repeat it," he said. "We want you to be a Blue Ribbon school every

Roger Breed, the Nebraska commissioner of education, presented the Blue Ribbon plaque to Bloomfield school board president Jason

Breed commended the Bloomfield faculty, administration and board for providing the resources and commitment to its students'

"This achievement didn't occur in a vacuum," he said.

The real reward goes beyond the Blue Ribbon banner of plaque, he added. "Each of you has done and will continue to do your best,'

Principal Rusty Kluender and math teacher Duane Wilken, who represented Bloomfield at the Blue Ribbon awards ceremony in Washington, offered remarks during Wednesday's ceremony.

Kluender recognized former BHS principal Kim Lingenfelter, who was unable to attend Wednesday's program, for her leadership and contribution to the current

He also recognized BHS senior Nick Nagengast, who scored a perfect 36 on his ACT college entrance exam, and BHS students Grace Carhart, Dakota Burgerhoff and Lexie Hauger, who each scored higher than 30 on the ACT exam.

'These seniors have taken things to a new level," he said.

Wilken, who has spent the past 40 years at Bloomfield, choked back his emotions during his remarks. He asked all Bloomfield teachers, past and present, to stand for recognition.

"I believed we were a Blue Ribbon school before ever got this award," he said. "This achievement didn't come this last year or two years. It came from a long time

Superintendent Bob Marks said the Blue Ribbon award stood greater than any individual or group of individuals.

This award showcases the academic prowess of our students," he said. "Today is a day to bask in the sunlight of success."

Marks followed up on the governor's reference to the recent state

In an average of 227 schools across the state, Bloomfield grades 9-12 ranked first in math, third in science, sixth in writing and sev-

enth in reading.

The overall average of grades 3-12, out of 249 schools, Bloomfield students ranked second in writing, fifth in reading, 26th in science and

"If you want to see your tax dol-lars at work, this is it," Marks said. 'We don't have the fanciest in facilities and the best in accessories, but what we do have, we put directly to staff and students, and you can see the results. We are proud. We are Bloomfield.'

During the program, BHS student Callen Koester noted that many people think great things can't be done in Bloomfield, a town of 1,100 residents.

"We couldn't disagree more," he

Bloomfield already has excelled in athletics and the arts and is now adding national recognition for its academics with the Blue Ribbon award, he said.

Carhart noted Bloomfield's small size but its place as one of the six top schools in Nebraska.

"We may not be the biggest school, but Bloomfield has moved past limitations to excel," she said. We hope that future generations will work as hard as we have to maintain this (Blue Ribbon) sta-

In separate comments, Nagengast told the *Press & Dakotan* that the school's award is well deserved. He noted the long line of outstanding teachers as well as the community's commitment to academic excellence.

Looking ahead, Nagengast is considering a music major at the University of Southern California. However, he is also considering engineering and medicine, as well as attending the University of Ne-

He hopes future Bloomfield students continue the Blue Ribbon

"I hope people don't become self-satisfied because we got it one year," he said.

Hefner, the school board president, told the *Press & Dakotan* he doesn't fear that Bloomfield will rest on its laurels. If anything, the district will build on its current ex-

cellence, he said. "Success rewards success," he

You can follow Randy Dockendorf on Twitter at twitter.com/RDockendorf

# Mercado

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mindset sets the conditions for effective counterinsurgency," Mercado said. "Maintaining a proper mindset is critical to bringing fence-sitters into the fold and to reconcile or reintegrate accidental or former gorillas.'

When the company finally arrived in Afghanistan, it had to wait to implement its plan.

Mercado said the soldiers first had to build a combat outpost in Imam Sahib, as the commute from the current operating base to the company's area of responsibility was more than three hours. However, it had a small window to do

"Intelligence showed the insurgents fighting around Imam Sahib were not local. They had left the area for the winter months and weren't expected back until the start of the spring offensive," Mercado said. "We had a limited opportunity to build the outpost uncontested. If successful, I could literally build and seize the initiative from the insurgents and force them to fight on my terms. I could literally change the nature of the fight with the opening move and control the tempo with subsequent actions.'

