

## SD Regulators Ok Wolf Cubs, Fox Kits

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A Minnesota woman will be able to keep wolf cubs and fox kits at a wildlife education center she's opening in Deadwood, but visitors won't be able to play with the animals, a South Dakota regulatory board decided on Wednesday.

The South Dakota Animal Industry Board granted a permit allowing Terri Petter to house the animals at the roughly 17-acre Deadwood location. But they barred the "pet and play" portion of Fur-Ever Wild's Deadwood site, which would have allowed groups to mingle with the baby animals.

Opponents of the Deadwood facility were largely unable to air their concerns about Petter's fur operation and the alleged conditions and treatment of animals at her location on 100 acres in Lakeville, Minnesota, because the board said they were outside the scope of the proceedings. The project faces opposition from people in part concerned that Petter's real purpose is to raise animals for fur.

The board ultimately considered whether Petter can safely possess the animals, and she highlighted the fences and enclosures, among other security features, at the facility to keep animals and people safe. Adam Wiechmann, a veterinarian for the state who inspected the facility, said he believes it's ready to handle wolf cubs and fox kits younger than 6 months old.

Petter said after the hearing that the decision is "great news" and said that the location would still be a viable business even though public contact with the animals isn't allowed. She initially planned to have six wolf pups and seven fox kits at the Deadwood site.

"We can still educate," she said. "We can still teach people about the fox and the wolf, and it's what we wanted to do all along."

State Veterinarian Dustin Oedekoven advised the board against allowing the "pet and play" aspect of the location.

"The consensus of science, especially among public health veterinarians, is (it's) generally recommended that dangerous animals such as wolves and animals which may serve as a reservoir for rabies such as foxes not be in public contact," Oedekoven said.

Opponents also said they were concerned about safety at the Deadwood site. Sharon Martinisko, a Deadwood resident, said her biggest concerns were the possibility of injury and the spread of disease.

"By eliminating the contact, that took the biggest piece out of it," she said. "The facility is going to be closely monitored. If not by city government, it will be monitored by the citizens."

## Bosworth Made "Honest Mistake"

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Defense attorneys for former South Dakota political candidate Annette Bosworth told jurors Wednesday that an "honest mistake" led to charges of election law violations against her client.

A jury of 12 people and two alternates in Pierre heard opening statements Wednesday from Bosworth's defense attorneys and the prosecution. The jury will decide the fate of the 43-year-old Sioux Falls physician who unsuccessfully sought the Republican nomination for the U.S. Senate in 2014.

Bosworth is accused of election law violations that include allegedly being out of the country during a time when her petitions to get on the ballot say she was gathering signatures. Bosworth, who is expected to testify during the trial, has said she's the target of "political persecution" and has pleaded not guilty to perjury and filing false documents.

Defense attorney Dana Hanna told the jury that as a rookie candidate, Bosworth took advice from her attorney and political consultant Joel Arends, who told her she properly could call herself the petitions' "circulator" because they were circulated under her direction.

But under South Dakota law, the person circulating the petitions must witness the signings from registered voters. Hanna said Bosworth's biggest mistake was relying on Arends' advice.

"You're gonna learn that Annette Bosworth ... was a more competent doctor than she was a political candidate," Hanna said. "She was negligent, she was careless, but she was not guilty of any crimes. ... She made an honest mistake."

An arrest affidavit shows Bosworth attested to personally gathering signatures when she was on a publicized medical mission trip in the Philippines. According to the affidavit, she also attested to gathering signatures on some Hutterite colonies, but residents interviewed said she was not there when they signed.

# Union County Homeowners Won't See Flood Insurance Surcharge

BY REGINA GARCIA CANO  
Associated Press

SIoux FALLS, S.D. — More than 400 homeowners whose property lies along the Missouri River in southeast South Dakota are no longer facing a potential surcharge on their flood insurance.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency on Wednesday said Union County officials met a Monday deadline to submit documents addressing accusations that they did not maintain adequate record keeping and failed to manage development in the flood plain.

