

S.D. Colleges Earn Low Marks

Report: Four-Year Schools Lagging In Terms of Access, Affordability

BY JOE SNEVE

Argus Leader

SIoux FALLS — Two-year colleges in South Dakota received high marks for student access and affordability in a recent study, but four-year schools here are lagging the national average, the report says.

The report, from the Institute for a Competitive Workforce and titled "Leaders and Laggards," grades all 50 states and the District of Columbia on how well their public colleges and institutions prepare students for postgraduate careers. More states got F's than A's. South Dakota got C's.

The institute, an affiliate of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, called the results of its study "sobering."

"We're too used to resting on our laurels," said Margaret Spellings, president of the institute and secretary of education during the George W. Bush administration. "There's very little of looking below the reputational issues to, 'Well, how are we doing?'"

Students and businesses would benefit if states found more efficient ways to measure both the quality and quantity of degrees over the long term and rewarded institutions accordingly, Spellings said.

Each state received separate grades for four-year institutions and two-year institutions in four grading categories. In two categories, policy environment and innovation, each state was graded based on performance by state government officials. The report uses data from different sources from 2008-2012.

Among the findings:

- At the four-year level, Washington state, California and Florida earned the highest grades. The worst performers were Alaska, Idaho, Louisiana and Nevada. South Dakota's four-year institutions received D's in student access and success as well as efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

- North Dakota and South Dakota outperformed other states at the two-year level. South Dakota earned an A in student access and success and B's in efficiency, cost effectiveness and meeting labor market demand.

- Florida was the only state to receive an A grade at both the four-year and two-year levels.
- In all but three states, statewide completion rates at four-year public colleges hovered around 50 percent.

- In 17 states, fewer than half of first-time students at four-year institutions got their bachelor's degree within six years.

- Completion rates for two-year colleges are even worse. Just one state — South Dakota — had a statewide graduation rate higher than 40 percent, and 33 states had two-year completion rates at or below 25 percent.

- Just two states, Minnesota and Texas, received A's for "transparency and accountability" among four-year institutions. Thirteen states received F's. No two-year institution earned an A for that category.

- Money spent by four-year institutions per degree awarded ranged from \$46,071 in Florida to \$142,638 in Alaska. The national median was \$68,140.

The report shows a stark contrast between the performances of two-year and four-year institutions in South Dakota. In the category of student success and access, "South Dakota's four-year institutions receive a poor grade ... ranking in the bottom third of states," while two-year institutions "fare much better, placing first in the nation in completion rate and retention rate."

Southeast Technical Institute, a two-year school in Sioux Falls, has a retention rate of 64 percent, in part because of innovative approaches to student engagement, said Jeff Holcomb, STI president.

"There are a couple things that we are doing different. One of the things we've implemented here is a student success center. We try to focus on every student and find out what their issues are and help them complete," he said. "Each student has a success adviser that works with them, and we also recognize that barriers to completion are not always academic in nature."

Holcomb said often the students who quit school don't do so because they're not college material, but because of medical issues or other obligations such as taking care of children or working full-time.

"We try to accommodate them and help them make it through regardless of what their situation is," he said. "We feel that individualized attention is a great piece. The faculty and staff are very engaged in helping each student."

Jack Warner, executive director of the South Dakota Board of Regents, said he was surprised to see low marks for the institution he oversees and questioned the methodology the institute used when conducting the study.

"We're being compared with states that have comprehensive community colleges. In many ways, we fulfill the role of some associate degree-granting institutions," he said. "If you're in another state, the comprehensive community college would offer the first two years of that kind of instruction. Some of those nuances get lost in a national study like this, and I would have thought we'd rank quite a bit higher."

Still, Warner said the report did reveal some useful information.

"It's not easy to decipher how they derive some of their comparisons, but it obviously identifies some challenges for us, particularly with student access and success and what they call efficiency and cost-effectiveness."

The report says states should focus less on attracting new students and work harder at making sure students who already are enrolled get their degrees.

"Somebody has to make universities care about outcomes, and that's the state," Grover "Russ" Whitehurst, director of the Brown Center on Education Policy at the Brookings Institution, said Tuesday during a panel on the report's findings.

