

South Dakota

Tax-Refund Program Winds Down

BY BOB MERCER
State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE — For the past decade, state government carried tens of millions of dollars on the books year after year waiting for companies to come looking for tax refunds they were owed on big projects in South Dakota.

This spring, that practice will end. The governor signed into law last week an emergency act passed by the Legislature setting a May 1 deadline for all claims to be filed.

Any money remaining afterward — if there is any — will go to general use.

It is the last act in what began as a very secretive program. For years the state Revenue Department of the Rounds administration treated as confidential the refund amounts and the names of the companies receiving them.

Not even legislators could find out the details.

That changed in 2009. A reporter for five daily newspapers successfully challenged Revenue for access to the permits

that companies needed to obtain as a first step to qualifying for the refunds.

As that appeal moved forward, the Legislature declared the amounts of the refunds and the identities of the projects and the companies to be public records.

When all of that information became available, the Legislature decided in 2010 to end the program altogether. Lawmakers set an ending date of Dec. 31, 2012.

In 2011, new Gov. Dennis Daugaard convinced enough Republicans in the Legislature to approve a similar new program. But Democrats successfully petitioned for a referendum, and South Dakota voters overwhelmingly rejected it in the November 2012 elections.

The refund program wound up costing the state treasury more than \$99 million through Dec. 31, 2013.

Approximately \$30 million of potential liabilities are still on the state's books for the program, however.

The Legislature set a definite window for refunds to be processed for projects that qualified after the 2010 decision to end the program.

But there wasn't a cut-off for older projects. The emergency law taking effect this spring sets the deadline for them at May 1.

Approximately \$30 million remains on the books as potential liabilities. The governor has built \$19.4 million of the leftover into his budget plans. Another \$10 million or so is still in play.

The new law, HB 1070, cruised through the House of Representatives 66-2 and the Senate 31-1.

"We worked with the Department of Revenue to send out letters to any projects that would be affected by this," said the legislation's prime sponsor, Rep. Mark Mickelson, R-Sioux Falls.

The Building South Dakota program that was approved by the Legislature in 2013 includes a reinvestment provision that replaces the refund program.

Under the old program companies automatically qualified for refunds if they met requirements set in state law and filed to get their money back. It didn't matter whether the refund was important to the decision to build the project in South Dakota.

Cabela's Co-Founder Dies At 77

SIDNEY, Neb. (AP) — One of the co-founders of outdoor outfitter Cabela's has died at the age of 77.

Cabela's says Richard Cabela died Monday at his home in Sidney, where the company is based.

The company that sells outdoor gear and sporting goods got its start humbly in 1961 when Richard Cabela bought \$45 of fishing flies in Chicago.

When the flies didn't sell quickly at the family's furniture store, Cabela started selling them through the mail with his wife and brother, Jim.

That led to the development of the Cabela's catalog and eventually the firm with \$3.6 billion revenue and 50 retail stores across North America.

Current Cabela's CEO Tommy Millner says Dick and Jim Cabela made it possible for people to find quality outdoor gear no matter where they lived.

Crop Values Show Decline In 2013

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — The value of crops fell last year as corn and soybean prices declined from record highs the year before.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture says in an annual report the value of 2013 field crops fell 9.8 percent to nearly \$167 billion from \$185 billion in 2012.

The 2012 drought reduced the corn and soybean harvest and drove prices to record highs which resulted in increased crop value.

Friday's report says the average price of corn for 2012 was \$6.89 per bushel and the value of the crop that year was \$74.3 billion. Last year's average price was \$4.50 and the overall value fell to \$62.7 billion.

Top crop producers last year were Illinois with crops valued at \$16 billion, Iowa at \$15.9 billion and Nebraska at nearly \$12 billion.

Lakota Minister Takes On Park Plan

RAPID CITY (AP) — A Lakota minister is trying to stop plans by the National Park Service and Oglala Sioux tribe to create a tribal national park in southwestern South Dakota.

The plan threatens the sanctity of sacred land near the Black Hills and the ranching way of life of the people who live there and have had land passed down through generations of their families, Robert Two Bulls told the *Rapid City Journal*.

"I'm not going to sit idle when people are oppressed," he said. "I'm not going to lose my land to those people."

National Park Service officials hope to complete draft legislation early this year to eventually bring the park plan to Congress for approval. The plan includes the reintroduction of bison to the South Unit of Badlands National Park.

