

## Fuel

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gallon, Bietz said. A year later, on Jan. 6, 2015, the price stood at \$1.6767 — or approximately 37 percent less.

In addition, the No. 1 Diesel blend was \$3.5543 on Jan. 6, 2014, and stood at \$2.0321 on Jan. 6, 2015, or approximately 43 percent less. The No. 2 Diesel blend was \$2.9994 on Jan. 6, 2014, and \$1.6236 on Jan. 6, 2015, or nearly 46 percent less.

Even with such plunges, the district is limited in its ability to take advantage of the lower prices, Bietz said.

"We own three underground storage tanks — two of them with 10,000-gallon capacity and one with 6,000-gallon capacity — and we place orders for fuel four to five times per year, so we have a limit on the amount of fuel we can store at current prices," he said.

Still, the district will see improved finances thanks to the lower fuel prices, Bietz said. The full impact remains to be seen, he added.

"The savings thus far have been a pleasant surprise for this year's budget and will be more accurately determined at the conclusion of the school year," he said.

The City of Yankton also uses the OPIS system, according to City Finance Officer Al Viereck.

"We spent approximately \$400,000 in 2014 purchasing fuel for the Central Garage, which supplies the majority of our vehicles. It averages about one load per month," he said. "I would guess January's price will reflect some of the decrease. If fuel stays low for some time, you can see the savings we would enjoy."

The Yankton County fuel situation wasn't known for this story. Auditor Patty Hojem referred the *Press & Dakotan* to Highway Superintendent Brian Gustad, who couldn't be

reached for comment.

### AREA IMPACTS

For regional governments, the situation varies from large savings to little or no impact.

Bon Homme school business manager Gary Kortan reported his district has already realized a financial benefit — and more savings may be on the way.

"Compared to prices we paid last spring for fuel to heat our two schools in Springfield and Tyndall, we have saved approximately \$22,500 on 17,000 gallons compared to prices last winter," he said. "If prices remain as they are, I estimate we will save close to another \$60,000 this fiscal year just on heating costs. However, with the bitter cold we have been having, our usage will sure be higher (and) eating away at the projected savings."

At Vermillion, City Manager John Prescott didn't have a specific figure for fuel savings. However, the lower prices played a key role in the closing months of 2014, he said.

"Our budget year is the same as the calendar year, so as prices were falling in November and December, it helped hold our fuel line within budget," he said. "Our fuel budget isn't based on 'X' gallons at a certain price for the year. At this point, I don't have the final numbers for 2014 as bills from that budget year are still being processed."

Still, the impact of the declining fuel prices has been noticeable, Prescott said.

"We bid fuel on a monthly basis," he said. "Obviously, the fuel bid that the City Council awarded on Monday night for January is the lowest we have seen for a while."

At Wagner, City Finance Officer Becky Bruning has found a mixed bag when it comes to the overall financial impact of lower fuel prices.

"Our propane price for our buildings was bid in August, so we are set until this next August," she said. "I'm not sure on the fuel. We have the Voyager Cards that (deduct) the

taxes at the pumps. With four patrol cars and other city maintenance vehicles, that invoice this past month was quite a bit lower. So yes, I would say we are seeing a savings there."

On the other hand, Bruning noted the city's financial picture contains one uncertain piece to the puzzle that may offset the fuel savings.

"Our Alco store is closing, so that means less sales tax after that (store) closes until something new goes in," she said.

In the Avon schools, Superintendent Tom Culver said his district hasn't seen significant fuel savings. However, the district still anticipates a good outcome on its transportation costs.

"(Lower fuel prices) hasn't had much of an effect on us. We bought fuel oil for the winter back in the fall for \$3.20 and \$3.25 per gallon," he said. "We don't have bus routes, so we pay mileage to the families and that rate does not change. We will be under budget for the fuel we use for our vehicles and bus trips to school events."

In the Viborg-Hurley school district, Business Manager Wanda Kost noted the different heating methods for the two attendance centers.

"The school district burns propane in the Viborg building. The board accepted a bid of \$1.33 a gallon for approximately 30,000 gallons. The Viborg building has averaged between 25,000 and 30,000 gallons a year for the past five years," she said.

"The Hurley building has a boiler system; we burn 50/50 blend of stove fuel during the cold months. The board did not accept a bid on stove fuel. I request quotes on the stove fuel on an 'as needed' basis."