The Bushmaster Company took the gamble and began building the outpost in extreme conditions. The soldiers stayed on site, only traveling for supplies. They had no running water, no sewage and slept in

"The conditions were terrible, and we loved every single minute of it," Mercado said. "We knew it was only a matter of time before we transformed our outpost into a well protected fort that provided our soldiers with everything they needed and much more.

Completing the task on time was an operational victory, he said, because it allowed the company to project influence over the district from a local center and allowed for a rapid response within

'Most importantly, it allowed us to foster better relationships with the Afghan people we were charged to protect," Mercado said.

The Bushmaster Company next turned its attention to the enemy's headquarters, and were again met with an obstacle. The Taliban had retreated toward Dast-e Archi following a long battle with the previous unit, and it had destroyed many roads and bridges along the

After repairing the roadways, the company moved into Dast-e Archi, finding success where many thought it was impossible.

We had been warned that Dast-e Archi was so dangerous, that we would be unable to pene-trate into the district at all," Mercado said. "Our first mission, however, resulted in us clearing through nearly the entire district."

Having penetrated deep into an enemy stronghold, the company was determined to hold the ground it had fought desperately to seize, he said. This required

"Too small of a company to physically hold the terrain by ourselves, we created space for the local police to move in and for (a local security force) to hold the terrain," Mercado said.

With everything in place, the Bushmaster Company finally

began implementing its campaign. The plan targeted the relationship between the enemy and the people of the region with a combination of infantry missions and more peaceful solutions.

"In addition to more conventional infantry-type combat operations like raids, ambushes, reconnaissance and security patrols to clear Imam Sahib and Archi Districts of insurgent activity, we often found ourselves engaged in situations that required a more delicate touch, including mediation, conflict resolution and crisis management," Mercado

After several successful months, he said the company transitioned from "a population-centric counterinsurgency campaign to a security force assistance mission, and he relinquished his command to assume command of his battalion's Headquarters & Headquar-

While he is unsure of the mark the Bushmaster Company's work will make on the region, Mercado said he was pleased with the success of the mission. However, he knows the war is not over.

"Looking back on the experience, I know that though we accomplished much, much more remains for others to complete,"

You can follow Derek Bartos on Twitter at twitter.com/d\_bartos

From Page 1

In an unusual move. Rice and acting CIA Director Michael Morell have held two days of private meetings with Republican senators in hopes of assuaging their concerns. Privately, Senate Republicans said they had hoped the conversations would quiet the criticism as they want to avoid the spectacle of a postelection challenge to a female African-American

Instead, the sessions have cast further doubt on her chances for the top State Department job and increased the likelihood of a protracted fight if Obama does choose her. Although Democrats will have 55 votes in the next Congress, the president would need the support of five Republicans to avoid a filibuster of the nomination.

Collins said she was troubled by Rice's "political role" in downplaying the Libya attack as a spontaneous demonstration over an

anti-Muslim video rather than a terrorist attack by al-Qaida affiliates in a series of Sunday talk show appearances on Sept. 16 five days after the attack and weeks before the election.

U.S. Ambassador Chris Stevens and three other Americans were killed in the raid on the U.S. diplomatic mission.

Rice has said she was relying on talking points provided by U.S.

intelligence. Introducing another issue certain to be fodder for any confirmation battle, Collins said she pressed Rice about security at the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi in 1998 when a truck bomb was set off outside the facility, killing more than 200 Kenyans and 12 Americans.

"What troubles me so much is the Benghazi attack in many ways echoes the attacks on those embassies in 1998 when Susan Rice was head of the African region for our State Department," Collins told reporters after the meeting. "In both cases, the ambassador begged for additional security."

Collins said Rice told her she was not involved directly in turning down the request for

improved security. The Maine senator said that in light of Rice's position, she had to be aware of the general threats and U.S. Ambassador Prudence Bushnell's requests for security upgrades in Kenya.

Review boards headed by former Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman, Adm. William J. Crowe after the Aug. 7, 1998, bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania did not find reasonable cause that any U.S. employee breached his duty in connecting with the bombings. Rice was not blamed.

However, Crowe said the boards believed there was a "collective failure" by several administrations and Congress over a decade to invest adequately to shore up vulnerable U.S. diplomatic missions around the world.