Bill Would Tighten Payday Loan Rules

PIERRE (AP) — After negotiating with representatives of the payday lending industry, Rep. Steve Hickey has come up with a proposal he hopes the South Dakota Legislature will pass to put restrictions on the short-term loans he says can trap poor people in crippling cycles of debt.

The Sioux Falls Republican said industry representatives were alarmed last year by his effort that would have placed a proposed law on the statewide ballot to cap interest rates for such loans. He

said he agreed to stop the ballot effort if they would cooperate to write reasonable regulations.

The compromise resulted in a bill that instead of limiting interest rates for short-term loans would impose additional state regulations and limit the size of loans based on a borrower's ability to repay. The House Commerce and Energy Committee will hold a hearing on the measure Wednesday.

"You would think any reasonable, responsible lender would ensure a person bor-

rowing the money can indeed pay them back. Stunningly, this industry doesn't operate like that," Hickey said. "They get people in, give them money and keep flipping the loans many times over. It's extremely profitable for them. It's a debt trap."

Current law puts a limit of \$500 on a short-term loan or the total balances of all loans made by a lender to a customer. Hickey's bill would change that to \$700, but the loan could not exceed 25 percent of the borrower's gross

monthly income.

The measure also would limit loan renewals or rollovers, give borrowers a chance to cancel loans within a day of making a deal, allow extended payment plans with no additional finance charge and require lenders to provide information on loans to the state Banking Commission.

One of the lenders Hickey worked with to develop the proposal is Advance America, a South Carolina-based company that has offices in South Dakota and 28 other states.

American Life In Poetry

The Task Of Easing A Tree's Burden

BY TED KOOSER
U.S. Poet Laureate

One of the founders of modernist poetry, Ezra Pound, advised poets and artists to "make it new." I've never before seen a poem about helping a tree shake the snow from itself, and I like this one by Thomas Reiter, who lives in New Jersey.

RELEASING A TREE

Softly pummeled overnight, the lower limbs of our Norway spruce flexed and the deepening snow held them. Windless sunlight now, so I go out wearing hip waders and carrying not a fly rod but a garden hoe. I begin worrying the snow for the holdfast of a branch that's so far down a wren's nest floats above it like a buoy. I work the hoe, not chopping but cradling, then pull straight up. A current of air as the needles loft their burden over my head. Those grace notes of the snowfall, crystals giving off copper, green, rose — watching them I stumble over a branch, go down and my gloves fill with snow. Ah, I find my father here: I remember as a child how flames touched my hand the time I added wood to the stove in our ice-fishing shanty, how he plunged that hand through the hole into the river, teaching me one kind of burning can ease another. The branch bobs then tapers into place and composes itself, looking unchanged though all summer it will bring up this day from underfoot.

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BY TOM AND RAY MAGLIOZZI
King Features Syndicate, Inc.

Dear Tom and Ray:
I have a Chrysler 300M with a stuck driver's window. The mechanical function is fine — when it works, it works fine. But heat seems to glue the window closed: When it's hot out, it sticks to the plastic liner and won't go down until the temperature drops. I live in Florida, so the temperature doesn't drop very often! Is there a grease, lubricant or cleaner I can use to fix this? I need that window to function. Help. — BJ

TOM: Have you considered a hammer, BJ?

RAY: It's not entirely clear to me that it's sticking, BJ. You might assume it's "getting stuck" in the up position. But the window motor could be dying.

TOM: It's not unusual for a window motor to fail intermittently when it's on the way out.

RAY: Unlike my brother, who tries to be consistent by failing all the time.

TOM: Your window switch, or window relay, also could be failing in extreme heat — remember, it's a lot hotter inside a parked car than it is outside. And when you want to open the window? When you sit down in a hot car, and it's 150 degrees inside, and you seat your thighs on the "300M" logos on the seat cushions.

RAY: So the first question for you is: Can you hear or feel the motor trying to work when the window is stuck? When you hit the window switch, is the motor straining to lower the glass?

TOM: If it is, then the switch and the motor are fine and the window is, indeed, stuck somehow.

RAY: In that case, the first thing I'd try is some silicone spray. There's rubber weath-

erstripping in the door that the window slides into when it's closed. Hit the inside of that weatherstripping on all three sides of the door frame with some silicone spray. Cans of silicone spray often come with thin tubes that allow you to get that gunk into small spaces. That's what you want to use.

