

Groundbreaking Marks Start Of 'Virtual Broadband Highway'

BY DAVID LIAS
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VERMILLION — No visible construction will follow a groundbreaking ceremony held at Vermillion High School Thursday.

Workers won't begin laying the foundation for a new addition to the school building, or an expansion of the high school's outdoor track.

The ceremony marks the beginning of the groundwork for the ultimate building of what Vermillion Mayor Jack Powell describes as an invisible virtual broadband highway.

SDN Communications of Sioux Falls broke ground Thursday at VHS on Project Connect South Dakota, a \$25 million effort that will bring increased broadband access to 305 hospitals, schools, government facilities and public safety offices in more than 75 South Dakota communities.

Thursday's celebratory event marks the start of work in Vermillion, the second community to benefit from the construction. SDN started work in Rapid City last month.

The entire project will add 359 miles of new fiber-optic cable and will be completed by December 2012. Beyond Vermillion and Rapid City, SDN will begin fiber construction in Watertown yet this year.

"The broadband connection is an important teaching tool. In a world that has become smaller and flatter, connectivity to other



DAVID LIAS/VERMILLION PLAIN TALK

Vermillion Mayor Jack Powell, Jim Edman, director of the South Dakota Bureau of Information and Telecommunications, Mark Shlanta, chief executive officer of SDN Communications, and Mark Froke, Vermillion superintendent of schools, toss shovelful of dirt into the air during a groundbreaking at Vermillion High School Thursday. The ceremony marked the start of construction in Vermillion by SDN Communication on Project Connect South Dakota.

schools and to the World Wide Web prepares our students for anything," Superintendent Mark Froke said at Thursday's ceremony. "Maybe most importantly, it prepares our community so that we can have an economy that can compete and allow our young people to remain here."

SDN was selected in December 2009 to receive a \$20 million grant as part of the Department of Commerce's Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP). The company will contribute an additional \$5 million to the project.

SDN was likely the first company in the nation to begin construction on the BTOP initiative. SDN's application was one of the nation's first 18 funded, making it among the top 1 percent of the telecom companies receiving an award.

"I think it's appropriate that we're here at Vermillion High School, with the campus of USD being down the street.

Bandwidth and connectivity at USD rivals that of any other campus across the country," said Jim Edman, director of the South

Dakota Bureau of Information and Telecommunications.

He noted that use of broadband and the Internet across the state and across the world "has just exploded" over the past few years, and that services such as distance learning, research, and business use of the Internet require high-speed broadband access.

"For South Dakota to be able to compete in the 21st century for our global markets and the economies that are coming, we have to have high speed broadband access, not just in our larger metropolitan areas, but equally, and more importantly, in our smaller, more rural communities across South Dakota," Edman said.

Powell noted that describing the benefits of the virtual broadband highway being constructed by SDN can be difficult "because it is invisible to us. It all goes underground. It is also mysterious because it is hard for many of us to imagine that what we type on a screen, what we say on a cell phone, what we shoot on a camera — all of this can be instantly condensed down to bits and bytes and then delivered through a fiber line the thickness of a human hair in a split second to virtually anywhere in the world."

"In Vermillion, we'll be touching the Clay County Courthouse, the Vermillion High School, some of the other public schools in town, along with Sanford Vermillion Hospital," Mark Shlanta, chief executive officer of

SDN Communications, said before Thursday's ceremony. "I believe there are a few other sites in Vermillion we'll be touching as well. We have a presence already at the University of South Dakota, and now we're looking at health care, public safety, state and federal government facilities — those are types of facilities we'll be touching, and those will be the buildings in Vermillion we'll be connecting with this project."

SDN Communications, he said, offers services designed to serve large enterprises, such as government entities, businesses and health care facilities, rather than individual homes.

"We are owned by the independent phone companies in the state of South Dakota, so we started as a way to aggregate some advance services for the phone companies to offer in their markets, and we've begun to take those services to larger enterprises and state government over the last 12 to 15 years," Shlanta said.

