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SIOUX FALLS, SOUTH DAKOTA

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State offers free testing for wells near polluter

BY LEE WILLIAMS
Argus Leader

DENR confident contamination limited to company

Watertown residents worried that their private wells may have been contaminated by a toxic chemical dumped by a local company can have the water tested free, the state Department of Environment and Natural Resources said Tuesday.

In a news release issued late Tuesday afternoon, DENR Secretary Steve Pirner said tests conducted near the CoEv Magnetics Inc. plant, where water containing the toxic chemical

methyl ethyl ketone (MEK) was illegally dumped, showed the contamination had not spread beyond the property.

"All follow-up sampling showed negative results, and DENR is confident the MEK never left the site," Pirner said. "However, if people are concerned about their private wells, we invite them to call us."

He also said the DENR will ask CoEv to reimburse the

To test wells

To request a test of a private well, call Jay Cofer at the regional DENR office in Watertown, 605-882-5111.

state for the sampling costs.

Watertown residents who live near CoEv, on the city's west side, became concerned about the safety of their wells after an *Argus*

Leader story Sunday revealed that the electronics manufacturer had been dumping wastewater containing MEK out the back door of its plant for three years.

MEK is an extremely flammable liquid that can cause brain damage and could pose reproductive risks.

Dick Strichertz, vice president of a local lake association that's less than a mile downhill from CoEv, was pleased

with the state's decision.

"I like the idea," he said. "We were gonna ask for that from CoEv. I think they should pay. We didn't have a thing to do with it. It's kind of like victim's assistance."

Strichertz, who lives along Lake Pelican, had already obtained several well-testing kits.

Tuesday morning, DENR staff member Jay Cofer, a natural resource scientist based in Watertown, was telling residents they'd be required to pay for their own well testing.



CoEv Magnetics Inc. in Watertown manufactures electronics.

"The state lab is not set up to test for MEK," Cofer said then. "Generally we use private labs."

But in the written statement issued hours later, See **COEV**, page 8A



Mike Rounds Jim Abbott

Advocates envision city as a canvas for art



CHRISTOPHER GANNON / ARGUS LEADER

Stoneworker Porter Williams looks over an artist's rendering of a mosaic that will be built into this quartzite wall along Indian Mound Drive in Sherman Park. The mosaic depicts a Native American on horseback chasing a group of buffalo. The project will add to the artwork that enhances public places around Sioux Falls.

Visual Arts Commission tries to beautify Sioux Falls, find money

BY JENNIFER SANDERSON
Argus Leader

They pierced the wall with pickaxes and sledgehammers, some ripping at the concrete with their hands.

And when the people of East Berlin had obliterated the symbol of a fractured nation, they put down their tools of destruction and armed themselves with paintbrushes.

"I'd been there in high school, and everything was the color of that concrete," recalls Brad Heegel, who recently took a trip to unified Germany. "This time, I couldn't put my finger on what was different. And then it hit me: It was the color. The homes there are yellow, hot pink, iridescent green. I realized

then how important color is in affecting your entire being. Beyond that, how completely dependent we are, in many ways, on our environment."

As chairman of the mayor's Visual Arts Commission, Heegel wants to bring that sense of color to Sioux Falls. The City Council voted to establish the advisory board, which will reach its two-year mark in August, following a series of public arts projects that mired residents and City Hall employees in late-night debates:

■ Should the Statue of David be returned, in its nude glory, to Fawick Park after a petroleum spill cleanup?

See **VISUAL ARTS**, page 9A



Brad Heegel

Maintaining school tech will be a challenge, rivals say

BY TERRY WOSTER
Argus Leader

PIERRE - South Dakota's next governor will inherit a nationally recognized system of school technology but will struggle to keep it ahead of the pack, major party candidates agreed Tuesday.

"There's a cost to maintaining the technology and

DECISION 2002
Governor's race For complete election coverage, go to argusleader.com/election

can Mike Rounds of Pierre said.

"We have the basics in place. We need to keep them there, while recognizing that there will be a lot of competition for the revenue available."

