

SIOUX EMPIRE

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SECTION B

ARGUS LEADER, SIOUX FALLS, S.D. ♦ SUNDAY ♦ MARCH 6, 2005

East-side sewer gets another try

Joint jurisdiction of land unfair, council member says



Kermit Staggers (left) cast the opposing vote against the joint-jurisdiction agreement. Carol Twedt, Minnehaha County Commission chairwoman, supports the proposal.

IF YOU GO

WHAT: Sioux Falls City Council meeting
WHEN: 7 p.m. Monday
WHERE: Carnegie Town Hall. Meetings also are broadcast on CityLink Channel 16.

AGENDA, PAGE 3B

BY JENNIFER SANDERSON
jsanders@argusleader.com
A part of Monday's City Council meeting will have a familiar feel, as councilors take a second run at a rule change that most say is needed before Sioux Falls can grow eastward.

Councilors met late last month with Minnehaha County commissioners, expecting a routine vote on the agreement between their overlapping governments. Commissioners approved extending by 8,800 acres the joint jurisdiction of city and county. The proposed add-on reached east of city limits to

the Big Sioux River, and from 57th Street nearly to Madison Street.

But one council member thinks extending the city's power is inappropriate, considering county residents in the parcel can't vote in city elections.

"If I lived there, I'm sure I

wouldn't like Sioux Falls coming in and making decisions like this," said councilor Kermit Staggers, whose lone vote sent the agreement back to square one on the city side.

The defeat means a delay in securing up to \$31 million from a State Revolving Fund

loan. Lyle Johnson, the city's public works director, said his department needs the agreement in place before it can apply for a conditional-use permit to build a pump station for the east-side sanitary sewer system.

See **SEWER**, page 3B

ARGUS LEADER SPELLING CONTEST

That's a-g-g-l-u-t-i-n-a-t-e

Word sends 8th-grader to state final

BY JAY KIRSCHENMANN
jkirsch@argusleader.com

Without skipping a beat, 26 students breezed through words such as "jurisprudence," "benevolence" and "domiciliated."

While emotions were high, there were no voices faltering or hands trembling onstage as students competed in the 45th annual *Argus Leader* Spelling Contest.

Standing before a silent auditorium full of spectators, the group of middle school students aged 16 and younger grew smaller with each round, until just five students remained standing.

Katie Nelson missed on "shogunate." Aaron Hoe stumbled on "immalleable." And Zachary Forsberg missed on "hydrangea."

It wasn't for lack of trying. Many of these students had been practicing a list of hundreds of potential words for weeks before the Saturday contest.

And then there was Alison Crissman, who spelled

See **SPELLING**, page 3B



CHRISTOPHER GANNON / ARGUS LEADER

Finalist Alison Crissman concentrates on spelling a word Saturday at Augustana College during the Argus Leader Spelling Contest. Crissman placed first in the bee. Finalist trophies are lined up behind her.

VIEW THE LIST OF WINNERS ON PAGE 3B

SUNDAY BRIEFING

ONLINE POLL

QUESTION: Have you had problems understanding what a customer service agent is saying on the telephone?

To vote yes or no, go online to www.argusleader.com/news. Vote by 9 p.m., and see results in Monday's newspaper.

SATURDAY'S RESULTS

Would you give the 2005 legislature a passing grade?

- ▶ **YES:** 57.8 percent
- ▶ **NO:** 42.2 percent
- ▶ **TOTAL VOTES:** 957

For the latest local news, log on to www.argusleader.com

Minnesota man dies in house fire

LeRoy George Gerdes, 53, died in a rural Holland, Minn., house fire Saturday, according to Pipestone County Sheriff Dan Delaney.

The fire was reported at 6:25 p.m. Saturday. No cause of death was given for Gerdes.

Gerdes' wife, Linda, was at the home at 1321 161st St. at the time of the fire but escaped without injury, Delaney said.

The Minnesota state fire marshal and the Pipestone County Sheriff's Office are investigating. The Pipestone Fire Department and Ambulance and the Holland Fire Department responded.

—Jay Kirschenmann, Argus Leader

LOTTERIES & BRIEFS, PAGE 2B

Workers on Wheels help around houses

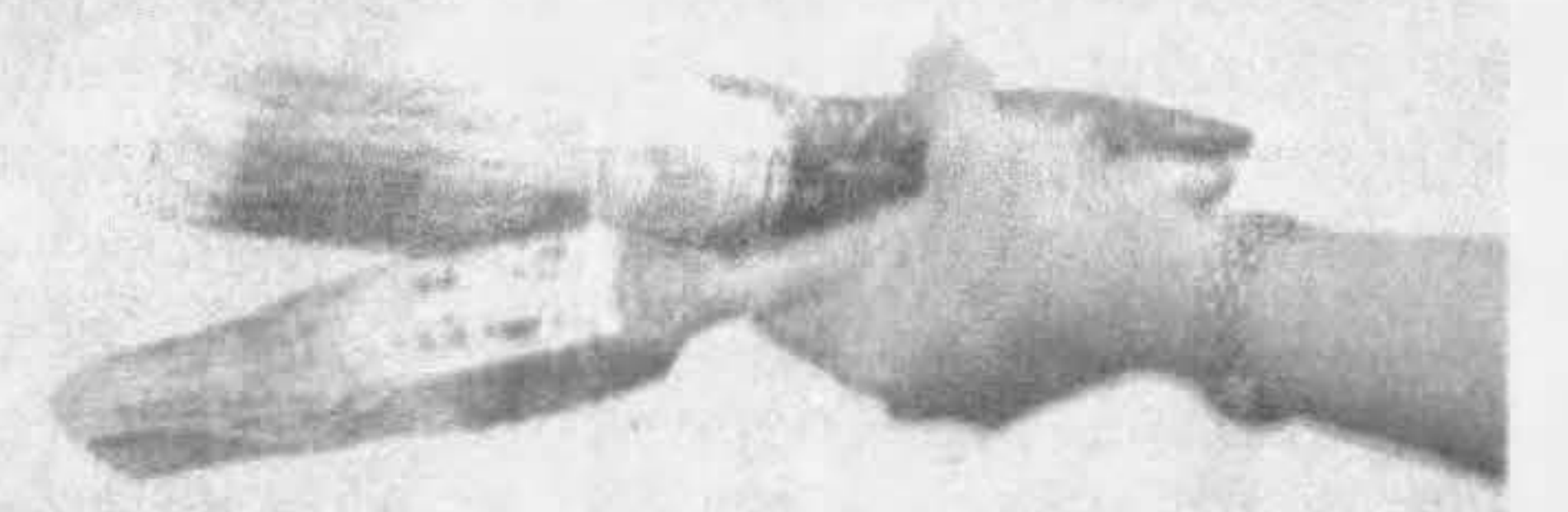
A volunteer program began last March has helped elderly homeowners with more than 200 odd jobs around the house.

Workers on Wheels, or WOW, provides nonemergency light maintenance, chore assistance and repair services to help seniors remain in their homes. Clients pay for supplies, while WOW staff members assess client eligibility and train volunteers in practical tasks.

Volunteers in Sioux Falls, Brandon and Dell Rapids are available to help as spring-cleaning season approaches.

WOW is sponsored jointly by the Sioux Empire United Way and the Center for Active Generations. If you or someone you know needs help, or if you'd like to volunteer, call 333-3317.

—Jennifer Sanderson, Argus Leader



CHRISTOPHER GANNON / ARGUS LEADER
Randy Wratz, 4, (bottom) gets a close look at some faucets while visitors crowd the aisles during the Sioux Empire Home Show at the Sioux Falls Convention Center Saturday afternoon. The show continues today.

Interest in fixtures and updates attracts crowds to Home Show

BY JAY KIRSCHENMANN
jkirsch@argusleader.com

Even as temperatures pushed 60 degrees Saturday, officials saw record crowds at the Home Show this weekend.

Today ends the four-day event at the Sioux Falls Convention Center, which had about 13,000 visitors last year. Nearly 14,000 had walked through the door by Friday night, organizers say.

It's a sign that people are interested in home improvement, especially when they pass up a chance to be outside on a sunny day, said Gary Harr, president of Home Builders Association of the Sioux Empire, which is sponsoring the show.