SDN Communications is currently hard at work to get as much fiber buried underground as possible before winter sets in.

"Over the course of the winter, the connections that we're placing right now will be 'lit.' Many of those facilities will go into service over the course of the spring of next year, and really be into service for up to 20 years into the future providing high-speed connectivity," he said.

Even though SDN's services

are designed with government institutions and larger businesses in mind, people throughout the state, Shlanta said, will be impacted positively by the improvements that are in store.

"Citizens across South Dakota will be the beneficiaries as Project Connect South Dakota brings better service to many of the entities state residents regularly rely on," he said.

From a public safety standpoint, the project will, for example, allow law enforcement agencies across the state to one day arraign prisoners via a video link.

"That will free up a deputy's time. As time goes on, we'll be able to have more of those types of services available, freeing up county resources and hopefully taking a bit of stress off of county budgets," Shlanta said. "I think another application we'll be able to see will be a greater distribution of telemedicine resources across the state, allowing practitioners in some of the smallest markets in our state access to on-demand video connections with some of the specialists in some of the state's larger population centers."

"These advanced technologies will not only improve services to taxpayers at all levels of local government," Powell said. "It will also deliver a bigger broadband backbone to Vermillion, providing a new economic attraction to businesses interested in locating here."

YANKTON COURTS

CASES DISPOSED 8/20/2010-8/26/2010

Rebecca M. Ferris, 1003 Memory Lane, #4, Yankton: No drivers license, \$120

Eric James Chesley, 902 E. 15th St., #5, Yankton: Careless driving, \$120

Jerardo Lopez, Irene: Fishing without license-non resident, \$170
Jeremy Alan Bagstad, 127 Mulligan Dr., Yankton: Fail to maintain financial responsibility, \$130; renewal registration during assigned month, \$112

Michael M. Thomas, 105 Richards, Yankton: Seat belt violation, \$25

Michael John Byrkeland, 2810 Lakeview Dr., Yankton: Seat belt violation, \$120

Todd M. Bottolfsen, Hartington, Neb.: Possession of alcohol by minor, \$120

Donald Dean Olson, Vermillion: Speeding other roadways, \$142

Drew A. Heymen, Boyden, Iowa: Speeding on state highway, \$85

Tyler John Keegan, 774 Rolling Hills Dr., Yankton: Careless driving, \$152

Preston Ferguson, Lake Charles, La.: Speeding other roadways, \$100

Christopher Roubideaux, 1106 Redmond St., Yankton: Municipal speeding, \$99

Melissa Jo Castillo, Vermillion: Speeding other roadways, \$122

Kermit R. Graber, Minneapolis, Minn.: Speeding other roadways, \$167

Megan Leigh Walker, 802 W. City Limits, #20, Yankton: Open alcoholic bev container accessible in vehicle, \$120

Marissa Page Brownell, Rapid City: Renewal registration during assigned month, \$117

Joshua Koch, 220 1/2 Capital St., Apt. B, Yankton: Municipal speeding, \$99

Michael Stevens, Springfield: Seat belt violation, \$25

Dzenana Ibrisevic, Sioux Falls: Speeding on state highway, \$105

Brandon K. Culp, 3210 W. 11th St., Yankton: Exhibition driving, \$117

Amanda Kay Novak, 2400 Douglas Ave., #23, Yankton: Speeding other roadways, \$125

Zoltan Jeremy Spak, 112 W. 6th St., Yankton: Speeding other roadways, \$125

Charles Joseph Stibral, 31110 Walleye Dr., Yankton: Speeding other roadways, \$105

