

The Press & Dakotan

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OPINION OTHER VIEWS

Boosting Nebraska's EMS Crews Needed

**THE GRAND ISLAND (Neb.) INDEPENDENT (May 7):** Seconds seem like hours when a medical emergency happens and people are waiting for an ambulance. The medical crews can never get there fast enough, it seems.

Unfortunately, that wait is getting longer in many areas of rural Nebraska. Ashton recently lost its local rescue squad and the Sherman County community now relies on one from Loup City, which is an extra 10 minutes added on to the response time.

Ashton isn't alone. Dean Cole, EMS and trauma program administrator for the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, recently told the *Independent's* Lauren Sedam that communities across the state and country are facing reduced access to emergency medical services.

The reason is the same as many of the other problems facing rural areas: fewer people. With a smaller population, there aren't as many volunteers as there used to be for the EMS crews. The scramble for manpower becomes too much for many communities.

EMS work is certainly not easy. Responding to emergencies, many involving friends and neighbors, can be extremely wearing emotionally. It takes a special person to be able to respond to emergency calls and not be traumatized themselves.

In addition, EMS crew members must undergo extensive training and licensing. For beginners, it requires 120 hours of classes, and continuing training is also required. With busy lifestyles, with jobs, families and other obligations, finding volunteers who are able to put in that much time is difficult.

There are, however, no easy solutions to the problem. Rural areas have seen a population decline due to farms getting bigger and most jobs being located in larger communities. That trend just continues.

Losing EMS crews certainly hurts rural areas even more. Medical care and help during emergencies are important quality of life matters. Many people, especially those with health concerns, will be wary of living in an area without nearby ambulance and paramedic service.

Reversing the trend of dwindling EMS crews will take a cooperative effort. The state, counties, towns, businesses and medical facilities all need to work together to address the problem. Perhaps incentives and funding can be provided to volunteers seeking the training. Businesses would have to allow their employees serving as EMS volunteers flexible work time so they can respond to emergencies.

It really is a statewide issue that impacts communities throughout the state. In an emergency, it's always nice to know that a caring, nearby EMS crew is coming to your assistance.

ABOUT THIS PAGE

The View page provides a forum for open discussion of issues and interests affecting our readers. Initialed editorials represent the opinion of the writer, but not necessarily that of the **PRESS & DAKOTAN**. Bylined columns represent the view of the author. We welcome letters on current topics. Questions regarding the Views page should be directed to Kelly Hertz at [kelly.hertz@yankton.net](mailto:kelly.hertz@yankton.net).

P&D LETTER POLICY

The **PRESS & DAKOTAN** invites its readers to write letters to the editor. We ask that a few simple guidelines be followed:

- Please limit letters to 300 words or less. Letters should deal with a single subject, be of general interest and state a specific point of view. Letters are edited with brevity, clarity and newspaper style in mind.
- In the sense of fairness and professionalism, the **PRESS & DAKOTAN** will accept no letters attacking private individuals or businesses.
- Specific individuals or entities addressed in letters may be given the opportunity to read the letter prior to publication and be allowed to answer the letter in the same issue.
- Only signed letters with writer's full name, address and daytime phone number for verification will be accepted. Please mail to: Letters, 319 Walnut, Yankton, SD 57078, drop off at 319 Walnut in Yankton, fax to 665-1721 or email us at [kelly.hertz@yankton.net](mailto:kelly.hertz@yankton.net).

IN HISTORY

**By The Associated Press**  
Today is Monday, May 18, the 138th day of 2015. There are 227 days left in the year.

**Today's Highlight in History:** On May 18, 1980, the Mount St. Helens volcano in Washington state exploded, leaving 57 people dead or missing.

**On this date:** In 1642, the Canadian city of Montreal was founded by French colonists.

In 1765, about one-fourth of Montreal was destroyed by a fire.

In 1896, the Supreme Court, in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, endorsed "separate but equal" racial segregation, a concept renounced 58 years later in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*.

In 1910, Halley's Comet passed by earth, brushing it with its tail.

In 1926, evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson vanished while visiting a beach in Venice, California. (McPherson reappeared more than a month later, saying she'd escaped after being kidnapped and held for ransom.)

In 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed a measure creating the Tennessee Valley Authority.

In 1934, Congress approved, and President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed, the so-called "Lindbergh Act," providing for the death penalty in cases of interstate kidnapping.

In 1944, during World War II, Allied forces finally occupied Monte Cassino in Italy after a four-month struggle with Axis troops.