"We're glad they're inside to see what we have at the show," Harr said. More than 200 vendors have booths ranging from home heating and cooling systems, siding and garage door openers, to home entertainment and backyard playgrounds.

Ed and Jan Harskamp drove an hour from their home in Sibley, Iowa, to attend the event.

"It's our first time to this

See **HOME SHOW**, page 3B

IF YOU GO

WHAT: 2005 Home Show, sponsored by the Home Builders Association of the Sioux Empire

WHEN: Noon to 5 p.m. today

ADMISSION: \$5, children 12 and younger free

INFORMATION: 330-2387, or www.hbsiouxempire.com

Favorable reviews from colleagues, press help Thune

Freshman Sen. John Thune got a lot of positive attention from colleagues and the news media in his first 60 days in office.

So far, everything seems to be going perfectly for Thune, says Jennifer Duffy, who monitors the Senate for the *Cook Political Report*.

"He has a lot of respect from his Republican colleagues, respect across the aisle. I haven't seen anyone slinging an arrow at him, and that qualifies as some success," she said.

She calls Thune "very approachable."

"And right now, he is an icon for the Republican Party for beating Daschle. But when you get beyond that, he can still talk issues with you," Duffy said.

There are hurdles ahead for Thune, though, she said. How he deals with President Bush's call for Social Security reform will be a real test.

"Of course, there are all kinds of land mines out there, and freshman senators have it more difficult. Members of both parties were surprised at the reaction they got over recess — lack of support for private accounts; people convinced they



DAVID KRANZ
Politics

ONLINE

For previous columns, visit argusleader.com

are going to cut benefits," Duffy said.

The fact that South Dakota has a large population of older citizens makes the situation more delicate for Thune, she said.

Thune says he feels a responsibility to be part of the solution.

"I came here to get things done. I think that it's incumbent on the United States Senate to solve problems. And Social Security is a looming crisis. It is a problem.

President Clinton called it that. This president has called it that. You cannot look at the demographics. You cannot look at the actual tables and walk away

from it and not come to the conclusion that we don't have to do something about that," he said.

Thune says he wants to help deliver this message and provide the information and the facts so that people can make an informed decision.

"And the sooner we act, the less painful it is. The longer we wait, the more painful it's going to be," he said.

Daschle receptions

Former Sen. Tom Daschle will return to the state in April to thank supporters.

He will hold receptions in Aberdeen, Sioux Falls, Rapid City and reservation communities. He also has been invited to lecture the Farber Forum at the University of South Dakota.

Daschle was honored Tuesday by former colleagues, staffers and friends in Washington. Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid told those gathered that the Senate Democratic Campaign Committee office was being renamed the Thomas A. Daschle Building.

Lewis & Clark help?

Sen. Tim Johnson says his new assignment on the Energy and Water Subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee could be a plus in the funding pursuit for the Lewis & Clark water pipeline. The subcommittee helps set funding levels for that badly needed project.

Lincoln Day Dinner

Rich Galen will speak March 30 at the Lincoln County Lincoln

Day Dinner. He served as press secretary for Dan Quayle when Quayle was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives and for Newt Gingrich when he was House Majority Whip.

Galen, who writes an Internet newsletter, served in Iraq at the request of the White House. He was responsible for bringing the message of the positive aspects of what the coalition is doing in Iraq back to America. Sen. John Thune and Gov. Mike Rounds have been invited to the dinner. The event will be held at Sioux Falls Christian School. Call 275-6080 or 334-0021 for tickets. Cost is \$20.

David Kranz has covered South Dakota politics for more than three decades. His column appears Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Write to him at the Argus Leader, Box 5034, Sioux Falls, SD 57117-5034.



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Spelling: Students stayed relaxed

Continued from 1B

"agglutinate" when her final competitor missed it. The word means "stuck together, as with glue." She sealed the win with "timorously."

Without studying, the eighth-grader at Patrick Henry Middle School left Augustana College with the biggest of the five trophies handed out. "I just read a lot," she said.

"I'll add the trophy to my others," she said as her mom and dad, Craig and Michele Crissman of Sioux Falls, stood smiling nearby.

Crissman said the huge trophy will sit next to ones earned competing in soccer, volleyball and basketball. She also plays clarinet in the school band.

"I am amazed they can be so calm and keep it together," said Melinda Jensen, Lincoln High School ninth-grade English teacher and one of three judges for the event.

During the competition, Randall Beck, executive editor of the *Argus Leader*, read the words to contestants as the three judges checked their lists for misspellings.

It's the seventh year that Jensen has worked with the spelling bee. "When it starts, my heart is racing," she said. "It's emotional."

Ronda Thielen, the *Argus Leader's* Newspapers In Education coordinator and a judge, said she agrees.

"When it starts, your emotions just go with them, but we have to remain calm and emotionless," Thielen said.

Runner-up Zachary Truelson, 14, who is home-schooled, appeared relaxed during the competition as family and friends watched.

In the audience were his parents, Nels Truelson and Sandy Durand, of Sioux Falls, and his older brother, Nick. Last year, Nick won the contest and went on to beat all but two of his competitors at the 77th annual Scripps National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C.

"I wasn't nervous," Zachary said. "I was mostly thinking about the words. I usually just visualize the way I've seen them spelled, as in the Paideia."

The "Paideia" is a 4,000-word study guide published by the Scripps National Spelling Bee people.

Crissman, who admits she has looked through a copy of the Paideia her teacher gave her, now moves on to a statewide spelling bee next Saturday at 10 a.m. at Dakota Wesleyan University in Mitchell.

Reach arts and entertainment reporter Jay Kirschenmann at 331-2312



CHRISTOPHER GANNON / ARGUS LEADER
Aaron Hoe pauses Saturday while pondering the spelling of a word during the final round of the Argus Leader Spelling Contest at Augustana College.

TOP FIVE FINISHERS

These are the top five finishers in the 45th annual *Argus Leader* Spelling Contest, held Saturday at Augustana College:

- 1) Allison Crissman, Patrick Henry Middle School, Sioux Falls
- 2) Zachary Truelson, home-schooled, Sioux Falls
- 3) Zachary Forsberg, Luverne Middle School, Luverne, Minn.
- 4) Aaron Hoe, Edison Middle, Sioux Falls
- 5) Katie Nelson, Sioux Falls Christian, Sioux Falls

Contact Jay Kirschenmann at 331-2312.

Sewer: Meeting Monday

Continued from 1B

No pump, no sewer. And no residential or commercial properties connecting to city utilities.

The money also would pay for several gravity-controlled sewer sections as well as a force main running from the new pump station to the city treatment plant. Differences in elevation and other variables require a mixed system to transport wastewater.

Staggers was one of five councilors who attended the joint meeting, and the measure needed all five votes to pass. The item will get its first reading - for the second time - at Monday's public meeting.

"There's an attempt to portray me as anti-development, and that's the furthest thing from the truth," Staggers said. He thinks the city should work with county officials outside the formality of a joint agreement. He suggests the city could vote to annex the area now rather than later, cooperating with Minnehaha County to ensure the project fits everyone's standards. That way, he said, responsibility for individual decisions falls squarely on officials who can be either reaffirmed or removed by the people affected.

"We'd be asking them, not dictating, and that's the nice thing about it. This is all muddled now. The way I like it, and the way it should be, is to have one entity making the decision," said Staggers, who cast votes on statewide issues as senator for District 13. He said the former office required him to take that charge on behalf of all South Dakotans. As a councilor, he sees his role confined by established city limits.

The process Staggers now outlines, however, could exchange a joint agreement for behind-the-scenes wrangling among government leaders. Council Chairman Gerald Beninga worries that might hamper progress and hurt public perception of an open government.

"I don't think the general public would feel like that's good cooperation," said Beninga, who called it a fluke that his absence contributed to the shortfall. "I think they expect us to shut down and talk

MEETING AGENDA

View the full agenda at www.siouxfalls.org.

JOINT JURISDICTION: Another first reading for a joint jurisdiction ordinance with Minnehaha County. Councilors passed the item earlier, but not enough supporters showed up at a recent joint city/county meeting to ensure success.

