

The Press & Dakotan

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Yankton Media, Inc., 319 Walnut St., Yankton, SD 57078

CONTACT US
PHONE:
(605) 665-7811
(800) 743-2968
NEWS FAX:
(605) 665-1721
ADVERTISING FAX:
(605) 665-0288
WEBSITE:
www.yankton.net

SUBSCRIPTIONS/ CIRCULATION
Extension 104
kristina.tunink@yankton.net

CLASSIFIED ADS
Extension 108
tera.schmidt@yankton.net

NEWS DEPT.
Extension 114
news@yankton.net

SPORTS DEPT.
Extension 106
sports@yankton.net

ADVERTISING DEPT.
Extension 122
sales@yankton.net

BUSINESS OFFICE
Extension 119
ar@yankton.net

NEW MEDIA:
Extension 136
beth.rye@yankton.net

COMPOSING DEPT.
Extension 129
kathy.larson@yankton.net

MANAGERS
Gary L. Wood
Publisher

Michele Schievelbein
Advertising Director

Tonya Schild
Business Manager

Kristina Tunink
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Classified Manager

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OPINION

Rail Authority Idea Has Potential

At this juncture, a proposed establishment of a rail authority for Yankton County seems like a prudent idea not only for the county but also for the region.
The Yankton County Commission is currently exploring the establishment of such a body, which would be established to help spur development along the county's rail lines — in particular, the enticing Napa Junction northwest of Yankton.
A rail authority would become a governing body with certain powers, such as the power to tax and to pursue federal or state funding for projects.

The rail-related aspect of Yankton County has become a focus of both contention and potential the past year or so, thanks in large part to the Napa Junction project and the efforts by Dakota Plains to begin development of a grain facility at that site. While that episode took numerous twists and turns — and may well do so again — it did demonstrate just how valuable that particular site is and, thus, how consequential the development of rail service in Yankton could be to the local tax base.

To that end, the County Commission is now looking into establishing a rail authority. The plan calls for a partnering with the City of Yankton in creating this governing body. (For their part, city officials seem quite intrigued by the idea and tentatively plan on hold their own public hearing on the matter later this month.)

Of course, this was a high-profile matter last year, and one that ended up with Dakota Plains turning its attentions instead to Bon Homme County for a possible location. But since the near-wholesale change in the Yankton County Commission in last November's election, Dakota Plains has again expressed an interest in the Napa site. It remains to be seen how this will play out.

But even if Dakota Plains is not in Yankton County's direct picture, creating a local rail authority would seem practical. It would represent a proactive effort to market the county's rail potential — and that potential seems quite high, given all the interest attached to the Napa line.

Technically, Yankton County is already part of the Napa-Platte Rail Authority to the west. However, State Transportation Secretary Darin Bergquist pointed out that it is not unusual for a county to be part of more than one such authority.

In fact, the process could be mutually beneficial for both authorities. At last week's public hearing, it was noted that rail development usually moves from east to west in this region. Thus, the development in Yankton County, particularly at the Napa Junction, would likely produce economic benefits to the west in Bon Homme and Charles Mix counties. That kind of regional impact would be a big plus for the Yankton authority idea.

Make no mistake, Yankton County can be a key rail player, and it's clear the potential is there. It's time to start cultivating that potential. While more research is needed, the creation of a local rail authority figures to be a big step in a very promising direction.



The Rez Of The Story

A Time For Dignity

BY VINCE TWO EAGLES

Hau Mitakuepi (Greetings My Relatives),
The dictionary defines dignity as, "The state or quality of being worthy of honor or respect." The Nigerian author, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, once said: "It is easy to romanticize poverty, to see poor people as inherently lacking agency and will. It is easy to strip them of human dignity, to reduce them to objects of pity..."

I want to share some thoughts this week taken from an article in *Time* submitted by Tavis Smiley entitled, "It's a Dignity Thing: Democracy is Threatened by Racism and Poverty."