In 1953, Jacqueline Cochran became the first woman to break the sound barrier as she piloted a Canadair F-86 Sabre jet over Rogers Dry Lake, California.

In 1969, astronauts Eugene A. Cernan, Thomas P. Stafford and John W. Young blasted off aboard Apollo 10 on a mission to orbit the moon.

In 1973, Harvard law professor Archibald Cox was appointed Watergate special prosecutor by U.S. Attorney General Elliot Richardson.

In 1995, ballet dancer Alexander Godunov was found dead at his West Hollywood, California, home at age 45. Actress Elizabeth Montgomery, 62, died in Los Angeles.

**Ten years ago:** President George W. Bush offered his unqualified support for Egypt's political reform process as he received Prime Minister Ahmed Nazief at the White House.

**Five years ago:** Grilled by skeptical lawmakers, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar acknowledged his agency had been lax in overseeing offshore drilling activities, and that might have contributed to the disastrous oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. A suicide bomber detonated his vehicle near a U.S. convoy in Afghanistan, killing 18 people, including six troops — five from the U.S., one from Canada. Following a 2009 party switch, Sen. Arlen Specter was defeated in Pennsylvania's Democratic primary, ending his re-election bid.

**One year ago:** AT&T Inc. agreed to buy satellite TV provider DirecTV for \$48.5 billion, or \$95 per share (completion of the deal is pending government approval). Singer Jerry Vale, 83, died in Palm Desert, California. Cinematographer Gordon Willis ("The Godfather," "Annie Hall" and "All the President's Men") died on Cape Cod, Massachusetts, at age 82.

**Today's Birthdays:** Actor Bill Macy is 93. Actress Priscilla Pointer is 91. Hall-of-Fame sportscaster Jack Whitaker is 91. Actor Robert Morse is 84. Actor Dwayne Hickman is 81. Baseball Hall-of-Famer Brooks Robinson is 78. Actress Candice Azzara is 74. Bluegrass singer-musician Rodney Dillard (The Dillards) is 73. Baseball Hall-of-Famer Reggie Jackson is 69. Country singer Joe Bonsall (The Oak Ridge Boys) is 67. Rock musician Rick Wakeman (Yes) is 66. Rock singer Mark Mothersbaugh (Devo) is 65. Actor James Stephens is 64. Country singer George Strait is 63. Rhythm-and-blues singer Butch Tavares (Tavares) is 62. Actor Chow Yun-Fat is 60. Rock singer-musician Page Hamilton is 55. Contemporary Christian musician Barry Graul (MercyMe) is 54. Contemporary Christian singer Michael Tait is 49. Singer-actress Martika is 46. Comedian-writer Tina Fey is 45. Rapper Special Ed is 41. Rock singer Jack Johnson is 40. Country singer David Nail is 36. Rhythm-and-blues singer Darryl Allen (Mista) is 35. Actor Matt Long is 35. Actor Allen Leech is 34. Christian-rock musician Kevin Huguely (Rush of Fools) is 33. Christian singer Francesca Battistelli is 30. Actor Spencer Breslin is 23.

**Thought for Today:** "A conference is a gathering of people who singly can do nothing, but together can decide that nothing can be done." — Fred Allen, comedian (1894-1956).

FROM THE BIBLE

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly ... singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Colossians 3:16. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.



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Capitol Notebook

Losing Before The High Court Wasn't A Defeat

BY BOB MERCER  
State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE — The population of Pierre, our state capital, is somewhere north of 13,000.

As a news reporter, that means your path often crosses with the people about whom you report.

When the South Dakota Supreme Court last week unanimously rejected my request for records regarding the investigation of Richard Benda's death in October 2013, Justice Janine Kern wrote the opinion.

When Gov. Dennis Daugaard chose Janine as the newest member of the state's highest court last year, to succeed retiring Justice John Koenkamp, I thought, "Great pick." I still think that.

Her dad was a circuit judge. She worked in the state office of attorney general for years before she was appointed as a circuit judge serving in Rapid City. She focused much of her time on juvenile justice matters.

And, back when she lived in Pierre, she nearly became our neighbor when we still lived in the little blue house on Oak Street. I was delighted when she arrived next door one evening and waited for the real estate agent at the yellow house on the corner.

She waited and waited. The agent never came. The yellow house sold to a different party. Eventually, because of what became of the yellow house, we bought it when it came up for sale again.

