

# The Press & Dakotan

THE DAKOTAS' OLDEST NEWSPAPER | FOUNDED 1861

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## OPINION

# The 'Big Idea': Now What Happens?

So, now what happens?

That is the most pertinent question left on Onward Yankton's "Next Big Idea" campaign. It's part of an evolutionary questioning process that started with "What's Onward Yankton?" and progressed from there. And it's the one that tells us how much "onward" there is in this whole effort.

On Monday, this campaign gave us an answer when it announced the winner of its "Big Idea" contest. The idea, submitted by Jacob Fokken, calls for turning Yankton into an entrepreneurial hub that would help facilitate new businesses and would work with both Mount Marty College and the University of South Dakota to make these things happen.

That's a great answer, one filled with a lot of promise and, perhaps, even some hope.

Which leads us to the question at the top of this piece.

And there has to be an answer — and a good one, at that.

Maybe it's a tad hyperbolic to say this, but there is some merit in it: If Yankton fails to follow through with this "Big Idea," we're doomed.

That's not to say that the town will vanish into the dust or anything like that.

But a lot of energy and attention have been poured into the Onward Yankton campaign, and it has generated a ton of interest and enthusiasm. It also generated a lot of ideas: More than 500 submissions came in. So, if Yankton doesn't follow through on this, there is no good reason to expect that Yankton will ever move "onward."

Fortunately, it appears there is a concerted effort to make this idea happen. When Onward Yankton officials talk about meeting with "stakeholders," they are referring to city officials, county officials and businesses that are needed to make the "Big Idea" happen. So there is some planning taking place to lay the groundwork for Fokken's proposal.

And a lot of people in Yankton can help, too. Getting start-up businesses going — or "incubated" — means there will be a need for space. There are a lot of nooks and crannies around that could serve in that capacity. Building a directory of potential sites where small businesses that don't really require foot traffic could set up shop would be another good step in that department.

So, what happens next? Public and private interests must come together and embrace this vision. They must cultivate the garden where these seeds could be planted and where they may grow.

What must happen next is that Yankton must act. It has a vision — its big idea — and it apparently has the will. It's time for action. It's time to begin.

kmh

## ABOUT THIS PAGE

The View page provides a forum for open discussion of issues and interests affecting our readers. Initialed editorials represent the opinion of the writer, but not necessarily that of the **PRESS & DAKOTAN**. Bylined columns represent the view of the author. We welcome letters on current topics. Questions regarding the Views page should be directed to Kelly Hertz at kelly.hertz@yankton.net/.

## IN HISTORY

### By The Associated Press

Today is Wednesday, September 23, the 266th day of 2015. There are 99 days left in the year. Autumn arrives at 4:21 a.m. Eastern time.

**Today's Highlight in History:** On September 23, 1952, in what became known as the "Checkers" speech, Sen. Richard M. Nixon, R-Calif., salvaged his vice-presidential nomination by appearing live on television to refute allegations of improper campaign fundraising.

**On this date:** In 1779, during the Revolutionary War, the American warship Bon Homme Richard, commanded by John Paul Jones, defeated the HMS Serapis in battle off Yorkshire, England; however, the seriously damaged Bon Homme Richard sank two days later.

In 1780, British spy John Andre was captured along with papers revealing Benedict Arnold's plot to surrender West Point to the British.

In 1806, the Lewis and Clark expedition returned to St. Louis more than two years after setting out for the Pacific Northwest.

In 1846, Neptune was identified as a planet by German astronomer Johann Gottfried Galle.)

In 1908, an apparent baserunning error by Fred Merkle of the New York Giants cost his team a victory against the Chicago Cubs and left the game tied 1-1. The Cubs won a rematch and with it, the National League pennant.

In 1939, Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, died in London at age 83.

In 1955, a jury in Sumner, Mississippi, acquitted two white men, Roy Bryant and J.W. Milam, of murdering black teenager Emmett Till. (The two men later admitted to the crime in an interview with Look magazine.)

In 1957, nine black students who'd entered Little Rock Central High School in Arkansas were forced to withdraw because of a white mob outside.

In 1962, New York's Philharmonic Hall (later renamed Avery Fisher Hall) formally opened as the first unit of the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. "The Jetsons," an animated cartoon series about a Space Age family, premiered as the ABC television network's first program in color.

In 1973, former Argentine president Juan Peron won a landslide election victory that returned him to power; his wife, Isabel, was elected vice president.

In 1987, Sen. Joseph Biden, D-Del., withdrew from the Democratic presidential race following questions about his use of borrowed quotations and the portrayal of his academic record.

In 1999, the Mars Climate Orbiter apparently burned up as it attempted to go into orbit around the Red Planet.

