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S.D. Task Force

Assess Actual Usage To Determine Taxable Value

BY BOB MERCER State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE — Grasslands growing on crop-rated soils would get favorable tax treatment under a plan endorsed Tuesday by the state task force on agricultural land assessments.

The proposal calls for grasslands to be valued for property taxes as though they were on non-crop soils.

Up to 4.8 million acres could be affected statewide, according to an estimate by the state Department of Revenue.

The change calls for assessors to consider actual use in determining the taxable value of a parcel of agricultural land.

Next step is consideration by the Legislature in the 2014 session that opens in January.

The idea came from rancher Lyle Perman of Lowry. He is a task force member.

"Maybe I know best what I use my land for," Perman said. "The reason we're seeing the demise of our grasslands is economics. Many of these grasslands might never be restored."

The South Dakota Corn Growers oppose the change, while the South Dakota Cattlemen's Association supports it.

The proposal would require landowners starting July 1, 2015, to notify their county directors of equalization if cropland has been converted to non-cropland or non-cropland has been changed to cropland.

The task force is established in state law to oversee implementation of the soil- and productivity-based valuation system. The task force has a mix of legislators and citizens with interest in ag-land values.

Some legislators have searched for years for ways to encourage protection of grasslands. One such bill was brought in 2010 by now-U.S. Rep.

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South Dakota High School Football Playoffs



KELLY HERTZ/P&D



JEREMY HOECK/P&D

A Soggy Night Of Football

The South Dakota high school football playoffs got off to a soggy start Tuesday night, as day-long rain and crisp temperatures put a chilly damper on the action. ABOVE: These Avon statisticians used an umbrella to ward off the light rain that fell throughout the Pirates' Class 9B first round contest against Scotland in Avon. LEFT: Vermillion's Regan Bye, left, bounces off Dakota Valley defender Isaac Faldmo for a completion during their Class 11A first-round playoff game Tuesday night in North Sioux City. For more details on the games, see page 9. To see or purchase images from these contests, visit spotted.yankton.net.

INSIDE



American Profile

Should Yankton 'Move' Halloween?

BY NATHAN JOHNSON nathan.johnson@yankton.net

Would Yankton benefit from setting aside time on a weekend before Halloween for kids to celebrate the holiday?

A local mother and elementary school teacher believes the answer is yes.

"A few years ago, we visited my sister in Marshalltown, Iowa, during the week before Halloween," Amy Bruening told the Press & Dakotan this week. "Halloween has been my favorite holiday since I was young, so I was pleasantly surprised they were celebrating by holding trick-or-treating on the Saturday afternoon prior to the holiday, which fell on a week night that year. We were able to trick-or-treat during daylight hours, as well as attend an evening Halloween party hosted by a local church."

"I loved the safety factor," said Bruening, a teacher at Webster Elementary School. "Taking a large group of young kids out during daylight hours made sense. But I also loved not having to rush. We enjoyed spending the morning organizing costumes, made a Halloween-themed lunch and then set out to trick-or-treat."

Earlier this month, Bruening wrote on her Facebook page that she wished Yankton would have trick-or-treating the weekend before or after Halloween when it falls on a school night. The response she received from others was overwhelmingly

positive. "We'll keep on selling them as many times as we can," he said. Cash donations of all types are accepted, Kuchta said. Producers who sell livestock that day can designate a portion of their check for Ranchers Relief, and even those

HALLOWEEN | PAGE 8

YSD Forced To Cancel Meeting Due To Lack Of Attendance

From P&D Staff Reports

With no one from the public present at Tuesday night's open meeting to discuss the Yankton School District's design build project, school officials canceled the event due to lack of attendance.

The meeting was scheduled so that community members could hear a report and provide input on the proposed plan to address \$5.5 million in capital improvement measures throughout the district. The project, which was introduced at last month's regular school board meeting, includes domestic water and heating system improvements, lighting retrofits, replacement of air handling units and facility modifications and upgrades.

Financing for the design build project will be discussed at the Nov. 12 school board meeting. The board is expected to approve the plan at either its November or December meeting.

Area Producers Extend A Hand

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF randy.dockendorf@yankton.net

Area livestock producers and others will extend a hand on Friday to benefit western South Dakota ranchers devastated by this month's Atlas blizzard.

Yankton Livestock Auction Market is hosting a "roll-over auction" where cattle are sold, then donated back and re-sold a number of times, according to manager Tom Kuchta. All proceeds will go to the South Dakota Ranchers Relief Fund.

"This will be in conjunction with our feeder cattle sale that starts at 8 a.m. (Friday)," he said. "At 1 p.m., we will stop to do the auction for the Ranchers Relief Fund."

The roll-over auction has cattle lined up, but more donated cattle may hit the auction block by sale time Friday afternoon, Kuchta said.



PHOTO: METRO GRAPHICS

"We'll keep on selling them as many times as we can," he said. Cash donations of all types are accepted, Kuchta said. Producers who sell livestock that day can designate a portion of their check for Ranchers Relief, and even those

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Scotland School Takes Great Panes With Project

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF randy.dockendorf@yankton.net

SCOTLAND — The Scotland school's energy-saving plan has become a real pane.

The district installed 50 energy-efficient windows and blinds this summer at a cost of about \$150,000. The school used its capital outlay fund to cover the project.

The double-pane windows and insulated panel replaced the former window/glass block, according to school business manager Kevin Kocer. The windows and installment cost \$141,328, while the blinds were handled separately and cost \$8,750.

"The windows are tinted to avoid

glare and to keep the heat out," Kocer said. "The new blinds allow the teachers to control the light in the classroom."

The change toward new windows was 40 years in the making, according to Superintendent Damon Alvey.

"In the early 1970s, the high school had new windows for the last time," he said. "Now, we have replaced windows not only for the high school but also the middle school."

The school district is tracking its energy costs as the school year progresses, Kocer said.



Scotland

"We have not been able to show any energy savings quite yet, but we should have a better idea about this (impact) after the winter season," he said.

"We have had several rainy, windy days in the past couple of months that would have definitely resulted in water leaking in with the old windows. This is no longer the case."

Alvey agreed that drafts and precipitation are no longer a problem. "With the old windows, we had leaks whenever there were strong winds," he said.

The district doesn't look at the new windows and blinds as an expense, Alvey said.

WINDOWS | PAGE 8



RANDY DOCKENDORF/P&D

Scotland school business manager Kevin Kocer sits in the science lab next to one of the new windows and blinds, part of a \$150,000 energy-efficiency project.

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