



**USD Squeaks Past
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SAC: Paid In Full

After 20 Years, YSD Makes Final Payment On Facility

BY DEREK BARTOS
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It's now a home to education, concerts, activities and other events. But 20 years ago, it was just a pile of dirt.

In 1993, funding approval for the Yankton High School/Summit Activities Center cleared its final hurdle. Through a partnership between the Yankton School District (YSD) and the City of Yankton, the \$20 million structure would be paid for by a combination of a bond issue and an increase in city sales tax.

Last month, YSD made its final payment on its portion of the facility, closing out two decades of district funding that took place only after two bond issues, state legislative action and a state Supreme Court decision. The City of Yankton made its final payment in late 2012.

"I want to thank the Yankton patrons, the City of Yankton and the former school board members and city commissioners for making that work at the time," YSD superintendent Wayne Kindle told the *Press & Dakotan*. "As everybody knows, it has served our students in the district extremely well."

The first \$12 million bond issue (the remaining \$8 million would come from a 1-cent city sales tax) went before a public vote in June 1991 and was rejected, with 57 percent voting against the measure. After concerns with the proposal were addressed — including moving the proposed location of the facility from Fox Run to Summit Street — organizers again brought the issue forward. This time, patrons approved, with 55 percent in favor of the bond.

However, the future of the proposal was still uncertain.

Several opponents of the facility claimed the election was invalid due to insufficient legal notices and ballot information. They also contended the bond issue required 60 percent approval.

The state Supreme Court later ruled against those arguments. Part of its decision was based on a 1993 law passed by the state Legislature declaring any

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Twenty years following the original bonds being issued for the Yankton High School/Summit Activities Center, the Yankton School District made its final payment on its portion of the facility in December. Opened to students in 1996 and the public in 1997, the facility has hosted a variety of academic and athletic activities.

KELLY HERTZ/P&D

Economic Survey Suggests Growth, Optimism For Midwest

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — The economy will likely continue growing slowly in nine Midwestern and Plains states in the months ahead, according to a new survey of business leaders released Thursday.

The monthly survey's overall index remained at a weak level even though it improved to 53.2 in December from November's 51.2. Any score above 50 suggests growth.

"The resolution of the federal budget impasse and improvements in the nation's housing sector boosted supply managers' business outlook for the month," Creighton University economist Ernie Goss said.

The confidence index for the region jumped to 66.5 in December from November's 57.2, suggesting managers are quite optimistic about the next six months.

The survey covers Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma and South Dakota.

The survey results are compiled into a collection of indexes ranging from zero to 100. Survey

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HHS Moving Forward With New Facility

BY ROB NIELSEN
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This weekend when the Heartland Humane Society holds its monthly "meet and greet" in the former home of the Yankton Motor Company, it'll be yet another step toward turning the old building into the group's new home.

HHS Executive Director Kerry Schmidt said a new facility has been a goal of the humane society since she took over.

"I was hired in September 2011 to take the shelter in a new direction," Schmidt said. "That's always been a vision since I've been here."

The new facility will be located in the former Yankton Motor Company building on the east side of Yankton along Highway 50. Schmidt said HHS officially acquired the building Nov. 1, and is now deep into the planning process.

"We are almost finished with architectural design of the facility," she said. "We're making sure the design is



ROB NIELSEN/P&D

Heartland Humane Society Executive Director Kerry Schmidt stands in what will become the HHS' new shelter over the course of the next year. The building — recently vacated by the Yankton Motor Company — boasts over 8,500 square-feet of space versus the shelter's current 1,000 square-foot facility.

going to be able to match what we think we can fundraiser over the next year or so. If those two numbers match and we're comfortable with the project costs and the amount of fundraising that needs to be done, then we'll move forward and hire contractors. As the money is raised, construction will start."

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S.D. AG: Benda's Daughter Won't Allow Opening Of File

PIERRE (AP) — Attorney General Marty Jackley has reiterated that South Dakota law prevents reporters from reviewing investigative records into the death of a former state economic development director.

Richard Benda was found dead Oct. 22 in a grove near Lake Andes with a fatal shotgun wound. His death was ruled a suicide.

Jackley earlier agreed to allow reporter Bob Mercer and one other journalist to review a partially redacted version of the file, but only if a member of Benda's immediate family granted written permission.

Jackley said that's the law, and Benda's teenage daughter won't agree to it.

Mercer appealed to an administrative law judge and Jackley filed his response Thursday.

After the administrative law judge rules, either side can appeal to a trial court and then the state Supreme Court.



**Our Predictions
For 2014 • 1B**

INSIDE



USA Weekend

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Factory, Construction Growth Boost 2014 Outlook

BY CHRISTOPHER S. RUGABER
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON — Expectations are rising for a stronger U.S. economy in 2014 after reports Thursday showed solid growth in manufacturing and construction spending at the end of last year.

Factory activity in December stayed near a 2 1/2-year high. Americans are buying more cars and homes, increasing demand for steel, furniture and other manufactured goods. Manufacturers have boosted hiring to meet that demand and may add jobs at a healthier pace this year.

And builders stepped up spending on home construction in November, despite recent increases in borrowing rates. That suggests many remain confident in the housing recovery.

The economy has had bursts of healthy growth since the recession ended in June 2009, only to be followed by disappointing slowdowns. But many analysts think growth is now more sustainable.

"There was strength in some important sectors of the economy at the end of last year," Paul Dales, an economist at Capital

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