Spellings recommended making it easier for students to transfer credits from community colleges to four-year institutions and expanding access to online classes, associate degrees and other forms of alternative education.

"Students spend a lot more time than they need to and a lot more money on institutions," Spellings said.

But Warner said the Board of Regents has a very accommodating transfer policy, which he thought would have earned higher than D in the report.

S.D. Inmate Walks Away From Sioux Falls Unit

SIoux FALLS (AP) — South Dakota authorities are looking for a man who walked away from a minimum security unit of the state prison.

Corrections officials say Jason Lucas left the Jameson Annex at 7:50 a.m. Sunday for a work release job in Sioux Falls. The employer later sent the workers home, but Lucas failed to return in a timely manner.

The 35-year-old Lucas is serving a five-year sentence for drunken driving.

Forest Fire Near Edgemont 10% Contained

EDGEMONT (AP) — Authorities say a Black Hills forest fire is 10 percent contained and has burned about 3,000 acres.

The White Draw Fire is about five miles northeast of Edgemont, primarily in a mix of grasslands and timber.

Officials say crews started early Sunday morning ahead of expected unfavorable winds and hot temperatures. Rains on Saturday briefly slowed the advance of the fire.

More than 180 personnel are assigned to the fire. Workers are battling the blaze with the help of four helicopters and three air tankers. More crews and equipment have been ordered.

Officials say firefighters are facing additional hazards with the steep terrain and rattlesnakes.

Residents of five homes near Edgemont were given voluntary evacuation notices Saturday.

Firefighters Contain Nebraska Wildfires

HALSEY, Neb. (AP) — Firefighters are checking to make sure three wildfires in west-central Nebraska have been contained.

Local fire departments had to call in several other departments Saturday to help battle the fires that affected mostly rural areas. One of the fires was north of Stapleton, one was near Ringgold and the third fire was near Halsey and the Nebraska National Forest.

A few campers in the Whitetail and Natick campgrounds of the Nebraska National Forest were forced to relocate because of the fires.

Stapleton Fire Chief Frank Kramer said Sunday that the fires appear to be contained.

No injuries were reported. Officials believe that lightning sparked the fires.

Man Killed In Southeast Nebraska Crash

CLATONIA, Neb. (AP) — A Beatrice man is dead following a one-vehicle crash five miles south of Clatonia in southeastern Nebraska. Beatrice radio station KWBE-AM reports that 59-year-old Bruce Benash died in the early Saturday crash.

Gage County Sheriff Gus Gustafson says Benash was driving a pickup eastbound on a county road when he lost control, hit part of a bridge and rolled the truck. Benash was pronounced dead at the scene.

An autopsy has been ordered. Sheriff's investigators say Benash was not wearing a seat belt.

S.F. Men Named To Top Air Patrol Positions

SIoux FALLS (AP) — Two Sioux Falls men have been named to top positions of the Civil Air Patrol's South Dakota Wing.

John Seten is assuming command of the 300-plus member wing. The 49-year-old Seten is a 14-year member of Sioux Falls Fire Rescue. Seten, a graduate of Madison High School, is retired from the South Dakota Air National Guard.

Rick Larson, a senior master sergeant in the South Dakota Air National Guard, is the wing's new vice commander. The 49-year-old Larson graduated from South High School in Fargo, N.D., and attended North Dakota State University.

The Civil Air Patrol is the official support unit of the U.S. Air Force.

Doane Reinstates Suspended Fraternity

CRETE, Neb. (AP) — Doane College officials have reinstated a fraternity that was suspended in April 2010 because of hazing allegations.

Alpha Omega was originally suspended for four years because a student was hit with a paddle during an initiation ceremony.

Doane President Jacque Carter told the Lincoln Journal Star the fraternity successfully met requirements the university imposed for early reinstatement.

The fraternity had to submit a detailed plan for restoration and create new bylaws. Also, its alumni board promised to oversee the fraternity and provide regular reporting.

Alpha Omega will now be allowed to recruit new members in the fall.

Doane's Alpha Omega chapter was founded in 1897 and had about 17 active members when it was suspended.

Company Plans To Explore For Gold In S.D.

