

Reactions

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healthy, educated and ready for the workforce?"

Hunhoff called for pre-natal care for infants born into the poorest families, accessible early childhood education, stronger K-12 schools, more affordable college and technical education, and Medicaid expansion.

"We've spent too much time over the last years arguing about tax breaks for big corporations instead of investments in South Dakotans," he said.

On the other side of the aisle, Sen. Jean Hunhoff (R-Yankton) sees the governor's proposals providing tremendous opportunities.

"There is a big emphasis on technical education, and it can be a great benefit for Yankton," she said.

Daugaard's proposals would

provide more funding, including scholarships for critical workforce areas, Jean Hunhoff said. The governor has also proposed extending dual credits, generally offered to high school students taking college-level work, to technical programs as well, she said.

Daugaard offers a statewide approach with local flexibility, Jean Hunhoff said.

"(The governor) is working with the communities to identify their needs and to tailor the types of programs toward those regional workforce needs," she said. "If Yankton is focusing on manufacturing, then we can focus dollars on that area."

In his address, Daugaard provided an outline of how South Dakota weathered the recession that began in 2008, said Rep. Mike Stevens (R-Yankton).

"The speech was really a culmination of what the Legislature has done the last few years in dealing with the recession," Stevens said.

South Dakota's economy has more than recovered the

jobs lost during the recession, Stevens said.

"Our unemployment is the second lowest in the United States," he said. "Only 15 states have recovered the jobs they lost (during the economic downturn) — and we have recovered over 10,000 more (jobs) than we had at the time of the recession."

On the down side, the state's jobless rate has reached the point where worker shortages exist in key areas, Stevens said. More training could help fill those needs, he said.

In particular, workforce training could help retain and attract young employees, he added.

"We seem to do a really good job of educating the kids, and then they leave for someplace else," said Stevens, a former Yankton school board member.

"(Daugaard) really identified the need to keep our kids in the state, not only by increasing the funding for (K-12) education but also in dealing

with technical education."

Stevens sees strong opportunities for workforce training programs at the Regional Technical Education Center (RTEC) in Yankton.

"It would really help get people trained in areas like welding," Stevens said. "That is something that could really decisively impact Yankton."

Daugaard offered very positive statistics about South Dakota's economy and laid out his priorities in Tuesday's address, Jean Hunhoff said. Now, legislators face the challenge of deciding how to keep the state on track and to meet new challenges, she said.

When it comes to investing dollars, Bernie Hunhoff argued that South Dakota should expand its Medicare coverage under the Affordable Care Act. By expanding Medicare, an additional 48,000 working South Dakotans would have access to affordable health insurance, he noted.

Daugaard has said he opposes Medicaid expansion at

this time, questioning whether the state can afford it. South Dakota would need to pay \$1.5 million during the first year, but the governor has said he remains unsure of the long-term financial commitment for the state — particularly if the federal government finds itself unable to pay its share.

However, Hunhoff argues that investments in education and health care would benefit all of South Dakota.

"Poverty isn't just found in rural areas of the state," he said. "Fifty percent of kids in the Sioux Falls school district qualify for free or reduced school lunches, and around 40 percent of Yankton does."

In terms of state investment, Stevens said he was excited to see Daugaard talk about creating additional seats at the University of South Dakota medical school in Vermillion.

The expanded number of medical slots would open up more opportunities for South Dakota students, Stevens said. More medical school graduates

could also address the state's health care shortages, particularly in rural areas, he added.

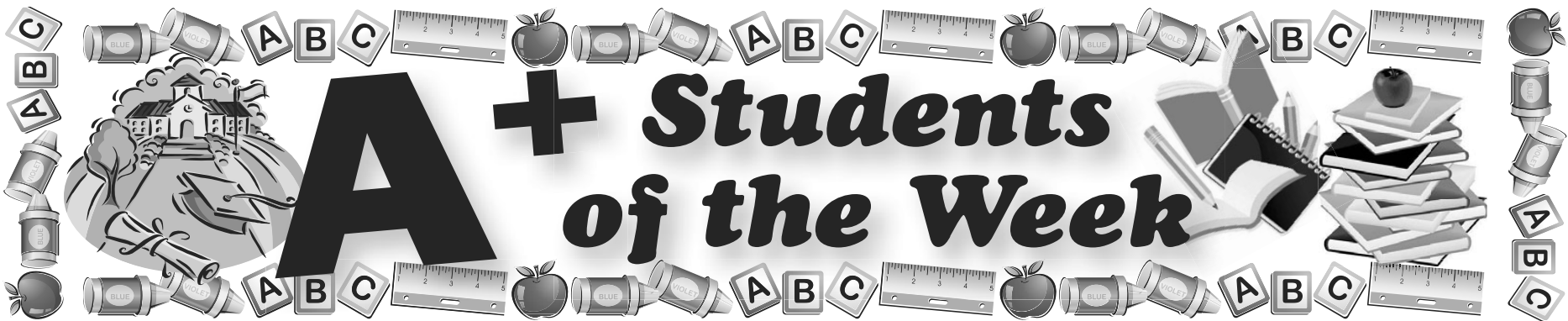
Stevens applauded the governor's emphasis on a balanced state budget and economic issues. However, the Yankton lawmaker also appreciated the governor's mention of South Dakota's quality of life.