Democrat Jim Abbott of Vermillion said Republican Gov. Bill Janklow and Education Secretary Ray Christensen deserve credit for the school wiring and distance learning in South Dakota. It will be up to the next governor to keep the technology in place and to create an environment that encourages schools to use the system to give their students access to

See **SCHOOLS**, page 8A

Economy growth appears to slow

Data expected to show GDP drop

BY KEN MORITSUGU
Knight Ridder

WASHINGTON - New government data coming out today is expected to confirm that the U.S. economy slowed in the spring, and some forecasters worry that growth could remain tepid for the rest of the year.

Analysts don't believe the economy will return to recession after a brief recession last year, but some say the recent slide in stocks could trim 1 percentage point off growth in the second half of the year.

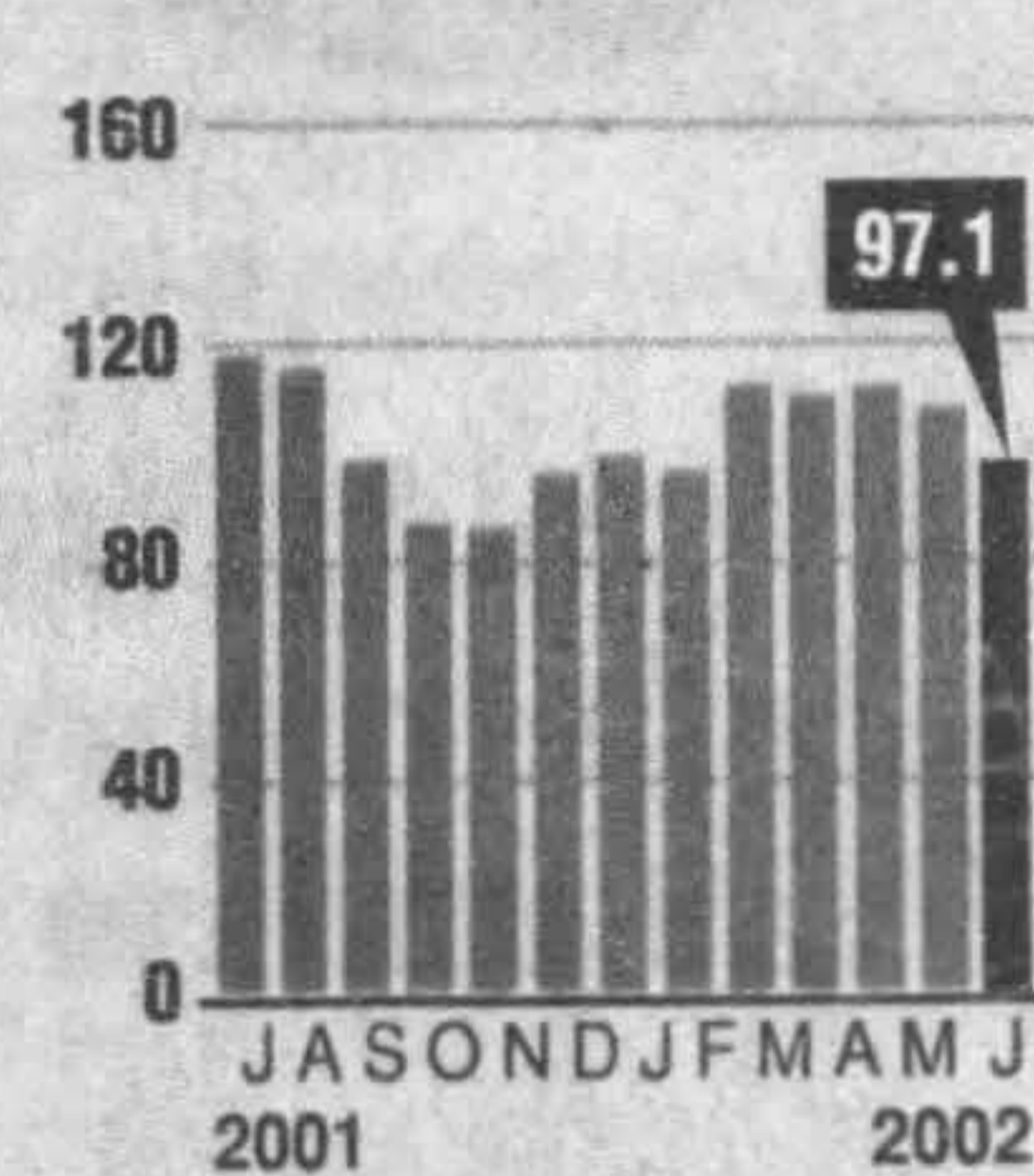
The Commerce Department will release its first estimate of second-quarter gross domestic product today. Most forecasts were for 2 percent to 2.5 percent growth at an annual rate, down from 6.1 percent in the first three months of the year. GDP, the total value of all the goods and services produced in the United States, is the broadest measure of the overall economy's performance.