Tavis writes, "The two seminal pieces of legislation in the 20th century happened just before the tumult of 1968 — the Civil Rights Act in 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Fifty years later, we ought to be in a season of celebration. Instead, we find ourselves in an American catastrophe. Trayvon Martin, Eric Garner, Freddie Gray [Rapid City]."

"On April 4, 1967, Martin Luther King Jr. gave the most controversial speech of his life, 'Beyond Vietnam.' A year later to the day, almost to the hour, he was assassinated. In that speech he had pointed out a triple threat facing America: racism, poverty and militarism. In 2015, what are the issues still threatening our democracy? Racism. Poverty. Militarism."

"Kings views about how to redeem the soul of America had fallen on deaf ears. The younger generation wanted something more tangible than nonviolence. When *Magnificent Montague*, one of the most well-known black radio hosts in Los Angeles, used the phrase *Burn, baby, burn*, that resonated. 1968 was also the year of the *Mexico City Olympics*, when *Tommie Smith and John Carlos held up their fists with black gloves*. The young people were chanting, 'Black Power!' 'Black leaders thought they could contain



Vince TWO EAGLES

the rage, helplessness and hopelessness. But they could not stop what happened on the streets in Newark, N.J., in Detroit. And Barack Obama is not any more able to stop it in the 2015 than King was in 1968. The suffering of everyday people gets rendered invisible if they don't find a way to express it.

"Are these riots, or it is an uprising? Semantics. Detroit then was a chocolate city. Baltimore now is a chocolate city. But Detroit had no black power structure. Baltimore today has a black mayor, a black police chief and a black President of the United States. And they are all essentially powerless to stop it.

"These riots aren't a black or white thing — they're a humanity thing, a dignity thing. When the mayor and the police chief and the President cannot explain to fellow black citizens why Freddie Gray is dead, somebody's got to be held accountable.

"Today, you don't have the Klan, and you don't have Emmett Tills or Medgar Everses, but it's more insidious in that predatory policing is happening under the rule of law.

"Sadly, when these incidents happen, we have a sort of fake and fleeting national conversation about police misconduct and race relations. And then we return to business as usual. Until it happens again.

"We must find the courage to address what kind of nation we want to be. If we don't have the courage to do that, then I shudder to think what happens to America in the coming months and years."

Mr. Smiley concludes: "Protests and riots — uprisings — could become the new normal. Welcome to the new America."

If we fail to find the courage to address our racism troubles here in South Dakota will unrest and continued conflict be the new normal for South Dakota?

And now you know the rez of the story. Doksha (later) ...

Point Of View

Why NW Seeks A Rate Change

BY BOB ROWE

President and CEO, NorthWestern Energy

Late last year, NorthWestern Energy filed a request with the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission to increase electric rates. A lot has changed since our last request for a base electric rate increase was made about 34 years ago, while Ronald Reagan was in the White House.

But in reality, investments in more recent years are driving NorthWestern's rate request. We have joined with Otter Tail and MDU to upgrade jointly-owned generating plants to meet federal air quality standards. While the work, which is required, has a worthy purpose, it's quite expensive.

At the Big Stone plant near Milbank, NorthWestern's share of the upgrade comes with a price tag of between \$95 and \$105 million. At the Neal Unit 4 plant in Iowa, we paid \$23 million for our share of the upgrades completed last year. That's more than \$118 million spent on the two plants. Both are in excellent operating condition and vital to our ability to reliably serve our South Dakota customers.

When Big Stone was built, our share cost only \$54 million. Under the "original cost minus depreciation" formula, Big Stone — like all our regulated utility capital investments — actually got cheaper and cheaper to customers.

Due to the shared ownership of Big Stone and Neal, the other owners have also sought electric rates increases. In fact, four of the six investor-owned electric utilities operating in South Dakota are requesting rate increases and there is talk of higher rates from rural electric cooperatives and municipal electric systems as well.