FEMA had threatened to put Union County on probationary status with the National Flood Insurance Program starting in mid-May unless it addressed what it called "program deficiencies" and "flood plain management violations." The probationary status would have resulted in a \$50 surcharge for flood insurance policyholders.

"They have a year to take some corrective action, and I give them a lot of credit, they really had to roll up their

sleeves and come up with some good remedies for some of the problems there," said Jerry DeFelice, external affairs specialist for FEMA.

The county has promised engineering studies and modifications to address the issues brought up by the federal agency. The construction of basements in the mapped flood plain area is among FEMA's chief concerns. Basements are banned in the flood plain.

DeFelice said FEMA and South Dakota authorities will follow up with county officials during the next 12 months to ensure that the county takes action on its remediation plan.

The National Flood Insurance Program, a part of FEMA, underwrites flood insurance policies sold by commercial insurance companies. Union County joined the program in 1977 and the area's current flood plain map was drawn in 2001. Traditional insurance policies for homeowners and renters do not cover flood damage. People who live outside a mapped flood plain can get insurance at low rates, while premiums within flood plains depend on how build-

ings are constructed.

Zoning director Dennis Henze said Wednesday that the county, as part of the remediation process, will spend between \$50,000 and \$60,000 to hire engineers and surveyors to be able to draft a letter to ask FEMA for a map revision in an area of Dakota Dunes where homes were built about three decades ago.

"At the time, we are talking in the late 80s, this area wasn't in the flood plain," Henze said. "And the homes were built and everything was fine. Now, they're saying 'Oh, no, no. That's in the flood plain.'"

Union County has 424 flood insurance policies. Only homeowners in the unincorporated area of the county, including Dakota Dunes, would have been affected by the surcharge. But incorporated areas, such as North Sioux City, would not have been forced to pay the penalty.

Low-lying areas in Union County, including Dakota Dunes, faced rising water in June 2011 as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers increased flows through dams on the Missouri River to get rid of water from rains of up to 8 inches that fell in Wyoming, eastern Montana and western North Dakota and South Dakota.

## Ricketts Approves New Two-Year Neb. Budget

BY GRANT SCHULTE  
Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — Nebraska Gov. Pete Ricketts signed a new two-year budget on Wednesday that includes \$408 million for property tax reductions and lower-than-average state spending growth.

The Republican governor approved the \$8.7 billion package without vetoes, saying it met the general goals he proposed at the beginning of this year's session.

"This budget is a good step in that direction," Ricketts said during a news conference at the Capitol. "This is a great day for Nebraska taxpayers."

The budget includes an increase in state aid for property tax reductions, education and prison expenses. The \$408 million approved by lawmakers and the governor will go to Nebraska's property tax credit fund, which uses state money to offset local property taxes.

The package would grow state spending by an average

of 3.2 percent annually over the next two years, although that number could rise slightly with new spending bills that pass this year. Nebraska's state budget has historically grown by an average 5 percent per year.

Ricketts said he still believed lawmakers had work to do to lower property taxes.

The governor had also endorsed legislation to lower the taxable value of farm and ranch land, but the idea stalled amid arguments that it would either shift the cost to residential property owners or deprive school districts of revenue.

The package would add millions for state K-12 school aid, prisons and a 3 percent funding increase for the University of Nebraska, state colleges and community colleges.

Under the budget, the K-12 school aid formula will receive a 4.3 percent increase in state funding in the upcoming fiscal year and a 0.8 percent increase in the year that follows.

The Department of

Correctional Services will get roughly \$2.5 million in additional funding per year to hire 59 more security staff members, and \$1.2 million for 14 new behavioral health positions.

The items were approved amid concerns that the prison lack services for inmates. Lawmakers added the money before a prison disturbance earlier this month that left two prisoners dead. Some of the inmates had complained prior to the revolt that the prison wasn't offering enough rehabilitation programming.