A drop in growth from 6.1 percent to the 2 percent to 2.5 percent range would not be as dramatic as it sounds.

In evaluating prospects for sustained economic growth, analysts look more closely at a component of GDP, final sales - the combined spending of consumers, businesses and the government - which grew at a 2.6 percent annual

Consumer confidence

Level compared to 1985 (1985 = 100): 91.5 106.6



A measure of consumers' optimism about future health of economy and wages, reflects their spending plans.

© 2002 KRT Source: Conference Board (U.S.)

rate in the first quarter. Many forecasters believe final sales dipped in the second quarter, with a drop in consumer spending overwhelming a pickup in business spending. "Everyone is looking for a second-quarter slowdown," said Cary Leahy of Deutsche Bank in New York. "... The worry is it will be maintained in the third quarter, because the confidence numbers have been knocked down."

Consumer confidence fell sharply this month, the Conference Board said Tuesday.

Telecom leaders vow to sustain services

BY ANA RADELAT
Gannett News Service

WASHINGTON - Executives of some of the nation's troubled telecommunications firms swore Tuesday to continue services to their customers and defended stock options and other costly benefits bestowed on top management.

WorldCom President John Sidgmore, Global Crossing Chief Executive John Legere and Qwest Communications President Afshin Mohebbi - all heads of companies in financial trouble and under investigation - faced angry

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lawmakers who criticized the industry's excesses at a time companies were laying off thousands of employees and moving toward financial chaos.

Federal Communications Chairman Michael Powell also testified before the Senate commerce committee,



KENNETH LAMBERT / AP

WorldCom President and CEO John Sidgmore, flanked by Global Crossing CEO John Legere (left) and Qwest President Afshin Mohebbi, prepares to testify Tuesday on Capitol Hill.

saying he was confident WorldCom's bankruptcy would not result in a "crisis in the provision of services" the company provides.

WorldCom subsidiary

MCI has more than 20 million long-distance customers, and another subsidiary - UUNet - helps

See **HEARING**, page 10A

Traficant gets 8 years for corruption

BY PAUL SINGER
Associated Press

CLEVELAND - Expelled from Congress a week ago, an unrepentant James Traficant was sentenced to eight years behind bars for corruption Tuesday and made it clear he intends to run for re-election from his prison cell - and expects to win.

The 61-year-old former House member was immediately led off to jail in handcuffs after the judge refused to let him remain free on bail while he appeals his conviction on charges of taking bribes and kickbacks.

"Quite frankly, I expect to be re-elected," the pugnacious former congressman told U.S. District Judge Les-

ley Wells after she imposed sentence.

The judge gave Traficant a longer sentence than the minimum 7½ years prosecutors had requested, saying he had undermined respect for the government.

The judge also fined him \$150,000 on top of the \$96,000 the jury required him to forfeit in ill-gotten gains.

"To protect a junkyard full of deceit and corruption and greed, you fought like a junkyard dog," Wells said, borrowing Traficant's own



James Traficant

words.

Traficant - a Democrat known on Capitol Hill for his arm-waving rants on the House floor, his loud '70s-style suits and bellbottoms, and his thatch of unruly gray hair and shaggy sideburns - was unrepentant: "I committed no crime. I regret nothing that I said."

He turned to one of the prosecutors and repeated his oft-stated claim of witness intimidation. "You should be ashamed of yourself, not me," he said.

Defiant throughout his trial and ethics hearings in Congress, Traficant filed earlier this year to run for a 10th term in November as an independent.

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Visual arts: How to fund projects challenges group

Continued from 1A

during his childhood.

■ Would travelers be content to see a likeness of World War II fighter ace and former governor Joe Foss stood in a corner of the regional airport?

■ Could the Falls Park renovation make room for the mahogany granite buffalo known as "Monarch of the Plains"?

