

THE PRESS & DAKOTAN

THE DAKOTAS' OLDEST NEWSPAPER | FOUNDED 1861

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OPINION | OUR VIEW

Napa Project: The Need To Communicate

This is an open letter to officials for both Yankton County and Dakota Plains Ag Center: You guys need to talk. By that, we mean that everyone who figures to be involved in getting the grain shuttle facility built near the Napa railroad junction, about four miles northwest of Yankton, really must get on the same page about what is needed to get this project going.

Right now, we're not sure the nearly \$50 million project, which was intriguingly described during last week's Planning Commission meeting as a potential "inland port," is headed in the right direction.

This thing would be a win-win for both the county and for Dakota Plains. The Napa junction is a unique (read: vital) crossroad of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Company line and the state-owned Napa-Platte line. This creates extraordinary possibilities for the shipping of grain, plus other associated agricultural enterprises that would go with it. This project could make the junction a crucial economic hub that would bring in a lot of revenue for both the county and the company.

And yet, you two entities appear sometimes to be operating on different frequencies.

This seemed evident at last week's Planning Commission meeting, during which Dakota Plains was seeking two zoning requests, including one to rezone the nearly 200 acres of property sought for the project from agricultural use to commercial use. The presentation painted a promising picture of what this could become; it seemed rather thorough. However, Planning and Zoning Administrator Patrick Garrity subsequently told the board members there was still a lack of information, including a developer's plan.

Ultimately, the Planning Commission tabled the requests. Dakota Plains hopes — or, perhaps, had hoped — to break ground on the project in mid-April, so time is more than a little pressing.

What's frustrating is the fact that this project — which has been discussed for years and is at a crucial stage — still has some apparent gray areas in the details, at least in the view of the county. Meanwhile, we also get the sense the Dakota Plains officials believe they've done what has been asked of them, only to find out they need more.

This needs to be cleared up, because the stakes here are huge.

County officials are concerned about the impact of the facility on the local roads, as they should be. Dakota Plains has offered to pay for road upgrades, which is a promising foundation of cooperation. There is no way such a project can go in without having some impact on the roads and the traffic patterns, but at least some preparations can be made to deal with it. So while road concerns must be addressed, they must not loom as a deal breaker.

What is being proposed at Napa junction would be a real economic shot in the arm for the region. Last week, the *Press & Dakotan* reported on the county coping with a long-term downward trend in building permits. That does not suggest economic vibrancy and would seem to point to a real need for fresh opportunities. This project is a BIG opportunity.

We're also concerned about the apparent relationship between the county and the company. At times, it has seemed that certain county officials have been almost adversarial toward this project, which makes little sense. On the other hand, if Dakota Plains' officials are being selectively vague with their plans, they're ultimately hurting their cause.

So, it's time to clear the air. The county and the company have too much to lose on this deal — and it would be a heavy, painful loss that would be regretted for a very long time.

You really need to get on the same page here, once and for all, because — if this does proceed — you two will, in a way, be partners.

Thus, given all that's at stake, we can only offer you one piece of advice as we await your next moves in this long, potentially lucrative process:

Please don't screw it up.

knh

ON THIS DATE

By The Associated Press
Today is Tuesday, Jan. 21, the 21st day of 2014. There are 344 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On Jan. 21, 1954, the first atomic submarine, the USS Nautilus, was launched at Groton, Conn., as first lady Mamie Eisenhower christened the vessel with the traditional bottle of champagne broken against the bow. (However, the Nautilus did not make its first nuclear-powered run until nearly a year later.)

On this date: In 1648, Margaret Brent went before the Maryland colonial assembly to seek two votes in that body, one for herself as a landowner, the other as the legal representative of the absent Lord Baltimore; the assembly turned her down.

In 1793, during the French Revolution, King Louis XVI, condemned for treason, was executed on the guillotine.

In 1861, Jefferson Davis of Mississippi and four other Southerners whose states had seceded from the Union resigned from the U.S. Senate.

In 1908, New York City's Board of Aldermen passed an ordinance prohibiting women from smoking in public (the measure was vetoed two weeks later by Mayor George B. McClellan Jr.).

In 1910, the Great Paris Flood began as the rain-swollen Seine River burst its banks, sending water into the French capital.