PERMITS FEES: Second readings and likely votes on ordinances to increase permit fees for fences and signs (from \$15 to \$17 each) as well as for planning and zoning applications (the new range would be \$10-\$225, depending on project).

CLINICS: Second reading and likely vote on an ordinance that would clarify which types of medical and veterinary clinics are allowed in districts other than institutional ones (namely, hospital districts).

Would allow vet offices without outdoor kennels in this category.



Gerald Beninga Andy Howes

Minnehaha County, Howes said. "It really didn't occur to anyone that this would happen."

Twedt recalls being stunned by the result. "For a moment, there just wasn't any resolution," she said. "It was, 'What now?'"

Then, realizing the unprecedented event, city attorney Gary Colwill went to work to unravel how to proceed. The county's vote will stand, leaving the matter to a new city vote. That can't happen until March 14 at the earliest, pushing back the timeline for a conditional-use permit. The state's Water and Natural Resources board won't approve a loan without the slip of paper.

"They're meeting at the end of March, and it doesn't look like we'll have it until April," said Johnson, the public works director. "We'd have to make a request for a special board meeting or wait until the next regular meeting, in June."

Beninga predicts a swift wrap-up from this point forward.

"When people move forward with changes, they need to be aware that there is a policy in place," Beninga said. "Joint jurisdiction sets ground rules for working on these projects together, without one government being a bully."

Staggers knows his resistance can't defeat the issue a second time. But he hopes the points he's raised give other councilors second thoughts.

"There's nothing magic about joint jurisdiction. It's just convenient for the two planning departments, and that's all," Staggers said. "This is the way Sioux Falls has always done it, and I pointed out some other ways to do this."

Reach reporter Jennifer Sanderson at 575-3629.

Home show: Free seminars today

Continued from 1B

show," Ed said. "We have a sun-room. We're thinking of doing something different with the flooring for that."

"And we'll probably be redoing a bathroom, too," Jan said.

The event is a fund-raiser for the more than 720 members in the Homebuilders Association, said association spokesman Troy Gordon.

"Most all (the money) goes to our general fund, for scholarships, member education programs and community programs," Gordon said.

Lauri and Cindy Lipponen of Sioux Falls weren't looking for anything specific when they came to the convention center.

"We just bought a house in

October, and we're looking around for ideas," Lauri said.

In addition to information, many vendors have giveaways, such as pens, yardsticks and coupons for discounts on services or products.

"People have a lot of questions," said Dan Konz, a representative of AGAN Drywall Supply, Sioux Falls.

"If they're interested in finishing the outside of a house, I explain how our product goes over existing surfaces," Konz said, showing a modern version of a drywall-like covering. "It's our fifth or sixth year here. A lot of people from Sioux Falls and the surrounding area come to us later in the year, after we talked at the show."

There's day care available from

Holy Cross Lutheran Church, and a coat-check service, too.

Free seminars today start at 11:30 a.m., and continue with the last one starting at 3:30 p.m. Schedules are available at the convention center's front table.

Don Benoit with Frisbee of Sioux Falls said he's fielding dozens of questions about the designer bathroom fixtures in his booth. His co-workers help with questions about home plumbing, heating and cooling.

"It's a very busy time for us, with the month before spent planning what we'll bring to the show and then a full week of setup before the four-day show," Benoit said. "It's tiring, but a lot of fun."

Contact Jay Kirschenmann at 331-2312.

Private prison might not get inmates

APPLETON, Minn. (AP) - Two western Minnesota lawmakers are working to block legislation that would prohibit the state of Minnesota from housing prisoners at the Prairie Correctional Facility in Appleton.

Rep. Aaron Peterson, DFL-Madison, and Sen. Gary Kubly, DFL-Granite Falls, said bills introduced last month in the House and Senate would ban the state from using the privately owned prison after Aug. 1, 2006.

They said lawmakers know the state's prison population is fast outgrowing the available number of beds and shouldn't limit the options in meeting the need for more prison space.

The House bill that would prohibit using the Appleton prison

was introduced by Rep. Debra Hilstrom, DFL-Brooklyn Center, and co-authored by Steve Smith, R-Mound, chairman of the Public Safety, Policy, and Finance Committee.

The bill would require that state and local jail and prison inmates be housed only in publicly owned and operated jails and prisons. It specifically prohibits state and local government bodies from contracting with the Prairie Correctional Facility in Appleton. The private prison is owned by the Community Corrections Corp.

An identical bill was introduced in the Senate by Sen. Thomas Bakke, DFL-Cook, and includes Sen. Becky Lourey, DFL-Kerrick, as a co-author.

The bills were introduced

shortly after the state Department of Corrections asked for \$2.8 million to rent space at the Appleton prison to house 300 to 700 inmates.

The department also is seeking money to house up to 1,700 state prisoners in Appleton through 2007, according to Peterson.

Both Kubly and Peterson said they think opposition to the use of Prairie Correctional Facility is because its work force is nonunion. The legislation hasn't yet had committee hearings in either chamber.

In the House, the bill is headed to its first hearing in the committee led by Smith, its co-signer. As a result, Peterson thinks the committee will approve the legislation.

CLIP & SAVE

Auction Calendar 331-2345

www.siouxfallsClassifieds.com

<p>SUNDAY, MARCH 6</p> <p>12:00 p.m. - Sale Today! At DJ's Auction Service, I-29 Exit #64, Worthing, SD 605-372-4713.</p>	<p>THURSDAY, MARCH 10</p> <p>10:30 a.m. - Farm Retirement auction. Tom & Fern Hansen, owners. I-29 exit 48, Hwy 46 - 9 miles west to Kindred, ND, 8 miles West on Hwy 46 & 1/2 mile north on County Rd 9, Dennis Bilske Auctioneers 701-847-2388.</p>	<p>FRIDAY, MARCH 11</p> <p>10:00 a.m. - 160 acres (+/-) Unimproved Deuel Co., SD land. From Toronto, SD, 2 miles east on Hwy 28 and 1 mile south. Norris & Nancy Bergjord, owners. Burlage-Peterson Auctioneers 605-692-7102.</p>	
<p>TUESDAY, MARCH 8</p> <p>9:00 a.m. - Annual Spring Farm machinery Auction. Located: Hwy #9 west edge of Armstrong, Iowa. Rooney Auction Company. 712-260-9694.</p>	<p>FRIDAY, MARCH 11</p> <p>10:00 a.m. - 320.53 acres of prime, Rock County, MN farm land at auction. Auction held in the Green Lantern Steak House, Hardwick, MN. Mike Pap, owner. Duane Mulder Auction Service 507-283-4901.</p>	<p>SATURDAY, MARCH 12</p> <p>9:30 a.m. - 7th Annual Spring Consignment Farm Equipment Auction. 6 1/4 mi. west of George, IA. Selling tractors, loaders and tillage, silage and hay equip. Anders Auction Service, 712-475-3993.</p>	
<p>WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9</p> <p>10:00 a.m. - 80 acres of Brookings County, SD land, offered in 2 tracts. Gene F. Justice, Owner. 21935 461st Ave, rural Volga, SD. Chuck Sutton Auctioneer 605-336-6315.</p>	<p>DEADLINE for the Argus Leader Auction Calendar is Wednesday at 5pm. Please call Angie at 331-2239 to place your multi-column ad.</p>	<p>10:00 a.m. - 309.71 acres (+/-) Deuel Co., SD land. From Toronto, SD, 5 miles west on hwy 28 and 1 1/2 miles north. Anderson Farms, owner. Burlage-Peterson auctioneers 650-692-7102.</p>	
<p>2:00 p.m. - 303 acres of land located near Miller, SD. Merlin Voorhees, Broker. 800-627-5674.</p>			

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SECTION B

ARGUS LEADER, SIOUX FALLS, S.D. ♦ TUESDAY ♦ MARCH 15, 2005

Joint-jurisdiction plan approved

Council also supports east-side sewer

BY JENNIFER SANDERSON
jsanders@argusleader.com
Robert Van Beek can't vote for Sioux Falls' mayor or any of its eight council members, but he came to Monday night's City Council meeting as more than a spectator. Van Beek, who lives east of

city limits, hoped to persuade councilors not to extend their reach nearly to the Big Sioux River. It will be years and perhaps decades before curb-and-gutter brushes up against Van Beek's property, but he and other rural residents saw the

seeds of annexation in a new joint-jurisdiction agreement between the city and Minnehaha County.

