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Yankton Unemployment Rate Dips

Six Area Counties Show Rise, However

BY NATHAN JOHNSON nathan.johnson@yankton.net

While Yankton's unemployment rate declined only slightly in January, it was enough to knock it off the top of the heap among South Dakota cities.

According to data released by the South Dakota Department of Labor Wednesday, Yankton had a 6.3 per-

cent unemployment rate in January, which was down from 6.4 percent in December. That puts it behind Watertown, which had a 6.6 percent unemployment rate, and Rapid City, which had an unemployment rate of 6.5 percent.



Dellinger

The number of unemployed in Yankton actually rose slightly in January from 475 to 480. Meanwhile, the size of Yankton's labor force grew from 7,405 to 7,645 individuals.

Yankton Economic Development Director Mike Dellinger said the number of jobs posted through the Yankton office of the Department of Labor increased by approximately 35 this week.

"This stuff is going to be month-by-month for a while, but the last couple months have tracked in our favor," he

said of unemployment figures. "We might continue to see some glitches here and there, but things are looking a little bit better for prospective employees."

The unemployment rate for Yankton County was 5.3 percent, or 620 people. That is up from 5.2 percent in December.

Meanwhile, Vermillion and Pierre had the lowest unemployment rates in the state with 3.7 percent. Sioux Falls

■ JOBS, Page 13 please

Jobless Rates Rise In 30 States During January

BY CHRISTOPHER S. RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON — Unemployment rose in 30 states in January, the Labor Department said Wednesday, evidence that jobs remain scarce in most regions of the country.

The data is somewhat better than December, when 43 states reported higher unemployment rates, but worse than November, when rates fell in most states.

Still, five states reported record-high joblessness in January: California, at 12.5 percent; South Carolina, 12.6 percent; Florida, 11.9 percent; North Carolina, 11.1 percent; and Georgia, 10.4 percent.

Michigan's unemployment rate is still the nation's highest, at 14.3 percent, followed by Nevada, with 13 percent and Rhode Island at 12.7 percent. South Carolina and California round out the top five.

There were some signs of job creation. Thirty-one states added jobs in January, up from only 11 in the previous month. But the job gains weren't enough, in many cases, to lower the unemployment rate.

For example, California reported the largest job gains, of 32,500, though its unemployment rate also rose. Illinois, New York, Washington state and Minnesota reported the next highest totals of new jobs.

The lowest unemployment rates are still found in upper Plains states, with North Dakota's jobless rate of 4.2 percent the lowest in the nation. Nebraska and South Dakota had the next lowest rates, at 4.6 percent and 4.8 percent, respectively.

In January, the national unemployment rate fell to 9.7 percent from 10 percent the previous month. Last week, the Labor Department said the national rate was unchanged in February at 9.7 percent, a better reading than most analysts expected.

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State-Bound

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RECYCLING

River City Recycling This Week NORTH of 15th St.



TOMORROW

■ RIVER CITY: Schemckfest To Present Webber Musical.



Theatre Restorations Planned

Funds Are Being Raised To Replace Outdated Roof

BY SHAUNA MARLETTE shauna.marlette@yankton.net

The 107-year-old Dakota Theatre is looking to the future with a three-phase planned renovation that should guarantee the survival of the historical Yankton landmark well into the future.

Opening to the public on Sept. 8, 1902, as the Yankton Opera House, the facility has gone through many aesthetic changes during the last century. It was renamed the Hess Theatre in 1921 when motion pictures became popular. In 1929, the theater was renamed the Dakota Theatre. Since then, there have been many facelifts, but a full-scale restoration has not been done.

"Beginning March 12, we are officially kicking off the restoration projects," said Lewis and Clark Theatre Company executive director Chuck Lambertz, who was busy getting ready for tonight's premiere of the joint LCTC and Yankton Children's Theatre Company presentation of "Wonderland, The Musical Misadventures of Alice." "The first phase will be restoring and replacing the roof. Stage two will see the restoration of the historic panels on the front of the building and restoring the marquee. We will also be installing thermal windows and doors. Stage three will see us insulating, and restoring the stucco and brick walls on the three sides of the facility."

Lambertz said that stage one of the project must be done now or risk major damage to the historical facility.

"In 107 years, the roof has been recovered three times, but a significant remodel of the roof has never been done," he said. "There has been leakage and with three layers of roof, you just can put another layer on it; you have to restore it. I know when there are old leaks from the past, there are just problems that must be fixed."

