

Royal

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Children's Miracle Network Miracle maker award, as well as \$10,000 from the Miss America Organization for the Jean Bartel Military Awareness Scholarship.

"The Miss South Dakota Pageant is part of the Miss America Organization, so it focuses on four areas: service, style, scholarship and success," she explained. "So, this past weekend 16 women from across the South Dakota came together in Hot Springs to compete for the title of Miss South Dakota in the areas of competition of interview, talent, swimwear and evening gown. Obviously, things went very well for me. I won the talent preliminary award on the night I competed, which was wonderful because as a singer and a vocal music education major from USD it was nice to have my abilities recognized by the judges."

Simunek said her years in the organization have prepared her to fulfill her duties as Miss South Dakota.

"The Teen program truly is a feeder program into the Miss program, so competing as a teen made me want to compete in the Miss program even more just to reach that next destination," she said. "I was definitely a different person eight years ago. I hadn't been through high school, let alone through college. There was a lot I still had left to learn about myself and my beliefs. You think critically about things going on in the world and what your opinion

of things are as a 14 year old girl those were things I thought about, but I don't think I fully understood. To be honest, do I even fully understand them now? We are constantly growing and evolving as people. Fortunately, now I can really think critically and focus on the research on the current issues going on and develop my own opinions. I have been able to grow monumentally in the last eight years."

She also noted that as she has matured, so has her favorite aspect of the pageant.

"My favorite is the interview aspect," Simunek said. "Had you asked me that a few years ago, you would have not gotten that answer, it used to be very intimidating for me to walk into a room with a panel of judges who are going to throw questions at you. There are no holds on what they are going to ask you, they will tackle any issue from what are your strengths and weaknesses to what is your opinion on ISIS. The range of questions is very vast. It used to be I would walk into the room and be very nervous, but with time, trust and belief in my own speaking abilities, I have been able to turn my least favorite part into my absolute favorite. I walked into the interview this year for Miss South Dakota knowing that I was there to give the judges my most authentic self and that is exactly what I did. I showed them my heart and the things I cared about and believed in."

While winning the title of Miss South Dakota will force Simunek to defer her student teaching

for a year, she also notes, it could

not have come at a better time in her life.

"This is the perfect year for me to win this title," she said. "Like we always say, life has a plan for me and you just have to trust it and follow it and enjoy it. Throughout every year that I have competed and not received the title, I have walked away with a valuable lesson, every time. I have been able to learn more about myself, work on my public speaking, and be out in the public serving our communities in South Dakota more. This was the perfect opportunity. With school, I was able to complete all my classes with my friends and be with them and have our study parties. Now I don't have to worry about missing classes with them. It is extremely wonderful timing for me."

Simunek noted that her relationships built at USD and in the community of Vermillion have allowed her to achieve her dream.

"I have been prepping and competing throughout my entire college career and I never stopped with my community service," she said. "I give 110 percent to my school work, which my professors know. I have been able to maintain an extremely high grade point average, on the Dean's List every semester and getting phenomenally great grades in my classes, and I say that with a humble heart. I am a hard working person, so it is just an effect for me. It is difficult at times, but thankfully my professors have worked with me when I was working with Children's Miracle Network and the Sanford Hospital in Sioux Falls, they understand if I can't be in class that

day because I am working for a good cause. This fall I will have one class to complete and will be doing it as an independent study with my teachers. After that, I will have completed all of my on-campus coursework and all I will have left is my student teaching.

"I would like to add a huge thank you to the community of Vermillion," she added. "Throughout the past five years they have been extremely helpful to me with my Veteran's Relief drive. Thank You to everyone at the University of South Dakota for their undying support over the years for helping me reach this goal and help me on my journey to Miss America."

Next for Simunek is preparing for the Miss America Pageant set for Atlantic City this September.

"That takes a lot of prep time making sure my interview skills and making sure that my talent is up to par and ready for a nationally televised stage," she explained. "Once I get back from Miss America I will spend my year touring the state of South Dakota visiting schools and talking about Children's Miracle Network, which the Miss America Organization is the national ambassador for, but also speaking on behalf of my own personal platform 5 Stars For Serving Those Who Served. I will spend a large portion of this next year really trying to bump up the numbers and help as many military families and homeless veterans making sure they have the tools to reintegrate into the community positively and thank them for all they do."

No matter what happens in Atlantic City, Simunek said she knows this will be a life changing opportunity.

"This has been a dream of mine for a very long time and go to Atlantic City to meet 51 other amazing women from across the country and see what they have to offer," she said. "You really do create a bond with these women that will last a lifetime. I am fortunate to say I know someone from every single state and will become sisters and have the opportunity to compete on the national stage representing everything that love and truly enjoy doing. I am very excited to represent the University of South Dakota on the national stage. There have been a couple of Miss South Dakotas that have hailed from USD and I am glad to be added to that list and represent the Coyotes all the way over in New Jersey, that will be very fun."