The council on Monday finished what it had begun weeks earlier, approving an

See **COUNCIL**, page 6B



Council member Kevin Kavanaugh (left) said the east-side sewer is meant to plan for future growth. Public Works Director Lyle Johnson said no one will be forced to connect.

Request to annex road withdrawn

BY JENNIFER SANDERSON
jsanders@argusleader.com
Lincoln County neighbors fighting to keep a rural road out of city limits got a reprieve Monday night.

Council member De Knudson withdrew her request to reconsider annexing Brande Avenue, a public right of way southwest of the 85th Street and Western

MORE ONLINE

For previous stories on the annexation plan, log on to www.argusleader.com.

Avenue intersection. The 1,000-foot-long stretch of road is the epicenter of a three-way property-rights fight. Landowners want to move

the road 33 feet to the west or be compensated for what they see as their half of the strip beneath the road. Previous owners dedicated the land for public right of way in 1972, and current owners reaffirmed the road's location with a replatting in 1995. They say it's unfair that the

See **ANNEX**, page 6B

► **PAVILION: Facility on better financial footing: Page 1A**

Rounds' goal: Get Dakotans healthier

When given the choice, Gov. Mike Rounds would rather talk about South Dakotans getting healthier than discuss legislation.

Health has been Rounds' pet objective since he became governor. Now, he's turning up the heat to show he means business.

Rounds has called a Healthy South Dakota Summit on April 8 in Sioux Falls to provide a map for people from business, health care, education and government to learn to educate their employees about healthy lifestyles.

The benefit for the institutions is lower health insurance costs.

State government is held up by Rounds as an example of how health care premiums have been reduced

because of a health-promotion program he initiated for state employees.

"They have reduced their own costs and also reduced the cost to taxpayers in South Dakota," Rounds said.

Dr. Julie Gerberding, an Estelline native who now heads the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, will speak at the summit.

"We think if we can look seriously at long-term implications, we can have some common sense solutions," Rounds says. "We need to talk about what we can do as a state to improve our long-term health."

Judge Bogue?

Speculation on who will eventually succeed Circuit Judge Gene Paul Kean of Sioux Falls when he retires took an unusual turn last week.

Those keeping tabs on possible candidates to run in 2006 added state Republican Sen. Eric Bogue to the list. Senate Majority Leader Bogue is from Faith. Word was he would be moving to Sioux Falls.

Bogue hopes to end the rapidly spreading story by simply saying it isn't so.

"I am not running for the job and not moving to Sioux Falls," he said. "If anyone in my family would be a judge someday, it would be my wife."

Johnson to move up?

When Sen. Paul Sarbanes, D-Maryland, leaves the Senate in 2007, it could have a positive effect on Sen. Tim Johnson.

Sarbanes ranks just ahead of Johnson on the Senate Banking Committee, and the retirement likely will elevate Johnson to second-highest-ranking Democrat on that panel.

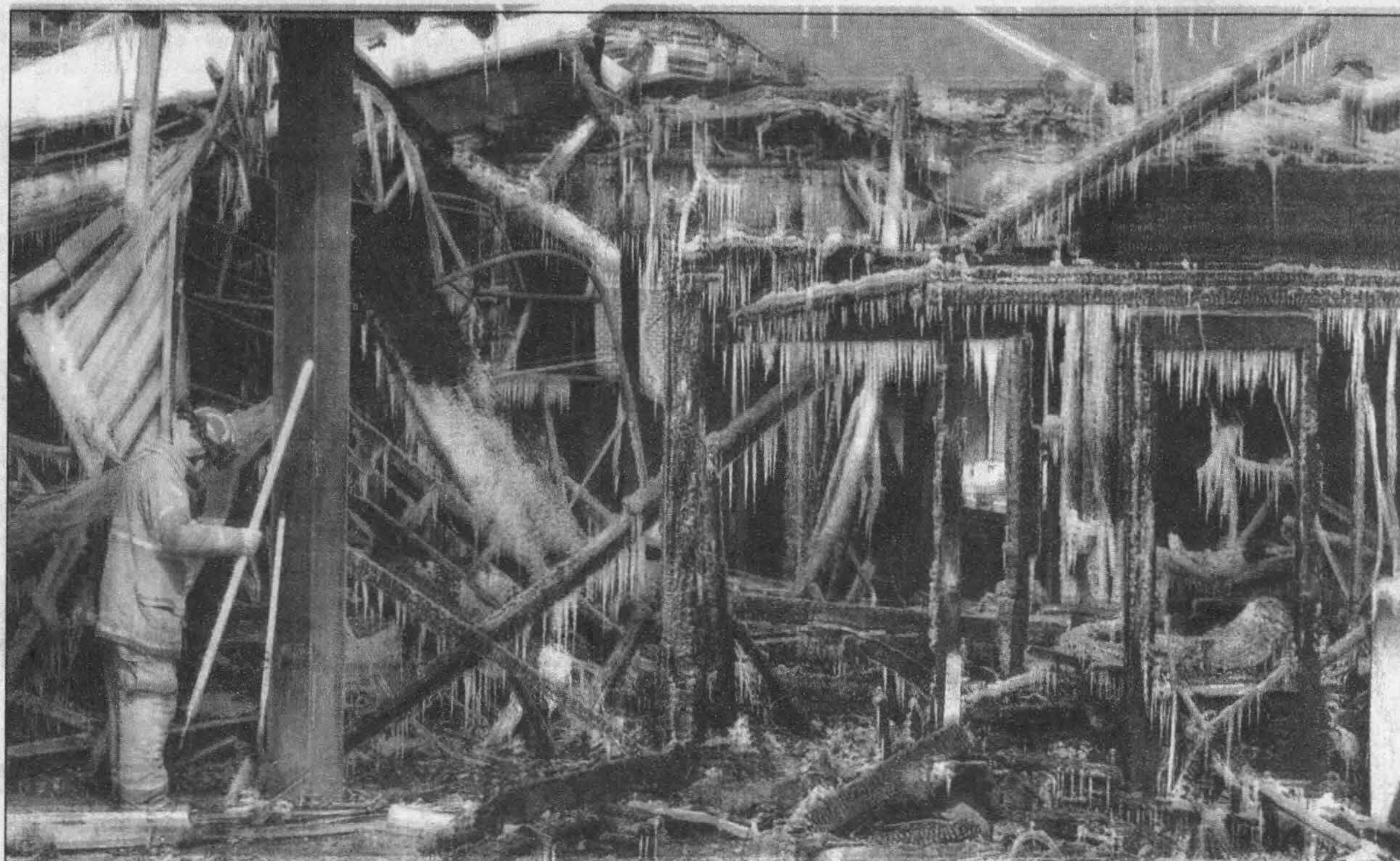
Thune line

U.S. Sen. John Thune has added a toll-free line for constituents to contact his office in Washington, D.C.

South Dakotans can reach him there at 866-850-3855.

David Kranz has covered South Dakota politics for more than three decades. His column appears Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Write to him at the Argus Leader, Box 5034, Sioux Falls, SD 57117-5034.

APARTMENT COMPLEX DESTROYED



Sioux Falls firefighter John Wagner gathers tools amid the icicle-encrusted, charred rubble of a building that burned Sunday night and early Monday near the corner of East Third Street and Sycamore Avenue. The building was still under construction.

Construction-site fire blamed on gas heater

Project was to house seniors, people with disabilities

BY DENISE D. TUCKER
dtucker@argusleader.com

A natural gas-powered heater sparked a fire Sunday night that destroyed a 40-unit apartment complex under construction in northeast Sioux Falls, investigators said Monday.

The building was to be completed by June 6, providing affordable housing to senior citizens and people with disabilities.

Fire Inspector John Wagner said a heater left on by the contractor ignited wood on the second floor of the building's central commons. Apartments were located in two adjoining wings.