Kost budgeted the propane at a 10-cent increase from the previous year at an average of 30,050 gallons at \$1.32.

"The last load of fuel received in the Hurley building during the 2013-2014 fiscal year came in at \$3.395 a gallon," she said. "I budgeted the stove fuel with an increase of 10 cents a gallon, for \$3.495, at

approximately 43,000 gallons."

For other government bodies, the fuel situation has seen little change.

The Bloomfield, Nebraska, and Wausa, Nebraska, schools have seen little impact, according to Bob Marks, superintendent for both districts.

"We run mostly diesel, and it's still close to \$4 a gallon," he said. Cedar County Clerk Dave Dowling, based in Hartington, Nebraska, said he has seen little change.

Bon Homme County Auditor Tammy Brunken, based in Tyndall, said her county hasn't determined what impact, if any, it has seen. "At this point, we haven't really evaluated anything along those lines," she said.

Union County Auditor Carol Klumper, based in Elk Point, referred the question to her county highway department, which handles fuel quotes. The highway officials didn't immediately respond.

In Menno, City Finance Officer Peggy Thranum said she doesn't have a firm figure at this time. "We are using more fuel now because of all the snow removal. Since we only pay the bill once a month, I have nothing to compare it to (for now)," she said.

In neighboring Freeman, City Administrator Carroll Vizecky said the City of Freeman pays at pump price for fuels.

At the Gayville-Volin schools, Superintendent Jason Selchert said the district doesn't contract prices.

"We purchase from state bid, which is the cheapest way for us," he said. "Probably seven years ago, providers stopped bidding because of the volatility in the market."

While fuel prices are currently declining, the Gayville-Volin district has faced challenges in covering the higher energy costs of recent years, Selchert said.

"State aid to education doesn't keep up with the increased costs associated with fuel and petroleum-based products," he said.

### TAKING THE PLUNGE

Whatever the local impact, the current price plunge remains unlike anything seen in recent years, said AAA South Dakota spokeswoman Marilyn Buskohl.

"To see South Dakota pump prices tumble 42 percent this (past) year has been incredible," she said. "Excess supply and weak demand forced West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude oil down to below \$50 per barrel (Monday) for the first time since April 2009. It's hard to believe WTI was trading at \$107 just this past June. West Africa, Latin America, Iraq, Russia, Canada, the U.S., Saudi Arabia — everybody is producing lots of oil."

Will the current price decline continue into the long-term future? That remains to be seen, Buskohl said.

"Global oil prices are expected to remain relatively low for the first half of 2015," she said. "Even though rebel forces continue to disrupt supply from OPEC member country Libya, the level of global oversupply appears capable of easing production concerns that might otherwise send prices higher."

Barring any significant fluctuations in the price of crude oil, AAA says the average price at the pump in 2015 is likely to remain below \$2.70 per gallon in South Dakota and below \$3.00 nationwide. However, prices may see seasonal increases this spring as refineries undergo maintenance or this summer as demand increases during the busy summer driving season.

The national average price of gas had fallen for a record 103 days to \$2.19 per gallon, which is the lowest average since May 8, 2009. American households spent an average of about \$115 less on gasoline in 2014 than they did in 2013.

You can follow Randy Dockendorf on Twitter at [twitter.com/RDockendorf](https://twitter.com/RDockendorf). Discuss this story at [www.yankton.net](http://www.yankton.net).

## Merger

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their classes more quickly and get their degrees, or learn English as that second language more quickly. They are actually providing class time and looking for tutors that would help students in between class time."

She added that it makes sense due to the shared visions of the two organizations.

"It seems like our missions are almost the same," she said. "We do have the difference in ages, but otherwise, our missions are primarily the same. In this day and age, duplicating services doesn't seem to be a wise thing to do, so if we can partner and work as one entity to provide better services to the students, then that's the direction we want to go."

Incoming YALC president Veronica Trezona said both entities could benefit from a possible merger.

"Southeast Job Link could get more grants because they would have more students to show," she said. "It saves the cost of an office and the Internet (for us)."

Wibbels said she's seen positive reception for the idea. "In talking to the tutors, most of us feel there's really no down-side to it," she said. "We really feel it's going to be a good fit for all of us."

