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YANKTON DAILY PRESS & DAKOTAN

Volume 139 Number 257

The Dakotas' Oldest Newspaper | 18 PAGES | www.yankton.net

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Battles Over Core Reach End In House

Deadline Passes With No Wins Against New Academic Standards

BY BOB MERCER
State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE — The last battles in the Legislature over Common Core ended in victory Tuesday for supporters of the new academic standards for math and English language.

The House of Representatives voted 45-24 against an anti-Common Core resolution brought by Rep. Stace Nelson, R-Fulton.



Nelson

House members also refused 42-27 to debate one of the pieces of legislation from the leader of the Common Core opposition, Rep. Jim Bolin, R-Canton.

Bolin wanted to let parents withhold their children from participating in achievement tests such as those related to Common Core.

Every piece of legislation that sought to derail or analyze Common Core standards has lost so far this year. There are two-plus weeks remaining in the 2014 session, but lawmakers can't introduce any more bills without suspending the rules.

The state Board of Education adopted the Common Core standards for math and English in November 2010. Public schools throughout South Dakota are using them

this year, and opponents began protesting at state board meetings last year.

Tuesday marked the deadline for all bills to pass or fail in their house of origin. Bolin managed to get one of his Common Core bills passed before the afternoon ended.

House members agreed the state board needs to slow down and provide more time for public comments in the future, when the board considers multi-state changes for academic standards in South Dakota.

Under Bolin's bill, the state board would need to observe intervals of at least 60 days between public hearings in Aberdeen, Sioux Falls, Rapid City and Pierre. The state board would need to provide public notice of each hearing at least 14 days in advance.

House members voted 59-9 in favor. HB 1075 moves to the Senate next.

No one spoke against it. Bolin said it would become unnecessary if the House adopts another measure that has already passed in the Senate.

Bolin referred to SB 64, one of several Common Core-related bills sponsored by Sen. Ernie Otten, R-Tea.

Otten's measure would prohibit the state board from adopting any additional multi-state standards until July 1, 2016. It doesn't contain Bolin's

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This sign warns visitors entering the Avon school of the district's ban on peanuts, peanut products and other nuts from the property and buses. The school board took the action in response to a student's severe peanut allergy that could prove fatal to the child.

Our Towns | Bon Homme County

Peanut Ban Enacted To Protect Student

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF
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AVON — To protect a child's health, the Avon school district has put the nix on nuts.

The school board has banned peanuts, peanut products and all nuts from school property and buses in response to a new student's potentially life-threatening allergy, said Superintendent Tom Culver.

Unlike other allergic reactions that cause discomfort, a reaction to peanuts could prove fatal, Culver said. For that reason, the district has taken extraordinary measures to sanitize the school premises, he added.

"I don't think most people realize

how serious and life-threatening this (peanut allergy) can be," he said. "You could go into anaphylactic shock, where the airways close off."

Some patrons questioned why the ban was necessary, believing the student can just avoid eating peanuts and related products at school, Culver said. However, peanut usage by anyone can contaminate school property and set off an allergic reaction for the student, he said.

The Avon ban covers all peanuts and peanut products such as peanut butter, nut granola bars and peanut candies. The ban includes lunches, snacks, in-school birthday parties or food brought on field trips. The policy



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County Set Real Estate Records In 2013

BY NATHAN JOHNSON
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Real estate sales in Yankton County climbed to new heights in 2013, according to the register of deeds office.

The county recorded \$98.38 million in real estate sales, shattering the previous record of \$81.29 million set in 2012 by a 21 percent margin.

Register of Deeds Brian Hunhoff notes in his annual report that \$98 million is a \$25.1 million increase from 2011.

"This is the fifth consecutive year Yankton County's land sales total has risen," he stated.

Seven of those 603 real estate transactions exceeded \$1 million.

Hunhoff said the biggest of them was a \$5.2 million farmland sale near Gayville. The next largest was a \$2.5 million sale.

Additionally, the register of deeds office recorded 1,042 deeds and reported 1,100 land transfers — both increases compared to 2012.

"We often cite rising farmland values as the primary reason for the county's increasing real estate sales total," Hunhoff stated. "The last two sets of numbers show it is not only the dollar amount of sales that is increasing, but the overall number of sales is up as well."

As the aforementioned figures rise, Hunhoff points out that the number of liens and foreclosures are declining.

The office recorded 146 state, federal and mechanic's liens in 2013, compared to 179 in 2012 and 220 in 2011.

Initial foreclosure filings

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22 DAYS UNTIL SPRING

SPORTS



Area Basketball Teams Move On
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INSIDE



American Profile



PHOTO: LINDA WUEBBEN
Dan Thoene of Fordyce, Neb., displays a map of the Brazilian state that he and his wife Norma visited last fall. They made the trip upon the invitation of a former foreign exchange student who had lived with them.

Fordyce Man Gets First-Hand Look At Farming In Brazil

BY LINDA WUEBBEN
P&D Correspondent

FORDYCE, Neb. — Dan Thoene and wife Norma of Fordyce have a rich history with foreign exchange students. So much so that, this past December, Thoene took advantage of an invitation to visit the state of Piaui in Brazil.

"I wanted to see first-hand how farming was done in South America," said Thoene. "I didn't want to go on a tour or with a farming organization. I wanted to get into the real farming areas."

Thoene was able to make this happen because of his connection with hosting foreign exchange students. In 2008, a young Brazilian girl was the guest of the Thoene family through the foreign ex-

change program. The two families became connected and have continued this connection through the past several years.

In 2012 a brother, Marcos Brito, came to finish a degree in English at the University of Nebraska at Kearney and asked the Thoene family if he could stay with them over the summer months into harvest to study agriculture in North America. He has a degree in agriculture also but wanted "first-hand" experience.

"It wasn't a very good year for him to see farming," Thoene said with a laugh but Marcos helped them work cattle and haul the few bales harvested during that dry year.

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Fatalities Up In SD Wrecks

PIERRE (AP) — Fatalities in car wrecks on South Dakota highways so far this year have almost doubled compared to the same period in 2013.

The state's Department of Public Safety says 24 people have died in crashes in 2014. The state recorded 13 highway fatalities during the first two months of 2013.

Lee Axdahl with the South Dakota Office of Highway Safety says frequent

snowfalls have created road conditions that may have contributed to the crashes. Axdahl notes that half of this year's victims were not wearing seatbelts.

Axdahl says it is still "difficult" to understand that some people still drive without buckling up first.

Axdahl said alcohol, speeding and overdriving road conditions in bad weather also contributed to several of the wrecks.



Something For Dr. Seuss

Second-grade students from Yankton's Beadle Elementary School make funny faces as part of the song "No Laugh Race," during the school's winter concert Tuesday night at the YHS/Summit Activities Center theatre. Students from grades 1-3, under the direction of Lea Ann Schramm, presented "The Cat in the Hat Songbook," in honor of the March 2 birthday of Dr. Seuss (aka Theodor Geisel). To see or purchase images from this event, visit spotted.yankton.net. (Kelly Hertz/P&D)