

Nebraska Quarantines Five Horse Farms For Possible Contagion

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Nebraska's state veterinarian has placed five horse farms under quarantine because of potential contact with a contagious horse virus during a championship event in Utah.

Dr. Dennis Hughes on Monday placed the farms under quarantine after several cases of equine herpesvirus have been

confirmed across the country. Hughes says the Nebraska horses may have come in contact with infected horses during the National Cutting Horses Association's Western National Championships in Odgen, Utah, about two weeks ago.

Symptoms include fever, decreased coordination, and nasal discharge.

Complex

From Page 1

manage the facility.

The owners of the complex, which included about 40 individuals from the community, decided to give up their equity in the project as a charitable contribution to LCBHS. The mental health provider then assumed the existing mortgage from the South Dakota Housing Development Authority (SDHDA), along with a small preservation loan and subsidy.

Most of the funding for the renovation came from the Tax Credit Exchange Program, which provided more than \$2.2 million in equity for the project. An additional \$788,000 in zero-percent financing came from the SDHDA's HOME program, which is funded through HUD. Approximately \$400,000 in conventional financing came from First Dakota National Bank.

"The project preserved 34 Section 8 subsidized, affordable housing units targeted to very low income individuals," Stanager said. Section 8, or the Housing Choice Voucher Program, is a federal housing program that provides assistance to low-income renters and homeowners in the form of rental subsidies.

"The hard work and dedication also allowed us to preserve a historic downtown Yankton landmark," Stanager continued. "The ability to stop the deterioration

and preserve this important landmark has been one of the more important indirect benefits of this project."

The complex is located at 118 East Third Street and includes four structures that were combined during a renovation project that began in 1982. The primary building was once known as the St. Charles Hotel. From its wooden beginnings in the 19th century, the hotel eventually became a brick-and-stone structure. It had many different names during its time as a hotel, including the Jencks, the Morrison, the Pierce, the Portland, the Yankton and the Hotel Charles Gurney before it finally became an apartment complex.

The building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is where Jack McCall, who was hanged for the murder of Wild Bill Hickok, was tried. It also gained local infamy in 1873 when Gen. Edwin McCook was shot and killed by Peter Wintermute in the structure's basement saloon.

In recognition of the 20th anniversary of HUD's HOME Program, the organization was seeking to give "Door Knocker Awards" to housing developments utilizing HOME funds. The SDHDA submitted the Sir Charles Apartments project for consideration. More than 100 applications were submitted for the different categories and HUD chose 14 winners.

"We were very pleased to hear that the Sir Charles application was chosen," said Lorraine Polak, director of rental housing development for SDHDA. "The previous owners were great partners in making this deal happen, and the new owners faced numerous obstacles in completing this project. The award provides an opportunity for SDHDA and HUD to thank them for their commitment to affordable housing in South Dakota."

Polak said the Sir Charles complex was one of the only rural projects to be recognized. Additionally, it was the only project in Region VIII — which includes the states of South Dakota, North Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado and Utah — to receive an award.

"SDHDA wants to thank their many partners in making housing affordable for our state," she stated. "Sir Charles Apartments is a good project, and we were happy that we were able to showcase what can be done in South Dakota."

Stanager said the renovation project is complete with the exception of a some HVAC work. An open house is being planned for June so the public can tour the building.

Sir Charles is currently at 100 percent occupancy, he added.

"The project has been structured so that both the affordable housing and the preserved structure should be part of our community well into the future," Stanager said. "The board of Lewis & Clark Behavioral Health Services needs to be credited with the vision, but the South Dakota Housing Development Authority and First Dakota National Bank provided the expertise and financing to make it happen."

Fact

From Page 1

down 50 percent state aid, 33 percent property taxes and 17 percent other revenues.

QUESTION: I have heard the school has more than \$4 million in its general fund reserves and another \$7 million in insurance reserves. Why?

