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the region

#### **Helping The DAV**



727th Transportation Company Chairman Bob Foster presents a check to Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Department of South Dakota Commander Helen Parr, who is surrounded by members of the Disabled American Veterans and the 727th Transportation Company.

# **Brookings National Guard** Unit Presents Check To DAV

SIOUX FALLS — The 727th Transportation U.S. Army National Guard Committee of Brook-ings presented a check for \$19,550.00 to the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Hospital Transportation Network (HTN) on Saturday, Oct. 11, at the DAV Headquarters, 1519 W. 51st Street, Sioux Falls.

The 727th hosted the 727th/DAV 10th Annual Charity Poker Run on Aug. 30 in Brook-ings. This year's donation of \$19,550.00 brings the total donations to \$85,000.00 in 10 years from the Annual Poker Runs.

The DAV uses the funds to purchase vans and operate the DAV Hospital Transportation Net-work which provides FREE rides for any Veteran to the VA Health Care Systems and VA Clinics.

In FY 2013 the program provided free rides for 12,775 veterans, 27,092 volunteer hours by our drivers and 667,509 miles driven.

The DAV Hospital Transportation Network was started in Sioux Falls in 1984 and was picked up in 1987 as a DAV National Program. Currently we have twenty-eight (28) vans in South Dakota with locations: Aberdeen, Belle Fourche, Brookings, Burke, Fort Thompson, Huron, Lake Andes, Lemmon, Madison, McLaughlin, Milbank, Miller, Mitchell, Mobridge, Pierre, Rapid City, Redfield, Rosebud, Sioux City, Sioux Falls (3 vans), Sisseton, Sturgis, Yankton, Watertown, Webster and Winner.

### USD Army ROTC Recruiting, Training **Excels With Additional Benefits**

VERMILLION - Students at the University of South Dakota don't have to sign a contract to serve in the U.S. military to take advantage of the benefits of the university's Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC). This year, 20 students received partial housing scholarships by participating in the same training and classes as ROTC cadets. This housing scholarship is just one of the ways the university's Army ROTC program is stepping up its recruitment efforts to encourage new enrollees in the corps, said Lt. Col. Ross Nelson, professor of military science and commander of the program at USD.

"A lot of people are talking about the scholarship," Nelson said. "We're finding new people interested in it every

To qualify for the housing scholarship, students must agree to take part in physical fitness training three morn-ings a week, enroll in the onecredit courses Military Science 101 and 102, and participate in a field training lab on one Saturday of each month.

Nelson admits the intro-duction to ROTC program is challenging. "A few students are feeling a little overwhelmed," he said. "Apparently 6:15 in the morning is a little too early to get up and exercise for some of them. However, as students participate and they get over the

freshmen jitters, they find PT and other training events to be a fun and rewarding challenge.

On the other hand, those students who enjoy their year-long experience can apply to become a cadet contracted to serve in the Army after graduation and receive additional financial benefits if they qualify for an Army ROTC scholarship, Nelson said. Those cadets who don't qualify for scholarships can still contract with the Army and earn monthly stipends for living expenses, which are also available to scholarship students. After contracting as a cadet in the program, students participate in leadership and management training through ROTC while completing their college degree. A graduate is commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army either on Active Duty, Army Reserve or in the National Guard.

Recruitment efforts at USD are especially important this year in light of the U.S. Army's 2013 decision to close ROTC programs at USD and 12 other universities in 2015. Schools slated for closure were mostly in sparsely populated areas. After a campaign by the schools and elected officials in opposition to the closure, the Army canceled all closure plans and is now working with universities to try and improve overall commissioning numbers and conducting annual reviews of

programs to track progress. Nelson said one of the main evaluation benchmarks is the number of commis-sioned officers per year. "This year we had 11 commissioned officers, which is the highest number since 1998," he said. "We plan to commission 10 this year but I hope to be in the 15 range by fiscal years 2016 and 2017.

The U.S. Army informed schools that programs must commission an average of 15 officers per year to remain a viable ROTC host program. Programs can also produce fewer than 15 if they also commission officers with STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) degrees greater than the average for Army ROTC overall. Nelson said USD is just below the national average in this measure and he's working on increasing the numbers of STEM majors in the university's programs.

Other recruiting efforts include becoming more visible on campus and in the community. Among other activities, ROTC cadets help out on the field during all home football games, participate in the annual cleaning of the USD letters on the Vermillion bluffs and introduce USD students to the joys of rappelling and other military skills throughout the semester by inviting student organizations to train with cadets.

## Bee

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the potatoes in his garden just recently. He has owned the team he plowed with Sunday in Randolph for two years and was told they were worked previously in farm fields by an Amish family near Orchard.

A very handsome team of Belgium horses plowed under the watchful eye of Rex Cribs of Iowa, a

horses have been his hobby for several years. He has had the team of Belgiums for about ten years and uses them to give hay rides. He even has a pull behind mower and uses the horses for mowing. He has hauled wedding parties but his most unusual pull, and hardest, was for a funeral of young boy who loved horses.

retired chemical salesman, and the

Both Cribs and Wilcox agreed the soybean ground where they were plowing was packed very hard. Bargstadt told them corn had been piled on the field and semis had driven in and out a lot. But

Bargstadt still felt the soybean ground would be easier for the horses and mules than the alfalfa field which had been growing there for six or seven years. The two teams took about three swings across the field and called it quits.

The most unique tractor there was a 1939 steel-wheel Case CD, run by father and son, Scot and Zach Albrecht of Pierce. They managed to move their 35-hp gas tractor for one round but had difficulties with power.

It was the first opportunity the men had to work their restored Case and said it was just one of

several they have been working on. The father-son duo have an extensive collection of Case tractors the father owning  $\mathbf{23}$  and the son has 15. Parts aren't easy to come by and they troll junkyards and salvage lots for replacement parts because new parts aren't to be had. They have displayed their tractors at tractor shows and threshing bees.

An old-time tractor enthusiast, Jeff Thies of Randolph, came just because he loves watching the old tractors work. He remembered riding with his dad years ago when they were cultivating. He would

stand right beside his dad while dad was driving and it was his job to lower and lift the lever for the cultivator when they came to the end of the field. He was five years old and it was one of the best memories he had from growing up on the farm.

The field bordered the Randolph Golf Course so among the alfalfa sprigs and soybean stems laid several white golf balls and Sunday they were all promptly turned under the rich black ground while men of all ages, with wide smiles, played in the dirt.



week.