"We have things like the education we provide our kids, the low cost of living and the values like our work ethic," Stevens said. "Those things often get forgotten."

The State of the State address also covered a myriad of issues awaiting lawmakers, Stevens said.

"There are so many things that the state is dealing with, from railroads and the governor's houses to pheasants and pine beetles," he said.

You can follow Randy Dockendorf on Twitter at twitter.com/RDockendorf. Discuss this story at www.yankton.net/.



Brooke Davis

Parents: Sonja Davis and Bill Thompson
Grade: 5th
School: Scotland Elementary
Favorite Subject(s): Reading and Science



Kennedy Bietz

Parents: Jennifer and Jason Bietz
Grade: 5th
School: Scotland Elementary
Favorite Subject(s): Reading, Art and PE



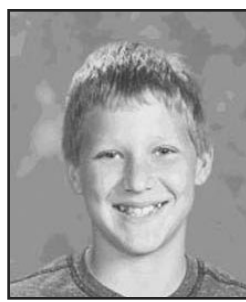
Grace Fryda

Parents: Steve and Vicky Fryda
Grade: 5th
School: Scotland Elementary
Favorite Subject(s): Math, Art and PE



Annabelle Hlavac

Parents: Craig and Michelle Hlavac
Grade: 5th
School: Scotland Elementary
Favorite Subject(s): Social Studies and Reading



Jordan Gall

Parents: Fred and Tricia Gall
Grade: 5th
School: Scotland Elementary
Favorite Subject(s): Math, Art, PE and Band



Stephanie Kotalik

Parents: Pat and Kris Kotalik
Grade: 12th
School: Scotland High School
Favorite Subject(s): Anatomy



Sydney Gall

Parents: Fred and Tricia Gall
Grade: 10th
School: Scotland High School
Favorite Subject(s): Algebra



Shelby VanDriel

Parents: Bill and Tina VanDriel
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School: Scotland High School
Favorite Subject(s): Chemistry and Personal Finance



Sawyer Schmitz

Parents: Rob and Lisa Schmitz
Grade: 11th
School: Scotland High School
Favorite Subject(s): Biology II



Shannon Fanning

Parents: Shelly Konstan and John Fanning
Grade: 9th
School: Scotland High School
Favorite Subject(s): Physical Science and Geometry



Kate Kruse

Parents: Casey and Christine Kruse
Grade: 9th
School: Scotland High School
Favorite Subject(s): English I and Facs I



Elyssa Walloch

Parents: Mark and Emily Walloch
Grade: 9th
School: Scotland High School
Favorite Subject(s): English



Andrea Wollman

Parents: Craig and Lois Wollman
Grade: 7th
School: Freeman Academy
Favorite Subject(s): Math and English



Annie Carlson

Parents: Brad and Kris Carlson
Grade: 8th
School: Freeman Academy
Favorite Subject(s): Music and English



Dane Allison

Parents: Jay and Lynnelle Allison
Grade: 9th
School: Freeman Academy
Favorite Subject(s): Spanish



Ryan Haggerty

Parents: Dan and Heather Haggerty
Grade: 10th
School: Freeman Academy
Favorite Subject(s): Math and Music Theory



Clara Koerner

Parents: Todd and Suzanne Koerner
Grade: 11th
School: Freeman Academy
Favorite Subject(s): Bible, Spanish III and Music



Gabriel Eisenbeis

Parents: Tim and Anita Eisenbeis
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School: Freeman Academy
Favorite Subject(s): Anatomy and Physics

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