Simunek said she knows that as the 69th Miss South Dakota she is stepping in the history of many successful South Dakota women.

"It is very historical and that is something that is important to recognize, it is truly much bigger than yourself," she said. "I am representing an organization that doesn't just represent me as a person, but that I am now representing the state of South Dakota. I represent a vast amount of people and opinions in this state and that is quite the task to take on, but I am so excited to take on that opportunity and responsibility and to hold the history of the Miss South Dakota and Miss America organization in my hands. I am excited to be able to nurture it and mold it into what I want it to be and go around the state makes a vast difference in my life."

Election

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most surprising thing to me," he said. "I think that the people were engaged in the process. When I started city council one of the things I was concerned about was that we were not having community discussions on the big issues in front of us. I really think that the community that was here this summer really was very engaged in the process about the merits of the ordinances."

Mayor Jack Powell echoed Ward's statement.

"I am quite pleased with the turnout," Powell said. "Oftentimes, in off-term elections like a school board election, you will be lucky get 15 percent. I think that we got 24 percent is a really good turnout. I appreciate how the voters voted. I think it speaks well for progressing with our pool and park project and I hope now we can get back on track with it. I take it as an affirmation that they support what we are trying to do in

trying to progress the city. I just can't say enough about the people who got out and voted. That is what our form of government is all about."

However, Ward said he did not feel exalted after the ordinance was upheld because he knew there were many people who are disappointed at the result.

"Obviously I supported both ordinances for a reason," Ward said. "I am really happy that we are talking about the issues and people are aware of what is going on. I am happy they are supporting us, but I am happier that they are voicing their opinions."

Ward also noted that going into the election he did not know what result to expect.

As for what the decision to keep the malt beverage ordinance on the books means for the pool project, Ward commented that he is not sure.

"My understanding is we will work with our contractor to try to do as much as we can this year and then try to create a calendar that will allow us to build the pool as quickly as possible," he said. "I don't think we know at this point what the

length of the delay will be. We need to run it by our pool people. What it does mean is that we can quickly finance the Prentiss Park Project and move forward to make Vermillion a destination city for people who want to work here."

DAYCARE ORDINANCE

The daycare ordinance was adopted in a close race winning by only 62 votes.

Daycare providers had mixed feelings regarding the adoption of the day care registration ordinance.

"I am really happy that so many people got out to vote," said Laurie Kruse, an in-home daycare operator. "The citizens decided. It was close. We got the message out there and I think that our community leadership are ready to take on some of the responsibilities of regulating the daycares. This is an important issue. I think they did their homework and are ready to take on the task."

Karen Hansen also runs a day-

care out of her home.

"We thought we did really good," she said. "We were a little disappointed. We just wish we could have gotten more providers on board."

Hansen operates one of the two in-home daycares in Vermillion which are already registered, so the passing of the ordinance will have no effect on her daycare.

Hansen opposed the ordinance because she felt it was simply not needed.

"We'll just have to see what happens in the next year," she said. "Hopefully now they aren't going to start changing things on it."

Sarah Sherlock, director of the Center for Children and Families, said she is very happy with the level of interest this vote has shown in the care of children.

"I was pleased that the folks in Vermillion value the importance of safety standards," she said. "I think that it's nice that the citizens of Vermillion were able to vote for it. I think that was important for a lot

of people instead of it just being for city council members. It was very close. It shows that a lot of people care."

Though some worry about the future of the in-home daycares in Vermillion, Sherlock isn't concerned.

"It sounds like many of the home daycare providers are already meeting these standards," she said. "I think it's a positive thing if it means improved health and safety standards for our kiddos."

The regulations set forth in the ordinance seem more than fair to Sherlock.

"Compared to what we have to go through, these are not asking a lot," she said. "I like that the city is providing CPR training because we're responsible for our staff to be trained. Overall I think it's positive. In general I think that anytime we can improve the quality of care for young children I think it's for the better."

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605-689-2244

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\$5 Cheeseburgers & Fries
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Tuesday: \$5 Boots

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Thursday
5-7pm – Domestic
Beers **\$1.50**
5-7pm – Hamburger/
Pizza Burger & Fries
\$5.00

Friday
Apple Glazed
Pork Chop
Serving 5:30-8:00

**Saturday
Entertainment**
No Band
Regular Menu 5:30-8:00
**Bingo Wed. at 7:00p.m.
Sunday at 6:30p.m.**
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4:30-6:00**
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Farmer's Market located
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Friday, July 3rd
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