In 1924, Russian revolutionary Vladimir Lenin died at age 53.
In 1937, Count Basie and his band recorded "One O'Clock Jump" for Decca Records (on this date in 1942, they re-recorded the song for Okeh Records).

In 1950, former State Department official Alger Hiss, accused of being part of a Communist spy ring, was found guilty in New York of lying to a grand jury. (Hiss, who proclaimed his innocence, served less than four years in prison.) George Orwell (Eric Blair), author of "Nineteen Eighty-Four," died in London at age 46.
In 1968, the Battle of Khe Sanh began during the Vietnam War. An American B-52 bomber carrying four hydrogen bombs crashed in Greenland, killing one crew member and scattering radioactive material.

In 1977, President Jimmy Carter pardoned almost all Vietnam War draft evaders.
In 1982, convict-turned-author Jack Henry Abbott was found guilty in New York of first-degree manslaughter in the stabbing death of waiter Richard Adan in 1981. (Abbott was later sentenced to 15 years to life in prison; he committed suicide in 2002.)

In 1994, a jury in Manassas, Va., found Lorena Bobbitt not guilty by reason of temporary insanity of maliciously wounding her husband John, whom she'd accused of sexually assaulting her.

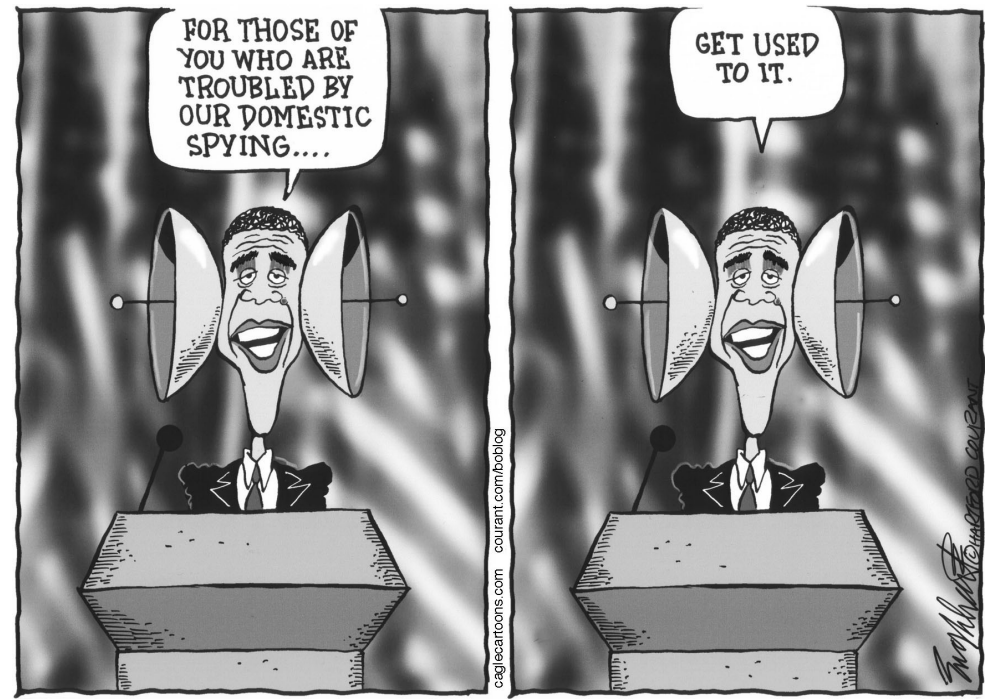
Ten years ago: President George W. Bush visited community colleges in Ohio and Arizona, where he highlighted the economy and several new job-training initiatives he'd proposed a day earlier in his State of the Union speech. The recording industry sued 532 computer users it said were illegally distributing songs over the Internet.

Five years ago: In a whirlwind first full day in office, President Barack Obama showcased efforts to revive the economy, summoned top military officials to chart a new course in Iraq and eased into the daunting thicket of Middle East diplomacy. The Senate confirmed Hillary Rodham Clinton as secretary of state.

