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Corps

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Dakotas and northern Iowa. This is not atypical and will be a function of any late-winter snowpack or early spring rain we receive during the remainder of the season.'

Todey added temperatures have run below average throughout the last month across the state — up to 12 degrees below average in the Yankton region — and that they are expected to stay below normal throughout the rest of the spring.

Drought conditions have also persisted throughout northeastern Nebraska as well as parts of Minnesota and Iowa, but are expected to improve in the coming months.

El Nino is also expected to take effect sometime during the summer or fall this year.

For updates on conditions within the Missouri River Basin, visit http://www.nwdmr.usace.army.mil/rcc/index.

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County

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However, Dakota Plains has said they will not proceed without a TID agreement.

It has been proposed that YAPG would receive the revenue of the TID, which has been proposed at \$5 million. That money could be used for such things as road maintenance, land acquisition costs and rail construction. In return, YAPG would be allowed to act as a developer that would seek out other businesses interested in building facilities at the site and having rail access.

Stephenson said it is estimated that Dakota Plains will only use 10-15 percent of the rail's capacity.

"Dakota Plains is going to spend \$8 million building (the rail loop)," said John Kramer, president of YAPG. "They don't have to let anybody use that. That's an \$8 million asset that they own. We're not giving them incentives to build that. What we've asked for is, for \$3 1/2 million (toward construction of the loop), we have rights to that

"They aren't going to give it away for free," he continued. "Are we giving the company an incentive? No. We're buying access to that rail."

That description of the arrangement didn't sit well with everyone. "At \$5 million, it sure looks

like an incentive to me," Commissioner Allen Sinclair said.

Later in the meeting, he added, "We started out in this process saying that the developer was going to build their own infrastructure and do that road (to the grain facility). I don't know how it got to the point that we're the bad guys because we're denying (YĀPG) from turning over \$5 million to a developer. It seems to me we're going backwards.

Sinclair said he couldn't envision himself voting for a TID. Commissioner Donna Freng agreed.

"I want (tax money) to be

used for something besides Cargill," she said at one point, referring to the fact that Dakota Plains is jointly owned by Cargill

and Agrex.
"(Do you want to see this project) in Bon Homme County?" responded Stephenson. Dakota Plains has said it has verbal and written agreements to build in locations that are not in Yankton County.

"Anywhere," Freng said. "We'd like you to look out for Yankton County," Stephenson responded. "That's why we're here.'

"That's what I'm doing," Freng said. "Your job is economic development and to push it. I get that. My job is to watch the bottom line for the taxpayers of this county. That's what I do, and I take it very seriously.

"This is not going to another county," she continued. "When they first came here before you guys jumped in, they didn't say anything about needing \$4 million to help build the rail.'

Freng said that one minute she's being told how valuable the Napa junction location northwest of Yankton is because it offers access to three rail lines. The next, she is told Dakota Plains will go elsewhere if a TID isn't approved.

"It doesn't even make sense," Freng stated. "I don't understand why, since (YAPG) got involved, the whole deal changed and they're not coming without it. It doesn't make sense. If there are that many companies waiting to come and get this rail, I don't think we have to give this away."

Matt Winsand, the general manager of Dakota Plains, has said that, even if the company does not build at the site, it will retain control of the property to prevent another grain facility from being built on it.

Commissioner John Harper offered up ideas on how he thought a TID agreement could be reached.

"I think people on and off the commission are having a hard time grasping what control of that rail is worth," he said. "That's part of what we're talking about buying. I wonder if this TIF district would be a lot more palatable if the majority of

it bought something physical." He proposed that it be put toward rebuilding the four miles

of 306th Street from the proposed Dakota Plains facility east to Highway 81.

"If we're going to create a TIF district, let's do it for something that is good for everybody, Harper stated. "Let's build 306th Street up to the same standards we're building (435th Avenue)."

Commissioner Garry Moore proposed subtracting \$600,000 for land acquisition and \$800,000 for grading from the proposed TID and leaving it at \$3.6 million for rail construc-

Ultimately, a 3-2 vote was taken to refer the TID discussion to the Planning Commission and for it to come up with a recommendation for the County Commission. Commissioners Freng and Sinclair voted against the motion.

"I don't know if we have given (the Planning Commission) a clear direction as a board," Harper said.

Planning and Zoning Administrator Patrick Garrity said he would attempt to get at the specifics the Planning Commission will need.

"I have templates (for TIDs) that will allow us to ask the right questions to get those answers," he said.

Despite tenuous support for the TID on the County Commission, Winsand said he would continue to work with the county.

"Last week was a step forward, and this was a step forward," he said of the meeting. 'We're going to take it from there. We have not been confrontational. We want to help Yankton County grow, plain and simple. We're not asking for anything extra. With this TIF and how it works, it's going to be positive for Yankton County.

"Dakota Plains has a board meeting March 19, and they've asked that this be a discussion at the meeting," Winsand added. "It will be very clear to them where the process is at. The board will know the steps that are coming next, and that will give them the opportunity to say 'Keep moving forward,' or, 'Enough is enough, and let's

look elsewhere.' I'm going to push for us to keep moving forward, because it is a great spot and we want to develop there.

Afterwards, Stephenson told the Press & Dakotan he was disappointed with the outcome of

Tuesday's meeting. "Our County Commission has taken almost no leadership in working proactively to make the most of this great opportunity for long-term economic development for the Yankton area," he said. "Farmers will benefit, local businesses will benefit and Yankton County taxpayers will benefit significantly over the long term.

"I appreciate that three commissioners did the minimum to keep the project alive tonight, but unfortunately each of them also said they weren't close to supporting the plan proposed. Dakota Plains has said they will move the project to a neighboring county if a TIF is not formed. Commissioner Freng said she'd prefer they do that! YAPG has worked hard to meet with the commissioners to explain how a TIF can be structured so that the taxpayers of Yankton County get significant benefit and with very little cost to Yankton County. But the commission has shown little interest in any significant dialogue to understand all the potential options for this, and instead blamed Dakota Plains and YAPG for the lack of progress in creating details needed for this to succeed.

YAPG has a 35-year history of fostering economic development in Yankton, according to Stephenson.

'Yet a few of the commissioners treat us like we're somehow the county's enemy," he said. "I'm just frustrated that there's a lot of people working hard to try to make the most of this great opportunity, but the people that we've elected to lead Yankton County are not. And the chance of it happening appears to be quickly fading.'

You can follow Nathan Johnson on Twitter at twitter.com/AnInlandVoyage. Discuss this story at www.yankton.net/

Avera

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art feel for long-term care and senior care in the state of South Dakota," he said. "It creates that sense of community. The neighborhood itself becomes more

their home, and if they're going to have family members visit, it gives them an additional gathering place to go that's outside of their home. I think our community will be surely impressed with the end product once it's all said and done.

Additional therapy space and six hospice units will also be part of the project. All resident rooms are designed to

be private.

The project is expected to cost between \$11-11.5 million.

"We're hoping to get it out to bid sometime in the first part of April and then, hopefully, begin construction sometime toward the end of April or first part of May with probably a 15- to 17month timeline for completion,' he said.

A date hasn't been set for

groundbreaking at this time, but Erickson said he expects it to occur sometime in late April. He also did not expect any disruptions to current services at Sister James during construction.

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