

Lake Level Measurements Available

PIERRE — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has completed its 2014 spring lake level measurements of about 150 lakes. The lake level measurements can be viewed through an interactive graph from the department's homepage at <http://denr.sd.gov> or by visiting the department's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/southdakotadenr/>.

"Because South Dakotans love the outdoors, many people find natural resources data interesting," said DENR Secretary Steve Pirner. "DENR's Lake Level Measurements page is another effort to provide the most up-to-date data available to everyone over the internet."

The department measures the surface elevation for many South Dakota lakes each spring and fall. The biannual elevations provide an historical record of lake level fluctuations. The elevations do not, however, reflect the annual high and low elevations of the lakes.

In addition to showing surface elevations, some lakes have elevations established for the ordinary high/low water mark and lake outlet.

The elevations may be useful to people who own property, homes, cabins or businesses on or near lakeshores. Water project districts, recreationists and those interested in establishing the elevations of lake outlets or spillways may also find the data helpful.

Lake Poinsett, for example, is a popular lake in Hamlin County in east-central South Dakota. A visit to the DENR lake levels website shows the lake has an ordinary high water mark of 1651.5 feet above mean sea level, the outlet elevation is at 1650.5 feet above mean sea level, an aerial view or map of the lake, the approximate latitude and longitude for the lake location and outlet location, an interactive graph showing the historical elevations, and a table containing exact elevation data from October 1983 to May 2014.

Red Power Round-Up Set For June 26-28

HURON — The International Harvester Collector's Club (IHCC) has selected the State Fair Grounds in Huron as the host site for the National Red Power Round-Up to be held June 26-28.

This 25th annual anniversary celebration will bring people together to see the history of International Harvester and agriculture-related memorabilia.

Along with an impressive selection of approximately 1,000 tractors, Steve Masat of Redfield, the S.D. Red Power/Chapter 21 key organizer of the event, expects 15,000 to 20,000 people to attend. Additional exhibits will include engines, trucks, equipment, household appliances, milking equipment and toy collections.

This event will be a once in a lifetime opportunity to see unique exhibits which include the 1924 International Harvester Farmall Tractor, the first one ever produced. Along with it will be the very last IH Farmall Tractor ever produced, the 1985 model 5488.

Youngsters who attend the event will be entertained with several kids' activities planned by the Ag Committee of the Huron Chamber & Visitors' Bureau. There will be a pedal tractor maze, kids' scavenger hunt, crafts, a corn sand box, rope making and a featured movie. Children's book author, Billy Steers, will be featured as he illustrates stories from his "Tractor Mac" series.

Other highlights will include the James River Blue Grass Band, Mogen's Heroes, Ranch Rodeo Performance, the Crafts/Flea Market, Quilt Trunk Shows and contest, a daily parade and special presentations from Rodney Miller, owner and host of "Small Town Big Deal" television show.

This will be the farthest west and north for the Red Power Round-Up. South Dakota last hosted the event at Madison in 1997. The three-day gathering will provide fun for the entire family. The show will offer a unique and rare opportunity for people of South Dakota and around the world to experience a show of this nature and see how American agriculture was shaped. South Dakota Red Power/Chapter 21 welcomes all international harvester collectors, vendors and the general public to the 2014 National Red Power Round-Up.

For more information, go to www.redpowerroundup2014.com/.

Barnyard To Boatyard Exchange Set

HURON — South Dakota Farmers Union, in conjunction with the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, is offering the second annual Barnyard to Boatyard Conservation Exchange for Farmers Union members.

"Farmers Union is thrilled to announce the second annual conservation exchange," said Doug Sombke, President of South Dakota Farmers Union (SDFU). "This is an amazing opportunity for South Dakota's farmers and ranchers to learn about water quality issues, develop relationships with Louisiana fisherman and create memories that last a lifetime."

The Barnyard to Boatyard Conservation Exchange is an all-expense paid experience that focuses on the importance of the Missouri and Mississippi River watersheds and Delta region. South Dakota farmers and ranchers selected for the exchange will participate in two weekend trips this summer.

During the first weekend trip, South Dakota farmers and ranchers will travel to Louisiana for a three-day educational seminar where they will be provided an overview of the fishing, shrimping, oyster, energy and shipping industries. The trip will focus on the delta with tours of the region, fishing in the gulf, and discussions on the economic and development impacts that the region faces from saline water and hypoxia build-up.

The second trip will take place in North Dakota and South Dakota. During this trip, fishermen and shrimpers from the Mississippi Delta region will travel to the Midwest and learn about the conservation practices that farmers in the upper Missouri and Mississippi watersheds utilize, as well as issues they face.

"Anytime we can share practices that farmers implement here in the Upper Midwest to protect our resources for generations to come, it helps spread the message of stewardship," Sombke said.

SDFU is currently accepting applications for this year's exchange. Farm and ranch couples are strongly encouraged to apply together. Applications can be found online at www.sdfu.org and must be received by 5 pm MDT on Friday, June 27, to be given full consideration.

Dates have not yet been confirmed for the trips, but each trip will be a four-day excursion, Thursday-Sunday, in August and early September.

For additional questions or to have a form mailed to you contact SDFU Rural Development Director Kristen Fink at 605.352.6761 ext. 118 or kfink@sdfu.org.