Should the vote favor a merger, Wibbels said it's hoped that the merger can be made final later in the month.

You can follow Rob Nielsen on Twitter at [twitter.com/RobNielsen-PandD/](https://twitter.com/RobNielsen-PandD/). Discuss this story at [www.yankton.net/](http://www.yankton.net/)

## Twitter

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"Twitter is an instant snapshot of what's happening in the world," Hanten said.

Naturally, there are comparisons to Facebook, but the differences are significant — particularly when it comes to sharing content.

"Twitter is having a conversation, where Facebook is almost like moments you put on a wall," Hanten said.

One key way to drive conversation on Twitter is using hashtags, Hanten told the crowd.

"On Twitter, you can find a whole new audience," he said. "It becomes a way to build a network around you."

Among the benefits to communicating with such a network is sharing critical information, according to Yankton School District superintendent Wayne Kindle — who was in the crowd Wednesday.

"It's just another way to communicate with parents and other people," he said, when asked why he started an account.

You can follow Jeremy Hoeck on Twitter at [twitter.com/jhoeck](https://twitter.com/jhoeck). Discuss this story at [www.yankton.net](http://www.yankton.net).

## Attack

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immediately clear who lived there.

One of the police officials said they were linked to a Yemeni terrorist network, and Cedric Le Behec, a witness who encountered the escaping gunmen, quoted the attackers as saying: "You can tell the media that it's al-Qaida in Yemen."

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to publicly discuss the sensitive and ongoing investigation.

Cherif Kouachi was sentenced to 18 months in prison after being convicted of terrorism charges in 2008 for helping funnel fighters to Iraq's insurgency. He said he was outraged at the torture of Iraqi inmates at the U.S. prison at Abu Ghraib near Baghdad.

The masked, black-clad men with assault rifles stormed the offices near Paris' Bastille monument in the Wednesday noon-time attack on the publication, which had long drawn condemnation and threats — it was fire-bombed in 2011 — for its depictions of Islam, although it also satirized other religions and political figures.

Shouting "Allahu akbar!" as they fired, the men used fluent, unaccented French as they called out the names of specific employees.

Artist Corinne Rey told the French newspaper *L'Humanite* that she punched in the security code to the *Charlie Hebdo* offices after she and her young daughter were "brutally threatened" by the gunmen.

Eight journalists, two police officers, a maintenance worker and a visitor were killed, said prosecutor Francois Molins. He said 11 people were wounded — four of them seriously.

After fleeing, the attackers collided with another vehicle, then carjacked another car before disappearing in broad daylight, Molins said.

Among the dead: the paper's editor, Stephane Charbonnier.

The staff was in an editorial meeting and the gunmen headed straight for Charbonnier — widely known by his pen name Charb — killing him and his police bodyguard first, said Christophe Crepin, a police union spokesman.

Rey said the assault "lasted five minutes. I hid under a desk."

Two gunmen strolled out to a black car waiting below, one of them calmly shooting a wounded police officer in the head as he writhed on the ground, according to video and a man who watched in fear from his home across the street.

The witness, who refused to allow his name to be used because he feared for his safety, said the attackers were so methodical he first thought they were members of France's elite anti-terrorism forces. Then they fired on the officer.

"They knew exactly what they had to do and exactly where to shoot. While one kept watch and checked that the traffic was good for them, the other one delivered the final coup de grace," he said.

"Hey! We avenged the Prophet Muhammad! We killed *Charlie Hebdo*," one of the men shouted in French, according to video shot from a nearby building.

The other dead were identified as cartoonists Georges Wolinski and Bernard Verlhac, better known as Tignous, and Jean Cabut, known as "Cabu." Also killed was Bernard Maris, an economist who was a contributor to the newspaper and was heard regularly on French radio.

Le Behec, the witness who encountered the gunmen in another part of Paris, described on his Facebook page seeing two men "get out of a bullet-ridden car with a rocket-launcher in hand, eject an old guy from his car and calmly say hi to the public, saying 'you can tell the media that it's al-Qaida in Yemen.'"

*Charlie Hebdo* has been

repeatedly threatened for its caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad and other sketches. One cartoon, released in this week's issue and titled "Still No Attacks in France," had a caricature of a jihadi fighter saying "Just wait — we have until the end of January to present our New Year's wishes." Charb was the artist.

