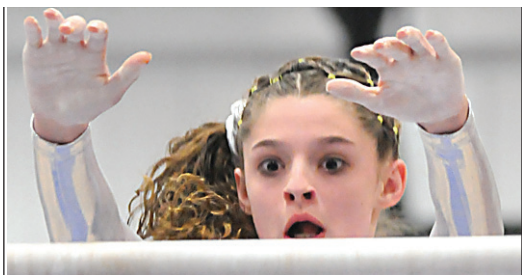




Very Windy With Some Flurries

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Session Begins Today

SD Legislators Face Complex Budget, Other Issues

BY CHET BROKAW
Associated Press

PIERRE — Lawmakers will examine a complex budget proposed by Gov. Dennis Daugaard and debate state aid to schools, another push to expand Medicaid and a proposal to abolish the death penalty as the Legislature kicks off its 2014 session Tuesday.

It's also the final legislative session before lawmakers seek re-election or campaign for other offices.

Here are five things to watch during the upcoming session:

1. STATE BUDGET

South Dakota lawmakers expect to spend a lot of time examining the complex state budget Daugaard proposed a little more than a month ago. The Republican governor wants to use a windfall in unclaimed property payments to provide larger-than-expected spending increases for schools, health care for



Daugaard

poor people and pay raises for state employees. State law would require only a 1.6 percent inflationary increase for school aid. But Daugaard said an unexpected \$70 million in unclaimed property receipts, money the state gets from bank accounts and other property for which owners cannot be found, will allow 3 percent increases in school aid, payments to health care providers in the Medicaid program and raises for state workers.

The governor seeks to use more than \$100 million available on a one-time basis from reserves and unclaimed property to pay off bonds

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Fire Officials: No Controlled Burns During High Winds

From P&D Staff Reports

With high winds predicted for this week, Yankton County fire officials will not be allowing controlled burns.

The Yankton County Dispatch Center, where residents are required to call prior to starting a controlled burn, was advised Monday to not allow burning through at least Wednesday morning — and possibly through Thursday depending on weather conditions. The temporary ban includes burn barrels.

"With the expected 45 to 50 mph wind and conditions dry with no snow cover, rekindles could be likely — especially with tree piles," Yankton Deputy Fire Chief Larry Nickles said.

The dispatch center can be reached at (605) 668-5210 for further information.



IMAGE COURTESY OF RDG PLANNING AND DESIGN

This artist's rendering illustrates the plans for phase one of the Meridian Bridge Plaza project. While the plan could be adjusted from the current vision, the Yankton City Commission could seek bids for the work in 2014.

Planning For The Plaza

Commission Hears Proposal For Meridian Development

BY NATHAN JOHNSON

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Although insisting that costs be pared down, the majority of the Yankton City Commission expressed support Monday for moving ahead with proposed improvements to the Meridian Bridge Plaza.

The Meridian Plaza Master Planning Committee worked with RDG Planning and Design last year to update the design proposal for the area on the north side of the Meridian Bridge. The current estimated cost of the three-phase project is \$1.22 million.

Phase one of the master plan would focus on the area north of the upper-level entrance of the bridge that is adjacent to Second Street. The proposal includes trellises on the west edge to provide a visual block of the gas station and private housing properties. Spray

jets would shoot small water streams up from the concrete, which planners believe would be an attraction for families in the warm-weather months. The focal point of the plaza would be a fountain of flowing water and walls around the fountain to provide seating for people to stop, relax, rest and reflect. The area would also incorporate turf, flowers, native plantings and trees.

The cost of the first phase is estimated at \$685,000.

The city currently has approximately \$900,000 in its downtown improvements capital budget, which could be used for the plaza.

The two additional phases of the project, which would likely be done in subsequent



Sommer

years, would cost \$203,000 and \$340,000, respectively.

Phase two of the master plan would include improvements to the plaza area from the upper-level entrance of the bridge south to Riverside Drive. It would include a rain garden that would include plants aimed at attracting butterflies.

