



Decreasing Clouds

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Wagner Tops
Winner In
Volleyball

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Bon Homme County

Wind Farm Proposal Advances

Board Unanimously OK's First Reading

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF
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TYNDALL — The Bon Homme County Commission has taken the first step toward amending its zoning regulations to address wind farms.

Before a packed room, the five commissioners unanimously approved Tuesday the first reading for Article 17, an ordinance dealing with wind energy systems (WES). The commissioners repeated the 5-0 vote in scheduling the

second reading and final approval for the Nov. 3 regular meeting.

Approving both measures were commissioners Russell Jelsma, John Fathke, John Hauck, Mike Soukup and Duane Bachmann.

Bon Homme County currently doesn't have any zoning regulations for wind farms. The county contains part of the Beethoven wind farm near Tripp. Beethoven would be grandfathered under the current ordinance.

The wind ordinance, if finalized and

passed, would cover the proposed Prevailing Winds farm. However, the ordinance doesn't specifically address Prevailing Winds or other projects.

The main point of Tuesday night's hearing dealt with the section dealing with setbacks for wind farms. In the end, the commissioners voted to approve the ordinance as recommended by the county zoning board.

The ordinance calls for setbacks of

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RANDY DOCKENDORF/P&D

The Beethoven wind farm operates near Tripp. The project would be grandfathered under Bon Homme County's proposed zoning ordinance for wind energy. However, the new ordinance would cover the proposed Prevailing Winds wind farm.

GEAR UP Transition To Universities Starts, Amid New Optimism

BY BOB MERCER
State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE — It likely won't be known for years whether the state's public universities are the right new place for the state's GEAR UP program.

But they have purposes that overlap.

In select areas of South Dakota, GEAR UP has focused on helping students, primarily American Indians, learn about what is needed to seek education beyond high school.

The state Board of Regents, whose members govern the public universities, decided last October that a goal to reach by 2020 should be nearly doubling the numbers of university graduates who are American Indians.

The most recent annual number was 118. The regents' target is 220.

Staff members for the regents and state Department of Education sit down next week to discuss the direction to be taken with GEAR UP.

State Education Secretary Melody Schopp last month terminated the management contract held by Mid Central Education Cooperative at Platte. Schopp's move came after state audits found improper financial management.

Less than 24 hours after Schopp notified the cooperative's director, Dan Guericke, its business manager and assistant business manager, Scott and Nicole Westerhuis, and their four children were found dead in the wake of a fire that ravaged their rural Platte home.

State Attorney General Marty Jackley subsequently determined the causes of death initially appeared to be by shotgun for the mother and children, while Westerhuis allegedly took his own life with a shotgun after setting the house afire.

The GEAR UP contract now will be with the state university system. The state contract with Mid Central didn't require tracking of the numbers of students who participate in GEAR UP and went on to college or technical school.

Time will be spent Tuesday to assess which GEAR UP services should continue and whether new and innovative activities are warranted, according to Paul Turman. He is vice president for academic affairs in the university system.

Turman said many of the regents' current programs

Yankton County

The Road Toward Reality?



KELLY HERTZ/P&D

Toby Morris of Dougherty and Company addresses the Yankton County Commission Tuesday in regards to a state loan to help build an industrial-grade road to the site of a proposed industrial rail park at Napa Junction.

Commission Talks Napa Roadway, Engineering Agreement

BY ROB NIELSEN
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Progress on bringing an industrial rail park — and with it, a proposed Dakota Plains grain sorting facility — to Napa Junction surged further ahead Tuesday as the Yankton County Commission approved an engineering contract for an access road to the site.

The \$773,870 contract with Eisenbraun & Associates of Yankton would include designing and engineering Deer Blvd. between Highway 50 and Napa Junction into an industrial-quality road.

Dan Eisenbraun said his firm wants to get started immediately on designing the proposed roadway.

"In my opinion, we're already a couple of months behind where we'd like to be simply because of the huge volume of work that's necessary before we can get the bid letting," Eisenbraun told commissioners. "There's a lot of engineering that goes into putting a massive set of plans like this together and there's a lot of review time and we (need) time prior to bid letting for advertising and so forth. We're already at the point here it's going to be surely summer before we can get the bids so the sooner we get started on this, the better."

The commission voted unanimously to approve the contract.

The contract acceptance comes on the heels of an announcement that the county was the recipient a South Dakota Department of Transportation (SDDOT) loan of up to \$6 million to build the industrial grade road to the Napa site.

Toby Morris of Dougherty and Company was on hand Tuesday to talk about the process of securing funding for the rail park link, which wouldn't hold the county liable for payment.

"As we looked for options on how to fund the road into the industrial rail park at the Napa (Junction) site, there was a couple of things that we knew we had to keep in mind — we couldn't expose the county to any kind of liability, so what I did was I started working with various state departments to go with a non-conventional funding mechanism," Morris said.

He said that at first there wasn't a fitting funding program in place.

"Working with Secretary (Darin) Bergquist at the Department of Transportation for a couple of months, they didn't really have a program that

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Delmont Alters Town Government

From P&D Staff Reports

DELMONT — Voters in Delmont narrowly approved an alteration of its city government caused in the wake of last May's devastating tornado.

On Tuesday, citizens of the Douglas County town voted 33-30 to downsize the government from six aldermen to three trustees.

The vote total is unofficial, according to City Finance Officer Linda Laib.

Delmont's government had consisted of six council members and a mayor, with each councilman representing a particular ward.

However, in the wake of the F-2 Mother's Day tornado, the town has experienced a severe population decline — falling from 240 people to 170 — as several people have decided to move elsewhere rather than rebuild. The town had already decided to eliminate one ward, no matter what happened in Tuesday's vote.

Under the new structure, the council will consist of three trustees who can be elected from anywhere within the city limits.

It's estimated the change will save from \$6,000-\$8,000 annually.

SD Sheriff's Association Keeps Up With Legislation

BY ALISSA WOOCKMAN
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For Staci Ackerman, keeping county sheriffs up to date on legislation is her job, but improving local government is her goal.

Ackerman, executive director of the South Dakota Sheriff's Association (SDSA), paid a visit to the Yankton Rotary Club meeting Tuesday to communicate her overview of the past year with the public.

"This association is a great way for sheriffs to get together and visit

with one another to try and solve some of the common problems," Ackerman said. "The biggest thing I want to let the public know is that your sheriffs are all engaged."

Ackerman has been with the organization since 2007 and has been a certified law enforcement officer in the state since 1993. This experience served her well in her current position which involves attending regular legislative sessions to help sheriffs understand and impact the bills traveling through state government.

Ackerman said that, in her travels, she has learned that not all agencies cooperate at the scale of South Dakota.

"I am very proud to say that we are very small in number, rural in nature and work well together," she said.

As a lobbyist for her organization, Ackerman spends the winter in Pierre monitoring bills in legislative session that could have an impact on law enforcement.

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