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SF Roosevelt Sweeps Yankton SPORTS/9

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A sign welcomes visitors to the Westfield Acres housing development in Hartington, Neb., in this photo taken last fall. The NerdWallet website ranked Cedar County, which includes Hartington, and neighboring Knox County among the Top 10 Nebraska counties for job seekers.

Our Towns

Area Counties Rank Among Highest For Job Seekers

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF randy.dockendorf@yankton.net

When it comes to attracting jobs, Cedar and Knox counties show their efforts are working.

And now, a national Internet site has recognized them among the 10 best Nebraska counties for job seekers.

The NerdWallet consumer advocacy website ranked Cedar County second and Knox County ninth among 56 Nebraska counties included in the analysis. Only counties with a population of more than 5,000 were considered.

In her article, NerdWallet writer Annie Wang noted Nebraska's low jobless rate of 3.9 percent in October, trailing only North Dakota and South Dakota.

"With these prospects, Nebraska is undoubtedly one of the best states for job seekers," she said. "However, not all places offer the same opportunities, and cost of living can be a big factor. To help, NerdWallet crunched the numbers to find the best places for job seekers in Nebraska."

The website looked at the counties' unemployment rate. The site also assessed growth in the working-age population, ages 16 and older, from 2009 to 2011 to ensure the county was attracting workers and showing a trend of upward population growth.

NerdWallet also looked at whether workers could live in the county comfortably, Wang said.

"We measured a county's median household income to see if workers made a good living," she said. "We also analyzed the monthly homeowner costs, including mortgage payments, to see if the county had a reasonable cost of living."

The article noted Cedar County's working-age population grew 3.2 percent between 2009 and 2011, and its unemployment rate stands at 2.7 percent.

From 2009 to 2011, Knox County saw an increase of 1.5 percent in its working-age population. Its 3 percent jobless rate last October stood below the state average.

Cedar County has seen a spurt in construction and expansion in recent years, ac-

OT | PAGE 2

Yankton County

Road Limit Plan Axed

Commission Decides To Rework Resolution In Response To Criticism

BY NATHAN JOHNSON nathan.johnson@yankton.net

The Yankton County Commission had a heavy load to bear Tuesday when a large crowd turned up to protest a recent resolution limiting the gross vehicle weight on all county-maintained improved highways. Recognizing that the matter needs more

evaluation, the commission repealed an 80,000-pound limit on all its paved roads.

At a Feb. 4 meeting, commissioners approved the resolution. Up to that point, not much input had been received on the measure.

However, commissioners said they were inundated with phone calls from upset citi-



Moore

zens once news of the resolution spread during the past few weeks. The result was the largest crowd at a County Commission meeting in at least 10 years. The standing-room only audience spilled outside of the commission chambers.

"I got a number of calls. We all did," Commission Chairman Bruce Jensen told the crowd. "That's why we scheduled a (hearing) tonight to get things straightened out."

The hearing began with the commission listening to the concerns of a handful of resi-

COUNTY | PAGE 13

Medical Move For Vermillion



DAVID LIAS/VERMILLION PLAIN TALK

Under an agreement between the Dakota Hospital Foundation and Sanford Health, the original Dakota Hospital building in Vermillion, along with expansions added to its south and north ends shown in this photo, will be demolished in the next two years. The agreement also calls for a \$12 million investment in the city's medical facilities during the next five years.

A Major Upgrade

Original Hospital To Be Demolished To Make Way For \$12M Investment

BY TRAVIS GULBRANDSON travis.gulbrandson@plaintalk.net

VERMILLION — The oldest section of the Sanford Vermillion Medical Center (SVMC) could be demolished within the next two years as part of an agreement between the Dakota Hospital Foundation (DHF) and Sanford Health, which will make a \$12 million investment in the city's medical facilities over the next five years.

This will include renovations, demolition and construction of a new facility in the old one's location, concluding with Sanford Health assuming ownership for future infrastructure, including building projects and technology.

The announcement was made Tuesday afternoon by Sanford Vermillion CEO Timothy

"We know that (the demolition) comes with some emotions from the public ... but one of the things that we've learned from Sanford Health and the university is, sometimes the worst thing to do is to try and accommodate an old building."

TIMOTHY TRACY

Tracy during a meeting with the Vermillion City Council.

"We know that (the demolition) comes with some emotions from the public ... but one of the things that we've learned from Sanford Health and the university is, sometimes the worst thing to do is to try and accommodate an old building," Tracy said. "What you end up with when you're all done is a building

that you're still trying to accommodate and still trying to work around."

The plan is to tear down the original hospital, which was built in 1935, along with the two additions that are connected to it. Those small expansions to the original building do not include the newer hospital expansion

UPGRADE | PAGE 3

Panel Rejects Bill On Sex Orientation

PIERRE (AP) — A South Dakota legislative panel has rejected a measure that sought to protect people from being sued for expressing their religious beliefs regarding sexual orientation.

The bill also sought to protect businesses against lawsuits if they refuse to serve or hire a person because of sexual orientation.

The Senate Judiciary Committee voted 5-2 to kill the bill after opponents said it would have no practical effect but would be seen as mean and hateful.

The measure also attempted to order judges to dismiss lawsuits dealing with freedom of speech or hiring based on sexual orientation.

Winter Tunes



KELLY HERTZ/P&D

Seventh-grade violinist Brenna Becker and the rest of the Yankton Middle School seventh-eighth grade orchestra work their way through "Beethoven, Inc." during an orchestral winter concert Tuesday night at the YHS/Summit Activities Center theatre, featuring performances by two middle school orchestras and the high school orchestra. To see or purchase images from this event, visit spotted.yankton.net.

South Dakota

Bill To Give Gun Laws More Power Defeated

By NORA HERTEL Associated Press

PIERRE — A bill that would have given South Dakota state gun laws supremacy over those of federal and local governments failed in a legislative panel Tuesday.

The House Local Government Committee voted 8-4 to reject the measure.

The bill would have made it a felony for law enforcement officers to carry out federal or local firearms regulations that were more restrictive than state laws. It also would have invalidated

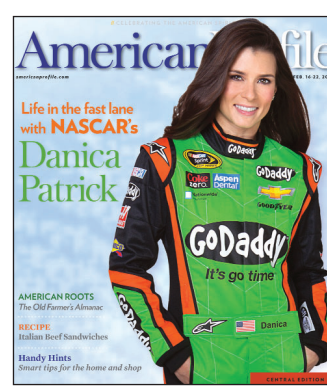
any presidential executive orders and local ordinances that restricted firearm possession and use.

Supporters of the bill, including a representative from the National Association for Gun Rights, argued that it was necessary to preserve the Second Amendment rights of law-abiding South Dakotans.

Opponents said the bill is both unconstitutional and unenforceable. They said the state cannot place its laws above

GUNS | PAGE 13

INSIDE



American Profile

29 DAYS UNTIL SPRING