

The Press Dakotan

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OPINION OTHER VIEWS

Cities, Counties Need Tax Flexibility

ARGUS LEADER, Sioux Falls: Sometimes a good idea just runs into poor timing.

Let's hope that's true with a proposal that was shot down by the South Dakota Legislature in 2010, but just might get another hearing.

The idea is to empower local governments to raise or add a sales tax for a special purpose. The proposal in 2010 would have allowed for a temporary city sales tax as a funding mechanism for a new Sioux Falls event center.

Mayor Dave Munson and others proposed the legislation and a total of 92 cities and towns supported the bill, saying the power to add a temporary tax would help them with the multitude of building and infrastructure needs they face.

They argued that residents would be able to put such measures to a local vote, assuring that the ultimate control over raising taxes would rest with the taxpayers of the communities.

The proposal never made it out of legislative committee. The House Local Government Committee killed the bill on a 10-3 vote.

Legislators and state revenue department officials argued that such a law could hinder the state's ability to raise its sales tax if needed.

Sioux Falls Mayor Mike Huether brought the subject back to the forefront recently, after returning from a trip to Williston, N.D. Huether said that community, which is wrestling with phenomenal growth brought on by the oil boom, was adding a half-cent sales tax to build a recreation center and acquire land for more parks. North Dakota state law allows that.

In addition, he said the North Dakota State Legislature was considering a separate sales tax measure that would provide funding to cities and counties affected by the rapid growth in those areas.

He pointed to those funding sources as possible solutions to ongoing problems in Minnehaha County caused by rapid growth. The county has no ability to add a sales tax and is struggling with overcrowding and pressures on its jail and court system. County officials have pushed unsuccessfully over the years for legislation to allow taxes on drinks to raise funds to deal with continuous growth.

Huether isn't pushing the measure, just pointing it out as a solution in a similar situation. We applaud him for raising the issue.

Maybe it's time to try again to get similar enabling legislation passed in our state.

At the very least, the discussion should be restarted in Pierre.

ON THIS DATE

The **PRESS & DAKOTAN** encourages its readers to write letters to the editor and asks 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/.

ON THIS DATE

By The Associated Press
Today is Monday, Nov. 10, the 314th day of 2014. There are 51 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On Nov. 10, 1944, during World War II, the ammunition ship USS Mount Hood (AE-11) exploded while moored at the Manus Naval Base in the Admiralty Islands in the South Pacific; the blast annihilated the Mount Hood and damaged nearby vessels, leaving 45 confirmed dead and 327 missing and presumed dead.

On this date: In 1775, the U.S. Marines were organized under authority of the Continental Congress.

In 1871, journalist-explorer Henry M. Stanley found Scottish missionary David Livingstone, who had not been heard from for years, near Lake Tanganyika in central Africa.

In 1919, the American Legion opened its first national convention in Minneapolis. In 1928, Japanese Emperor Hirohito was formally enthroned, almost two years after his ascension.

In 1938, Kate Smith first sang Irving Berlin's "God Bless America" on her CBS radio program. Turkish statesman Mustafa Kemal Atatürk died in Istanbul at age 57.

In 1942, Winston Churchill delivered a speech in London in which he said, "I have not become the King's First Minister to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire."

In 1951, customer-dialed long-distance telephone service began as Mayor M. Leslie Denning of Englewood, New Jersey, called Alameda, California, Mayor Frank Osborne without operator assistance.

In 1954, the U.S. Marine Corps Memorial, depicting the raising of the American flag on Iwo Jima in 1945, was dedicated by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in Arlington, Virginia.

In 1969, the children's educational program "Sesame Street" made its debut on National Educational Television (later PBS).

In 1972, three armed men hijacked Southern Airways Flight 49, a DC-9 with 24 other passengers on board during a stopover in Birmingham, Alabama. (The 30-hour ordeal finally ended in Cuba, where the hijackers were taken into custody by Cuban authorities.)

In 1975, the ore-hauling ship SS Edmund Fitzgerald and its crew of 29 mysteriously sank during a storm in Lake Superior with the loss of all on board.

In 1982, the newly finished Vietnam Veterans Memorial was opened to its first visitors in Washington, D.C., three days before its dedication. Soviet leader Leonid

I. Brezhnev died at age 75.

Ten years ago: Word reached the United States of the death of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat at age 75 (because of the time difference, it was the early hours of November 11 in Paris, where Arafat died). President George W. Bush nominated White House counsel Alberto Gonzales to be attorney general, succeeding John Ashcroft. France, the United States and other nations began evacuating thousands of foreigners from Ivory Coast following attacks on civilians and peacekeeping troops.

Five years ago: John Allen Muhammad, mastermind of the 2002 sniper attacks that killed 10 in the Washington, D.C. region, was executed. President Barack Obama visited Fort Hood, Texas, where he somberly saluted the 13 Americans killed in a shooting rampage, and pledged that the killer would be "met with justice — in this world, and the next."

One year ago: Talks in Geneva on curbing Iran's nuclear program ended with no deal after France objected that the proposed measures did not go far enough.