More than 30 firefighters and 15 vehicles were dispatched to the two-alarm blaze at Pasque Meadow Apartments, 4611 E. Brennan Drive, which started shortly after 9:30 p.m. Sunday.

Firefighters brought the blaze under control by 2:30 a.m. The last crew left the scene Monday afternoon. No one was injured.

Wagner said the building was destroyed. Damage is estimated at \$1.8 million.

Construction of the apartment complex had begun Aug. 6, and rental applications were to be taken starting in April.

"We were about 75 percent com-

plete," said Jim Daniels, owner of Daniels Construction, general contractor for the \$3.5 million project. "Both wings were Sheetrocked, and we were working on the middle section."

He said workers were able to salvage most of their major equipment but lost some tools, space heaters and scaffolding.

Financing for the project came from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the city, said Dan Billmark, director of real estate development for Accessible Space Inc., the nonprofit sponsor of the apartment complex.

The city contributed \$375,000 in federal home funds and Community Development Block grant money, said Randy Bartunek, director of community development. He said that money was secured through a lien on the property and an agreement with Accessible Space Inc.

"Either we'll recapture the money or rebuild," Bartunek said. "Our goal would be to see the units completed."

Billmark said he is not sure about rebuilding costs. "It's too early to know; we have to wait and see," Billmark said from his office in St. Paul, Minn. "We're still hoping we can pick up and start over."

On Monday, smoke still hung in the air, charred wood was stacked in a pile, and a hole could be seen in the roof of one of the buildings.

Jim Sideras, Sioux Falls Fire Rescue division chief, said fighting the fire was a challenge. Because of the cold weather, firefighters had to be rotated to avoid hypothermia.

They were able to warm up on a bus. Trying to work in mud about 1 foot deep also created problems.

Some firefighters had to keep an eye on embers that shot up to 150 feet in the air. They knocked them down as soon as they landed.

"We had to worry about those landing on other buildings," Sideras said.



Reach reporter Denise D. Tucker at 331-2335.

Si Tanka continues discussion with BIA

Interior Department requests information

BY MELANIE BRANDERT
mbrandert@argusleader.com

The Interior Department requested more information about Si Tanka University as negotiations continued Monday between the university and Bureau of Indian Affairs officials about securing federal money to keep the school open.

The department seeks additional data from the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association, said David Nadolski, a Sioux Falls lawyer working with the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and the college.

The Higher Learning Commission is the major accrediting group for Midwestern colleges and universities.

Nadolski said he did not know whether the department wanted accreditation or policy information from the commission.

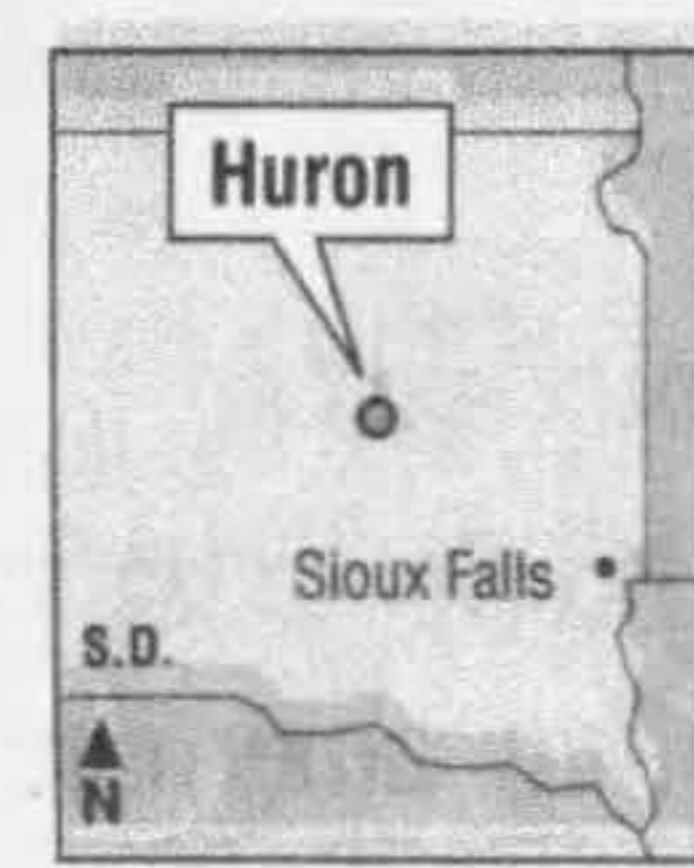
"Hopefully, once they have this Higher Learning communication, that's enough," Nadolski said. "We're anxious to get answers so we can communicate with students and faculty."

Si Tanka President Francine Hall and her husband, Bob Hall, institutional development director, have been meeting with BIA officials in Washington, D.C., since last week about \$850,000 in federal money known as 471 funds. Higher education institutions receive a \$4,390 appropriation per student if their enrollment is made up of 50 percent or more Native Americans.

Si Tanka fell below that standard when it acquired Huron University in 2001. The school was notified in August that it would no longer receive those funds.

Nadolski said the university has a contingency plan to close the Huron campus on or about April 1 unless federal money is released to the school soon. That date would be late enough for students to earn credit for spring classes, officials say.

The college also has defaulted on nearly \$7 million in loans with interest and faces a \$2 million federal tax lien. Nadolski said he continues to negotiate with U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development and First National Bank of Huron on a restructuring



MORE ONLINE

Will Si Tanka survive? Voice your opinions in the forums at www.argusleader.com.

See **SI TANKA**, page 6B

TUESDAY BRIEFING

ONLINE POLL

QUESTION: Have you ever made a donation to the Washington Pavilion, apart from tax dollars?
To vote yes or no, go online to www.argusleader.com/news. Vote by 9 p.m., and see results in Wednesday's newspaper.

MONDAY'S RESULTS

Is binge drinking a problem in the Upper Midwest?
► **YES:** 71.2 percent
► **NO:** 28.8 percent
► **TOTAL VOTES:** 2,143

For the latest local news, log on to www.argusleader.com

Man killed in van crash is identified

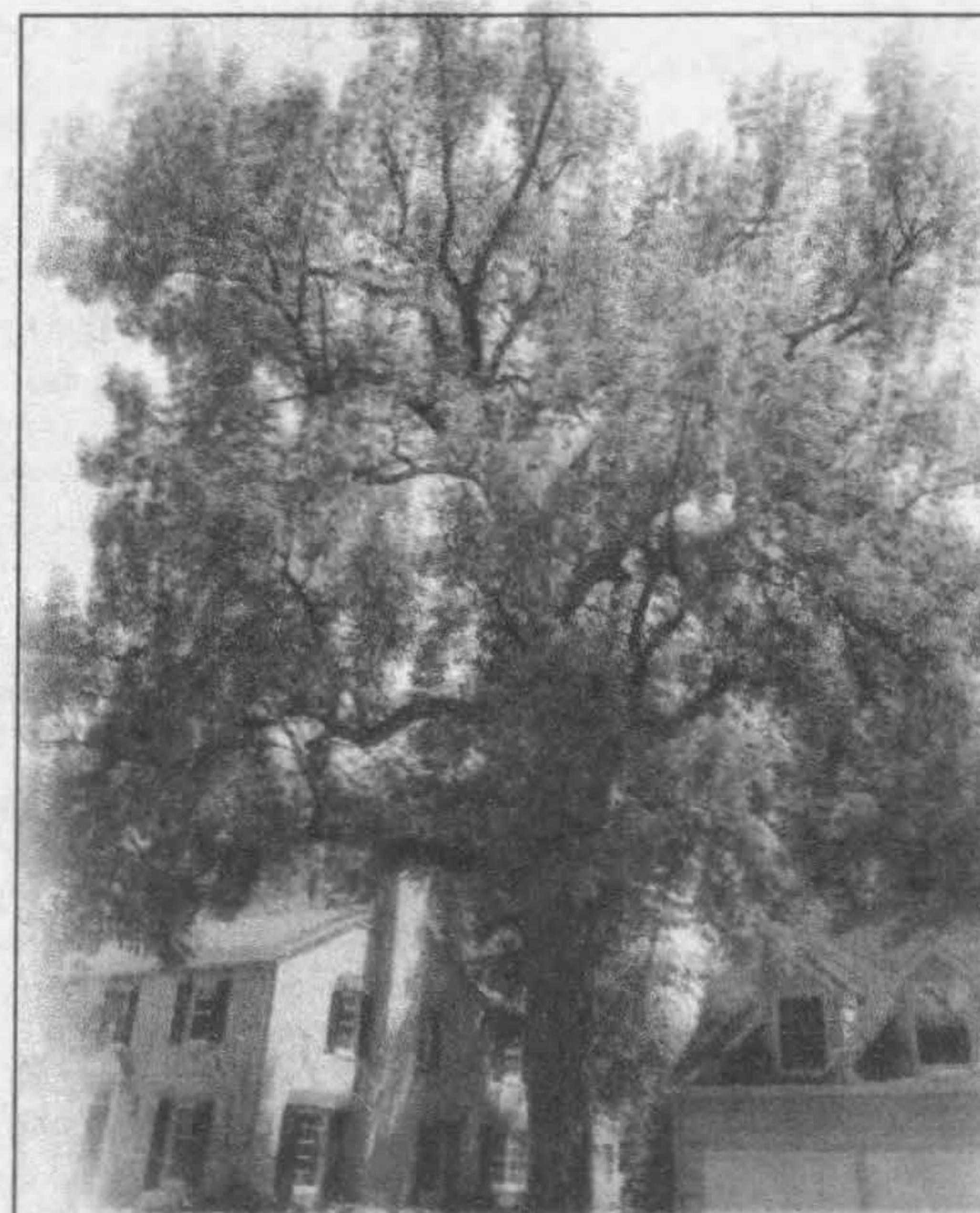
The man who died Sunday morning after his van struck a post office building has been identified as John E. Dressing, 55, of Sioux Falls.

