

## Rachel Svartoien Olson Receives ACHE Award

Rachel Svartoien Olson, Student Health and Ancillary Service Director of Sanford Vermillion Medical Center, Vermillion, received the American College of Healthcare Executives Early Career Healthcare Executive Regent's Award at the 2012 South Dakota Association of Healthcare Organization's annual convention held recently in Sioux Falls.

The award, presented by Judy Blauwet, ACHE District Regent and Sr. Vice President of Hospital Operations/CNO at Avera McKennan Hospital and University Health Center, recognizes ACHE affiliates who are experienced in the field and have significantly contributed toward the advancement of healthcare management excellence and the achievement of ACHE goals.

Svartoien was born and raised in Freeman. She earned her BS in Administration and her Masters of Public Administration at the University of South Dakota. She started her career in healthcare by working as a certified nursing assistant at Sanford Vermillion Care Center. Svartoien was accepted for an Administrative Internship. Since that time she has accepted any and all job opportunities, spanning the entire organization, providing her with a depth of experience while pursuing her education. Upon graduation she was named Director of Student Health Services and subsequently absorbed the Director of Ancillary Services position.

"Rachel brings energy and enthusiasm to the work environment, that when coupled with her management abilities provide Sanford Vermillion with a remarkable and promising early careerist," commented Tim Tracy, CEO of Sanford Vermillion.

## IRS Urges S.D. Preparers To Take Test Now

The Internal Revenue Service is urging more than 600 South Dakota tax return preparers to immediately schedule their competency test or risk difficulty finding a date, time or location as the exam deadline nears next year. For most of these, the appropriate test will be the Registered Tax Return Preparer competency test.

The Registered Tax Return Preparer test has been available since November 2011. Nationwide, more than 310,000 tax return preparers still need to pass the test before Dec. 31, 2013. Tax professionals who are Enrolled Agents, Certified Public Accountants, and attorneys are exempt from the test, as are certain non-signing preparers and those who do not prepare the Form 1040 series.

The RTRP test is being administered by Prometric, Inc., which has 260 testing sites nationwide. However, if too many preparers delay, available seats will be scarce.

To learn more about the test or to begin the scheduling process, preparers should go to <http://www.irs.gov/Tax-Professionals/IRS-Test-Requirements-for-Becoming-a-Paid-Tax-Professional>.

The test is one phase of a multi-year effort by the IRS to increase oversight of the tax professional industry and help ensure minimal competency levels among those who are paid tax return preparers. More than 60 percent of taxpayers use a tax preparer. Under the new rules, all professional tax return preparers must register with the IRS, obtain a Preparer Tax Identification Number (PTIN), and adhere to ethical standards.

Certain preparers must also pass the new test and complete 15 hours of continuing education each year. For these preparers the IRS created a new credential: Registered Tax Return Preparer. Starting Jan. 1, 2014, only Registered Tax Return Preparers, Enrolled Agents, CPAs and attorneys will be authorized to prepare and sign individual tax returns.

Next year, the IRS will launch a public listing for taxpayers and others to confirm preparers with professional credentials and valid PTINs.

There are nearly 1,700 return preparers from South Dakota who have obtained PTINs from the IRS. Of those, more than 600 must still pass a competency test. For most of these the appropriate test will be the RTRP test. More than 20 South Dakota preparers already have taken the RTRP test and become Registered Tax Return Preparers.

The test is a 2 1/2 hour, timed exam. It must be taken at a Prometric site for control purposes. There are 120 questions which cover Form 1040 tax preparation issues, individual tax law issues and ethics. CPAs, EAs and attorneys already must pass tests for their credentials.

## Christianson Joining Williams & Company

Melissa Christianson, CPA has joined the Yankton, SD office of Williams & Company, PC. Melissa attended Mankato State University and graduate school at Ohio University. She brings seven years of experience from work at a CPA firm in Madison, SD performing a range of public accounting duties. Melissa specializes in quality tax and accounting services for businesses and individuals. Melissa is a licensed CPA in South Dakota and California, she is a member of the South Dakota CPA Society and American Institute of CPAs (AICPA).

Williams & Company, P.C. is a full service certified public accounting firm. They offer a wide range of services to assist their clients in achieving their individual and business goals. Services offered include audit, accounting & tax assistance, business advisory, estate and personal financial planning, business valuation, litigation support, and computer software and QuickBooks assistance. In addition to Yankton, they have offices in Sioux City, Le Mars, Sheldon, Spencer and Onawa, Iowa and Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

## ENGINEERING HONORS



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Employees of Applied Engineering were recently recognized for their years of service with the company.

**Pictured (back left) Steve Rosener, 10 years; (back middle) Rory Hamilton, 10 years; (back right) Julie Derby, 15 years. (front left) Julie Kirchner, 20 years; (front middle) Lisa Rokusek, 10 years; (front right) Karen Saboe, 10 years; (not pictured) Mike Sudbeck, 10 years**

## Existing Home Sales Down 1.7%, But Trends Still Good

BY JIM PUZZANGHERA

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WASHINGTON — Sales of existing homes fell 1.7 percent in September after a big increase the previous month, but the trends in the housing market remain positive, the National Association of Realtors said Friday.

The drop from August, which was in line with analysts' expectations, was caused by a tighter supply that is helping push up prices and encourage more construction, the group said.

Sales decreased to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 4.75 million in September, down from a revised pace of 4.83 million in August. But the rate of sales last month was up 11 percent from a year earlier.

And the median sales price last month was up 11.3 percent from last September, marking the seventh straight month of year-over-year increase, the Realtors group said. The last time there were that many consecutive months of year-over-year price increases was in late 2005 to early 2006, during the housing boom.

"Despite occasional month-to-month setbacks, we're experiencing a genuine recovery," said Lawrence Yun, chief economist for the group. "More people are attempting to buy homes than are able to qualify for mortgages, and recent price increases are not deterring buyer interest. Rather, inventory shortages are limiting sales, notably in parts of the West."

Tighter inventory, continued low mortgage rates, and rising prices all indicate a housing market rebound.

This week, the government reported that new home construction starts were up in August to their highest annual rate in four years.

Distressed sales — either foreclosures or short sales — were up in September from the previous month, accounting for 24 percent of sales compared with 22 percent in August. But a year earlier, in September 2011, such transactions accounted for 30 percent of all sales.

There were 2.32 million existing homes for sale in September, down 3.3 percent from August.

"The shrinkage in housing supply is supporting ongoing price growth, a pattern that could accelerate unless home builders robustly ramp up production," Yun said.

## NEW MEMBERS INTRODUCED



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Wayne and Cecilia Sorenson, owners of American Truck Driving Academy, (ATDA) recently attended the fall conference of the Commercial Vehicle Training Association in Dallas, Texas where they were introduced as new members. ATDA is the only CVTA recognized school in South Dakota and one of 50 member schools that provide professional entry level drivers. CVTA is the national trade association representing proprietary truck driving schools in the U.S. and Canada and its members abide by a code of conduct that ensures that students enrolled in member schools are provided with the highest quality driver training. It also provides 2 conferences per year for its members and an instructor certification program.

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