In a somber address to the nation Wednesday night, Hollande pledged to hunt down the killers, and pleaded with his compatriots to come together in a time of insecurity and suspicion.

France raised its security alert to the highest level and reinforced protective measures at houses of worship, stores, media offices and transportation. Schools closed across Paris, although thousands of people later jammed Republique Square near the site of the shooting to honor the victims, waving pens and papers reading "Je suis Charlie" — "I am Charlie." Similar rallies were held in London's Trafalgar Square as well as Madrid, Barcelona, Berlin and Brussels.

"This is the darkest day of the history of the French press," said Christophe DeLoire of Reporters Without Borders.

Both al-Qaida and the Islamic State group have repeatedly threatened to attack France, which is conducting

airstrikes against extremists in Iraq and fighting Islamic militants in Africa.

President Barack Obama offered U.S. help in pursuing the gunmen, saying they had attacked freedom of expression.

## Out On The Town

Don't Miss Our  
**All-You-Can-Eat  
Broasted Chicken  
& Pollock Buffet  
With Salad Bar**

Every  
**Wednesday  
5 to 9pm**

**Joe's  
Substation**

Rural Lesterville  
605-364-7414

**Knights of  
Columbus**

**BREAKFAST**

**THIS SUNDAY**  
8:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Pancakes, Rolls, Eggs,  
Ham or Sausage, Milk,  
Juice or Coffee & Fresh  
Baked Cinnamon Rolls

**KC Hall**

2700 N. Broadway  
Breakfast served second  
Sunday of the month.

**Everyone Welcome!**

This Month's Special:  
**Mexican Scramble & Burritos**

**VFW**

Post 791 209 Cedar  
**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

**Wednesday & Sunday**

5-7pm Cooks Choice

**Thursday**

5-7pm — Domestic

Beers \$1.50

5-7pm — Hamburger/  
Pizza Burger & Fries

\$5.00

**Friday**

Yankee

Pot Roast

Serving 5:30-8:00

**Saturday  
Entertainment**

No Band

Regular Menu 5:30-8:00

**Bingo Wed. at 7:00pm**

**Sunday at 6:30pm**

**Happy Hour M-F**

**4:30-7:30**

Chislic Served Last  
Wednesday of Month



Drop in Corn Prices Due to  
Trade Disruption with China

**If you lost corn profits,  
you will want to read this.**

The drop in corn prices due to disruptions in international trade has affected every corn grower in America. If you suffered loss in *your* corn profits, please join our friends and agricultural professionals at one of our Town Hall meetings listed below. Many of our neighbors will be there, along with local lawyers to answer your questions and offer a *solution* to recovering your losses. We know you'll want to be a part of that discussion. Your opinions are welcomed, and we look forward to seeing you there. Snacks and beverages will be provided at no charge.

### • Corn Growers - Town Hall Meeting Schedule •

#### Thursday - January 8

**8 am**  
Chrome Country Inn  
211 US 18 in Algona, IA

**10:30 am**  
Softtail Saloon  
811 1st Avenue in Superior, IA

**3 pm**  
Kings Pointe  
1520 E. Lakeshore Dr., Storm Lake, IA

**6:30 pm**  
Golden Pheasant  
44028 Iowa highway 3 in Remsen, IA

#### Friday - January 9

**8 am**  
Best Western - Minerva's  
1607 SD50 in Yankton, SD

**8 am**  
Ramada Inn  
1525 W. Havens in Mitchell, SD

**11 am**  
Best Western  
2000 Dakota Ave S. in Huron, SD

**1 pm**  
McCrory Gardens  
632 22d Ave. in Brookings, SD

#### Friday - January 9

**2 pm**  
The Depot  
715 3rd Street West in Redfield, SD

**5 pm**  
Ramada Inn  
2727 6th Ave. SE in Aberdeen, SD

**5 pm**  
Ramada Inn  
1500 E. College Drive in Marshall, MN

#### Saturday - January 10

**8 am**  
Jubba's  
219 South Main St. in Blue Earth, MN

**11 am**  
AmericInn  
240 Stadium Road in Mankato, MN

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[www.LostCornIncome.com](http://www.LostCornIncome.com)

These Town Hall events have been scheduled and are sponsored by your neighboring agricultural professionals:

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