RAPID CITY (AP) — A Canadian company plans to begin exploring for gold in the next two months on mining claims near Keystone in South Dakota's Black Hills.

However, an official of Mineral Mountain Resources Ltd. tells the *Rapid City Journal* that actual gold mining could be six or seven years away.

Brad Baker, vice president of corporate development for Mineral Mountain Resources, says the Vancouver-based company is successfully assembling financing for a project that could spend up to \$20 million in exploration in the next four years.

Baker says the company will work with Keystone officials and residents to explain the project and answer questions about future impacts, but the exploration phase will have little impact on the area.

Baker says plans call for an underground mine, not a surface operation.

OBITUARIES

Lula Hagge

Lula Grace (Pederson) Hagge, age 92, of Yankton, SD passed away Friday, June 29, 2012, at the Avera Yankton Care Center, Yankton, SD.

Funeral service will be 11:30 a.m. Tuesday, July 3, 2012 at Trinity Lutheran Church, Yankton, with Rev. Dave Lund officiating. Burial will be in the Gayville Cemetery, Gayville, SD at approximately 1:30 p.m. Tuesday afternoon.

Visitations will be one hour prior to the service at the church. The Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Home & Crematory, Yankton, is assisting with arrangements.

Pallbearers are her grandsons: Eric Pederson, Brad Pederson, Jim Pederson and Brian Pederson; niece, Brenda Engen; great-grandson, Tyler Pederson; Donald Engen, Eugene Wright, and Gary Hauck.

Lula Grace (Pederson) Hagge was born January 14, 1920, in Yankton, SD to Troy and Wilda (Collar) Lux. At the age of four, she moved with her parent and family to Volin, SD. She graduated from Volin High School in Volin, SD, and was baptized and confirmed in the Lutheran faith.

In 1940 she married Elmer Pederson in Hartington, NE. Together they lived and farmed in rural Gayville, SD. In 1958 they bought a farm near Utica, SD. Elmer passed away in 1989. She



Hagge

later married Bertram Hagge of Menno, SD. He passed away in 1997.

She was active in church work and taught many years of Sunday school education both in Volin Lutheran Church and Our Savior's Lutheran Church, rural Menno, SD. She enjoyed traveling and visiting many states and the country of Norway.

Following ill health, she moved to Yankton, living there until her death.

Survivors include two sons, Thomas (Adeline) of Norfolk, NE and James (Maurine) of Sioux Falls, SD; five grandsons: Eric, Brad, Jim, Mark and Brian; and eleven great-grandchildren and nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her husbands, her parents, three sisters and three brothers.

Memorials to be directed to Trinity Lutheran Church Building Fund, 30060 448th Ave., Yankton, SD 57078.

Yankton Press & Dakotan
July 2, 2012

OPSAHL-KOSTEL
 FUNERAL HOME & CREMATORY INC.
 Online condolences at:
 www.opsahl-kostelfuneralhome.com

S.D. Producers Harvesting Less Hay Than Last Year

BY ANDREA COOK

Rapid City Journal

RAPID CITY — The sweet scent of freshly mown hay lingered in the air of a hay field recently where Dennis Boomsma cut a mixture of alfalfa and grass east of Box Elder.

Grasping a handful of hay cut the previous day, Boomsma figured that by mid-morning it was already too dry to bale.

"I'll have to wait to bale it until tonight," he said. "There's just no humidity, and it dries out too fast."

That isn't the only problem Boomsma and other producers in eastern Pennington County are facing this year as they hit the hay fields, hoping to build a winter store of feed.

Boomsma estimates that this particular field will yield about a fourth of the bales it produced last year.

In another field, the grass is only four inches tall.

"I don't know if I'll even cut it," Boomsma said. In all, he estimates that his hay crop will be a fourth to a third of what it was last year.

Thousands of barely visible grasshoppers also threaten his hay crop. The grass in his hayfield seemed alive with the hungry insects.

"The trouble is, it's this way all over, too," Boomsma said.

A virtually snowless winter and erratic spring rains, coupled with day after day of hot moisture-sucking winds have stressed the hay crop, according to Boomsma and his neighbors.