ANSWER: According to school district public records, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2010, the general fund reserve was \$4.9 million. For the current school year (2010-2011), the budget adopted by the school board has a structural deficit of \$1.5 million.

"If we spend every penny that is budgeted to be spent and collect every penny that is scheduled to be collected, we would end up spending down that reserve from \$4.9 million to \$3.4 million," said Yankton business manager Jason Bietz. "In reality, we typically spend about 97 percent of the budget and we may not collect everything budgeted. Next year — the 2011-2012 budget that we just presented at the May board meeting — after cuts (the budget) is calling for a \$1.7 million deficit. We have a \$16.2 million spending budget and a \$14.9 million revenue budget. So, it would take that \$3.4 million down to a balance of \$1.4 million."

The proposed budget represents a 50 percent reduction in the general fund reserve.

"The cash flow of the district ... needs to be near that 15 percent cash flow reserve," Bietz said. "If you start dipping below that 15 percent (\$2.43 million), you are going to have cash flow

problems because of the way revenue comes in. That is not to say we won't be able to operate, but we will start incurring borrowing expenses and other issues."

Bietz said that the insurance fund is a completely different issue.

"The self-insurance fund was initiated in 2002," he said. "The school board, rather than buy insurance on the open market through a commercial carrier, elected to go self-insured. The premiums that are typically paid to a carrier are collected into a separate holding count that is on the school's accounting sheet. Instead of a XYZ company having \$7 million on its balance sheet and profit statement, it is in the school reserves."

Because it is self-insured, the school district sets its own premiums and payout levels.

"We can't reach in and pull the money out because the money came from several different funds," Bietz explained. "If we take money out, we have to rebate to the funds in the same proportion in which it came out. That is just not something the district has any wish to be involved in going forward. The way we handle that is to analyze our risk and contributions, and make the proper decisions in setting rates."

School district policy is to have 18 months worth of claims value in the fund. Today the fund is at \$7.4 million.

"We are just slightly above the districts self-imposed policy," Bietz said. "This is a great place to be, a great problem to have. It protects us from double-digit renewal increases because we set the premiums and benefits. We are saving taxpayers money by doing this."

Cabin

From Page 1

by Norwegian immigrants near Volin, the cabin was moved repeatedly, to the McChristy farm to the Irene fairground to Yankton.

"Those were never meant to be moved once, let alone that many times," Nelson said.

The restoration, which began two weeks ago, was originally planned for last summer, but unexpected circumstances delayed the repairs.

"Some last-minute things came up and he was unable to do the work at that time," Nelson said.

"We were lucky enough to get him in early this year so that we could have it open later this summer for the 150th celebration, because it will be 150 years old itself."

As he restores the cabin, Barker is taking multiple measures to ensure the structure remains historically accurate.

"The cabin is from the 1800s, and I want to keep it looking that way," he said.

To keep the cabin's original look, Barker is attempting to keep as many of the original logs as he can, repairing them with caulk and two-part epoxy.

The logs that are damaged beyond repair are being replaced with the same kind of wood — cottonwood — with the same type of dovetail joints. While using cottonwood helps with historical accuracy, Barker said it makes the job more difficult, as each log weighs about 350-400 pounds.

"I normally work on round cabins and almost always use cedar, and cedar is about half the weight," he said.

For help with the heavy logs, Barker is utilizing inmate labor that has been provided through the museum.

"I'm really thankful for the help with the lifting," he said.

To help with accuracy, Barker is also doing most of the work by hand with axes and a chisel. While he will use a chainsaw occasionally to speed up the process, he said he makes sure he covers up any marks.

"Even when using modern techniques to preserve it, you don't want to see any difference," he said.

Nelson said the restoration of the core structure should be finished around July 1, with the exhibit and final touches completed for the grand re-opening of the building on Aug. 6.

Until then, she said the museum encourages volunteers to stop by and help with the project.

"If people are able-bodied and want to work with him when they have time, they are more than wel-

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