We would have been so pleased to have Janine as our neighbor. Pierre is a small town. I have a T-shirt that began existence through another Supreme Court member. The blue shirt bears the slogan "Re Elect Lori S. Wilbur Circuit Judge."

Point Of View

It Was A Very Proud Week For South Dakota

BY GOV. DENNIS DAUGAARD  
R-South Dakota

This past week has shown us, yet again, why we can be proud to be South Dakotans.

On Friday, May 8, our state welcomed President Barack Obama to Watertown. Linda and I were honored to greet the President at the airport and to join his motorcade as he rode to the Civic Arena. Thousands of people lined the entire four-mile route — waving, cheering and holding American flags. Members of the national media who travel with the President commented on the impressive display.

It was all the more impressive because, based on election returns, many of those who turned out probably don't support President Obama politically. But this was not a day for politics — it was a day for patriotism. We welcomed our nation's President to South Dakota, and I was proud of the reception and the respect Watertown showed.

President Obama delivered the commencement address at Lake Area Technical Institute and recognized LATI as one of the nation's best two-year institutions. His speech focused on several of the graduates who had faced adversity and had come to LATI to seek a better life. The President recognized the values of hard work and self-reliance that make South Dakota a great state. All across South Dakota on that same weekend, thousands of hard-working students celebrated a successful college graduation, in a similar way.

On Sunday morning, I was back in Pierre. Our family was enjoying a Mother's Day brunch after church. In Delmont, families were doing much the same — spending time

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

*EDITOR'S NOTE: This letter, which appeared in Friday's Press & Dakotan, inadvertently cut off the last line. We are printing the letter today in its entirety. We apologize for the error.*

Your Name Here

Janet Rupiper, Yankton  
Having been the recipient of various

I had known Lori for nearly all of the 28 years I've now lived in Pierre. I didn't support her campaign — as a reporter, I couldn't — but she has been a fun person to know, as was her late husband, Brent.



Bob MERCER

If memory is right, that tee shirt came from the campaign year when Lori and another circuit judge, Kathleen Trandahl of Winner, came through the Oak Street neighborhood one day knocking at doors.

Circuit Judge Trandahl ruled against me in the Benda case. I don't think any less of her or Lori. I had watched their solid work through the years in the big courtroom at the Hughes County Courthouse.

I've known Chief Justice David Gilbertson for years both casually and professionally. He speaks for the state's Unified Judicial System on matters of policy and budgets.

I've enjoyed many conversations through decades with Justice Steve Zinter. Once we were in the same fantasy baseball league. For ethical reasons, he stopped playing. We still love talking baseball when we can.

Nor do I hold anything against Hillary Brady, the state hearing examiner who initially denied my records request.

When a decision was slow in coming, I contacted her a year ago. Turned out she was suffering from back troubles. Eventually the decision came.

She had ruled in my favor years earlier regarding then-secret tax refunds for large business projects.

I could be disappointed in losing last week. I'm not. In a small town, you come to know integrity, because you see it.

I do wish I had won.



Daugaard

with friends and family. Then, out of nowhere, a tornado came from the south and tore through the west side of town.

I arrived in Delmont mid-afternoon. The devastation and destruction were even worse than had been reported. Dozens of homes were damaged, along with the city's brand-new fire hall and the beautiful Zion Lutheran Church. I was saddened by the great loss of property, but grateful that no one was killed or critically injured.

And, once again, I was inspired by the people of South Dakota. Delmont's citizens joined together to help their neighbors. Local officials set aside their personal losses to coordinate the city's response. With the Delmont fire hall destroyed, firemen from Armour and Tripp came to Delmont's aid. Power linesmen were immediately on the scene, working to restore power. The people of Delmont began to clean up their city and comfort those who suffered losses.

Yet again, the worst of Mother Nature brought out the best in South Dakota. Just as we've seen again and again — during the Missouri and Big Sioux River floods, Winter Storm Atlas, and the Wessington Springs tornado — South Dakotans stepped up to help their neighbors.

In South Dakota, we love our country. We work hard to advance ourselves. And we step up to help our neighbors when disaster strikes. That's why this week made me proud, still again, to be a South Dakotan.

neighbors' garbage cans, I am suggesting that everyone put their addresses on their receptacles.

In the past, I have always found the owners but now I have a green bin with no idea who it belongs to. As I'm writing this, I actually went out and picked up another stray!

Help me help you with this simple fix to a windy problem. Oh ... and have a good day!