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RANDY DOCKENDORF/P&D  
President Michael Chipps of Northeast Community College in Norfolk, Neb., addresses the audience during this week's joint meeting of five school boards in Wausa, Neb.

## Five Schools Learn Their Merger Options

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF  
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WAUSA, Neb. — After this week's three-hour joint school board meeting, one question remained unanswered for five northeast Nebraska districts discussing a merger.

"We just had school elections last week, and there was a high turnover on the boards. How will that affect things?" one patron asked from the crowd of about 400.

That remains to be seen, said Lincoln attorney Rex Schultze.

"You may not progress down this road. You may choose a different direction," he said. "You have to come voluntarily to the party. In this case, it takes five to tango. If your boards choose to go forward, then it does."

Schultze, who holds northeast Nebraska roots, has worked with school consolidations for 30 years. He is currently working with the historic five-school talks among Bloomfield, Wausa, Creighton, Osmond and Plainview.

The question about school board turnover may have also weighed on the members' minds. They didn't act as planned on two issues. First, the boards were to decide collectively whether to pursue a secondary school of grades 7-12 or

5-SCHOOL | PAGE 12A

## Special Delivery



A Member of the South Dakota National Guard repels from the ceiling of the DakotaDome prior to the start of the South Dakota High School Activities Association 9A Football Championship game, Thursday, to deliver the ceremonial game ball. The game which featured Howard and Wolsey-Wessington was won by Howard 32-20. For more information on the games go to page 6A. To view more photos from the games go to <http://spotted.yankton.net>.

## Regents: Bollen Knew The Rules

Say He Knew He Shouldn't  
Sign EB-5 Contract While  
Working For NSU

BY BOB MERCER  
State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE — As an employee at Northern State University, Joop Bollen knew he shouldn't have signed an agreement between NSU and the for-profit company he incorporated in 2008 to provide services for EB-5 business projects financed by immigrant investors, the chief executive for the state university system testified at a legislative hearing Thursday.

"It is very clear to our employees who can sign contracts and who cannot," Jack Warner, the executive director for the South Dakota Board of Regents, said. "Bollen himself acknowledges he did not have authority and he knew it."

The contract needed to be signed by someone with authority, Warner said, and Bollen didn't seek approval because he knew he wouldn't get it.

Someone purporting to be Bollen sent an email to this reporter after the hearing concluded. The sender refuted some of the testimony and comments, arguing that obtaining authority wasn't necessary and the agreement was a memorandum of understanding rather than a contract because there wasn't any exchange of value.

The sender's identity couldn't be confirmed. The sender didn't respond to a question sent in response asking, "Is this actually Joop?" Bollen had declined or ignored all requests from reporters for comments and interviews during the past year.

Warner said the regents also had a conflict of

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## Hacecky Says Goodbye To Heartland Humane Society

BY JORDYNNE HART  
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Good-byes are hard.

Friends, family, staff members, puppy kisses, kitten hugs and the Yankton community are just a few things that former Heartland Humane Society's (HHS) executive director, Kerry Hacecky, said she will miss as she embarks on her new adventure.

Hacecky told the *Press and Dakotan* that after three years with the Heartland Humane Society, she will be moving to Council Bluffs, Iowa, to be the director of a homeless shelter.

"It has been an amazing community to be working with," Hacecky said. "It took a while for me to make a decision to leave. Yankton has been my hometown and this has been a phenomenal journey."

Hacecky said this move will be good for her on both a personal and professional level.

"This is an opportunity to spread my wings and go serve another part of the non-profit world," she said. "Though it has been really hard for me to leave the shelter, they are in really good hands. The board of directors is really strong right now. What we have been doing is working. I think it is a great opportunity for someone new to come into a situation that is stronger than when I entered and really take it off to another level."



JORDYNNE HART/P&D  
Senior staffer Janette Kaddatz (standing) and shelter coordinator Christa Kranig (right) said two furry friends that are up for adoption said goodbye to Kerry Hacecky on her last day as executive director of HHS. Hacecky will be moving to Council Bluffs, Iowa, to be director of a homeless shelter.

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## Old Post Office To Be Given New Life

BY ROB NIELSEN  
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After sitting vacant for nearly three years, the former downtown Yankton Post Office building will soon be revitalized.

During a One Million Cups session earlier this month, Monte Froehlich, president/managing broker of U.S. Property which now owns the property, laid out plans for apartments and retail space that will soon fill "The Post."

"We're going to lead primarily with a residential redevelopment," Froehlich said.

U.S. Property has slated 17 apartments and about 3,000 square feet of retail space.

"That could go office, but we prefer retail," he said. "We think we've got the stacking to make that work and still have 17 parking stalls for the residents of the building."

Additionally, the project will include the removal of a non-original addition in the back of the building to create a drive-through as well as work on two separate roof decks for use by the public and residents of the property.

The full cost is estimated at more than \$1 million, but no solid figures will be available for some time.

The design will include live-work units, studio apartments and single-bedroom apartments along with the commercial space. Prices are expected to start at \$425 per month for studio units.

Originally, the property was going to be branded "The Grand Chateau," which Froehlich said didn't

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### River City



MMC's Jim Reese  
Releases New  
Collection Of Poetry

### Inside



USA Weekend

At Home With **HOME FEDERAL** BANK

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