

Judge Rules For Fort Pierre In Project

FORT PIERRE (AP) — A circuit judge has rejected a request to put additional issues to a public vote regarding a \$16 million development project on the Missouri River in Fort Pierre.

The City Council has accepted some referral petitions, and a special election will be held Tuesday on a conditional use permit for a boat storage area at the proposed Riverwalk Landing project.

But the council rejected petitions calling for a public vote on zoning changes and a deferred development fee, saying those council actions were administrative and not subject to a public vote.

KCCR Radio reports that Circuit Judge John Brown ruled in the city council's favor.

Diane London, owner of a restaurant near the project, argues the city is giving the project preferential treatment.

Ex-Hospital CEO In NE Neb. Takes Job

NORFOLK, Neb. (AP) — The former president and chief executive officer of Faith Regional Health Services in Norfolk has taken a new job as president of Boone Hospital Center in Columbia, Mo.

The *Norfolk Daily News* reports that Jim Sinek will begin his new job Aug. 12.

Sinek resigned from the Norfolk hospital post in February, but remained with the hospital as an interim consultant. Sinek said he resigned to pursue other opportunities.

Boone Hospital has 400 beds, 350 physicians on medical staff and 2,000 employees. It has gross revenues of about \$800 million and net revenue of about \$300 million.

2 Children Injured In Fireworks Accident

FREMONT, Neb. (AP) — Two young girls, their mother and a man are recovering from injuries they received in a fireworks accident west of Fremont.

The Dodge County sheriff tells Omaha television station KETV that the girls, ages 2 and 9, and mother suffered injuries to their faces when an improvised firework exploded Wednesday night.

Sheriff Steve Hespen says people were taking apart mortar shells and packing the powder into a cannon. A stick or wooden rod used to pack the powder ended up serving as a projectile when something ignited the powder, sending wooden shrapnel out from the firework.

An adult male also was hurt. The four were taken to a hospital, but details on their conditions were not immediately available.

2 Charged With Fraud In \$23M Vets' Contracts

BY RYAN J. FOLEY

Associated Press

IOWA CITY, Iowa — Two businessmen are disputing an indictment that accuses them of fraudulently bidding for and winning \$23 million worth of federal construction contracts in Nebraska and Iowa that were intended for disabled veterans' businesses.

Ram Hingorani and Ronald Waugh pleaded not guilty in federal court in Des Moines this week to 32 counts including fraud and money laundering. Omaha-based Midwest Contracting, Inc., a company operated by both men but majority owned by Waugh, is also named in the indictment.

According to the indictment, Midwest Contracting bid for and won contracts from the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense under a program designed to help small businesses that are at least 51 percent

owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans. Federal law encourages agencies to give at least 3 percent of their contracting work to such firms.

Waugh, of Glenwood, Iowa, is such a veteran, having been designated as service disabled for hearing loss in 2007 and tinnitus in 2008. Hingorani, of suburban Omaha, is not a veteran, and the indictment suggests that he was actually in control of Midwest Contracting.

The indictment alleges that the two men formed the company in 2007 specifically to seek such contracts and that they fraudulently relied on the wounded veterans' preference to receive 45 contracts for work for the VA in Des Moines and Omaha and at Offutt Air Force Base in Nebraska starting in 2007. Six of the contracts were worth more than \$1 million.

Hingorani later transferred large sums of money from Midwest Contracting's bank account to other assets he

controlled, including \$1 million to set up an investment account, the indictment alleges. He also used the proceeds to buy 40 acres of land in Sarpy County, Neb., and made a \$510,000 payment to Waugh in 2011, it says.

The indictment notes that pass-through companies set up to win contracts are considered illegal under the program, and that any joint ventures must be controlled by the disabled veterans' company.

Leon Spies, an Iowa City attorney representing Waugh and Midwest Contracting, said his client is a Vietnam veteran who was also stationed in Europe and the southern U.S. during a "long and rewarding and valuable career in the military."

Spies said that the particular details of the government's allegations have not been fully fleshed out, but that Waugh would vigorously contest them.

5 Rescued Bears From Ohio Come To S.D. Sanctuary

SPEARFISH (AP) — Five bears rescued from a private owner in Ohio are getting a new home at the Spirit of the Hills Wildlife Sanctuary in Spearfish.

Until their owner in Prospect, Ohio, relinquished custody, the five bears had lived in small, cramped pens on a concrete pad.

Fred Erdman, president of the sanctuary board, said the U.S. Agriculture Department's office in South Dakota contacted the organization

because it knew the western South Dakota sanctuary had space for more bears.

"Knowing our capabilities and that we had room for them, it wasn't a terribly hard decision," Erdman told the *Rapid City Journal*.

Bobbi Brink, founder and director of San Diego's Lions Tigers and Bears, led the effort to relocate bears from private owners in Ohio. She said she's happy the Spearfish sanctuary could take five of the bears.

"They get to live out their lives and finally get to play on the grass and swim and run," Brink said. "With logs to scratch and play on, and they get to live their life with dignity. They get to be a bear."

Brink said the bears were relinquished ahead of a new Ohio law set to go into effect this fall that strictly regulates the ownership and housing of dangerous wild animals.

The law was passed after

a tragedy in which dozens of exotic animals escaped in 2011 after their owner set them free before committing suicide.

Brink picked up bears from three locations in Ohio, transporting them to Spearfish and other reputable sanctuaries. In addition to the five bears coming to Spearfish, two will go to a sanctuary in Keeneseburg, Colo., one will go to Kendalia, Texas, and one will go to Alpine, Calif.



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