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**INSIDE TODAY**

# The Roots Of Success

## Avon High School Teacher Honored With Teacher Of The Year Award

BY DEREK BARTOS  
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AVON — For many teachers, the inspiration for their careers can be traced back to a specific time, place or series of events.

For Avon High School's Paul Kuhlman, those roots could be found under a dandelion.

Roughly 25 years ago, Kuhlman was a student at North Dakota State and was looking into a career in education. As a

requirement for one of his classes, he went to teach a sample lesson at a middle school.

"I went out and dug up this dandelion and did a lesson about how long their tap-roots are," he said. "All the students were so excited, and it really got me hooked on teaching. It was a real blessing."

Kuhlman turned that excitement into a successful career, which has included



**Kuhlman**

the last 21 years as a science and math teacher at Avon High School.

He was recognized as the South Dakota Teacher of the Year in 2009 and received the 2011 Presidential Award for Excellence in Science Teaching. He has served as a consultant for the South Dakota Department of Education and the University of South Dakota's School of Education.

Kuhlman created the Avon Science Fair, which has given Avon students the opportunity to compete in events all around the United States. He also has engaged teachers from other disciplines

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# 'An Incredible Chief'

## Friends Remember And Praise Former Yankton Fire Chief

BY NATHAN JOHNSON  
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Pat Smith was a fire chief that earned the respect, as well as the friendship, of the firefighters under his leadership during a 23-year tenure with the City of Yankton, according to those who knew him.

Smith, 79, of Yankton died Wednesday at Avera Sister James Care Center, Yankton.

From February 1973 to December 1996, Smith served as Yankton's fire chief.

"Pat was an incredible chief," said Steve "Chop" Johnson, who was a member of the fire department from 1974 to 2011. "Everybody had a great amount of respect for him. We listened to him. We also had a great time."

Johnson will transport Smith to the cemetery today (Saturday) on the Yankton Fire Department's Engine Two.

"It's an honor for me to be able to do that," he said.

Larry Lanning was a member of the fire department from the early 1960s to the early 1990s and knew Smith for more than 50 years. During Smith's bout with cancer, he visited him almost every day.

"I know he would have done the same for me. We had a strong bond," Lanning said. "Pat and I worked really close while we were involved with the department. I was an officer. We used to get in real arguments, but we'd always 'kiss and make up' and come to neutral grounds on whatever the issue was."

Lanning said that Smith brought about a lot of changes during his tenure.

In 1976, he oversaw the construction of Fire Station No. 1 at Fifth Street and Douglas Avenue.

"Pat also laid the foundation for what we call Station No. 2," added Deputy Fire Chief Larry Nickles, who served as a volunteer under Smith and was eventually hired by him as assistant chief fire marshal. "That's how long we worked on that (station that was completed at 23rd Street and Douglas Avenue in 2010). He started on that in the 1980s. He worked on studies about why the new station was needed and did presentations."

Under Smith, the fire department purchased several trucks, as well.

"Probably the most significant was the 102-foot platform ladder truck," Nickles stated. "We'd had a bunch of fires in the 1980s. The truck we had was a 1961 75-foot aerial stick. It was inadequate, and we'd have to call Vermillion for help because our ladder couldn't handle some of the buildings. Pat went to work and convinced the city we needed to replace it. In 1989, he got us the ladder truck we have now. It hadn't been budgeted for at the time, but they came up with \$431,000 to buy it."

Firefighters also recall Smith's right-hand man, who lived in the fire station.



COURTESY PHOTO

Pat Smith, who served as the Yankton fire chief from 1973 to 1996, is seen here with his right-hand man, Hoser. The fire department mascot lived at the station, where he was under Smith's care for more than a decade. Firefighters who served under Smith say he was a friend as well as a fire chief.

## Hillcrest Vandalism Investigated

BY NATHAN JOHNSON  
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Suspects are being sought in connection with vandalism that took place last weekend at the Hillcrest Golf Course in Yankton.

According to Yankton Police Lt. Todd Brandt, thousands of dollars worth of damage was done to the course and several golf carts.

"There was a large amount of damage done to the course with golf carts, which were taken from the golf cart shed at the course," he said. "Greens and fairways

were ripped up by erratic driving."

The incident was reported at 7 a.m. Sunday.

Police are seeking individuals who may have any information about the crime, Brandt said.

The police department can be reached at (605) 668-5210, or information can be given anonymously by calling Crime Stoppers at (605) 665-4440.

You can follow Nathan Johnson on Twitter at [twitter.com/AnInlandVoyage](https://twitter.com/AnInlandVoyage). Discuss this story at [www.yankton.net/](http://www.yankton.net/).

# S.D. Teacher Evaluation Processes May Change

## Potential Changes In Rules Give Districts Eval. Power

BY BOB MERCER  
State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE — A proposed change in state rules would allow South Dakota school districts to use their own processes for evaluating teachers' performances, rather than following the standard model already established by the state Board of Education.

Under the plan, a school district's system would need to align with the Danielson framework that was previously adopted by the state board and would need to include data on student growth as a significant factor. Those requirements would take effect for the 2014-15 school year.

The proposed rules call for each teacher who is evaluated to receive a professional practice rating and a student growth rating. Those will be combined into one effectiveness rating: Below-expectations; meets-expectations; or above-expectations.

As part of the changes, the state board intends to create a new, separate article in its rules specifically for teacher performance standards and evaluations. Those currently are covered in rules that deal primarily with teacher conduct.

School districts seeking flexibility in their evaluation processes would need to seek permission from the state Department of Education by Jan. 31 prior to the school year for which the alternative evaluation model is sought. The department would face an April 1 deadline to decide.

The board plans a public hearing Oct. 1 on the changes. The hearing is at Cedar Shore Resort at Oa-coma starting at 3:30 p.m. Central. The board is meeting there as part of the annual statewide summit on Indian education.

Board president Don Kirkegaard of Sturgis said Friday he expects some school districts will adapt the state template or a modification of it, while others will keep what they're already using.

The Legislature adopted a state law in 2010 requiring teacher evaluations. Under the law, teachers in their first, second and third years after certification must be evaluated annually. Starting with year four, they must be evaluated every other year.

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# Viborg Theatre Enjoys Show Of Support

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF  
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VIBORG — For supporters of Viborg's Lund Theatre, the show must go on.

Faced with the closure of their movie theater, area residents have rallied to keep the cinema alive. A community theater board was formed, raising \$150,000 in four months to purchase the theater and to fund the needed improvements.

"It's critical to Viborg. It means a lot to everybody in the community and surrounding area," said Glenn Petersen, president of the Historic Lund Theatre Association.

The theater seats about 240. Petersen said. A theater has existed in Viborg since 1911, with the cinema at its current

location since 1915.

The century-old movie theater nearly went out of business earlier this year. Owners Ken and Susan Kessler planned to close the theater, citing their desire to retire and the increasingly rising expenses of running a small-town theater.

For the Kesslers, the final straw came when they faced the need to purchase a digital projector for the new movies. The projectors carried a price tag of around \$75,000 to \$80,000.

"The Kesslers felt they couldn't invest that much money into it. They decided just to close (the theater)," said Petersen, also a member of the town's economic

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