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# Up For Discussion

## Public Raises Concerns About Proposed New Water Treatment Plant And Rates

BY NATHAN JOHNSON  
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During a public forum Monday to address questions about a possible water system upgrade, the Yankton City Commission heard concerns about the proposed location of a new plant and rate increases for consumers.

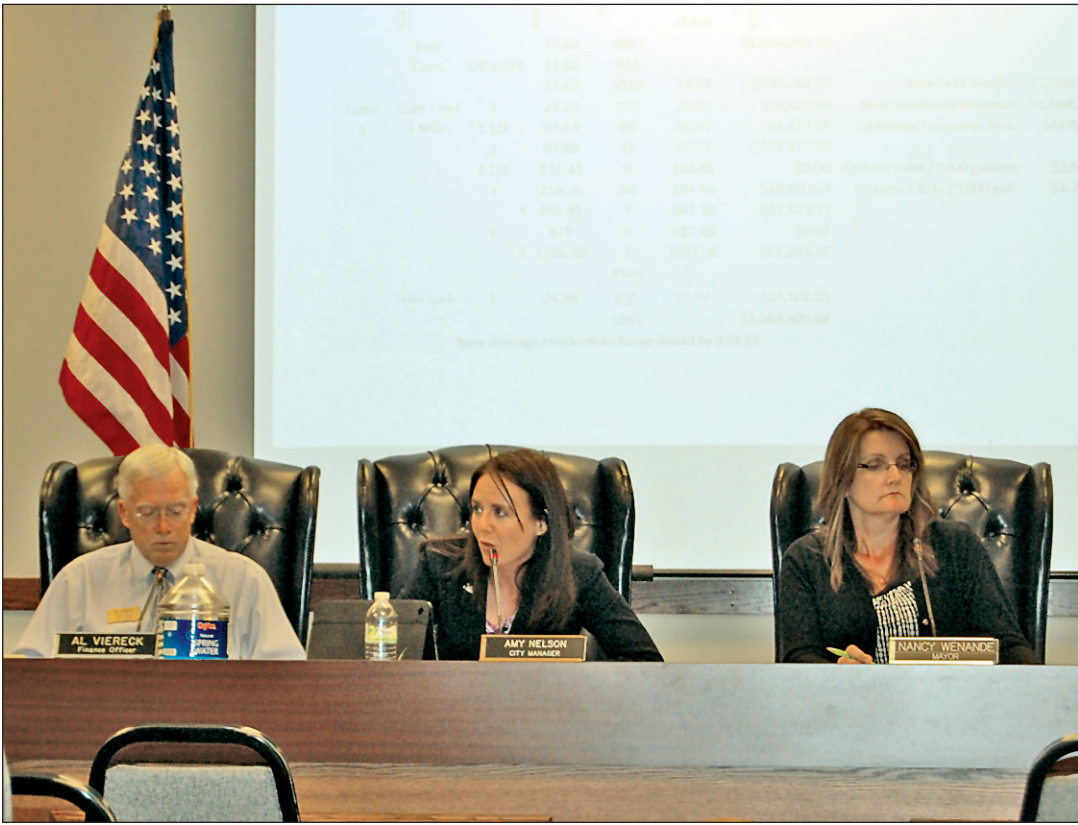
Approximately 20 members of the public were on hand for the 75-minute session that consisted of presentations from Yankton Environmental Services Director Kyle Goodman and Finance Officer Al Viereck, as well as a question-and-answer period for commissioners and audience members.

Cheryl and Mark Wenzlaff, who live at the corner of Douglas Avenue and Levee Street, asked whether building a new water plant adjacent to Water Treatment Plant No. 2 on the east side of the Meridian Bridge is ideal for Yankton's future development.

"My concern is that the building you propose is right in the heart of our most beautiful asset," Cheryl said. "Is there any possibility of searching for another location?"

Mayor Nancy Wenande acknowledged that the commission had heard that concern from other community members, and the possibility of a different site was investigated. However, the commission was skeptical that citizens would be willing to add millions more dollars to the estimated \$28.7 million project that is currently proposed so the water plant could be moved to a different location.