Dressing's 1991 Plymouth Voyager collided with a pickup truck on Cliff Avenue, then went off the road and slammed into the wall of the Post Office Annex building at 630 S. Cliff Ave. The accident occurred shortly before 9 a.m.

Dressing reportedly was traveling at 71 miles per hour, said Sioux Falls Police Lt. Jerry Miller.

Officers are awaiting blood test results and medical reports.

— Denise D. Tucker, Argus Leader



City offers advice for pruning trees

City property owners whose trees stand in the "parking strip" — that 5-foot-deep public right-of-way between sidewalk and curb — must trim low-hanging branches. City ordinance requires 10 feet of clearance over sidewalks, 16 feet over arterial or connector streets and 12 feet over all other streets.

The parks and recreation department's forestry division recommends removing weak, split or dead branches from all trees to eliminate falling hazards. Hedges and bushes also should be cleared back.

The city's Web site carries tips on tree care and pruning, as well as a link to the city's own Landscape Design Manual. Visit www.siouxfalls.org/parks and click on the "Forestry" link.

— Jennifer Sanderson, Argus Leader

REGIONAL BRIEFS, PAGE 2B

OBITUARIES CONTINUE FROM 4B

Linus 'Jack' Hurley

Sioux Falls – Linus 'Jack' Hurley, 90, formerly of rural Lincoln County, died Saturday, March 12, 2005, at Avera McKennan Hospital.



Jack Hurley was born June 16, 1914 on the family farm in rural Lincoln County to Alfred and Mary Mae Hurley. He was baptized at Saint Edward's Catholic Church at Worthing. He attended country grade school with his sister, Ellen, and his brothers, Ambrose, Cecil, and Burton. He attended Cathedral High School for one year in Sioux Falls, where he learned to play the violin, and graduated from Canton High School in 1932. He made many friends in high school and enjoyed visiting with them over the years.

Upon graduation from high school, Jack was employed in the meat department at Council Oak Stores at Hawarden, Iowa. He was promoted to manager and worked at the Council Oak Stores in Vermillion, South Dakota and Hawarden, Iowa.

Jack enjoyed playing baseball with his brothers and friends for the Worthing Sluggers, managed by his dad, Fred Hurley. The Worthing Sluggers played baseball teams in the area at Hurley, Lennox, Canton and Harrisburg. The players enjoyed talking about their baseball games for many years.

While employed in Hawarden, Iowa, Jack met the love of his life, Ellen Lucille Ronan, the daughter of Daniel and Margaret Ronan. They were married on September 1, 1938 at Saint Mary's Catholic Church, Hawarden, Iowa.

Jack's brothers, Ambrose and Cecil, helped Jack and Ellen start farming in Lincoln County in 1941. Jack and Ellen were parishioners of Saint Chrysostom's Catholic Church and later Saint Dominic's Church in Canton since 1941. They have been members of Holy Spirit Catholic Church in Sioux Falls since retirement from the farm. Jack and Ellen enjoyed farming for 50 years, raising crops and cattle on their farm in Lincoln County. Jack's brother, Cecil, was instrumental in starting Jack in the cattle business, and they enjoyed their continuing cattle business and close friendship for decades.

Jack and Ellen were the proud parents of sixteen children. The farming years were busy and challenging for Jack and Ellen, managing their farm and raising their active family. Jack was an excellent teacher and he involved all of his children in the farm work. He instilled in his children a deep and abiding faith in God and love for our Savior Jesus Christ. He encouraged his children to be good students in school and to be active in baseball, basketball, music, declam and all school activities. Jack and Ellen were excellent parents, always involved in the lives of their children. Jack was very proud of each of his children.

Jack was preceded in death by his father and mother, his sister, Ellen Leavitt, and his brothers, Ambrose, Cecil and Burton.

Jack is survived by Ellen, his beloved wife of sixty-six years, and their children, Mary Ellen McTighe, Kathleen Ann Petri, James Hurley, Patricia Garry, Brian Hurley, Marcella Hurley, Elizabeth Trygstad, Jeremiah Hurley, Daniel Hurley, John Hurley, Dominic Hurley, Lynn Hurley, Willard Hurley, Alan Hurley, Teresa Ambur, and Rita Thomas; fifty-five grandchildren; and eighteen great-grandchildren.

Mass of Christian Burial will be at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, March 16, 2005, at Holy Spirit Catholic Church, with burial at the Worthing Cemetery. Visitation will be Tuesday, March 15, from noon until 4:00 p.m. at Heritage Funeral Home. Visitation will resume at 6:00 p.m. at St. Dominic's Catholic Church in Canton, with a scripture service beginning at 7:00 p.m.

Memorials may be sent to Holy Spirit Catholic Church or St. Dominic's in gratitude and appreciation of Monsignor James Andraschko.

Florence Paulsen

Clear Lake – Florence Paulsen, age 91, of Clear Lake, SD, passed away on March 12, 2005 in the Good Samaritan Home in Clear Lake, SD. Funeral services will be at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, March 17, 2005, in the Baptist Church, Clear Lake, SD, with burial in the Lakeview Cemetery, Clear Lake, SD. Visitation will be on Wednesday from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the Houseman-Eng Funeral Home in Clear Lake, SD and will resume Thursday one hour prior to the services at the church.

Melba V. Christensen

Brookings – Melba V. Christensen, 90, died Monday, March 14, 2005, at the Brookings Hospital. Funeral services will be at 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 17, 2005, at Grace Lutheran Church in Nunda, with interment in Prairie Queen Cemetery. Visitation will be from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. on Wednesday at Eidsness Funeral Home in Brookings.



Melba Viola (Albertson) Christensen was born September 24, 1914 at Nunda, SD to Oscar and Mabel (Grinde) Albertson. She grew up on the family farm. Her mother died when she was 11. She graduated from Rutland High School in 1933. On July 7, 1946, she married Elmer Christensen at the Prairie Queen Church at Nunda. They farmed for many years near Nunda. In 1983, the Christensens moved into Brookings.

Melba was a member of the Prairie Queen Church and Grace Lutheran Church at Nunda. She served as the church pianist and organist at both churches and was active in the women's organizations. She enjoyed music, writing, and reading.

Survivors include her husband, Elmer Christensen of Brookings; three sons, Ray (Alice) Christensen of San Antonio, TX, Lowell (Sandy) Christensen of Lake Elmo, MN and Curt (Deb) Christensen of Stillwater, MN; nine grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; and a sister, Eva Hotvet of Sioux Falls, SD. She was preceded in death by her parents; two sisters, Irene and Ina Mae; and two brothers, Carmen and Vernon.