TOM: If a good shot of silicone doesn't get the window moving freely, then you have to suspect that the window regulator is sticking. That's the mechanical erector set inside the door that actually lifts and lowers the glass. If it's binding up, then you have to get someone to remove the door panel and replace it for you.

RAY: And if that doesn't fix it, you'll have to drive to a cold-weather climate and sell

the car there. Good luck, BJ.

Why do unmitigated cheapskates like Tom continue to buy nothing but old clunkers? Find out by ordering Tom and Ray's guide "How to Buy a Great Used Car: Secrets Only Your Mechanic Knows." Send \$4.75 (check or money order) to Used Car, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475.

Get more *Click and Clack* in their new book, "Ask Click and Clack: Answers from Car Talk." Got a question about cars? Write to *Click and Clack* in care of this newspaper, or email them by visiting the Car Talk website at www.cartalk.com.

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Car Talk: Getting Some Help For A Non-Functioning Window

Senior Citizens: Please Join Us For Coffee, Cookies, Conversation and FREE BINGO

Thursday, Feb. 20th • 2PM ~ East Bldg.

Autumn Winds, LLC
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60th Anniversary Celebration



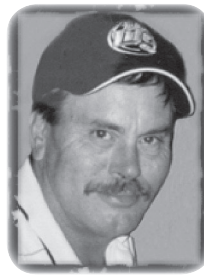
Mr. and Mrs. Neuharth
Mr. and Mrs. Philip Neuharth Jr., Menno, SD, will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary on Friday, Feb. 28, 2014.

Philip Neuharth Jr. and Virginia Voy were married on February 28, 1954 at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Scotland, SD.

They have eight children: the late Lonnie Jo Neuharth, Lue Allen (Pam) Neuharth, Menno, SD; Lue Ann (Rick) Miller, Scotland, SD; Phillip (Linda) Neuharth, Menno, SD; Marcia (Clay) Roubideaux, Utica, SD; Dianne (Donny) Hopf, Yankton, SD; Sandra Kuper, Watertown, SD; and Mary (Mark) Olesen, Yankton, SD.

The couple has 17 grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren. Their family requests a card shower. Greetings may be sent to P.O. Box 147, Menno, SD 57045.

Thank You



We would like to extend a special thank you to everyone who expressed their condolences in person or by cards, telephone calls, beautiful flowers, food, kind words, and stories about Greg and helping us share our sorrow.

Thank you to Father John for the beautiful service. Thank you to Marla Bianchini for singing such a touching song. Thank you to all the honorary pallbearers for honoring Greg at the celebration of his life.

We want to thank the emergency personnel and first responders who gave us help that day. We especially thank Steve and Paul Wintz and the staff at Wintz and Ray Funeral home for their compassion and care given to our family and for all the special things they did to make it easier to face our loss. What a wonderful tribute to honor the life of our beloved husband, father and grandpa.

We will miss Greg, his stories and the way he could visit with a friend or stranger on any subject. We will be grateful for the time we shared. We know he loved us with all his heart and taught us to cherish every moment and we will continue to do so - taking one day at a time.

The Family of Greg Koepsell

DO YOU KNOW YOUR NUMBERS?
TAKE OWNERSHIP OF YOUR HEALTH

When you know numbers, you can take action to reduce your chances of developing heart disease, diabetes and other major chronic illnesses.

The Avera Sacred Heart Hospital Lab provides health screenings at reduced rates. Walk-in, no appointment or doctor order necessary, and make sure you know your numbers.



TESTS AVAILABLE INCLUDE:

- **Complete Blood Count \$8**
Helps to determine general health status
- **Comprehensive Lab Profile \$15**
Profile of kidneys and liver, as well as blood sugar and proteins
- **Lipid Panel Screen \$12**
Measures good and bad cholesterol and risk of heart disease
- **Hemoglobin A1c \$16**
Determines average blood glucose over past 3 months
- **Thyroid Profile \$20**
Evaluates thyroid gland function and helps diagnose thyroid disorders.
- **Vitamin D Screen \$35**
Determine if bone weakness, bone malformation, or abnormal metabolism of calcium (reflected by abnormal calcium, phosphorus, PTH) is occurring as a result of a deficiency or excess of vitamin D.

Walk-in testing available Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. - 5 p.m. 12-hour fasting is required for some tests.



For more information, call the Avera Sacred Heart Hospital Lab at 605-668-8169.