RANDY DOCKENDORF/P&D
Bloomfield, Neb., faculty members Richard Eisenhauer (left) and Gary Eisenhauer discuss proposals during Tuesday's five-school meeting in Norfolk, Neb.

Schools

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are you gaining?"

The school officials talked about a wide range of courses that could be added if they were to pool their student enrollment of about 1,300.

The wide ranging discussion included advanced placement courses, upper level science and math courses and areas such as welding, auto body work, agriculture and health care fields.

They also discussed career areas such as athletic training and wind energy.

They also talked about the possibility of providing more opportunities for students to explore career areas such as medicine, athletic training and communications.

Extracurricular activities could also benefit, with the addition of programs such as orchestra and debate. In addition, students at the larger school would feel more freedom to pick and choose activities rather than feel pressured to participate because the program needs numbers to survive.

The administrators in attendance said they have neither the teachers nor the students to offer advanced courses or new programs.

Wausa principal Brad Hoelsing said his students need to request independent study for a specialized course that's not currently taught at the school.

"The kids struggle to get the electives they want," he said. "We can offer just what they need for curriculum. We just don't have the students with our current system to expand the curriculum."

In the same manner, Hoelsing said he can't stretch his current staff any further.

"I think we offer a very good education for our kids, but we can't expend any more," he said. "We can't ask more of our staff. They're tapped out."

Administrators at the other schools expressed similar sentiments, saying their staff members are juggling either a variety of work assignments or teaching every

period without a break.

The school officials also worried about short-changing their students.

"How do we say that kids are college and career ready when we can't give them everything they need?" Alexander asked. "And how will our students be competitive? If you have a (course) with only two students, how competitive is that? That's not how the world works. If you have a class with 15 students, it will be more competitive."

One teacher in attendance asked about the future of current staff members should the five districts combine their students and curriculum.

Osmond superintendent Dave Hamm said the transition process would likely take at least three years. Attrition — particularly with a large number of teachers approaching retirement age — would likely bring staffing to the needed levels.

"We have stated, our goal is not to lose jobs initially," he said. On the other hand, the combined school operation may need more teachers, Alexander said.

"When these five schools combine their enrollments, we will be a large Class B school. We will have a large (secondary) building and a large group of teachers," he said. "We will still need (multiple) sections of high school English, and we will need teachers for junior high English."

The expanded faculty would also help prevent staff burnout, Alexander said. "A teacher would no longer need to say, 'I'm the social studies department of my school,'" he said.

Plainview superintendent Richard Alt noted the schools will likely hire more teachers than proposed in a consultant's study.

"With the combined five schools, we will have the kids (enrollment) to support those numbers, and the more we can do," he said.

Hamm agreed, noting the five-school effort likely wouldn't save \$2.7 million the first year as suggested in the consultant's study.

"We're not going to be efficient that first year, but we will become efficient over time," he said, referring to the required transition and staff adjustments.

In addition, the school officials said they could hire staff for specialized services such as speech therapy. Currently, the five schools pay a combined \$800,000 to \$1 million annually to contract for those services.

In terms of financial assistance, Hamm told the *Press & Dakotan* the five schools can apply for revision grants of \$5,000 per school, amounting to a total of \$25,000, and implementation grants of \$50,000 annually

per school over a three-year period, bringing another \$750,000.

NED staff member Cory Epler told the *Press & Dakotan* he encourages

the five schools to think in terms of benefiting not just school-age students but the entire region.

"There is a clear link between education, workforce and economic development," he said. "How do we continue to grow this area and region, offering opportunities for students to be college and career ready?"

In that respect, the effort must begin at an early age, Epler said.

"Career exploration needs to start in the elementary schools. They start thinking about careers in fourth grade," he said. "If you start talking about careers in middle school and high school, that may be too late."

The five schools' efforts at career development could provide a model for all of Nebraska, said NED staff member Bev Newton.

"Companies are crying for workers," she said. "They will leave Nebraska because we can't fill their needs."

In that respect, Blaylock said NECC stands ready to offer whatever curriculum

advice and services are needed.

"We are glad to be at the table," he told the *Press & Dakotan*. "We can offer more resources and make an impact any way we can."

In conclusion, Alexander encouraged the school officials to keep local residents informed.

"We need to be pro-active in our communities," he said. "We can't be afraid to talk to people about what we are doing and that we have NED support."

Creighton superintendent Jeff Jensen said the discussion focuses on making a good education even better.

"At every one of our meetings, we have discussed how well each district has done. But we are facing challenges such as funding, facilities and declining enrollment," he said. "How do we provide the best education?"

The five schools will hold subcommittee meetings June 25 in Bloomfield and July 23 at Plainview, Hamm said. He advises school patrons to show patience as the process unfolds.

"This (five-school study) has never been done before. It's a slow process," he said. "It will take 12 to 18 months to complete the curriculum. People are saying they want a vote on this, but we're nowhere near that step. Those conversations haven't been held."

Hamm advises school patrons to show patience as the process unfolds. "We can't afford to screw this up," he said.

The wait will well be worth it, Hamm predicted. "We can all remain on our own, but at what cost?" he asked. "Put together, we can provide a lot more opportunities."

You can follow Randy Dockendorf on Twitter at twitter.com/RDockendorf. Discuss this story at www.yankton.net.

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DAVE HAMM

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