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IRS Suffers Another Blow

Officials Enjoyed Luxury Rooms At Conference

BY STEPHEN OHLEMACHER AND ALAN FRAM Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Already heavily criticized for targeting conservative groups, the Internal Revenue Service absorbed another blow Tuesday as new details emerged about senior officials enjoying luxury hotel rooms, free drinks and free food at a \$4.1 million training conference.

One top official stayed five nights in a room that regularly goes for \$3,500 a night, and another — who was later promoted — stayed four nights in a room that regularly goes for \$1,499.

A total of 132 IRS officials received room upgrades at the conference in 2010 in Anaheim, Calif., according to a report by J. Russell George, the Treasury Department inspector general for tax administration. The tax agency paid a flat daily fee of \$135 per hotel room, the report said, but the upgrades were part of a package deal that

added to the overall cost of the conference.

The report was made public on the same day leaders of six conservative groups testified at a congressional hearing, where they told lawmakers they had endured abuse from IRS agents as they spent years trying to qualify for tax-exempt status.

In often-emotional testimony, the conservatives described IRS demands for details about employees' and group officials' political activities and backgrounds, for comments they'd posted on websites, for videos of meetings and information on whether speakers at such ses-

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INSIDE TODAY



American Profile

* * *

County Seeks Answers About 211

BY NATHAN JOHNSON nathan.johnson@yankton.net

After discussing the 211 helpline for a second time Tuesday, the Yankton County Commission was still torn over how much benefit it would provide citizens.

By calling 211, residents could obtain information from the Helpline Center in Sioux Falls on community resources, volunteer services, child care resources, suicide and crisis support, and military and family support.

Yankton County Emergency Management Director Paul Scherschligt told commissioners at their previous meeting that he is willing to administer the local paperwork for the service through his office. He is particularly interested in how 211 could provide information to the public during emergency situations.

The cost of the service would be 60 cents per person annually, bringing the estimated cost for Yankton County to \$13,462. Bon Homme and Hutchinson counties are also looking at implementing the service along with Yankton County.

The 211 service originally served the Sioux Falls metropolitan area, and it was expanded to six counties in the Black Hills in 2005.

The local United Way spearheaded an effort to get 211 in Yankton County in 2005, but it could not obtain sufficient funding. Neither the Yankton City Commission nor the Yankton County Commission were interested in assisting with the costs.

"We've only got two small areas of the state explored in this," Commissioner Garry Moore said to Helpline Center Director Janet Kittams-Lalley, who attended Tuesday's meeting. "Why are others reluctant to hop on board? I know it's not mandated by the state, and it's not funded by the state. But there is not a lot of people

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Trucking Firm Hauls In Safety Award

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF randy.dockendorf@yankton.net

WYNOT, Neb. — When he hits the road, Charles Jones believes in playing it safe.

Safe, as in hundreds of thousands of accident-free miles for his Wynot, Neb., trucking firm.

Jones Feed & Grain Trucking Inc. was presented the Platinum award by Great West Casualty Company as part of the 2012 National Safety Awards Program.

"This is a national award, and Platinum is the highest award that you can get," Jones said.

He sees the award reflecting a commitment to getting the job done — and done safely.

"Everybody that's a repeat customer knows the service that I give," he said. "Everybody appreciates that, rain or shine, we will get there somehow."

The national award reflects a team effort, Jones said. "It's awesome. It just shows me that I

have good quality drivers working for me," he said.

However, the Wynot trucker is no stranger to national recognition for his company's safety record. He won the Platinum award in 2005 and 2006, the Bronze award in 2007 and 2008, and back to the Platinum award in 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012.

"Looking at the wall, we've got Platinum awards since 2005, except for those two years," he said. "It's a credit to my drivers and to my dispatcher, Dennis Wuebben, in the office."

The Wynot company has received National Safety Awards Program honors almost since its opening day in business.

Jones Feed and Grain Trucking has been serving the Midwest since 2001. The company runs nine trucks from the local area to areas throughout the Midwest.

Jones notes his local roots as a Wynot native and his role as an independent business owner and operator.

"We handle all feed and grains ... anything that

AWARD | PAGE 12



SIMPLY GOURD-GEOUS

Area children got the opportunity to showcase their artistic skills Tuesday at the Kids' Art Fest at Riverside Park. The event was put on by the Yankton Area Arts Association. ABOVE: Winny Yaggie of Yankton gets some help painting a gourd from her father Jason. RIGHT: A host of young artists demonstrate their skill by painting gourds. (James D. Cimburek/P&D)



Nebraska

Lawmakers Eye Medicaid Bill In 2014

BY GRANT SCHULTE Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — Nebraska lawmakers who want to expand Medicaid coverage as part of the federal health care law promised Tuesday to revive the issue next year, with a focus on both the financial and human impact of the program.

Sen. Kathy Campbell of Lincoln an-

nounced that lawmakers will study alternatives to the proposed expansion, as well as the economic impact on Nebraska and local communities. She announced the study alongside 21 senators.

Campbell introduced a bill this year that would have extended coverage to tens of thousands of low-income adults, many of whom are childless and don't qualify for coverage right now. Support-

ers of the measure failed to reach the two-thirds majority needed to overcome a filibuster in the 49-member Legislature. Republican Gov. Dave Heineman has said he also opposes the law, and overriding his veto would require at least 30 votes.

Sen. Jeremy Nordquist of Omaha said lawmakers are willing to look at

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Home Prices Jump By Most In 7 Years

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. home prices soared 12.1 percent in April from a year earlier, the biggest gain since February 2006, as more buyers competed for fewer homes.

Real estate data provider CoreLogic says prices rose in April from the previous April in 48 states. Price also rose 3.2 percent in April from March, much better than the previous month-to-month gain of 1.9 percent.

Prices in Nevada jumped 24.6 percent from a year earlier, the most among the states. California's gain was next at 19.4 percent, followed by Arizona's 17.3 percent, Hawaii's 17 percent and Oregon's 15.5 percent.



METRO GRAPHICS

Officials Work To Curb Teen Drinking

BY ANDREW ATWAL andrew.atwal@yankton.net

Sixty-nine percent of South Dakota high school students had one or more drinks of alcohol at least once in their life, according to a youth risk behavior study.

Thirty-nine percent of South Dakota high school students had at least one drink of alcohol within the last month.

In order to help prevent teenage drinking in the area, officials from Lewis and Clark Behavioral Health Services (LCBHS) have been working with the Yankton School District (YSD) and community members to raise awareness on the dangers of underage drinking.



Kashas

In August, Tiffany Kashas was hired as a school based drug and alcohol counselor for YSD and has worked on curriculum, school activities, contact with parents and meeting with students one-on-one to help combat drug and alcohol among underage students in Yankton.

"The first year of this program has gone really well," she said. "There has been a lot of neat things we did, and I think students had fun with some of the activities we put on."

With the new addition of a new counselor, Yankton High School (YHS) officials made a substantial change to one of their alcohol policies.

"With longer suspensions, students are now able to serve the suspension on a week in, week out basis," Kashas said. "In other words, instead of needing to serve the suspension all at once, a student can rotate five days in, five days out. On the days they are out of school, students are also able to work at the Alternative Learning Center (ALC) to do homework and catch-up on other work."

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