The fact that NorthWestern is not alone in seeking a rate increase doesn't reduce the impact of our request on our customers. If our request were approved as filed, the average residential customer could see electric rates increase about 56 cents per day, or \$16.76 per

month. Because we filed the application for the rate increase in December 2014, we have had time to discuss it with customers and explain the reasons for the request. The Commission will make the decision regarding the actual amount of the rate increase. NorthWestern has the legal authority to implement interim (temporary) rates on July 1, likely before the PUC releases a final decision. If the Commission decides on a rate lower than our request, customers will receive a refund for the difference, plus interest.

Along with the Big Stone and Neal projects, we've invested in a new natural gas-fired generating plant in Aberdeen that helps us meet our customers' peak electric demand. We have upgraded transmission lines and substations and made numerous other reliability improvements. Big Stone, Neal and the Aberdeen Peaker account for about 96 percent of the total request.

At the same time, we are working to help our customers save money on their utility bills. In the past year, we launched our Efficiency Plus energy efficiency programs in South Dakota. These programs, approved by the South Dakota PUC, can help residential and business customers save money, often through low or no-cost methods of reducing energy consumption.

We've worked hard to keep electric rates stable for more than 35 years, while making important investments in the infrastructure that ensures safe and reliable service and meets the needs of our customers today and into the future.

The South Dakota Public Utilities Commission will hold a public hearing in Yankton Thursday, May 14, to hear comments and questions about the electric rate increase proposed by NorthWestern Energy. The public hearing will begin at 7 p.m. in Meeting Room C-D at the Best Western Kelly Inn, 1607 E. Highway 50 and adjourn at the conclusion of comments and questions from all persons who have arrived before 8 p.m.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Wonderful Support

Michael and Ellen McVay, Yankton

We would like to extend a gracious thank you to all those who helped make the second annual Round to Remember Golf Tournament possible. The event was held at Hillcrest Golf and Country Club on Friday, May 1. The purpose of the tournament was to raise awareness about the extent of Alzheimer's disease in South Dakota. The tournament was very successful in raising money that goes directly to the South Dakota Alzheimer's Association so that it can provide educational outreach to the communities of South Dakota.
We would like to acknowledge all the

individual and business sponsors who contributed funds to support the event. We were deeply touched by the kindness of all people who took time away from their busy schedules to play in the tournament and offer their support. This is another great example of how the Yankton community comes together and supports those who are in need.

It is estimated that 16,000 South Dakotans are living with this disease there are 37,000 caregivers for these people. Although there is no effective treatment as yet, so much can be done by promoting awareness of this illness so there can be effective care and planning for the future.

ONLINE OPINION

The results of the most recent Internet poll on the Press & Dakotan's Web site are as follows:

LATEST RESULTS:

Do you think the Boston Marathon bomber should get the death penalty?
Yes.....76%
No.....19%
Not sure.....5%
TOTAL VOTES CAST353

The Press & Dakotan Internet poll is not a scientific survey and reflects the opinions only of those who choose to participate. The results should not be construed as an accurate representation or scientific measurement of public opinion.

CURRENT QUESTION:

Do you think the U.S. economy is headed in the right direction?
To cast your vote in the PRESS & DAKOTAN'S Internet poll, log on to our website at www.yankton.net.

IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press
Today is Tuesday, May 12, the 132nd day of 2015. There are 233 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On May 12, 1975, the White House announced the new Cambodian government had seized an American merchant ship, the *Mayaguez*, in international waters. (U.S. Marines gained control of the ship three days after its seizure, not knowing the 39 civilian members of the crew had already been released by Cambodia.)

On this date: In 1780, during the Revolutionary War, the besieged city of Charleston, South Carolina, surrendered to British forces.

In 1870, an act creating the Canadian province of Manitoba was given royal assent, to take effect in July.

In 1922, a 20-ton meteor crashed near Blackstone, Virginia.

In 1932, the body of Charles Lindbergh Jr., the kidnapped son of Charles and Anne Lindbergh, was found in a wooded area near Hopewell, New Jersey.
In 1937, Britain's King George VI was crowned at Westminster Abbey; his wife, Elizabeth, was crowned as queen consort.

