.

And if the Lederman machine-numbers bill makes it through the Senate in the next few days, the lead sponsor in the House next will be Werner.

Dick Werner and Dan Lederman will be the legislators to watch on this issue this session.

## Pondering The 'Wreckovery'

**BY MICHELLE MALKIN**

Creators Syndicate

On Feb. 17, 2009, President Obama promised the sun and the moon and the stars. That was the day, five years ago, when he signed the \$800 billion "American Recovery and Reinvestment Act." President Modesty called it "the most sweeping economic recovery package in our history." He promised "unprecedented transparency and accountability." He claimed the spending would lift "two million Americans from poverty." Ready for the reality smackdown?

The actual cost of the \$800 billion pork-laden stimulus has ballooned to nearly \$2 trillion. At the time of the law's signing, the unemployment rate hovered near 8 percent. Obama's egghead economists projected that the jobless rate would never rise above 8 percent and would plunge to 5 percent by December 2013. The actual jobless rate in January was 6.6 percent, with an abysmal labor force participation rate of 63 percent (a teeny uptick from December, but still at a four-decade low).

Five years after the Recovery Act, 10.2 million people are out of work. The number of able-bodied Americans who have simply given up looking for work or are "not in the labor force (but) who currently want a job" has exploded. By some estimates, a record 90 million-plus people are hopelessly sitting on the sidelines.

The unemployment rate for black Americans is 12.1 percent; nearly double the national rate. The Obama campaign excoriated President George W. Bush when it exceeded 10 percent under his watch. The black teen jobless rate is now a whopping record 38 percent. Some 50 million Americans remain below the poverty level. And 47 million are now on food stamps, a third more than when Obama first took office in the halcyon days of Hope and Change.

After \$150 billion in stimulus and other spending on green energy boondoggles, what does the White House have to show for it? According to The Green Corruption Files blog, 32 Obama-backed environmental firms have gone bankrupt as of February 2014. These include crony-clogged Solyndra at a cost to taxpayers of \$535 million; Beacon Power, \$240 million; Abound Solar, \$400 million-plus; Fisker Auto, \$529 million; A123, \$250 million; ECOality, \$100 million; and Ener1, \$118.5 million. In addition, 22 other Obama green energy projects are now in dire financial trouble.

Unprecedented transparency? Section 1513 of the Recovery Act required the White House to submit a progress report every three months. Last year, blogger Doug Powers noted: "Under their own guidelines, the administration should have released 14 of these reports by now, but they've only submitted eight of them for public review." What-ehs.

Obama promised an avalanche of "shovel-ready" jobs to build vital infrastructure before signing the Recovery Act. Instead, stimulus money went to wasteful makework and non-work, including: bridges to nowhere; a California project to pho-

tograph ants; a University of North Carolina computerized dance program; a privately owned martini bar and Brazilian steakhouse in Missouri; a bogus New Hampshire beauty school; and renovations to Vice President Joe Biden's favorite Amtrak train station in Delaware. Somehow, stimulus "Sheriff" Biden overlooked the hundreds of millions in stimulus money steered to General Services Administrations junkets in Las Vegas and Hawaii, ghost congressional districts, dead people, and those ubiquitous stimulus propaganda road signs stamped with the shovel-ready logo.

In 2012, Ohio State University economics professor Bill Dupor reported that more than three-quarters of the jobs created or saved by the stimulus were government jobs. Dupor and another colleague also concluded that the massive wealth redistribution scheme "destroyed/forested roughly one million private sector jobs" by siphoning tax dollars "to offset state revenue shortfalls and Medicaid increases rather than boost private sector employment."

In 2011, at a rare meeting of his Jobs and Competitiveness Council, Obama turned his "shovel-ready" vow into a punchline: "Shovel-ready was not as, uh, shovel-ready as we expected," he cracked with a sheepish grin. The dog-and-pony Jobs Council, led by GE's Jeffrey Immelt, giggled and cackled at Obama's snark.

More forgotten insult to grievous injury: the telling moment when *New York Times* columnist David Brooks giggled on Jim Lehrer's PBS show that Obama had told him off the record in 2009 that the shovel-ready promise was a crock, but that he sat on the truth until the *Times'* Peter Baker reported the admission more than a year later in October 2010. The transcript:

**JIM LEHRER:** Off the record? So, then you can't talk about it.

**(LAUGHTER)**

**DAVID BROOKS:** Yes, because Peter Baker is a better (reporter) than I am, because I couldn't get him to go on the record with that thing.

**(LAUGHTER)**

**JIM LEHRER:** He said this to you a year ago?

**DAVID BROOKS:** It was obvious. I mean, you are trying to build a stimulus package. And when they were trying to build it, believe me, they would have loved to have filled it with infrastructure jobs. But the projects just didn't exist.

While the lapdogs of the Fourth Estate snicker along with the White House about their lies and cover-up, the Wreckovery Act wreckage continues to pile up. And now the White House wants more money to burn for Porkulus Redux.

Retiring Sen. Tom Coburn, R-Okla., was right when he warned five years ago that the "morally reprehensible" stimulus represented "the worst act of generational theft in our nation's history." It's no joke. It's a \$2 trillion travesty built on criminal government malpractice. Take that and shovel it.

*Michelle Malkin is the author of "Culture of Corruption: Obama and his Team of Tax Cheats, Crooks and Cronies" (Regnery 2010). Her e-mail address is malkinblog@gmail.com.*