"You're looking at major improvements to your



Yankton City Manager Amy Nelson (center) presents information about the city's proposed water system upgrade during a public forum held Monday at the Technical Education Center. Approximately 20 residents attended to learn more about the city's plans. Also pictured are City Finance Officer Al Viereck and Mayor Nancy Wenande.

distribution system in order to get that water from the treatment plant out to the distribution system properly," Goodman noted. "The area between (Water Treatment Plant No. 1 and Plant No. 2) currently has about 2.5 million gallons of underground storage that you would have to look at moving. The cost of moving would be extremely high."

City Manager Amy Nelson asked if it would be possible to at least be creative with the design of the new plant.

"We can get more creative with the architecture," Goodman responded, saying that can be

addressed once the project enters the design phase.

Mark Wenzlaff also asked whether money could be saved by purchasing water from another entity.

Discussions are still ongoing with B-Y Water, Wenande stated. The rural water district is expected to present a proposal at the June 10 City Commission meeting.

"We're going to still need some of these improvements (to our treatment system)," Viereck said.

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## Daugaard Plans To Seek Extra Funds For State Veterans Home

BY DAVID LIAS  
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South Dakota's economy is improving, meaning the state should end its fiscal year at the end of June with anywhere from \$14 million to \$20 million in unspent revenue.

Turns out there's a need for those extra funds. Gov. Dennis Daugaard will call the South Dakota Legislature into a special session on June 22 to deal with cost overruns in the construction of a new State Veterans Home in Hot Springs.

"Some of that (revenue) I'm going to ask the Legislature to look at spending on the State Veterans Home, which came in over budget," the governor told local reporters after addressing Friday's session of Girls State on the University of South Dakota campus at Vermillion.

The Legislature earlier this year approved a bill authorizing the spending of \$41.3 million in state and federal money to build the new home. But Daugaard says when bids from contractors were opened recently, the lowest bid was considerably above projections. He says that will lead to a total project cost of \$51.3 million.

Daugaard says the state can't wait until the next legislative session in January to deal with the issue.

The governor said he believes he and members of the Legislature share the same concerns regarding this issue: "... frustration that our projections were so far off, and they (lawmakers) want to dive into the details of that, and understand what caused that. I think in some cases our architect and engineers just misjudged the competition for contractors and if we would have been able to bid this a year ago, we would have had better bids."

"I think the Legislature will, as I do, grouse about it, feel kind of irritated about it," Daugaard said, but ultimately will approve appropriating the needed funds for the project.

An improving economy means the demand for contractors has grown, he said. That growing demand means construction firms are bidding projects hoping to make a profit instead of merely breaking even.

"I think also, in some areas, some of our engineers or our architects just forgot this or that," Daugaard said. "One other benchmark against which I judge this is Nebraska just announced they will be seeking bids for an over 200-bed nursing home for veterans, same as us. Their costs per bed are projected to be higher than what our bids came in at."

He said veterans' nursing homes are more costly to build because they must meet higher standards than typical nursing homes.

The governor said he spent Thursday morning with the architect, the engineer, the state engineer, the lieutenant governor and other officials "working through every possible way we could drive the cost down, and so we are working toward that."

A recent development that makes investing such a large appropriation for veterans' care in one location is Medicaid certification for the Hot Springs facility.

"We had been operating, essentially, a nursing home without Medicaid eligibility in the past, and



Daugaard

## Beginner Driver Class To Be Offered In Yankton

BY ANDREW ATWAL  
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Only two spots remain open for a beginning driver course in Yankton being offered by the South Dakota Safety Council.

The class runs the weekend of June 18 and features defensive driving instruction, behind-the-wheel training, driving simulator instruction, a traffic talk with members of the Yankton Police Department and a roll-over simulator with the highway patrol.

Although only two spots remain open, Diane Hall, emergency care, traffic and membership with the South Dakota Safety Council, said she would bring the class back to Yankton if it fills up.