Bill Kopp lives a few miles farther east on U.S. Highway 16-14. Like Boomsma, his haying season is just getting started, and it isn't looking good. He is expecting about 20 percent of the hay he cut last year, but

he's somewhat philosophical.

There was a large surplus of hay for about four years, so it isn't unusual to have a less productive year, Kopp said.

Kopp delayed getting into the field, hoping the weather would improve and give the alfalfa and grass the boost it needed.

"We got more rain, but not enough," he said.

"It's going to be a short crop," confirmed retired veterinarian Dale Hendrickson of Caputa while tossing some of last year's third cutting of alfalfa and grass hay to five hungry horses. In a nearby corral, a small bunch of cows nibbled on the remains of two 1,000-plus-pound bales.

"It's going to be a short crop," Hendrickson said. "The grasshoppers and alfalfa weevils took their toll on the first cutting."

Hendrickson said the hay looks good in the valley along Rapid Creek, where he has 90 acres of irrigated land.

Above the valley, however, things aren't looking good. A 70-acre field that produced 160 big bales last year probably won't be cut this year.

"There's nothing there," Hendrickson said.

On the warm, breezy day, Jeff Dale of Rapid City battled a reluctant baler to make his first bale of the season. His father, Jerry Dale, watched from a nearby van.

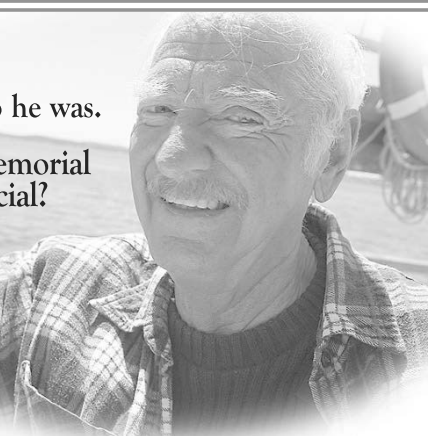
"This is pretty decent, but a lot of it isn't," said Jeff Dale, surveying the double windrows of alfalfa and grass hay lying on a 13-acre field east of Rapid Valley.

"I think this piece is comparable with last year, but around the country, it's not good," he said. One parcel of the Dale's "isn't worth dragging a baler to," he said.

Unique...

that was just who he was.

Shouldn't his memorial be just as special?



Finest quality personalized memorials, as unique as the lives they honor.



Home Office & Carving Center
 1609 Broadway • Yankton, SD • 605.665.3052

Visit us on-line at:
 www.lukensmemorials.com

Member
MTA Monument Builders of North America
 THE MARK OF EXCELLENCE

GOT NEWS?

Call The Press & Dakotan At 665-7811

We Will Not Live Forever.

But we would like to make sure that our memory lives on.



We wanted to make sure that our funerals are a moving and personal reflection of the lives we have lived. The Wintz's took the time to understand the individual's that we are, and worked with us to plan a ceremony that will be a reflection of our lives. After all, who knows better than us, what we really want is gerbera daisies, classical music and butterflies!

Don't leave it up to your kids...

Call the Wintz Family to preplan today.



WINTZ & RAY
 FUNERAL HOME
 and Cremation Service, Inc.
 Yankton, 605-665-3644
 wintzrayfuneralhome.com
 Garden of Memories Cemetery

HONORING THEIR MEMORY

Our Thoughts And Prayers Are With Them

Our care and concern does not end with the funeral service. This week we remember with family and friends the anniversary of the deaths of:

Sylvan Jiricek
who passed away on
July 4, 2011

Clarence Courtney
who passed away on
July 5, 2011

Richard Merrigan
who passed away on
July 7, 2011

Duane Heeney
who passed away on
July 8, 2011

This remembrance is brought to you free of charge. If you have a loved one you would like remembered, contact us at Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Home & Crematory. Guiding and serving families with compassion and trust.

OPSAHL-KOSTEL
 FUNERAL HOME & CREMATORY INC.
 Funeral Home & Crematory, Yankton
 Memorial Resource Center, Tyndall
 Memorial Chapels, Tyndall, Tabor & Menno

665-9679 • 1-800-495-9679
 www.opsahlkostelfuneralhome.com