■ And of the greatest importance to some, should city government have the last word – or would citizen volunteers set the policy?

While the statue controversies are settled – David returned to Fawick and Joe Foss stands in the center of the concourse – art supporters fear new disputes will take their place. For several commission members, growing with the city means securing public money to put toward public projects. Others are open to public partnerships with businesses and nonprofits.

While they might disagree on where the money should come from, all want to spread a broader view of public arts. Applying artistic principles to commonplace capital improvements can give Sioux Falls a signature character, they say. A few envision a time when the city as a whole will be a work of art.

"I believe with everything that's happened over the past year or so, especially, people have a bad taste in their mouths about the arts," panel member Edward Thompson says.

He's referring to the outcry over an outdoor mural at a local coffeehouse, the collapse of a 72-year-old community theater and additional requests for city money from the Washington Pavilion of Arts and Science.

"I think a lot of people have a misconception of what public art is," says Thompson, a founder of the Artfalls festival. "Statues and paintings are a part of it, but we should be looking at ways to bring artistic ideas to everyday things. If we're having manhole covers made anyway, why not stamp the ones downtown with a design that says 'Phillips to the Falls'? We have to start seeing the art in the everyday, whether it's the entrance to a building, the slope of a sidewalk or the architecture of a bridge."

A showcase

The multimillion-dollar "Phillips to the Falls" project, designed to extend the street north to Falls Park, would displace metal scrap yards and railroad tracks with green commons areas. Mayor Dave Munson wants the project done by the end of 2004. Thompson believes "Phillips to the Falls" holds the city's greatest promise for public arts.

Commission member Carl Grupp, a print-maker and director of Augustana College's art program, would take Thompson's vision even further by including the river for which the city is named.

"Not too long ago, someone asked me what I'd do if I were in charge of that project, and I said, 'I'd move the river,'" Grupp says. "I said it half as a joke at the time, but then I got to thinking – if Monet could do it, why can't we?"

Impressionist painter Claude Monet diverted the Epte, a tributary of the Seine River, to create massive lily ponds in Giverny, France.

Inspired by his own visit to the site, Grupp wrote an open letter that proposes rerouting the Big Sioux River to create a large pond and garden on the 16 acres where Pitts Inc., a salvage and recycling business, once stood. Koi fish and other aquatic life could inhabit the ponds, he says, and small islands, foot bridges, gazebos and sculptures could dot the parklike setting.

Grupp passed out copies of his letter during last Thursday's unveiling of the Statue of Liberty replica in McKennan Park. The bronze's patina finish recreates that of Bartholdi's original in New York harbor, and the near-life-sized Lady Liberty is more than a statue for some residents. The dedication brought closure for those who grew up in the park's neighborhood, including former mayor Gary Hanson. He worked during six of his eight years in office to replace a wooden replica that vandals defaced

Money questions

The city paid for the \$35,000 bronze out of the Capital Improvements Program. That's the same source Visual Arts Commission members hoped to tap for projects as part of the city's regular budget. The commission drafted an ordinance that would have set aside 1 percent annually from the CIP, about \$170,000 this year, but the old City Council voted a 4-4 tie. Hanson, then mayor, cast the deciding vote, rejecting the measure primarily on the grounds that the amount was too great.

Councilor Darrin Smith also voted no, saying he didn't believe that was an acceptable use of CIP money, which comes from the city's second-penny sales tax. He attended the Visual Arts Commission's monthly meeting last week to explain why and to offer suggestions for paying for public arts. "I do support the arts community, and I even support publicly funding the art," Smith says. "I spelled out what I thought were three or four reasonable approaches. One is a project-by-project basis, one is a set budget decided by the City Council and one is a public-private partnership."

Smith favors the latter because it contains a built-in litmus test: "If someone can go out and raise \$50,000 for a project, we're given a pretty strong indication that this is something the public will support. It lets us know that we can feel responsible about giving a city match up to X amount of dollars."

During last Thursday's ceremony at McKennan Park, Hanson told a crowd of more than 100 that his years as mayor taught him that taxpayers will "give you a little more time if you get it right in the end." In the effort to replace Lady Liberty, he believes that held true.