"This is a unique training class designed specifically for beginning drivers who have their learners permit," Hall said. "The goal of the class is to reduce and prevent injuries and

**"This is a unique training class designed specifically for beginning drivers who have their learners permit. The goal of the class is to reduce and prevent injuries and collisions and help beginning drivers drive smarter."**

DIANE HALL

collisions and help beginning drivers drive smarter."

She added that she hopes the class will increase the knowledge of beginning drivers and influence their attitudes and behaviors while driving to help keep them safe on the road.

The Safety Council has offered similar classes in Yankton in the past, including a defensive driver training course, but this is the first class specifically geared towards new drivers.

"With the simulator we'll bring to the class, students will be able to go through a number of different

situations," Hall said. "The simulator brings up scenarios including hazard recognition, driving technique and appropriate decision making behind the wheel."

The round-table discussion with law enforcement will deal with feedback and input about what officers see with new drivers, including driving distractions, impairment and what drivers should do if they get pulled over.

"One of the goals of the class is to introduce thoughts into new drivers that influence their attitudes and make them think more about certain

situations when they're behind the wheel," Hall said. "We want to help kids drive smarter and increase their knowledge about what is going on when they're driving."

Currently, South Dakota allows 14-year-olds to get a learner's permit. The difference between a learner's permit and restricted license is that a learner's permit requires drivers to have a qualified adult in the car while they drive.

The permit is held for six months, then if a parent or guardian says it's okay, new drivers can go to the DMV and get their restricted license, following a driving test.

A restricted license allows new drivers to drive by themselves within a restricted time frame, there are no passenger restrictions with this license in South Dakota.

Hall said officials at the Safety Council believe the drivers license

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## New Jersey Senator Lautenberg Dead At 89

BY ANGELA DELLI SANTI  
Associated Press

TRENTON, N.J. — The next time a flight attendant reminds you there's no smoking or you witness a teenager getting carded at a liquor store, think of Frank Lautenberg.

The liberal Democratic senator from New Jersey left his mark on the everyday lives of millions of Americans, whether they know it or not. In the 1980s, he was a driving force behind the laws that banned smoking on most U.S. flights and made 21 the drinking age in all 50 states.

Lautenberg, a multimillionaire



Lautenberg

businessman who became an accomplished — if often underestimated — politician, died Monday at a New York hospital after suffering complications from viral pneumonia. His funeral will be held Wednesday morning in New York City.

At 89, he was the oldest person in the Senate and the last of 115 World War II veterans to serve there.

"He improved the lives of countless

LAUTENBERG | PAGE 11

### Nebraska

## Heineman Signs 3 Tax Cut Measures Into Law

BY GRANT SCHULTE  
Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — Gov. Dave Heineman signed three tax-cut measures into law on Monday, while members of a new committee met for the first time to begin searching for weaknesses in Nebraska's tax structure.

The Republican governor approved the bills alongside 11 state senators who played a role in passing them. The signing near the end of this year's session came as lawmakers started their work on a statewide tax study authorized last week.

"These important tax bills represent small steps forward regarding tax relief and tax competitiveness, but they are important steps forward," Heineman



Heineman

said during a news conference at the Capitol.

Lawmakers on the 14-member Tax Modernization Committee began talking Monday about how to proceed with a six-month review of Nebraska's tax climate as a means to explore ways to stimulate business and population growth while maintaining essential state services.

The panel will look at what areas of the tax system, if any, have fallen out of sync with Nebraska's economy, said Sen. Galen Hadley, the committee's chairman. The last major tax overhaul took place in the 1960s, and some

lawmakers question whether it meets the needs of a state that relies less on manufacturing and more on services.

Hadley noted that Nebraska's economy and tax system have fared better than other states during the recession.

Sen. Beau McCoy of Omaha said lawmakers will need to take a long-term view, because major tax policy changes are rare.

Lawmakers have passed several smaller tax measures this year, including a wind-energy incentive bill that is awaiting Heineman's approval or veto. He has until Tuesday to act on the legislation.

Heineman said Monday that he

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