Kaolin Kelly Nelson, Beresford: Seat belt violation, \$25

Scott P. Kneiff 1st., Papillion,

Neb.: Speeding on state highway, \$85

Shari Lynn Porth, Sioux Falls: Speeding on state highway, \$125

Mark G. Seidl, Sleepy Eye, Minn.: Overweight on axle, \$170

Rebecca Joann Heier, Mission Hill: Speeding other roadways, \$105

Nicole R. Pine, 814 Grandview Cir., Yankton: Municipal speeding, \$99

Summer Ann Johnson, 616 1/2 Locust, Yankton: Pet violations-no license dog/cat, \$70; pet violations-animal at large dog/cat, \$70

Lori Koehler, Pierce, Neb.: Speeding other roadways, \$105

Nathaniel K. Brandt, Exeter, Neb.: Violations of safety requirements, \$170

David G. Sternhagen, 30455 438th Ave., Yankton: Overweight on axle, \$214

Delano J. Pinney III, Hinton, Iowa: Overweight on axle, \$701

Arnold D. Myers, Sioux City, Iowa: Overweight on axle, \$219

Russell Dean Buchanan, Irene: Overweight on axle, \$228

Jacob Neufeld, Winkler, Manitoba, Canada: Fail to stop at weigh station, \$170

William J. Christopher, Greenup, Ill.: Commercial vehicle plates, \$170

Thomas Lee Glidden, Bingham Lake, Minn.: Log book/other violations, \$170

Lucas L. Delange, Corsica: Overweight on axle, \$203; expired annual inspection, \$170

Jeffrey E. Albrecht, De Smet: Overweight on axle, \$1,290.50

Annette L. Ruess, 1300 W. 8th St., #21, Yankton: Seat belt violation, \$25

Kim K. Halverson, Hartford: Speeding other roadways, \$125; renewal registration during assigned

month, \$120

Brandon I. Peterson, Oakland, Neb.: Insufficient number personal flotation device, \$110

Tyler Lydell Hanson, 30945 433rd Ave., Yankton: Seat belt violation, \$25

Desmond Miller, Parker: Tow trailer without safety chains, \$120

Douglas E. Sogn, Edgemont: Throw match or burning object from vehicle, \$120

Matthew Alan Munkvold, Lesterville: Overweight on axle, \$206

Robert Allen Parizek, 411 Douglas Ave., Yankton: Impersonation to deceive law enforcement officer, \$84 and 10 days in jail

Michael Gurney, 2000 John St., Yankton: Speeding other roadways, \$102

Alyssa M. Tucker, Huron: Speeding other roadways, \$125

Jennifer Arens, 4408 Broadway, Yankton: Careless driving, \$120

Robert J. Hahn, 812 Picotte St., Yankton: Municipal speeding, \$119

Matthew J. Ryken, 512 Mulberry, Yankton: Municipal speeding, \$99

Rochelle Jonas Deete, South Sioux City, Neb.: Speeding other roadways, \$85

Troy Brown, 116 Gregg St., Yankton: Theft by insufficient funds check, \$167

Jacob Scott Law, Sioux Falls: Seat belt violation, \$25

Roger Reed Saylor, Jr.,

Jefferson: Speeding on state highway, \$102

Jerry Lee Woodard, 1202 Whiting St., Yankton: Pet violations-vicious animal, \$110; pet violations-animal at large dog/cat, \$70

Robert James LeClaire, Paynesville, Minn.: Overweight on axle, \$172

Casey Shaw, Bakersfield, Calif.: Speeding other roadways, \$105

Joseph Michael Reiser, Vermillion: Driving to left on approach to intersection, \$120

Janelle Morse Kribell, Irene:

Municipal speeding, \$99

Kathryn Elizabeth Smith, 2500 Douglas, #7, Yankton: Speeding on state highway, \$102

Michael Eldaan Klose, Vermillion: Speeding other roadways, \$85

Richard Hauck, Utica: Seat belt violation, \$25

Gene Westenberg, Ederton, Minn.: Seat belt violation, \$25

Douglas Duayne Holland, Watertown: Seat belt violation, \$25

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