Today's Birthdays: Film composer Ennio Morricone is 86. Blues singer Bobby Rush is 80. Actor Albert Hall is 77. Country singer Donna Fargo is 73. Sen. Saxby Chambliss, R-Ga., is 71. Lyricist Tim Rice is 70. Rock singer-musician Greg Lake (Emerson, Lake and Palmer) is 67. Actress-dancer Ann Reinking is 65. Actor Jack Scalia is 64. Movie director Roland Emmerich is 59. Actor Matt Craven is 58. Actor-comedian Sinbad is 58. Actress Mackenzie Phillips is 65. Author Neil Gaiman is 54. Actress Vanessa Angel is 51. Actor Hugh Bonneville (TV: "Downton Abbey") is 51. Actor-comedian Tommy Davidson is 51. Actor Michael Jai White is 50. Country singer Chris Cagle is 46. Actor-comedian Tracy Morgan is 46. Actress Ellen Pompeo (TV: "Grey's Anatomy") is 45. Rapper-producer Warren G is 44. Actor Walton Goggins is 43. Comedian-actor Chris Lilley is 40. Rock singer-musician Jim Adkins (Jimmy Eat World) is 39. Rapper Eve is 36. Rock musician Chris Joannou (Silverchair) is 35. Actor Bryan Neal is 34. Actress Heather Matarazzo is 32. Country singer Miranda Lambert is 31. Actor Josh Peck is 28. Pop singer Vinz Dery (Nico & Vinz) is 24. Actress Zoey Deutch (Film: "Vampire Academy") is 20. Actress Kiernan Shipka (TV: "Mad Men") is 15. Actress Mackenzie Foy (Film: the "Twilight" films) is 14.

Thought for Today: "Hypocrisy is a fashionable vice, and all fashionable vices pass for virtues." — Moliere, French dramatist (1622-1673).

FROM THE BIBLE

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Acts 2:42. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Support Appreciated

Mead Building Committee
The Mead Building Committee and Yankton County Historical Society would like to thank everyone who came to the Waffle Feed on Saturday, Nov. 1. It was a huge success and we appreciate everyone

coming out. Also, a big thank you to members of the Cramer-Kenyon Heritage Home Board of Directors, Questers, and Friends of Yankton County History for helping work the event. Thank you to the Riverfront Event Center for allowing us to use the facility. We hope everyone had a good time.



Capitol Notebook

State Officials' Moral Courage Tested By EB-5

BY BOB MERCER
State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE — No Republican lost public office over the EB-5 issue in South Dakota's general elections last week.

The matter isn't going away, however. The Legislature's scrutiny will intensify, now that the 2014 political campaigns are done and the 2016 campaigns haven't openly begun.

Reforms will be officially recommended. Those proposals will show us how the secret schemes worked. Action will be taken in the legislative 2015 session.

In that respect, South Dakota is headed toward a very public test of elected officials' character on the EB-5 matter.

What we have seen so far has been mixed. We now know there were years of secrecy. EB-5 essentially sells visas to wealthy people from foreign countries seeking to live in the United States.

The foreign investor must provide at least \$500,000 directly or loan that amount to a U.S. business project.

If the investment creates or protects at least 10 jobs, directly or indirectly, the investor can get a permanent visa for the investor and immediate family.

The federal government allows formation of regional centers to put the deals together. The state government of South Dakota became a regional center during Gov. Mike Rounds' administration.

State lawyers knew as early as 2009 about a public official, Joop Bollen, paid by state government to run EB-5 who created a private business to do EB-5 deals.

Instead, various elected and appointed officials in state government let EB-5 activities spread.

There was a secret state-government contract in 2008 and another in 2009 with Bollen's company. Lawyers outside the government drew the contracts.

Lawmakers requested their Government Operations and Audit Committee look into economic development activities.

Normally the Republican-dominated committee takes a hard line with agencies. But on EB-5, the committee's Republicans proceeded very cautiously.

Now the elections are past. The panel meets again Thursday.

Two Democratic legislators who lost elections Tuesday pushed Republicans on EB-5. Susan Wismer of Britton and Kathy Tyler of Big Stone City showed courage. Republican legislators let them speak but they didn't get far.

Wismer and Tyler are gone in 2015. We will see how far Republicans go without them.

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Bollen left state employment when his company got the second contract. Richard Benda, secretary of tourism and state development for Rounds, signed the contract.

The scheme deepened when Benda arranged to take an extra \$550,000 from state government at the end of 2010.

The money paid Benda to work for Bollen's company starting in 2011.

Two years passed. In March 2013 a federal grand jury issued a subpoena to Gov. Dennis Daugaard's administration.

The subpoena remains secret other than one item revealed by the governor. The grand jury wanted travel records regarding a former state official, Richard Benda.

Daugaard's legal counsel asked state Attorney General Marty Jackley to look into the matter.

Last fall Daugaard's commissioner of economic development, Pat Costello, arranged for private auditors to start looking at his office's records.

All this was secret until after the Oct. 20, 2013, death of Benda. Information slowly came out.

Last winter, the Legislature seemed ready to act.

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