Unfortunately, it is not a project that can be put off any longer as the leaks are causing damage to the interior of the building.

"Right now, we have water sitting on the roof with nowhere for it to go," he said. "We know we have a leak in the



KELLY HERTZ/P&D

Lewis and Clark Theatre Company Executive Director Chuck Lambertz examines the roof of the 107-year-old Dakota Theatre. The winter has taken a heavy toll on the roof, forcing the theatre board to push stage one of a planned renovation project forward to address the roof's replacement.

center of the roof because we can see the water damage in the ceiling. We are also seeing damages at the back corners of the stage area and near the front where the water is pooling.

"Everybody knows if you can't protect what is inside, you don't have anything. Our roof is shot. We are going to totally restore and replace the old roof. We have to take three layers of old roof off, take the deck off and repair any rafter and studs that need to be

repaired. (We plan to) get the new deck down and a new roof on and bring it back to as good a new condition."

Lambertz said that the projected cost of restoring the roof is \$75,000.

"The leaks are just starting, but it is the crack in the dike," he said. "We have spent thousands of dollars in the past four years just patching. If, when we get the old decking off, it is totally

■ ROOF, Page 2 please

POLICE CHIEF SEARCH

Hisek Hopes To Keep 'Firm But Fair' Approach

BY NATHAN JOHNSON nathan.johnson@yankton.net

Jerry Hisek has spent 35 years with the Yankton Police Department, and he hopes to continue that rewarding relationship in a new role.

The 56-year-old has served as acting chief of police since the retirement of Duane Heeney in the fall, and he is one of two finalists for becoming the permanent chief.

The second finalist is Plattsmouth, Neb., Police Chief Brian Paulsen.

Hisek spent part of Wednesday doing interviews with two panels, one composed of city staff and the other of community members. An open house for Hisek was then held late Wednesday afternoon in the training room of the new Yankton fire station, so he could have a chance to interact

with the public.

"I've been here all my career, and you couldn't ask for a better place to be," he said in an interview with local media. "I love the community, and I want to continue with it. I think I have a lot to give the community. I hope they have the trust to let me have this position."

Hisek said he worked his way up the ranks before becoming the assistant police chief 15 years ago.

If hired, one of his priorities will be listening and learning.

"I've been here a long time, but I think in a leadership role ... you need to talk and listen to the people in your department," Hisek said. "They need to take an active role in leading the



Hisek

department, also. To me, leadership is a group effort."

As part of the hiring process for the police chief position, City Manager Doug Russell interviewed everyone in the police department. Hisek said that is a process he'd like to repeat personally. "I'd like to sit down with (Russell) and find out what his conclusions were," Hisek said. "Then I'd like to sit down and talk to everyone in the department to get their input."

Through the years, Hisek said he has learned to take a "firm but fair" approach to law enforcement. One thing he would like to do is expand upon the efforts the department undertakes to have positive interactions with the public it serves. Hisek said the department has been successful with

■ CHIEF, Page 2 please

Senate Passes Jobless Aid, Tax Breaks

BY ANDREW TAYLOR Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — The Senate voted Wednesday to extend a host of soon-to-expire elements of last year's economic stimulus measure, including help for the jobless and money to help financially strapped states pay for health care for the poor.

The 62-36 vote came over protests from conservatives who say the bill adds too much to the \$12.5 trillion national debt. Six Republicans joined all but one Democrat, Ben Nelson of Nebraska, in voting for the bill.

The plight of the jobless and the political power of an annual package of tax breaks powered the measure through the Senate, even though it would add more than \$130 billion to the budget deficit over the next year and a half.

The measure is the second piece of the Democrats' much-touted "jobs agenda" to pass the Senate this year, with more elements promised, such as help for small businesses suffering from a credit crunch. Concern over out-of-control budget deficits are a big challenge to the success of the agenda.

The vote sends the measure into talks with the House, which is wary about some Senate

■ BILL, Page 13 please

Centerville Opt Out Vote Easily Passes

CENTERVILLE (AP) — Residents in the Centerville School District have voted to opt out of the state property tax freeze.

Tuesday's vote was 284 in favor and only 72 against, for an approval rating of 80 percent.

The approval of the measure means an additional \$175,000 annually for five years for the southeast South Dakota school district.

A measure that would have generated \$195,000 per year was voted down five years ago.

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