Sen. Heath Mello of Omaha, chairman of the Appropriations Committee, said the budget included the priorities that the governor and lawmakers shared.

"The fiscal blueprint prioritizes growing Nebraska's economy through responsible investments, and begins to address key challenges facing our state," Mello said.

Senators were spared from having to make major cuts after a revenue forecast in April showed that the state will likely collect more than

expected.

The state's forecasting board projected last month that revenue will grow 5 percent during the fiscal year that starts on July 1 and 4.3 percent in the following year. Prior to the board meeting, many lawmakers had speculated that state revenues would decline and force them to trim the budget to avoid a deficit.

Ricketts had initially proposed adding \$400 million to the property tax credit fund, but the higher forecast allowed lawmakers and the governor to increase the total by \$8 million.

Lawmakers also voted to withdraw about \$28 million from the cash reserve fund to pay for renovations to the Capitol's heating, ventilation and air conditioning system. The full project is expected to cost \$106 million, including the expense of restoring windows, moving Capitol offices across the street and a more efficient geothermal heat pump system. The withdrawals would take place over eight years.

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## City

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But during the past year, Yankton Area Progressive Growth (YAPG) began looking at methods of tackling another issue seemingly unrelated to disputes over water coverage area — affordable housing.

YAPG president John Kramer told the *Press & Dakotan* that in order to move forward on YAPG's plans — which have become the Westbrook Estates project — the issue needed to be addressed.

"YAPG is responding to demands that our primary sector companies are putting on us to get affordable housing built," Kramer said. "When we looked at locations around Yankton, we looked at 12 different locations. ... Several of those sites were in B-Y Water's territory, and the question was, 'Could they serve it or not?' That could be a concern if we developed a subdivision — we've got to have water."

Kramer said it came down to YAPG housing director Dan Specht to help negotiate a deal between the two entities.

"Dan Specht took on the initiative on YAPG's behalf and asked B-Y and the city to come together," he said. "We're moving forward with the subdivision to hopefully add 150-200 lots to Yankton over the next 5-10 years, and we wouldn't be able to do that if we didn't have that agreement between B-Y and the city."

Mingo characterized the agreement as being a positive for each entity.

"With the Westbrook Estates project, we ended up with a win-win solution where they're B-Y's customers," he said. "Until B-Y, by their actions, decides to get to their actions, the city's just going to provide the water, but (the Westbrook residents are) going to remain B-Y customers. ... We've got a partnership with

them now that makes it work so development will be more smooth at that point."

He added that having YAPG involved was a huge boost to getting an agreement.

"We've had a lot of good dialogue with them over the last year or so trying to get to this point," he said. "The Westbrook Estates project and Yankton Area Progressive Growth's involvement as kind of a neutral party promoting development (helped)."

City Manager Amy Nelson told the *Press & Dakotan* that other attempts at a deal with B-Y had been made in the past.

"But for a lot of reasons, both B-Y Water, the city and YAPG wanted to roll up their sleeves and get it done (this time)," Nelson said. "Over the past 8-10 months, we had a really strong team, representative both of the City Commission and my city staff, as well as B-Y Water staff and B-Y Water board members, and we really worked hard. Some of the discussions were intense, but they were all professional. But, we kept in mind the shared goal, which is, 'We want to grow our community, we want to build houses, we want to be able to see Yankton move

forward.' So we were able to come up with an agreement, and I think it's a good one that's going to work well."

Mingo hailed the agreement as huge for the future of development of the Yankton area.

"To me, this is a lot bigger deal than people can realize," he said. "It's basically a new dawn for how we're going to address service in these areas."

B-Y Rural Water was unable to comment on the deal before press time.

Follow @RobNielsenPandD on Twitter.

*A Tribute to America's Heroes*

To those who lost their lives serving the country they loved. To those who left behind wives, husbands, children, mothers, fathers and friends. To those who bravely battled with everything they had. To those who understood better than anyone the importance of freedom and justice for all. To our honored dead, goes our undying gratitude and utmost respect.

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