So does Steve Thomas, the Augustana sculpture professor who helped steer early design concepts for the bronze. He knows well that public acceptance of arts can take time. In the mid-1980s, he created "Sea Dream," a golf-ball-like textured sculpture that stands on Second Avenue downtown, north of the Midland building. A plaque commemorating and naming the piece was placed only last year.

A new art effort

Master stoneworker Porter Williams is seeing his city arts project – a new quartzite wall in Sherman Park – move along more swiftly. With private donations, \$10,000 from the Sioux Falls Area Community Foundation and \$65,000 from the city, he says he's just \$10,000 short of having the project's full \$130,000 cost. Area companies plan to donate services.

Portions of the loosely stacked existing wall – a retaining structure rather than one capable of standing on its own – will come down. In its place, Williams will use flat quartzite stone to form the body of a wall that will be inlaid with colored stone from Missouri, creating a three-dimensional mosaic from a drawing by James Starkey. The image will show a Native American chasing buffalo on horseback.

"This has gone from the parks and recreation board to the Visual Arts Commission to the former mayor to the City Council," Williams says. "I would hope that once the community realizes the impact, we'll have one in every park. It would be a way of sharing between cultures and acknowledging that there were people here long before whites came to the area."

With the Great Plains Zoo to the north of the wall, Sherman Park is an ideal spot for such a citywide project, Williams says. "It's going to be a billboardable thing, something that could help tourism," he says.

Where to put art

Former gallery owner Shirley Savage hopes projects such as Williams' can be completed without the succession of false starts that her "Monarch of the Plains" faced. During two years, Savage sold 25 miniature versions of the piece at \$3,000 each, donating \$1,000 of each sale to pay sculptor Darold Bailey's \$25,000 commission. Her intention from the start was to donate the work to the city, and she met with parks and recreation officials to that end.

But they disagreed about plac-



LLOYD B. CUNNINGHAM / ARGUS LEADER
A Statue of Liberty replica was unveiled last week at McKennan Park in Sioux Falls.



▲ Shirley Savage commissioned the statue "Monarch of the Plains" for the city to place in Falls Park.

ing the buffalo where it could be incorporated in a nightly sound and light show or putting it elsewhere in Falls Park. The City Council resolved the matter, and the buffalo became part of the light show from its spot southeast of the visitor center. Four months later, the council voted to form the Visual Arts Commission.

"I don't know if a committee like this would've made a difference in

my case," Savage says. "I think it was a necessity that the board came out of all the dispute. ... It's a good idea, a group like this, because we could do some really great things here. A lot of cities are preserving their history through artwork. To be honest, though, the buffalo wore me out with all the politics involved."

It's the worst possible thing for the commission to hear, and something chairman Heegel hopes won't happen again. The group is writing guidelines that will state when the city can and should accept gifts of art. Who defines "art" remains to be seen.

The commission also wants to complete an inventory of public arts already in the city. Without

that baseline, members say, it's difficult to know what residents want or need. Heegel, an events coordinator at Augustana College, says the commission could pair with the Sioux Empire Arts Council, a nonprofit organization, to seek a grant that would pay for an assessor's expertise.

"My goal is to somehow get the commission, the arts council, Downtown Sioux Falls, Sioux Falls Beautiful – all these groups – working together," says Heegel, who's also president of the arts council. He doesn't necessarily think city money needs to be spent to employ an arts and design liaison in city offices, though Thompson believes money secured for public arts should pay someone to

coordinate the citywide projects.

The future

The arts council is the only one among the organizations Heegel names that has a full-time executive director. The Sioux Empire Cultural Plan, completed in June 1999, asked the city to give \$50,000 a year to pay the director's salary. In the years since, the city has supported the arts council at only one-fourth of that request, an average of \$12,500 a year.

Still, council director Deb Klebanoff considers the arts council's partnership with the commission "a perfect fit. How else do you get that voice, that message out to the public? A lot of times, it's just a coordination aspect between the city and the groups."

Thompson believes that an "aesthetic way of living" is a natural extension for a city poised to become a "Midwest arts mecca."

"During planning sessions, we need to have someone who can advise these city projects," he says. "We need someone who has the expertise and can say, 'Here are the logistics, here's what we're doing anyway. Why can't we take that extra step out of the box?' When it gets right down to it, it's that extra step that makes art in the first place."

Reach reporter Jennifer Sanderson at jsanders@argusleader.com or 575-3629.

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