Darlene M. Thill

Sioux Falls – Darlene M. Thill, 75, of III W. 17th St., died Sunday, March 13, 2005, at Avera McKennan Hospital. Mass of Christian Burial will be at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 16, at St. Lambert's Catholic Church, with burial at St. Michael Cemetery, Sioux Falls. Visitation will be from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 15, at George Boom Funeral Home. Visitation will resume at 6:00 p.m. at the church, with a Liturgical Wake Service beginning at 7:00 p.m., followed by recitation of the rosary and the family present to greet friends.



Survivors include 5 children, Daniel (Joan) Thill, Canton, SD, Barbara Thill, Sioux Falls, Bryan (Lisa) Thill, Sioux Falls, Paula (Pete) Thill, Hastings, MN, and Patrick Thill, Sioux Falls; 13 grandchildren; a great-granddaughter; a daughter-in-law, Colleen Thill, Sioux Falls; 5 siblings, Floyd (Bonnie) Bohlke, Sioux City, IA, Shirley Trauffer, LeMars, IA, Marilyn (Don) Hoffman, LeMars, Ray Bohlke, LeMars, and Lois (Lamont) Hageman, Hinton, IA; a sister-in-law, Delores Bohlke, Kingsley, IA; and a brother-in-law, Arnie Welter, Carroll, IA. A complete obituary and online registry is available at www.georgeboom.com.

Jack and Ellen were the proud parents of sixteen children. The farming years were busy and challenging for Jack and Ellen, managing their farm and raising their active family. Jack was an excellent teacher and he involved all of his children in the farm work. He instilled in his children a deep and abiding faith in God and love for our Savior Jesus Christ. He encouraged his children to be good students in school and to be active in baseball, basketball, music, declam and all school activities. Jack and Ellen were excellent parents, always involved in the lives of their children. Jack was very proud of each of his children.

Harvey L. Hoek

Maple Grove, MN – Harvey L. Hoek, age 63, of Maple Grove, MN, was preceded in death by his parents and a half sister, Irene Brass. He is survived by his loving wife, Janice Hoek; 2 sons and daughters-in-law, Paul and Sarah Hoek of Minneapolis, MN and David and Venessa Hoek of Champlin, MN; a daughter, Pam White of Maple Grove; 2 sisters and brothers-in-law, Darlene and John Nordman of Sioux Falls, SD and Vera and Mel Kuper of Illinois; and 3 grandsons, Andrew, Davis and Darlan.



Visitation will be on Tuesday from 4:00 to 8:00 at the Evans-Nordby Funeral Home, 34 2nd St. NE, Osseo and at church one hour prior to the funeral.

Funeral services will be on Wednesday at 10:30 a.m. at Advent Lutheran Church, 9475 Jefferson Hwy N., Maple Grove, MN. If so desired, memorials may be given to the Harvey L. Hoek Memorial Fund. Interment will be at Ft. Snelling National Cemetery.

David A. Grimlie

Astoria – David A. Grimlie, age 56, of Astoria, SD, passed away on March 11, 2005 in the VA Hospital in Sioux Falls, SD. Funeral services will be at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 16, 2005, in the Bethel Lutheran Church, Astoria, SD, with burial in the Bethany Cemetery, rural Astoria, SD. Visitation will be on Tuesday from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the Houseman-Eng Funeral Home in Toronto, SD and will resume Wednesday one hour prior to the services at the church.

Hurst E. Williams

Aberdeen – Funeral services for Hurst E. Williams, 85, Aberdeen, formerly of Brentford, will be at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, March 16, 2005, at Brentford UCC Congregational Church, with Rev. Jon Damasaka officiating. Burial will follow at Sunset Memorial Gardens. Mr. Williams died Sunday, March 13, 2005, at Bethesda Home, Aberdeen.

Visitation will be from 1:00 to 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday at Spitzer Funeral Home, Aberdeen, with a prayer service at 7:30 p.m. and Masonic Rites at 8:30 p.m.

He is survived by his loving wife, Millie; his children, Dan (Snow) Williams, Atlanta, GA, Pam (Donald) Kettering, Yankton, SD, Max (Heidi) Williams, Brentford, SD, and Tas (Paul) Tellinghuisen, Sioux Falls, SD; six grandchildren, Derek Williams, Devin Williams, Lance (Candie) Kettering, Heather Kettering, Colin (Meagan) Williams, and Jenna Williams; four great-grandchildren, Jessica Jennings, Amber Kettering, Hunter Jeschke, and Madeline Williams; and many nephews and nieces.

He was preceded in death by his parents and a sister, Joy Solinsky.

Ruth Reva Moulton

Lakeside, AZ – Ruth Reva Moulton, daughter of Ambrose and Anna (Streng) Mayer, was born July 24, 1920 on a farm near Colman, SD. She passed away on March 7, 2005 in Lakeside, AZ. She grew up on the farm and attended school in Colman. She married in 1938 and lived in the Elkton, SD area until moving to Sioux Falls, SD in 1956. She enrolled in the South Dakota Cosmetology Academy. She was a hairdresser for 31 years at the Fashion Beauty Salon, the last 15 years as owner.

Grateful for having shared her life are her son, Arnold and his wife, Peggy Moulton, of Lakeside, AZ; her 4 grandchildren, Ryan Layne Moulton, Glendale, AZ, Mark Allan Moulton, Phoenix, AZ, Wendi Lou Ward, Glendale, AZ, and Jill Ann Cady, Catlett, VA; 8 great-grandchildren; and one sister, Lorraine (Richard) Hiney of Sioux Falls.

She was preceded in death by her daughter, Gladys Ann Graham; her parents; 5 sisters, Marie, Bertha, Madeline, Emma and Viola.

Ruth's greatest joys were her family (great-grandchildren) and reading. She read thousands of books from the public libraries.

Darlene Gronskei

Canton – Darlene Gronskei, 58, died Monday, March 14, 2005, at Avera McKennan Hospital in Sioux Falls.

A memorial service will be held at 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 17, 2005, at Canton Lutheran Church. Visitation will be Wednesday evening from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at Anderson Funeral Home in Canton.

Mary Julia Welch

Parkston – Mary Julia Welch, 90, died Monday, March 14, at Firesteel Health Care Center in Mitchell. Funeral services will be on Wednesday, March 16, at 1:30 p.m. at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Parkston, with burial following in the church cemetery. Visitation will be on Tuesday, March 15, from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. at the Koehn Bros. Funeral Home in Parkston, with a 7:00 p.m. prayer service that evening at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Parkston.

She is survived by a son, Marvin Welch and wife, Eunice, of Parkston; 2 daughters, Frances Prickett of Mitchell and JoAnn Hettinger and husband, Joe, of Wessington Springs.

BIRTHS

Avera McKennan Hospital
A girl to Cody and Erin Oines, Sioux Falls, on March 11.
A boy to Thomas and Brenda Panks, Minneota, Minn., on March 12.
A girl to Jacob O'Neil and Jennifer Galindo, Sioux Falls, on March 12.
A boy to Jamie Baty and Paul Dahl, Flandreau, on March 12.
A girl to Rod and Christy Burrow, Tea, on March 12.

Sioux Valley Hospital
A girl to Theresa Mortenson and Hector Carrisalez, Sioux Falls, on March 12.
A girl to Laura Gosnell and Brian Beasley, Sioux Falls, on March 13.
A girl to Tauney Iron Horn, Sioux Falls, on March 13.
A boy to Holly Rounds and David Lemke, Sioux Falls, on March 11.
A boy to Jeremy and Kristina Kjose, Beresford, on March 10.
A boy to Jena and Wyatt Gillespie, Parker, on March 11.
A boy to Stacy and Linda

Financial aid directors tell senator availability is key

College officials warn Johnson federal cuts will hit students hard

BY RANDY HASCALL
rhascall@argusleader.com

Cuts and changes in federal financial aid programs would force college students to borrow money at higher rates from private lenders and put them deeper in debt when they graduate, South Dakota college officials told U.S. Sen. Tim Johnson on Monday.