**Ten years ago:** Hurricane Rita, down

to Category 3, steamed toward refinery towns along the Texas-Louisiana coast, creating havoc even before it arrived; levee breaks caused new flooding in New Orleans, and 23 people were killed when a bus carrying nursing-home evacuees caught fire in Texas. Embattled FDA Commissioner Lester Crawford abruptly resigned. Puerto Rican nationalist Filiberto Ojeda Rios, wanted in a 1983 robbery of a Connecticut armored truck, died during a gunbattle with FBI agents in Puerto Rico.

**Five years ago:** The U.S. delegation walked out of a U.N. speech by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad after he said some in the world had speculated that the U.S. staged the September 11, 2001 attacks in an attempt to assure Israel's survival. Congressional Republicans unveiled their "Pledge to America," a strongly worded manifesto promising to return government to the people. Teresa Lewis, 41, was executed by the state of Virginia for arranging the killings of her husband and stepson to collect on a \$250,000 insurance policy. The children's show "Sesame Street" announced it wouldn't televise a taped segment in which the Muppet character Elmo sang with bustier-clad pop star Katy Perry.

One year ago: In the first international test for his climate-change strategy, President Barack Obama pressed world leaders at the United Nations to follow the United States' lead on the issue. The U.S. struck the al-Qaida-linked Khurasan group with Tomahawk missiles and other ordnance near Aleppo in northwestern Syria based on fears it was planning terrorist attacks on the U.S. and Europe. A man wearing his work uniform opened fire inside a UPS sorting facility in Birmingham, Alabama, a day after he was fired from the company, killing two supervisors before committing suicide.

**Today's Birthdays:** Singer Julio Iglesias is 72. Actor Paul Petersen (TV: "The Donna Reed Show") is 70. Actress-singer Mary Kay Place is 68. Rock star Bruce Springsteen is 66. Rock musician Leon Taylor (The Ventures) is 60. Actress Rosalind Rao is 58. Gaffer Larry Mize is 57. Actor Jason Alexander is 56. Actor Chi McBride is 54. Country musician Don Herron (BR549) is 53. Actor Erik Todd Dellums is 51. Actress LisaRaye is 49. Singer Ani (AH-nee) DiFranco is 45. Rock singer Sarah Bettens (K's Choice) is 43. Recording executive Jermaine Dupri is 43. Actor Kip Pardue is 39. Actor Anthony Mackie is 37. Pop singer Erik-Michael Estrada (TV: "Making the Band") is 36. Actress Aubrey Dollar is 35. Tennis player Melanie Oudin is 24.

**Thought for Today:** "I cannot endure to waste anything as precious as autumn sunshine by staying in the house." — Nathaniel Hawthorne, American author (1804-1864).

## FROM THE BIBLE

*When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. Matthew 27:57.*  
Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### RBD Thanks!

### The 2015 Riverboat Days Board of Directors

We would like to thank everyone who took part in making this year's Riverboat Days a success!

For all those, who helped to get the park set-up and torn

down, organized events, worked at a booth, volunteered and all who came down to Riverside Park — Thank you!

We also want to thank all of our sponsors. We are grateful to live in a community where we don't have to look far to find this kind of support.

See you Aug. 19-21, 2016!

STAR TRIBUNE OgileCartoons.com

sdak



## Pierre Report

# Road Improvement Rules Discussed

BY REP. JEAN HUNHOFF

R-District 18 (Yankton)

Monday, the Interim Rules Committee met with the first agenda item being the rules to provide guidance to local public agencies for submission of a county highway and bridge improvement plan. Rules also addressed the application process, time lines, guidelines and criteria that will be used to award and distribute funds from the newly created Bridge Improvement Grant Fund.

I had attended the first of the public forums hosted by the Yankton County Commission to discuss the proposed property tax increase that is going to be voted on next week specific for road and bridge funding for the county. There were questions raised at that forum and others regarding the rules pertaining to the requirements in Senate Bill 1 for accessing grant funds. This article will focus on what was approved by the Rules Committee.

The Department of Transportation had formed a transportation advisory committee last year that was composed of representatives from county, township, city, planning districts, highway superintendents, federal highway and department staff to begin discussion on how needs could be met. A subcommittee from this group was formed after passage of the legislation to develop guidance documents for counties to address the components needed to implement the program. The guidance documents are available to counties.

From the onset, members of the committee recognized that road needs differed between West and East River. West River roads are primarily gravel and not as numerous but certainly pose challenges insofar as having realistic rerouting options when roads can no longer be used or need repair work. One thing to note that, prior to passage of the bill, the soonest a bridge could be placed for replacement on the current funding priority was 2026.

To be eligible to apply to the department (DOT) to receive a grant from the bridge improvement grant fund, a county shall submit to the department a county highway and bridge improvement plan and annual updates. There must be a written certification of adoption of the plan subscribed by the chairperson of the commission. The improvement plan shall include an inventory of all roads that are part of the county highway system and all secondary roads within the county. Specifics include:

- \* roadway classification,
- \* average daily traffic (if available),
- \* surface type (dirt, gravel, bituminous or concrete) and surface width of each road,
- \* surface thickness and base thickness of each road (if available),
- \* year each road was constructed, last year improved and type of improvement if information is available,
- \* shoulder type and width of each road if info available,
- \* and location and size of any culverts in each road if info available.