The final phase would be improvements to the recently acquired property along the southwest corner of the plaza area where fuel storage tanks and concrete have been removed. The City Commission agreed last May to acquire the former Stern Oil property for \$130,000. The structures and trees on that property will be removed this winter, and the area will be turned into green space later this year.

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YSD

Substitute Teacher Policy Is Changed

Williams Says He Won't Seek Re-Election This Spring

BY DEREK BARTOS

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The Yankton School Board Monday addressed concerns about substitute teacher availability by approving policy changes that likely will increase the number of qualified teachers in the district.

Also Monday night, board member Jay Williams confirmed that he will not be seeking re-election when his term ends this year.

The Yankton School District's substitute teacher policy previously had been limited to teachers holding a current South Dakota teacher certificate.

To attract more qualified individuals, the board approved changes in the policy that would allow any teacher holding a valid teaching certificate from any state to be a substitute teacher. The revisions also will allow a retired teacher who has held a valid teacher certificate within the last 10 years to be considered a degreed substitute.

"We've found it actually quite a challenge to get subs in the last few months, and I think this change would help us acquire more subs in the district," YSD Superintendent Wayne Kindle said. "I know we have retired Iowa teachers here in Yankton. And we have some Nebraska retired teachers and Minnesota retired teachers."

Kindle said he also knew of several retired YSD teachers that would be willing to return



Williams

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* * *

Santee

Felony Arrest Made In Thefts Involving Boats

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF

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SANTEE, Neb. — A suspect could face felony theft charges for allegedly taking items from two boats caught in last month's Missouri River ice jams, said Knox County (Neb.) Sheriff Don Henery.

During the Dec. 5 river incident, eight hunters and a dog were trapped for four hours in sub-zero wind-chill temperatures on the rapidly-freezing Lewis and Clark Lake near the Santee boat basin. The entire hunting party was rescued by the Nebraska State Patrol helicopter and other authorities.

South Dakota Game Fish and Parks had received a call for help. Three Nebraska Game and Parks officers, Nebraska State Patrol (NSP) Troop B officers in Norfolk, the Santee Police Department and Bloomfield (Neb.) Fire and Rescue responded to the call.

Shortly thereafter, the NSP aviation sup-

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USD

Students Explore MUC Expansion

BY TRAVIS GULBRANDSON

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VERMILLION — The expansion of the Theodore R. and Karen K. Muenster University Center (MUC) is officially open, an occasion its namesake called "wonderful."

"It's a high honor, it's a great tribute to my family and I'm very pleased how popular it is with the campus community," Ted Muenster said.

The 31,000 square foot expansion was budgeted at \$11.6 million, and had its opening ceremony Monday morning.

The expansion includes expanded seating and national restaurant options, such as Chick-fil-A, Qdoba and Einstein Bros. Bagels, the last of which has been open since last year.

Aramark also continues to provide dining options for students and visitors.

"I want to say thank you to

everyone who has been involved in this project," said USD President James Abbott during Monday's ceremony. "The number of people involved is far too numerous to mention. ...

"Suffice it to say that this project took a great deal of work from a great number of people, including a succession of tremendous SGA presidents and vice presidents, senators and cabinets," he said.

Abbott said the Muensters deserve the most credit.

"Without Ted and Karen Muenster's involvement over the years, financially and otherwise, with the original MUC, the addition, of course, would not be here," Abbott said.

Muenster said he had visited the structure several times during the construction period, and got his first look at the finished facility Saturday.

"It's a beautiful addition," he said. "It's just stunning. There's a



Charlie Coyote is joined by USD cheerleaders and members of the university's dance team for the official opening of the MUC expansion at noon on Monday.

tremendous amount of natural light, and it certainly looks like a logical part of the original building. The architects did a wonderful job making it compatible with the style of the original building. In addition to the expanded

dining options, there are also new seating areas and a new media wall that features 16 60-inch HDTVs that cover 16 feet along the south wall of the cafe-

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