Rice has emerged as the frontrunner for the top job at State though Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman John Kerry,

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16 Cabaret's

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By THOMAS JOSEPH

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D-Mass., passed over for the job in 2008, is considered a strong alternative.

In a clear message to the White House, Collins said Kerry would have no problem winning Senate confirmation.

"I think John Kerry be an excellent appointment and would be easily confirmed by his colleagues," Collins said.

Sen. Bob Corker of Tennessee, who is in line to become the top Republican on the Foreign Relations Committee, was more circumspect about Rice's chances after his own meeting with the ambassador.

The GOP senator suggested that Obama "take a deep breath and nominate the person he really believes is the very best person for secretary of state, regardless of relationships.'

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> AXYDLBAAXR is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

11-29 **CRYPTOQUOTE** 

XGGA GCYEMEX UEA

YEAMEX ZUVY

XGGA TMNZ CKGRMAYA JLYF

TYAYKMWG TYNNMEM Yesterday's Cryptoquote: THERE IS AN APPLAUSE SUPERIOR TO THAT OF THE MULTITUDES: ONE'S

WNGOY

Wagner

our families?" he said. "You can't let others hold you back from your dreams, and not everyone is able to ever achieve what they want in life because of other peo-

Anderson is the son of Native reason why Wagner Cultural Coordinator Vanessa Iverson wanted him to come speak.

"It's a really big deal to be able to get him to speak here," Iverson said. "I was very excited and surprised he was willing to talk to our students because he does speak to a lot of college students, but the message can be heard and related to with students here at Wagner.'

She added the successes and adversity Anderson has overcome in life can be related to by students that were in attendance.

'When I found out he was Native American, that was one of the first connections I made to students here," Iverson said. "Kids here might not feel like they have a lot of people they can connect with, but I think they could connect well with 'Famous Dave."

She hopes his talk makes students look at their future more and no matter what struggles they are having, or what obstacles they have to overcome, that they can achieve their goals and dreams in life.

Anderson told students his first restaurant was a simple Indian Fried Bread stand. He would open up his first Famous Dave's

I've been thinking...

in Wisconsin in 1994, and their are now 200 restaurants across the country, producing about \$500 million in sales each year.

He told students anything is possible if they set their mind to

"If you have dreams, anything is possible in life," he said. "You just can't let other people affect what you think and how you act. What you think about and hold in your mind is very important in life. What you think about all the

time is what you will become. Anderson said many people lose the their, and oftentimes it is because of other people.

"All change happens from within," he said. "You have to take ownership of your life you can't blame anyone else with what happens.'

He said he pushed himself to get an education, despite not having an undergraduate college degree, Anderson got his master's from Harvard at age 36. "I never gave up on myself,"

he said. "I started with nothing to grow into a multi-millionaire. Each of you here today has dreams of greatness within you." He told students they need to

follow their passion in life and when they have a job, they need to love what they do — too often, he said, people live a frustrating life doing something they have no passion for.

"I love what I do for a living," Anderson said. "Anyone who thinks their job is boring, they are actually the boring one. A job is an opportunity and work is tough, which is why they call it work.'

He said students should not make fun of each other, or spread rumors, because they never know when they might need

other people to lend them a hand or help them get through a tough

He added that they only people in life that hold us back is

"When I was building the first restaurant in Hayward, Wisc., I had no problem telling people my dream was to have the world's best restaurant," Anderson said. "In a town with a population of under 2,000, I was serving between 4,000 and 6,000beoble within a few months. As of today, we've won more than

600 'best of class' awards.' He said being average as a student is not good enough in

"How many of you want average?" he asked. "When you go to a doctor or need a lawyer, do you want average? No, you want the best. People that are average are

the best of the worst, and the worst of the best."

He left students with a final word of battling obstacles in life, and how they can overcome

"People that shoulder their share of problems are also the ones that are successful," Anderson said. "Problems and adversities are where you grow. Don't lose your optimism when facing tough times. Don't lose hope on your biggest dreams and always stick to your values.

After he spoke to the students, Anderson had a private luncheon open only to students who applied, where he had conversations about his life, signed books and answered questions.

You can follow Andrew Atwal on Twitter at twitter.com/andrewatwal





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