In 1949, the Soviet Union lifted the Berlin Blockade, which the Western powers had succeeded in circumventing with their Berlin Airlift.

In 1955, Manhattan's last elevated rail line, the Third Avenue El, ceased operation.

In 1965, West Germany and Israel exchanged letters establishing diplomatic relations. The Rolling Stones recorded the final version of "I Can't Get No Satisfaction" at RCA Studios in Hollywood.

In 1970, the Senate voted unanimously to confirm Harry A. Blackmun as a Supreme Court justice.

In 1982, in Fatima, Portugal, security guards overpowered a Spanish priest armed with a bayonet who attacked Pope John Paul II. (In 2008, the pope's longtime private secretary revealed that the pontiff was slightly wounded in the assault.)

In 1985, Amy Eilberg was ordained in New York as the first woman rabbi in the Conservative Jewish movement.

In 1994, British Labor Party leader John Smith died at age 55.

Ten years ago: The Foreign Relations Committee voted 10-8 along party lines to advance John Bolton's nomination to be U.N. ambassador without the customary recommendation that the Senate approve it. Microsoft officially unveiled its Xbox 360 video game console.

Five years ago: An Atrijay Airways Airbus A330 jetliner plunged into the

Libyan desert less than a mile from the runway in Tripoli after a flight from Johannesburg; a 9-year-old Dutch boy was the sole survivor of the crash that killed 103 people. An attacker hacked seven children and two adults to death in a rampage at a kindergarten in northwest China before taking his own life. Republicans chose Tampa, Florida, as the site of their 2012 presidential convention. Bowler Kelly Kulick, the first woman to win a PBA Tour title when she beat the men in the Tournament of Champions, won the U.S. Women's Open for her second women's major victory in 15 days.

One year ago: Scientists expressed concern during a NASA news conference over a pair of studies which said the huge West Antarctic ice sheet was starting a glacially slow collapse in an unstoppable way, a melt that could eventually add 4 to 12 feet to current sea levels.

Today's Birthdays: Baseball Hall-of-Famer Yogi Berra is 90. Critic John Simon is 90. Composer Burt Bacharach is 87. Actress Millie Perkins is 77. Rhythm-and-blues singer Jayotis Washington is 74. Country singer Billy Swan is 73. Actress Linda Dano is 72. Actress Lindsay Crouse is 67. Singer-musician Steve Winwood is 67. Actor Gabriel Byrne is 65. Actor Bruce Boxleitner is 65. Singer Billy Squier is 65. Blues singer-musician Guy Davis is 63. Country singer Kix Brooks is 60. Actress Kim Greist is 57. Rock musician Eric Singer (KISS) is 57. Actor Ving Rhames is 56. Rock musician Billy Duffy is 54. Actor Emilio Estevez is 53. Actress April Grace is 53. Actress Vanessa A. Williams is 52. TV personality/chef Carla Hall is 51. Country musician Eddie Kilgallon is 50. Actor Stephen Baldwin is 49. Actor Scott Schwartz is 47. Actress Kim Fields is 46. Actress Samantha Mathis is 45. Actress Jamie Luner is 44. Actor Christian Campbell is 43. Actress Rhea Seehorn is 43. Actor Mackenzie Astin is 42. Country musician Matt Mangano (The Zac Brown Band) is 39. Actress Rebecca Herbst is 38. Actress Malin Akerman is 37. Actor Jason Biggs is 37. Actor Rami Malek is 34. Actress-singer Clare Bowen is 31. Actress Emily VanCamp is 29. Actor Sullivan Sweeten (TV: "Everybody Loves Raymond") is 20.

Thought for Today: "We are taught you must blame your father, your sisters, your brothers, the school, the teachers — but never blame yourself. It's never your fault. But it's always your fault, because if you wanted to change you're the one who has got to change." — Katharine Hepburn, American actress (born this date in 1907, died 2003).

FROM THE BIBLE

Wealth gained hastily will dwindle, but whoever gathers little by little will increase it. Proverbs 13:11. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.