One year ago: A day after being inaugurated for a second term in a private Sunday ceremony, President Barack Obama took a public oath, summoning a divided nation to act with "passion and dedication" to broaden equality and prosperity at home, nurture democracy around the world and combat global warming. British movie director Michael Winner, 77, who'd made 30 films, including three in the "Death Wish" series, died in London.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Ann Wedgeworth is 80. World Golf Hall of Famer Jack Nicklaus is 74. Opera singer Placido Domingo is 73. Singer Mac Davis is 72. Actress Jill Eikenberry is 67. Country musician Jim Ibbotson (The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band) is 67. Singer-songwriter Billy Ocean is 64. U.S. Ambassador to China Gary Locke is 64. U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder is 63. Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen is 61. Actor-director Robby Benson is 58. Actress Geena Davis is 58. Basketball Hall of Famer Hakeem Olajuwon is 51. Actress Charlotte Ross is 46. Actor John Ducey is 45. Actress Karina Lombardi is 45. Rapper Levirt (B-Rock and the Bizz) is 44. Rock musician Mark Trojanowski (Sister Hazel) is 44. Rock singer-songwriter Cat Power is 42. Rock DJ Chris Kilmore (Incubus) is 41. Actor Vincent Laresca is 40. Singer Emma Bunton (Spice Girls) is 38. Actor Jerry Trainor is 37. Country singer Phil Stacey is 36. Rhythm-and-blues singer Nokie (Dru Hill) is 35. Actress Izabella Miko is 33.

Thought for Today: "Would to God that we might spend a single day really well." — Thomas a Kempis, German monk and author (c. 1380-1471).



Pierre Report | Bernie Hunhoff

The Agenda Takes Shape

BY REP. BERNIE HUNHOFF
D-District 18 (Yankton)



B. Hunhoff

As of now, some big controversies of the 89th legislative session in South Dakota involve education standards, public access to growing lakes, the death penalty and health care.

Many other issues will also be debated — from raw milk to insurance reforms and how to tax our biggest credit card banks — but we only have 38 days this session, and we have to pass a \$4 billion budget along the way, so legislators certainly won't be able to solve all the state's problems.

The education fight is all about Common Core Standards, an effort by the National Governor's Association to create a more rigorous and standardized curriculum for our K-12 school youth. Public school critics have been demanding more testing and accountability for years, so Common Core was partly embraced to answer that call. Ironically, many of the same critics now oppose Common Core because they think it robs school districts of local control.

We all want teachers to have the freedom to teach in their classrooms, so I do share the concerns that too much standardization might hurt the schools. We need a balance between local control and accountability, and that's what most lawmakers will try to do as we weigh a number of bills seeking to stop or slow Common Core.

South Dakota taxpayers and educators have already invested millions of dollars and lots of energy and time to implement Common Core, so it would seem wasteful to scrap it now, just as it's ready to launch. Instead, I hope we can make it work.

Meandered waters is another issue that has reached a boiling point. While it's not a big issue in southeast South Dakota, it is important to sportsmen and landowners in much of East River country. Meandered waters are lakes that were recognized and declared public waters long ago. In the last 25 years, some of those original lakes have swelled in size and hundreds of new lakes have formed, especially in the Glacial Lakes country of northeast South Dakota.

The courts have consistently ruled that all waters belong to the public, and sportsmen — whether they be boaters, anglers or duck

hunters — have the right to enjoy those waters so long as they can reach them by public access. But that tradition greatly frustrates landowners who pay taxes on the lake bottoms, and sometimes see slob duck hunters firing close to their livestock or buildings. GF&P officials have taken the lead in trying to reach a compromise, so stay tuned.

South Dakota has had a death penalty for most of the last 60 years, but it went unused for a philosophical issue and was seldom addressed in the legislature. Now, however, we've executed three men in recent years so it's no longer only theoretical.

Rep. Steve Hickey, a legislator and pastor from the Sioux Falls area, is seeking to repeal the death penalty so we'll have a good debate this year. Rep. Hickey is widely respected in the state capitol, and although he is a pastor he intends to argue the issue not on religion but on public policy grounds.

The death penalty debate is changing across America. Pharmaceutical companies are trying to block their drugs from being used for that purpose. DNA testing has proven that many convicted murderers — including several who were executed — were innocent. And the costs of the accused's lengthy appeals often make it a moot issue unless, as was the case with two of the prisoners South Dakota executed, they drop their appeals because they prefer death to incarceration.