Johnson heard concerns about the Perkins Loan, Pell Grants and other federal programs when he met with financial aid directors from eight colleges during a 45-minute session on the Augustana College campus.

The low-interest Perkins Loan could be eliminated under President Bush's proposed budget with money shifted to the Pell program. That's a concern because many students with Perkins loans exceed the Pell's maximum

income requirements. Officials also are concerned that a proposed change in the tax-table formula could reduce Pell eligibility or payout for students.

"If the Perkins is eliminated, plus there's a loss in Pell, USD takes a big step backward," said Julie Pier of the University of South Dakota financial aid department.

Johnson, who serves on the budget and appropriations committees, said the budget will evolve throughout the course of the year, and Monday's meeting was an opportunity to put together the collective priorities of South Dakota's colleges.

Federal financial aid programs have been vital to the success of college students and need to continue to assist, Johnson said.

"Those countries that invest in brain power and skills will do well," Johnson said. "Those that don't will flounder and fail."

Rosie Jamison of Dakota State University said the federal work-study program is another important aspect of financial aid.

"Loans, work study, grants – we

need to keep the balance," Jamison said. "We need to keep federal aid available and accessible."

About one-third of DSU's students are eligible for Pell Grants. That leaves two-thirds looking for other forms of financial aid.

Not all colleges have the same needs or preferences.

Kilian Community College in Sioux Falls serves primarily non-traditional students. A high percentage, 37 percent, qualify for full Pell Grants, financial aid director Glen Poppinga said. There are no Perkins loans at Kilian, and most students don't qualify for the Hope Scholarship tax credit, so many take out traditional loans. Poppinga would like to see more money put into the Pell program.

South Dakota schools have a loan repayment rate of nearly 99 percent, said Jay Larsen of South Dakota State University.

Nationwide, 6 percent to 7 percent of students default on their loans. The latest default rate at Augustana College is only 0.4 percent, financial aid director Brenda Murtha said.

Reach Randy Hascall at 331-2320.

Si Tanka: Council: Concerns Strategy

Continued from 1B

of the debt involving a significant write-down by the lenders.

If the college closes April 1, Nadolski said, the Huron campus likely would be turned over to Rural Development and the bank.

"At that time, we plan to negotiate a continued relationship," he said. "If we are going to have a summer program or program next semester, we can continue to operate that. It's in everyone's best interest that the campus remain open and not be vacated."

Athletic Director Brad Smith spoke with students at Voorhees Hall chapel Friday for an update, according to The Associated Press. He told them that if the college closes, Si Tanka would have a college fair to bring in representatives from other schools.

"We will help you find another place to go," he told students.

Lawyer Ron Volesky, a Huron city commissioner, has contacted Rural Development in his bid to buy Si Tanka's Huron campus. He sent an e-mail to Francine Hall last weekend, asking to meet with students. He noted that other universities, such as Colorado Tech and Dakota Wesleyan, are being given that opportunity.

Volesky said he didn't receive a response.

"I have a message for these students if I can get a chance to visit with them," Volesky said. "Something has to be done to save this school, whether it's through my efforts or the efforts of others."

Francine Hall did not return a call Monday seeking comment.

Besides Volesky, others have expressed an interest in buying Si Tanka and leasing it back to the university, Nadolski said. He would not elaborate.

Sen. Tim Johnson has asked the U.S. Education Department how it could help students. Johnson spokeswoman Julianne Fisher said Monday his office has yet to receive a response.

Nadolski said he hoped talks would wrap up today.

Reach reporter Melanie Brandert at 977-3926.

Continued from 1B

expanded boundary. Supporters say the agreement is necessary for the city to grow further east. Others say such pacts unfairly allow cities to pass rules governing rural residents, despite the fact that land remains outside city limits until annexed.

"I don't care for the city to come out and tell me where they're going to put a retention pond when they don't own the land," Van Beek said.

Monday's meeting also gave the formal go-ahead to an east-side sanitary sewer system, the foundation of any urban development. And the majority of councilors agreed to assess sewer costs to property owners who hook up to the system.

The vote for each of the three east-side items was 6-1, with councilor Kermit Staggers voting against. Chairman Gerald Beninga was absent.

Minnehaha County commissioners already had passed a measure to share planning and zoning authority over the roughly 8,800 acres of land between Madison and 57th streets. But Staggers defeated the action in late February at a joint meeting. Only five councilors were present, and the proposal needed all five votes to pass.

Staggers reiterated his view Monday, saying such questions run counter to the idea of a democratic, representative government.

Rural neighbors were more concerned about how much time they had before the city fully grows into the joint-jurisdiction boundary and what the new sanitary sewer will cost them.

"We'd like to keep our neighborhood a rural setting as long as we can. That's why we moved out here," said Mick Blumer, who lives in a rural development of about 200 homes and 35 businesses. The area is bordered by East 10th and 26th streets to the north and south, and by Highway 11 and Six-Mile Road to the west and east.

Blumer said he and his immediate neighbors won't oppose the sewer system because the proposed trunk lines now curve north and south around their area. Those lines meet east of Six-Mile Road, connecting with the system's backbone to carry wastewater north to the city's treatment plant.

"We won't be slowing down the city's growth by any means," Blumer said. "We would prefer the city does not ask that we be hooked up to the sewer and that we not be annexed for many years. We want to keep our country style of living."

Residents can do just that until they ask to become part of

Sioux Falls, said Lyle Johnson, the city's public works director. Neither residential nor commercial property owners would be forced to tap into the sewer unless their own septic systems failed. Those rules apply even after annexation.

Still, the dollar figures staggered some homeowners at Monday's meeting. Single-family homes will pay \$1,620 per connection, regardless of acreage. Developers will pay \$4,600 per acre. The final amount will be more, however, because existing property owners will pay to bring the sewer from a trunk line to individual connection points.

Those incremental costs average between \$5,000 and \$15,000 per owner, but some will pay substantially more. Cost recovery estimates peg one church at \$109,333 and one homeowner at \$74,379.

"You're awful mealy-mouthed when it comes to telling us just what it would be," said Van Beek, who wanted an upfront figure city officials couldn't offer.

Johnson said cost recovery numbers can fluctuate and aren't set until after the work is completed. In this case, the time frame stretches out more than two years. Johnson added that when Sioux Falls reaches those tracts, owners could subdivide to spread out the bill before developing their properties.

The per-acre cost is nearly twice the amount assessed for a recent west-side sewer. Elevation and other factors cause a natural flow from east to west. A combination of pump station, force mains and gravity-controlled sections is necessary to service east-side growth.

Chris Tibbetts feels caught in the middle. In October, he and his wife bought 4.8 acres just west of the Big Sioux River, with plans to build a home for their family of seven children.

He knows he'll need to pay for a septic system in the meantime, but he said he wants "an idea of how long it will be" before he must seriously consider the added expense of connecting to city services.

Councilor Kevin Kavanaugh sought to clear the issue, separating annexation from the sewer discussion.

"It's appropriate to remember that this is not a vote on annexation," he said. "We do not – as much as some people would like to think – control the way this city grows. All this does is prepare the infrastructure that allows for growth when there's pressure from business and for new homes. That all comes from the private sector. And if we don't keep up with it, we are fools."

Reach reporter Jennifer Sanderson at 575-3629.

Annex: Golf fees repealed

Continued from 1B

full 66-foot-wide road came from their side of the property line when Ronning Homes, a local developer to the west of Brande, will benefit from public access.

The city annexed Ronning Homes' 30 acres last year, along with portions of 85th Street and Western Avenue. But Brande wasn't part of the package because landowners petitioned Springdale Township and Lincoln County for permission to vacate Brande and reabsorb its entire width into their tracts.

Those motions were denied.

Monday, City Attorney Gary Colwill recommended starting over with the paperwork for Brande Avenue to avoid any legal troubles later on. Either the city, acting on behalf of the public, or Ronning Homes, acting as an adjacent landowner, must initiate an annexation study.

In other business, the council repealed fees for city-owned golf courses. The council will retain oversight of charges through its contract with Dakota Golf Management, but fees no longer will be set by ordinance.