The plan shall include a county map showing the location of each bridge and specifics about each bridge. A map shall also be included which show the location of all public roads within the county. The plan shall include a statement identifying the annual sources of revenue available to the county for highway and bridge work and the projected revenue amounts from each source for the next five years.

The plan includes a list of projects proposed to be undertaken by the county over the next five years from the date of the plan or plan update. A bridge project shall appear on the project list to be eligible for the bridge improvement grant. Specific description of the project along with project cost is also to be included. The plan must also include the five-year project list from the previous year's county highway and bridge improvement plan with a brief description of the status of the projects.

The plan for highway and bridge improvement must be submitted to the Secretary of Department of Transportation (DOT) before Dec. 16, 2015, before the improvement applications are due. A county shall submit a county highway and bridge improvement plan before Oct. 15 of each subsequent year. The county shall update the highway and bridge improvement plan annually and submit to the secretary of DOT by Oct. 15 of each year.

If the department rejects the plan or update, it will advise the county in writing of the necessary revision needed to comply with those requirements. Upon receipt of the plan, the department shall review for compliance and, if it's deemed compliant, will send written notification to the county of acceptance of the plan.

Once the plan has been accepted, the county is eligible to apply for the grant funds.

There is an emergency declaration allowance if a bridge is damaged or destroyed and not on the approved plan; the county may request an emergency. The request would be for a grant and can be approved or denied by the Transportation Commission.

Bridge improvement rules are as follows:



J. Hunhoff

Any local public agency (LPA) authorized by statute to own, maintain and govern the use of a bridge is eligible to apply to the department and receive a Bridge Improvement Grant (BIG). The county must have an approved county highway and bridge improvement plan. The Transportation Commission shall consider applications annually. Any application shall be filed

by the close of business on Jan. 31, 2016, and by Jan. 2, of each subsequent year. The commission shall consider and act upon the applications by April 30 of each year.

Criteria to be used will be based on an engineering analysis. For preservation work or any engineering study considered necessary by the department, the commission may use the department's recommendation as criteria for award. For bridge rehabilitation or replacement, the department shall use an objective scoring procedure as developed by the department. The scoring (60 percent) is based on bridge condition. Bridge condition factors will include whether the bridge is posted for load capacity, the sufficiency rating, the substructure condition, the box culvert condition, whether the bridge is fracture critical or scour critical (high water flows) and if it is an emergency.

The user impact (20 percent) factors include the amount of traffic the bridge carries and the detour length needed if the bridge is closed.

The local participation factors (20 percent) include points for the amount of wheel tax and whether the project plans are complete and ready to be let to bids.

The department may add bonus points for any increase in local financial obligations beyond the program requirements. The department may adjust the points assigned to each factor annually to achieve a fair and balanced system so that one demographic area of the state does not receive a disproportionate share of the grant funds.

The scoring is based on 100-point system. The bridges receiving the most points will receive the department's recommendation approval.

The department shall enter into a financial agreement with the LPA that details eligible expenses for any BIG awarded under this chapter. The department is responsible for the administrative funds of creating, process and reviewing of the BIG applications, compliance with the rules and disbursement of BIG funds. Only the commission has the authority to approve a BIG project application.

For rehabilitation or replacement of bridge projects the project shall be let to bids within four years from the date of commission approval of the project. The department may grant time extensions. All extensions considered need to be made prior to the four-year expiration date. The LPA will be responsible for reporting on the BIG project to the Department.

The commission may consider any of the following to be a default under the conditions of a local BIG:

- \* if the LPA knowingly makes any material false statement or report in the application;
- \* failure to adhere to the conditions of the BIG;
- \* failure of the LPA to provide the department access to documents, reports or other information required by this chapter;
- \* or if funds are not used for the bridge specified in the application.

If the LPA defaults, written notice will be given to the LPA and the LPA shall repay, within 45 days of the receipt of the written notice, all funds disbursed for the BIG and all costs incurred by the department for that project.

The Rules Committee reviewed all written comments submitted to the department. Proponents present were the department. No opponents presented. The rules are specific, except for the time frame that the plans will be approved and counties notified.

The department responded that their subcommittee struggled with this inclusion of time frame. The concern is that, with this first go-round for applications, many will be coming in and they want to make sure that they are in compliance. With that said, they acknowledge that efficiency in reviewing the applications is expected so that the turnaround time can as short as possible.

The other discussion point was around the scoring of the criteria in relation to local participation. More points will be received if there is greater local participation. The example is if there is only a wheel tax in place, they receive points; however, if there is both a wheel tax and a county tax for roads, that county will get bonus points.

The rules go into effect in 20 days. This is an opportunity for counties to access funds for roads and bridges in a partnership with the state.

The hearing