The biggest issue facing legislators is whether or not to participate in the nationwide Affordable Care Act by expanding Medicaid and providing care to some 48,000 South Dakotans who cannot afford insurance. That would cost us \$1.5 million in 2014 and would net South Dakota \$274 million — a return of 160 to 1. Obviously it's a big decision, and I'll focus on that in next week's column.

My thanks to the *Press & Dakotan* for making some space available to me and my fellow lawmakers. We welcome your opinions and advice. You can find email addresses for all of us on the South Dakota Legislature website.

Pierre Report | Tom Jones

The Extra Money On The Table

BY SEN. TOM JONES
D-District 17 (Viborg)



Jones

This year's trips to Pierre for our 2014 Legislative Session will be much different than those in past years. For several reasons, we have more than \$136 million to spend this session.

First, let me give you some generalities for this kind of money.

Unclaimed Property has given South Dakota a huge windfall of dollars in our state budget. More than \$120 million is available for us: \$60 million for this year and another \$60 million will be realized for future years (ongoing funds). These monies are from banks coming to South Dakota to set up their headquarters. We also have a reduction in FY2014's adopted expenses of almost \$12 million.

Here is the available one-time funds from Revenue:

- 1) Surplus left unspent by the Legislature — \$1.7 million;
- 2) Increase in Unclaimed Property receipts — \$30 million;
- 3) Liquidation of the account for large corporations benefits — \$19 million;
- 4) a bank card tax reduction — \$17 million;
- 5) Reversion of the South Dakota WINS fund — \$4 million;
- 6) Increase in ongoing Unclaimed Property — \$38 million;
- 7) a change to the rest of ongoing (one-time in FY2014), minus \$5 million;
- 8) a transfer from the Property Tax Reduction Fund — \$20 million.

These totals amount to approximately \$124 million.

Number 2 and number 6 are not duplicated. Both numbers are available for this year.

Concerning number 3, if you recall, the voters of South Dakota voted against the formation of an account to encourage large corporations to come to South Dakota. A fund of \$5 million (number 5) was established to recruit workers to come to our state. An estimated \$1 million of this fund was spent and now the program has been ended because of poor results; therefore the \$4 million.

In addition, this year we have a reduction in Medicaid eligibles, making a reduction in expenses of \$6 million. Also, we have a reduction in state aid to education of another \$6 million. Adding the \$124 million and the \$12 million together we have \$136 million available in FY2014 one-time funds for expenses.

Our governor has proposed using these one-time monies to pre-pay several ongoing expenses. This method will free up money in future years. I think, for most parts, this is a good idea.

No bills were introduced in our first week of session in the Senate, but I think approximately 120 bills were heard in the House and Senate committees.

If you have questions, concerns or even good news and would like to contact me, e-mail me at: sen.jones@state.sd.us/.

YOUR LETTERS

Appreciation

Ken Wittmeier, Tyndall

Thank you to the person who found my cane in a shopping cart at Yankton's Walmart on Saturday, Jan. 11, and turned it in. It was greatly appreciated.

ABOUT THIS PAGE

The View page provides a forum for open discussion of issues and interests affecting our readers. Initialed editorials represent the opinion of the writer, but not necessarily that of the **PRESS & DAKOTAN**. Bylined columns represent the view of the author. We welcome letters on current topics. Questions regarding the Views page should be directed to Kelly Hertz at views@yankton.net.

Online Opinion

The results of the most recent Internet poll on the *Press & Dakotan's* Web site are as follows:

LATEST RESULTS:

Do you think Vice President Joe Biden will run for president in 2016?
No 78%
Yes 13%
Not sure 9%
TOTAL VOTES CAST 296

The Press & Dakotan Internet poll is not a scientific survey and reflects the opinions only of those who choose to participate. The results should not be construed as an accurate representation or scientific measurement of public opinion.

CURRENT QUESTION:

Do you support the proposed rail grain facility near Napa junction in Yankton County?
To vote in the *Press & Dakotan's* Internet poll, log on to our website at www.yankton.net.

FROM THE BIBLE

God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son. John 3:16.
Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis