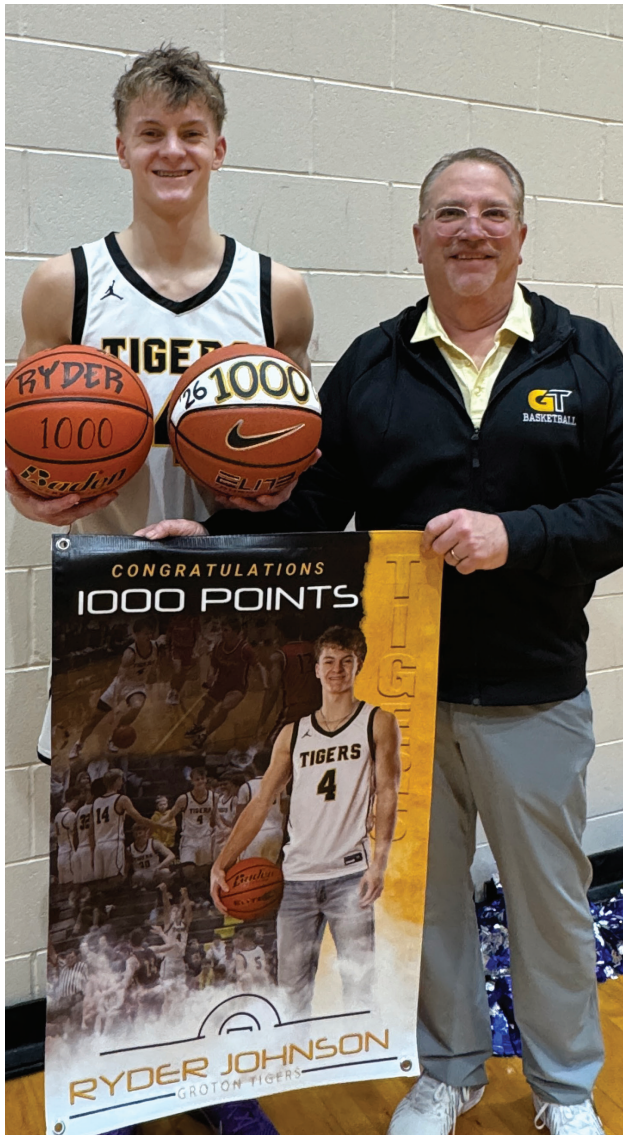


# The Groton Independent

Vol. 143 No. 19 ♦ Groton, SD ♦ Wednesday, Jan. 21, 2026 ♦ Established in 1889



## Johnson scores 1,000th point

Ryder Johnson scored his 1,000th high school career point at the game Thursday night. He is pictured with Coach Greg Kjellsen, who also coached his dad, J.R. Johnson who holds Groton Area's all time scoring record at 1632. (Photo courtesy Paula Johnson)



Pictured are the charter members and representatives who attended the first Squadron #39 meeting. From left to right are Shane Lamer, South Dakota Vice Commander; Rylan Blackwood, second sergeant-at-arms; Tannor McGannon; Bruce Babcock, Groton Legion Post #39 Commander; Mark Abeln, vice commander; Wyatt Reis, South Dakota Detachment Commander; Travis McGannon, Squadron #39 Commander; Aaron Severson; Paul Kosel, adjutant; Dylan McGannon, sergeant-at-arms; Aaron Grant, treasurer; Bob Thomason, District 4 Commander; and Aaron Grant Jr., Chaplain. (Photo by Brenna Johnson)

## Sons of the American Legion Squadron has its charter meeting

Groton's newest branch of the American Legion family took its first official steps forward during a Sons of the American Legion charter meeting held Monday, Jan. 19, 2026, at the Groton American Legion. Local members gathered to learn procedure, recognize their veterans, accept a long-awaited charter, and elect officers for the newly formed squadron.

The meeting opened with a brief lesson in Legion protocol, including how to respond to gavel taps, when members stand at attention, and when covers are removed. Leaders emphasized the Legion's motto, "God and Country," noting the chaplain's role at the front of the room and explaining that covers are removed during prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance.

With the room standing, a prayer was offered asking God to guide the work of the meeting, bless the nation and its leaders, preserve freedom and democracy, and comfort those suffering mental and physical disability. Members then recited the Pledge of Allegiance before taking their seats to begin the official order of business.

With a quorum present, the Groton Legion Post #39 Commander Bruce Babcock declared the meeting convened as Groton Squadron 39, Department of South Dakota. Visiting guests

were introduced, including Sons leadership from across the state and district. Wyatt Reis, Detachment Commander from Burke, representing statewide Sons leadership, thanked veterans for their service and thanked squadron members for stepping up to honor fathers, grandfathers, and family members who served. Leaders reminded the new squadron that growth may include "bumps and bruises," but encouraged them to remember their "why," support the post through honor guard and community service, and keep moving forward together as part of the Legion family.

District and department leaders also spoke about the momentum of the Sons organization in South Dakota, encouraging Groton to set goals, keep recruiting, and get the community involved. Shane Lamer from Burke, Alternate National Election Committeemen and South Dakota Vice Commander, said that South Dakota has had five new squadrons each year for the past five years - a feat that no other state in the United States has matched. Members discussed how quickly squadrons can grow when people see younger faces participating, and how stronger numbers help build a stronger volunteer base.

A key moment of the night came with the presentation of the official charter, described

**Continues on Page 5**



## Conde Legion donates \$3,000 to the DAV

Pictured from left to right are Jerry Grimes, Jim Becker, Mark Wolf from Aberdeen who is in charge of setting up the driving needs for veterans who need rides, Dave Burke, Conde American Legion Commander Daelyn Dirksen and Commander of the Aberdeen DAV Amy Lucas. (Courtesy photo Trixy Schwabe)

The Conde American Legion, Donald A. Lewis Post #148, has generously donated \$3,000 to support the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Transportation Network of South Dakota. The DAV is a nationwide veterans service organization dedicated to empowering veterans to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity, helping them access the benefits and services they've earned through military service and advocating on their behalf at every level of government.

The DAV Transportation Network provides free transportation to and from Department of Veterans Affairs medical facilities for injured and ill veterans who otherwise might face financial or logistical barriers to care. Operated by volunteer drivers and coordinated locally through hospital service coordinators, this program ensures that veterans can get to critical appointments, often at no cost to the veteran.

## Balanced Tigers defend, rebound, and roll past Dakota Valley

Groton, S.D. — The Groton Area Tigers put together another complete Saturday performance, using stifling defense and balanced scoring to defeat Dakota Valley 65–42 in boys basketball action.

Dakota Valley opened the game with a three-pointer, but Groton answered immediately with an eight-point run to take an 8–3 lead. The Tigers led 17–8 after one quarter and carried a 32–20 advantage into halftime after a seven-point burst midway through the second period. Groton continued to build separation in the third quarter, pushing the lead to 46–30, before closing out the 23-point victory.

“I thought our kids defended like crazy,” said Groton head coach Greg Kjellsen. “I was a little concerned having Gage and Becker matched up on six-foot guards, but dang it, they defended well. For the most part, we got done what we wanted to get done.”

Groton’s defensive pressure and rebounding were key throughout. The Tigers finished with 34 rebounds, six steals, and just eight turnovers.

“I thought we really owned the boards,” Kjellsen said. “The kids already knew how to play defense, and now they’re getting more comfortable in our offensive system too.”

Offensively, Groton shot 58% on two-point attempts (19-of-33), 38% from three (5-of-13), and 67% at the free-throw line (12-of-18), while recording 13 assists.

Karson Zak led the Tigers with 16 points, seven rebounds, and five assists in his return after missing Thursday’s game with a foot injury.

“He was in a boot until yesterday,” Kjellsen said. “Practiced yesterday, felt fine, and we let him go. You couldn’t even tell he’d been out.”

Ryder Johnson added 15 points and seven rebounds, while Gage Sippel finished with 14 points, eight rebounds, and a blocked shot. Keegen Tracy scored eight points, Easton Weber had eight points, two assists, and two steals, and Becker Bosma pulled down eight rebounds with four assists.

Kjellsen also credited his bench for maintaining momentum when foul trouble forced lineup changes in the second quarter.

“Guys that come in can do the job, and they did,” he said. “That stretch could’ve been a storm, but we weathered it and even widened the lead.”

Dakota Valley was led by Tatum Sorensen with 16 points, including 6-of-6 at the free-throw line. Luke Anema scored 10 points, Payton Sorensen added seven, and Aaron Bruns had five. The Panthers shot 29% from the field and committed 10 turnovers.

“I’ve watched Dakota Valley on film — they’re young and they can shoot lights out,” Kjellsen said. “They make quick runs, and we told our guys we had to weather the storm. I thought we did a better job tonight putting the nail in the coffin to start the third quarter.”

Groton improved to 8–3 on the season and will host Milbank in a doubleheader Thursday. Dakota Valley fell to 4–5.

### Junior varsity

Groton completed the sweep with a 44–26 junior varsity victory. The game was tied twice early, with the first seven points coming at the free-throw line. Groton led 11–8 after one quarter, 21–13 at halftime, and 31–16 after three before pulling away.

Asher Johnson scored 10 points to lead Groton. Anthony Tracy had nine, Ethan Kroll eight, Jace Johnson six, J.J. Muller five, Jordan Schwan four, and Ryder Schelle two.

Geoffrey Nelson led Dakota Valley with 12 points, while Cash Slater added nine.

### C-game

The Tigers also earned a 49–34 win in the C-game. Dakota Valley led 10–4 after one quarter before Groton edged ahead 23–22 at halftime. An 11-point run bridging the second and third quarters helped the Tigers take control, leading 38–30 after three.

Major Dolan scored 18 points to lead Groton. Trey Tietz had 11, Ryder Schwan eight, Trayce Schelle six, Zach Flihs four, and Connor Kroll two.

Ryan Snoozy paced Dakota Valley with 11 points, Matthew Bryan added nine, and Jaxon Sommervold and Patrick Smith scored five each.

**The varsity broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Avantara - Groton, Agtegra, Bierman Farm Service, Bary Keith at Harr Motors, Blocker Construction, Dacotah Bank, Full Circle Ag, Groton Ag Partners, Groton Chamber, Groton Ford, John Sieh Agency, Heartland Energy and The MeatHouse in Andover. Rich Bosma did the commentary, Jeslyn Kosel ran the camera and Paul Kosel did the stats and technology. The junior varsity and C games were broadcast as well, sponsored by S & S Lumber.**



**Jayden Schwan and Cash Slater had arms tied up in a scramble for the ball.** (Photo by Paul Kosel)

## Groton Area takes eighth at Battler Invitational

Gettysburg, S.D. — The Groton Area wrestling team finished eighth out of 23 teams Saturday at the Battler Invitational in Gettysburg, scoring 106.5 team points in a deep and competitive tournament field.

South Border captured the team title with 179 points, followed by Clark/Willow Lake (171.5) and Chamberlain (153.5). Stanley County and Harding County rounded out the top five. Groton Area’s eighth-place finish put the Tigers ahead of Deuel, Britton-Hecla, Pierre T.F. Riggs, Lemmon, Webster, and host Gettysburg.

Heavyweight Gavin Englund led the Tigers with a championship performance at 285 pounds. Englund opened with a fall over Cooper Gerard of Chamberlain in 3:08, pinned Lane Brown of Warner in 1:27, and secured another fall over Jaspur Gran of Wessington Springs/Woonsocket/Wolsey Wessington in 3:25 to reach the finals. He then closed the title bout with an 8-2 decision over Tristen Baloun of Faulkton Area to claim first place and 28 team points.

At 126 pounds, Kyson Kucker delivered a runner-up finish. After receiving a first-round bye, Kucker pinned Bransen Flack of Warner in 3:37 and earned a technical fall over Cooper Auble of Pierre T.F. Riggs to advance to the championship match. He finished second following a major decision loss to Benny Pommer of Clark/Willow Lake.

Preston Hinkelman put together a resilient tournament at 106 pounds, fighting through the consolation bracket to earn fifth place. Hinkelman started his day with a fall over Evan Hummel of Pierre T.F. Riggs in 1:25 before dropping a quarterfinal match by technical fall. He responded with four straight falls — over Cashton Rausch of Gettysburg, Henry Kilker of Britton-Hecla, and Rowdy Schrempp of CEB/Dupree in the fifth-place match — to secure 17 team points.

Wyatt Hagen added a fourth-place finish at 120 pounds. Hagen recorded a major decision over Easton Rausch of Gettysburg to reach the semifinals, then bounced back with a fall over Xavier Sanchez-Gonzalez of CEB/Dupree in the consolation semifinals before dropping a narrow 8-7 decision to Jyles Auble of Pierre T.F. Riggs in the third-place bout.

Ben Hoeft rounded out Groton Area’s placers with a sixth-place finish at 165 pounds. Hoeft opened with a decision over Hayden Landmark of Deuel and a fall over Ayden Forgey of Gettysburg to reach the semifinals before battling through the back side of the bracket.

Other Tigers also logged valuable mat time and victories. At 113 pounds, Luke Gauer received a first-round bye before falling to Retro Benson of Lemmon and John Ortmeier of Faulkton Area. Noah Scepanski (132) opened with a fall over Damian Garcia of Sully Buttes and later earned a decision over Erich Fokken of Deuel. Aiden Strom (138) dropped matches to Luke Olson of Mobridge/Pollock and Tanner Atkinson of Britton-Hecla. Grayson Flores (144) rebounded from an opening loss with a decision over Zach Dekle of CEB/Dupree. Kason Oswald (150) recorded a fall over Spencer Schulte of Faulkton Area. Donovan Block (157) posted a fall over Rayin Mansfield of Warner. Isaiah Scepanski (190) picked up a fall over Kameron Hunnel of Gettysburg.

## Krueger claims title at Harrisburg girls wrestling tournament

HARRISBURG, S.D. — Groton Area’s Liza Krueger continued her dominant season Friday, capturing the championship at the 2026 Harrisburg Girls Wrestling Tournament with a perfect run through the 105-pound bracket.

Krueger, now 29-2 on the season, placed first and scored 28 team points for the Tigers. After receiving a first-round bye, she opened her day with a quick fall over Alondra Romero Mondragon of Milbank in 1:09. She followed with another pin in the semifinals, sticking Shaylee Arredondo of Brandon Valley in 2:49. In the championship match, Krueger sealed the title by pinning Harper Gibson of Tri-Valley at 3:43.

The victory adds another tournament championship to an already impressive season for Krueger, who has established herself as one of the top lightweight wrestlers in the region.

At 110 pounds, Groton Area’s Gracie Decker competed in a tough bracket. Decker fell in the championship round opener to Benazir

Wilson of Harrisburg by pin in 0:37. After receiving a bye in the consolation round, Decker returned to the mat but was pinned by Aubrey Fischer of Pierre T.F. Riggs in 0:30. She finished the day unplaced but gained valuable mat time against strong competition.



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# Ryder Johnson hits 1,000-point milestone as Tigers roll past Tiospa Zina



**Ryder Johnson gets his 1,000th high school career point by making this basket in the first quarter.** (Photo by Paul Kosel)

GROTON — The Groton Area boys basketball team delivered another dominant performance Thursday night, rolling past Tiospa Zina 83-9 in action at Groton.

The Tigers set the tone immediately, jumping out to a 23-2 first-quarter lead. Groton extended the advantage to 45-2 at halftime and 61-9 after three quarters before closing out the victory.

Groton shot efficiently from the floor, making 31 of 47 two-point attempts (66 percent), 6 of 11 three-pointers (55 percent), and 3 of 5 free throws (60 percent). The Tigers also filled the stat sheet with 32 rebounds, 22 assists, and 21 steals

while committing just five turnovers.

The night's highlight came early, as Ryder Johnson scored his 1,000th career point in the first quarter, prompting a brief on-court celebration. Johnson finished with 15 points, six rebounds, four assists, and three steals.

"You don't score a thousand points just showing up on game night and expecting to get it done," said head coach Greg Kjellsen. "It takes a lot of work, and he's put it in. He deserves it. Hats off to him."

Johnson becomes just the 11th player in Groton High School history to reach the milestone. Nearly all reached the mark as four-year varsity players. His father, J.R. Johnson, remains the program's all-time leading scorer with more than 1,600 career points — a fact Kjellsen referenced with a smile.

"He shot it every time he touched it," Kjellsen joked. "There was no shot he didn't like."

Kjellsen also emphasized the character of this year's team, saying their success extends beyond the court.

"They're better kids than they are basketball players," he said. "I haven't had an issue with one of them all year. They come to work hard, they're polite, respectful, and this community should be awful proud of them."

Keegan Tracy added 14 points, four steals, and a block. Gage Sippel scored nine points and grabbed three rebounds. Ryder Schelle finished with eight points. Anthony Tracy posted eight points, four assists, and four steals. Ethan Kroll scored six points, while Jace Johnson added five. Logan Warrington, Asher Johnson, and Jordan Schwan each scored four points. Becker Bosma recorded two points and four

assists, and Easton Weber pulled down five rebounds to go with two points. J.J. Muller added an assist and a steal.

For Tiospa Zina, Isaac Rodlund scored six points and Jeffrey Heminger Jr. added three.

Groton also won the junior varsity contest. JV scoring included Jordan Schwan with 11 points, Asher Johnson with nine, Anthony Tracy with six, Zach Flihs with six, Ethan Kroll with five, Wesley Borg with five, Jace Johnson and Ryder Schelle with four each, Connor Kroll with two, and Briggs Conn with two.

Groton improves to 7-3 on the season and will host Milbank on Thursday in a doubleheader. Tiospa Zina falls to 3-6.



**Becker Bosma dunks the ball early in the game.** (Photo by Paul Kosel)

# Lady Tigers dominate Tiospa Zina Wambdi, 71-3



**Rylee Dunker is surrounded by Wambdi players while trying to pass off the ball.**

(Photo by Paul Kosel)

GROTON — The Groton Area girls basketball team delivered a defensive clinic Thursday night, overwhelming Tiospa Zina Wambdi 71-3 in a lopsided doubleheader sweep at Groton.

The Lady Tigers jumped out quickly, building a 30-1 first-quarter lead and never letting up. Groton extended the margin

to 49-3 at halftime and 57-3 after three quarters before closing out the decisive victory.

Head coach Matt Locke said the performance started with clear team objectives before tipoff.

"We tried to make some team goals before the game — points scored, points allowed — and just kept reminding them," Locke said. "Overall, it was a good defensive night."

Groton's pressure defense forced 19 steals and held Tiospa Zina Wambdi to just three total points. Locke credited his team's mindset for making the game "what it should be."

"You can do that against good teams as well if you have that mindset," he said. "Make the game what it should be — that's what we did so well."

Offensively, Groton shot 66 percent on two-point attempts (29-of-44), added three three-pointers, and finished with 21 assists on 32 made field goals. The Tigers also controlled the glass with 33 rebounds and committed only eight turnovers.

Taryn Traphagen led Groton with 15 points on 6-of-7 shooting, adding five assists and seven steals in a standout all-around effort. Locke praised her continued development.

"Taryn's very capable," Locke said. "We've been working on finishes every day in practice, and it's paying off."

Jerica Locke scored 11 points with five assists, while Jaedyn Penning added 10 points and eight rebounds. Kella Tracy finished with nine points. McKenna Tietz recorded six points and three steals. Rylee Dunker contributed five points, six rebounds, three assists, and three steals. Talli Wright and Sydney Locke each scored five, with Sydney adding three steals. Tevan Hanson had three points and four rebounds. Makenna Krause added two points and two assists, and Ashlynn Warrington recorded one assist and one block.

Stevie Marks scored two points for Tiospa Zina Wambdi, and Kayleigh Abbey added one.

Locke was also pleased with the team's depth, as every available player saw significant minutes.

"All capable kids," he said. "When they get in there and get the chance, you just have to relax and let them play."

With the win, Groton Area improves to 7-4 on the season. The Tigers will enjoy a brief break before hosting Milbank next Thursday.

"The girls needed it," Locke said with a smile. "We've been running pretty rampant — five games in ten days."

Groton also earned a junior varsity victory. Makenna Krause led with 14 points. Tevan Hanson scored 10. Ashlynn Warrington and Sydney Locke each added eight, Kella Tracy had eight, and Brynlee Dunker finished with four.

Both varsity games were broadcast live on [GDILIVE.COM](http://GDILIVE.COM), sponsored by Avantara - Groton, Agtegra, Bierman Farm Service, Bary Keith at Harr Motors, Blocker Construction, Dacotah Bank, Full Circle Ag, Groton Ag Partners, Groton Chamber, Groton Ford, John Sieh Agency, Heartland Energy and The MeatHouse in Andover. Rich Bosma did the commentary, Jeslyn Kosel ran the camera and Paul Kosel did the stats and technology.



**Jerica Locke pushes her way inside for this basket. Also pictured is Taryn Traphagen.** (Photo by Paul Kosel)



The Vikings are officially spectators now, but the NFL postseason has a funny way of reminding you why you keep watching, even when your own team is already on the couch. This weekend gave us everything. Overtime drama, blowouts, missed opportunities, and a couple of performances that will live in playoff lore for a long time. Four games, four very different outcomes, and plenty of lessons for teams still chasing a Super Bowl.

Denver Broncos (1) 33, Buffalo Bills (6) 30 (OT)

The weekend kicked off with the most entertaining game of the bunch. Buffalo had multiple chances to put Denver away, and every time, they let the door stay cracked. The Broncos took advantage. After trading blows throughout regulation, Denver finished the job in overtime to escape with a 33-30 win. Buffalo's offense moved the ball consistently, but red-zone inefficiency and a few costly mistakes kept them from closing things out. Denver, meanwhile, stayed patient, leaned on balance, and made the one extra play when it mattered most.

For the Bills, it is another postseason that ends with "what if". For the Broncos, they'll be without their 2nd-year QB Bo Nix, who fractured his ankle and will miss the rest of the season.

Seattle Seahawks (1) 41, San Francisco 49ers (6) 6

If you were looking for drama, this was not the game for you. Seattle came out angry, focused, and ruthless. The Seahawks jumped on San Francisco early and never let up, turning what was supposed to be a competitive playoff matchup into a laughter by halftime. San Francisco had no answers on either side of the ball, and once things started to snowball, it was clear this one was over. Seattle dominated the line of scrimmage, forced mistakes, and sent a loud message to the rest of the league that they are not just happy to be here. For the 49ers, this one will sting for a long time.

New England Patriots (2) 28, Houston Texans (5) 16

This game felt exactly like a Patriots playoff win has felt for the better part of two decades. New England did not overwhelm Houston with flash or fireworks. They simply executed better in every phase of the game. The Texans hung around early, but once the Patriots grabbed control, they never gave it back. Houston struggled to sustain drives, and New England capitalized on short fields and key moments. It was not pretty, but it was efficient, disciplined, and effective. The Texans' season ends with progress, while the Patriots keep marching forward,

doing what they always seem to do in January.

Los Angeles Rams (5) 20, Chicago Bears (2) 17 (OT)

Sunday night delivered the chaos that playoff football promises. Chicago looked like the better team for long stretches, but the Rams refused to go away. The game swung back and forth, and neither side could land the knockout punch in regulation. Overtime felt inevitable, and Los Angeles made sure it did not last long. The Rams capitalized on a Bears mistake and walked it off with a 20-17 win, silencing the Chicago crowd and ending a promising season in brutal fashion. For the Bears, it is a painful reminder that playoff football comes down to inches and execution. For the Rams, it is proof that experience still matters when the lights are brightest.

When the dust settled, the top seeds mostly held serve, but not without resistance. Denver's overtime win and Los Angeles' road upset were reminders that the margin for error in the playoffs is razor thin. One missed tackle, one failed conversion, or one bad decision can swing an entire season.

As Vikings fans, watching these games is equal parts entertainment and frustration. You see teams make mistakes Minnesota has made all year. You also see teams rise to the moment in ways the Vikings simply did not. That contrast is hard to ignore.

The postseason only gets tougher from here. The teams still standing are battle-tested, confident, and one step closer to hoisting a trophy. For everyone else, including the Vikings, the offseason questions start now.

And unfortunately, they are the same ones we have been asking for years.

## The Groton Independent

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Deadline to submit items: Noon Monday]

Yearly Subscription Rates are listed below.

The Groton Independent (USPS# 230-440) is published weekly with its periodicals postage paid at Groton, SD.

**Postmaster: Send address changes to Groton Independent, PO Box 34, Groton, SD 57445**

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## Groton Area wrestlers earn dual wins at Redfield triangular

REDFIELD — The Groton Area wrestling team turned in a strong performance Tuesday night at a triangular in Redfield, earning convincing dual victories over both Redfield and Webster Area.

In the opening dual, Groton Area defeated host Redfield 54-24, winning nine of the 14 contested bouts and collecting several key falls to pull away on the scoreboard.

Wyatt Hagen opened the night with a 4-1 decision at 120 pounds, while Kyson Kucker followed with a 15-9 decision at 126. Xavior Ellenbecker (132) picked up a forfeit before Noah Scepaniak delivered one of the highlights of the match, pinning Mason Mogen in 1:31 at 138 pounds.

Groton Area also received falls from Layne Johnson at 215 (4:55) and Gavin Englund at heavyweight (1:14). Additional points came from forfeits by Donovan Block (157), Ben Hoeft (165), Walker Zoellner (175), and Isaiah Scepaniak (190).

Redfield earned wins at 144 and 150, where Kasey Hermann and Conner Zens recorded quick falls, along with victories from Cruz Kimlicka (106) and Jace Edgar (113).

In the second dual of the night, Groton Area overwhelmed Webster Area 75-6, dropping just one bout. The Tigers recorded six falls under 1:40, including lightning-fast pins by Wyatt Hagen (0:15), Kyson Kucker (0:15), and Kason Oswald (0:16).

Noah Scepaniak (132), Aiden Strom (138), Grayson Flores (144), Donovan Block (157), Ben Hoeft (165), Bentley Ehresmann (106), and Isaiah Scepaniak (190) all added victories, while Walker Zoellner earned a 9-5 decision at 175. Gavin Englund closed the night with a fall in 1:36 at 285.

Webster Area's lone points came from a forfeit win at 215.

Groton Area now turns its focus to its next competition as the Tigers continue to build momentum in the heart of the season.

## Ace of Hearts

Deb Frederickson won \$85 Thursday night at the Ace of Heart drawing at the Groton American Legion. She picked card number five, which was the two of hearts. Ticket sales for the week was \$835. The jackpot is over \$20,000. Next Ace of Heart drawing will be next Thursday. You can purchase your ticket(s) at the Groton American Legion, S & S Lumber or from Paper Paul (Paul accepts Venmo, Paypal and Zelle).

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# Sons of Legion

## Continued from front

as a significant, federally recognized document confirming the squadron's lawful existence. The charter was read aloud, authorizing the establishment and maintenance of a Sons of the American Legion squadron in Groton under Post 39. Along with the charter, the squadron received a starter kit of materials, including table flags, a gavel, guidance paperwork, a POW/MIA chair cover, and a new squadron flag to be posted alongside existing Legion flags.

Leaders also announced that, because the charter dates back to 2025 and the in-person presentation came in January 2026, the detachment covered the squadron's dues through the current cycle. Members were informed they would not owe dues again until after July 1, 2026, a gesture intended to support the new group as it gets established.

Before elections, attendees introduced themselves and shared how they qualified for membership by naming a father or grandfather who served, often including branch of service. The introductions highlighted Army, Air Force, and Marine connections among the group, underscoring the squadron's mission of honoring family service and continuing that legacy through community involvement.

Elections were then held for the squadron's initial leadership. Travis McGannon was nominated and elected by unanimous ballot as Squadron

Commander. Upon taking the role, he appointed Paul Kosel as Adjutant, a position leaders described as the record-keeper and key contact for members, responsible for maintaining records and publishing necessary announcements. Mark Abeln was elected Vice Commander by unanimous ballot, and Aaron Grant was elected Treasurer after nominations were clarified and properly withdrawn and restated under parliamentary procedure.

Additional appointed roles were also discussed, including chaplain and sergeant-at-arms responsibilities. Members volunteered to help with duties such as setting up flags, maintaining meeting order, and assisting with ceremonial functions and security during meetings. Aaron Grant Jr. was appointed as chaplain, Dylan McGannon as sergeant-at-arms and Rylan Blackwood as second sergeant-at-arms.

A formal installation ceremony followed, with officers brought forward and sworn in. The installing officer reminded the new leaders that the welfare and success of the squadron depends greatly on its officers and that the group's purpose includes care for families of those who have died, support for those suffering, devotion to community service, and commitment to American ideals of justice, freedom, democracy, and loyalty.

After the installation, the group gathered for photos with the new flag and officers, marking the public beginning of Groton's Sons squadron.

Before adjourning, the squadron set a regular meeting schedule for the third Monday of each month at 7 p.m., discussed communication through group texting, and voted to set annual dues at \$25, structured to cover state,



**Wyatt Reis, South Dakota Detachment Commander, swore in the new officers of the Sons of the American Legion Squadron #39. They are Aaron Grant, treasurer; Travis McGannon, president; Dylan McGannon, sergeant-at-arms; Mark Abeln, vice commander; Paul Kosel, adjutant; Aaron Grant Jr., chaplain; and Rylan Blackwood, second sergeant-at-arms.** (Photo by Bruce Babcock)

national, and local squadron needs. Leaders also encouraged outreach to surrounding communities that have posts but no squadrons, emphasizing that eligible members from nearby towns can join Groton's squadron and help it grow. The District 4 Commander Bob Thomason from Selby talked about the district as Groton joins Herreid and Redfield. Aberdeen is considering starting a Sons of the American Legion squadron.

The meeting closed as it began—formally and reverently—with a closing prayer asking God to help members become better Sons of the American Legion through words and deeds rooted in justice, freedom, democracy, and loyalty. With covers replaced and a final salute, Groton's charter meeting concluded—launching a new chapter for Squadron 39 and completing another link in the local Legion family alongside the Legion and Auxiliary.

For more information about becoming a member of the Groton Squadron, contact any of the officers. You need to be a son, stepson, adopted son, grandson, step-grandson, adopted grandson, or other male descendant of someone who is eligible for membership in The American Legion.



**Wyatt Reis, Detachment Commander, read the charter. Once the charter is signed by the charter members, it will be filed in the Library of Congress.** (Photo by Bruce Babcock)

# Specialized Care in Aberdeen

## Your care team lives in the same community you do, and that means something.

The team at Avera St. Luke's Hospital will be here for you and your family through it all with the latest treatment options, allowing you to get care in your local clinic. These specialized providers are located right here in Aberdeen and visit clinics across the area as part of our outreach care program.

### This includes local access to:

- Latest diagnostic services and imaging technology
- Clinical trials
- 24/7 Level III Trauma Center
- Specialty services brought to rural facilities
- Telemedicine services
- Surgical care

### Specialty care includes:

- Nephrology
- Cardiology
- Urology
- Orthopedics
- Pulmonology
- Sports Medicine



**Specialized care** is what we do.  
**Compassionate** is who we are.

[Avera.org/StLukes](https://Avera.org/StLukes)

PRIM-1719100



JANUARY 13, 2026 – GENERAL MEETING

Meeting called to order by Lynn Heupel, Brown County Auditor at 8:45 A.M. in the Commission Chambers, Courthouse Annex, Brown County, SD. Present were Commissioners Drew Dennert, Kyler Dinger, Mike Wiese, Mike Gage, and Duane Sutton. Commissioner Dennert led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:** Moved by Commissioner Wiese, seconded by Dinger to approve the agenda. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None  
**SOUTH DAKOTA OPEN MEETING LAWS:** Per SDCL 1-25-13, Brown County Commission reviewed and acknowledged the Conducting the Public's Business in Public guide that was prepared by S.D. Attorney General's Office in partnership with S.D. NewsMedia Association. Chairman Sutton shared the guide is available for review at the Brown County Auditor's Office during normal business hours.

**LIABILITY INSURANCE QUOTES:** Brown County Commission reviewed the quotes provided by S.D. Public Assurance Alliance for Liability Insurance. Moved by Commissioner Wiese to remain with the \$1 Million Policy, seconded by Gage. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

**SURPLUS PROPERTY – TREASURER:** Patty VanMeter, Treasurer requested to surplus the following items and dispose of them at the Landfill: 8 HP 400pf Intel Core Desktop Computers; 2 flat panel 22" monitors; 1 HP P3015 printer; 1 SII label printer. Moved by Commissioner Wiese, seconded by Dinger to approve declaring the items above as surplus and be taken to the Landfill. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

**SURPLUS PROPERTY – SHERIFF'S OFFICE/DIVE TEAM:** Jon Lemke, Chief Deputy Sheriff requested to surplus the following items then sell and have proceeds go back to the Dive Team: 1994 Ford Ambulance (as is with Brown County decals removed) and a Stryker Power-Pro XT Cot.

Moved by Commissioner Wiese, seconded by Gage to declare these items surplus, authorize selling the items and the proceeds to go to the Dive Team. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

**BROWN COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH BOARD:** Moved by Commissioner Dennert, seconded by Wiese to approve appointing Patti Salo to the Brown County Mental Health Board. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

**CENTENNIAL VILLAGE REPORT FOR 2025:** Moved by Commissioner Wiese, seconded by Dennert to acknowledge receipt of the Centennial Village Report for 2025 Brown County Fair. Centennial Village was short by \$9,868.50 of total due for 2025, the Commission agreed to allow them to make payments, over the next three years along with the amount due each year from the Fair. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

**NEW OPIOID FUND TRANSFER:** Moved by Commissioner Wiese, seconded by Gage to approve cash transfer from General Fund in the amount of \$40,956.81 to the new Opioid Fund per Department of Legislative Audits. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

**CONSOLIDATED EQUALIZATION BOARD FOR 2026:** Commissioners Gage, Sutton and Dinger volunteered to sit on the Consolidated Equalization Board for 2026.

Commissioner Gage brought the following Resolution:

RESOLUTION #2026-10

A RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH CONSOLIDATED BOARD OF EQUALIZATION

PURSUANT TO SDCL 10-11-66 THROUGH 10-11-77

BE IT RESOLVED that a Consolidated Board of Equalization as authorized by SDCL 10-11-66 shall be established pursuant to the Resolution of the Governing Boards of Brown County, City of Aberdeen and the Aberdeen School District 6-1. The Consolidated Board of Equalization was created by this Resolution and shall be authorized to exercise all powers contained in SDCL 10-11-66.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that three members from the Brown County Commission, one member from the Aberdeen City Council and one member from the Aberdeen School District 6-1 School Board shall constitute a Consolidated Board of Equalization as provided by SDCL 10-11-66.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Brown County Commission, Aberdeen City Council, and the Aberdeen School District 6-1 shall be responsible for the per diem, salary, and mileage costs of the respective members that serve on the Consolidated Board of Equalization. Brown County Commission shall be responsible for the ordinary and customary expenses associated with the equalization of property including appeals to the State Board of Equalization. The financial responsibilities contained in this Resolution shall remain unless either the Brown County Commission, Aberdeen City Council, or Aberdeen School District 6-1 shall request that they be modified prior to February 1st of each year.

THIS RESOLUTION shall be binding upon the Brown County Commission, Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeen School District 6-1 School Board adopting this Resolution according to law.

Seconded by Commissioner Dinger.

Roll call vote: Commissioner Dennert-aye; Dinger-aye; Gage-aye; Sutton-aye; Wiese-aye. Resolution Adopted.

**NWENERGY PUBLIC SERVICE ENERGY CONVERSION FACILITY COMMITTEE:** Moved by Commissioner Dinger, seconded by Dennert to appoint Chairman Sutton to the Temporary Committee for the NWEnergy Public Service Energy Conversion Facility. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

**MINUTES:** Moved by Commissioner Wiese, seconded by Gage to approve the Reorganization Meeting Minutes of January 6, 2026. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

**CLAIMS/PAYROLL:** Moved by Commissioner Dennert, seconded by Wiese to approve the following Claims/Payroll: CLAIMS: Professional Fees: Active Data Systems \$18,448.50; Alcohol Monitoring Systems, Inc. \$2,003.20; BMI \$446.00; CGI, LLC \$2,550.00; Cogley Law Office, Prof LLC \$ 7,488.00; Dohrer Law Office, PC \$3,322.20; Fox Law Firm, PLLC \$222.00; Language Line Services, Inc \$491.32; Lenling Law Office, Prof. LLC \$2,250.00; LexisNexis Risk Data Mgt, LLC \$200.00; Lincoln County Auditor \$318.00; Mark Katterhagen \$30.00; MO-CIC \$150.00; Network Center, Inc \$3,057.77; PharmChem, Inc \$2,574.00; Sanford Health Occupational Medicine \$982.00;

Sanford Health \$42.25; SD Assoc of County Hwy Superintendents \$600.00; State of South Dakota PMB 0112 87.17; Taliaferro Law Firm, PC \$3,060.16; Thomson Reuters – West Payment Center \$595.49; Valerie Larson \$30.00; Valstone Corporation Inc \$7,250.00; Publishing: Grotton Daily Independent \$293.71; McQuillen Creative Group, Inc \$522.95. Rentals: Vestis \$321.76. Repairs & Maintenance: Auto Value Aberdeen \$134.99; Big Scoop Snow Removal \$726.67; Butler Machinery Company \$2,213.87; Crawford Trucks & Equipment \$4,960.00; Dakota Fluid Power, Inc \$12.50; Election Systems & Software \$7,281.22; Graham Tire Inc \$45.35; House of Glass \$50.26; Hoven Auto Repair, Inc \$1,313.92; Jake's Heating & Cooling \$656.63; Leidholt Electric, LLC \$477.50; Lenslock Inc \$33,967.00; Meister Mowing LLC \$1,810.71; Midwest Pump & Tank \$134.47; RDO Equipment Co \$4,122.00; Safety Service \$40.69; Schwan Welding \$4,317.30; Transource Truck & Equipment, Inc \$13.25. Supplies: Agtegra Cooperative \$37,919.99; Amazon Capital Services, Inc \$2,353.29; Auto Value Aberdeen \$333.42; Brown County Fair Foundation \$150.00; Butler Machinery Company \$1,926.81; Central Network Retail Group LLC \$4,698.81; Century Business Products \$338.67; Cole Paper Inc \$338.27; Cornwell Drug \$12.00; Crawford Trucks & Equipment \$7,883.07; Dakota Fluid Power, Inc \$3,707.88; Doll Distributing LLC \$165.00; Fox Law Firm, PLLC \$3.57; Geffdog Designs \$454.12; Graham Tire Inc \$1,035.30; Hoven Auto Repair, Inc \$112.00; Interstate Battery System of South Dakota \$615.80; Kessler's \$43.11; LabSource, Inc \$813.72; Laser Printer Checks \$317.44; LB's Dive Shop LLC \$1,266.40; Linde Gas & Equipment Inc \$177.80; Menards \$237.49; Midwest Pump & Tank \$589.07; NVC \$33.03; Performance Oil \$96.81; Porter Distributing \$282.00; RDO Equipment Co \$6,843.40; Rixstine Recognition \$32.96; Runnings \$3,202.93; Safety Service \$1,226.85; Schwan Welding \$24.00; Transource Truck & Equipment, Inc \$2,321.59; Tri-State Water \$86.60; Volk Upholstery \$40.00; Zastrowski Sales & Service \$66.60. Travel & Conference: Brian Koens \$152.00; CGI, LLC \$65.80; Kent Karlen \$19.00; Lenling Law Office, Prof. LLC \$80.00; Makendra Ochsner \$38.00; Neil Bittner \$19.00; Professional Development Academy, LLC \$500.00; SDAE4-HP \$200.00. Utilities: AT&T Mobility \$43.73; Big Scoop Snow Removal \$363.33; City of Aberdeen Treasurer \$1,564.96; Economy Propane, LLC \$2,801.60; Northwestern Energy \$7,426.45; NVC \$195.54; Richmond Lake Sanitary District \$1,200.00; T-Mobile USA Inc \$527.66; Town of Frederick \$79.79; WEB Water Development Association, Inc \$122.23. Other: Andax Industries LLC \$332.98; SD Assoc of County Officials \$886.00; SD Dept of Agriculture & Natural Resources \$4,080.72.

**PAYROLL:** Commission \$5,165.81; Elections \$2,050.39; Auditor/Welfare \$12,097.84; Treasurer \$18,251.33; SA \$38,134.90; Public Defender \$10,265.71; Maintenance \$13,765.48; Assessor \$17,506.93; Register of Deeds \$11,511.05; VSO \$5,006.26; GIS \$3,110.76; IT \$10,616.94; HR \$5,803.70; Sheriff \$75,181.46; Jail \$106,599.09; Coroner (Voucher) \$2,100.00; Court Security \$8,867.62; JDC \$45,418.79; Museum \$14,610.49; Parks/Fairgrounds \$7,966.34; Fair Board \$4,858.36; 4-H \$881.60; Weed \$1,245.44; Planning & Zoning \$8,510.51; Highway \$53,496.75; Dispatch \$56,460.85; Emergency \$5,968.89; 24/7 Sobriety \$3,057.14; Landfill \$19,296.51; Meal Benefits \$42.00; FICA \$33,814.82; Medicare \$7,908.28; HSA \$2,360.72. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

**HR REPORT:** Moved by Commissioner Dinger, seconded by Wiese to approve the following Human Resource Report submitted by Human Resources Director, Allison Tunheim:  
 o Last day of internship for Mayson Coyle, Brown County State's Attorney Intern; effective December 19, 2025.  
 o Employment ending for Abigail Rang, Brown County 911 Communications Officer, FT; effective January 8, 2026. Request to fill.  
 o Hiring of Matthew Muth as Brown County 911 Communications Officer, FT; starting wage \$23.73/hr. – effective January 12, 2026.

o Hiring of Brianna Chaviano as Brown County 911 Communications Officer, FT; starting wage \$23.73/hr. – effective January 12, 2026.

o Hiring of Kristen Hamiel as Brown County 911 Communications Officer, FT; starting wage \$23.73/hr. – effective January 20, 2026.

o Hiring of Tyler Kampa as Brown County JDC Detention Officer, FT; starting wage \$22.59/hr. – effective January 20, 2026.

All members present voting aye. Motion carried.  
**TRAVEL REQUESTS:** Moved by Commissioner Wiese, seconded by Gage to approve the following Travel Requests: Jon Lemke, Keith Baker, Wes Graff – Sheriff's Office to retrieve new Patrol Cars in Des Moines, IA on January 29, 2026. Derek Hoefert, Deputy Sheriff to attend Instructor Development Training in Rapid City on February 9-13, 2026. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

**OTHER BUSINESS:** Chairman Sutton shared that their goal is have new revisions to the Ordinance #302 -Wind Energy Systems on the website for review by the end of the week and have Final Reading on January 27th.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** Moved by Commissioner Dinger, seconded by Dennert to go into Executive Session per SDCL 1-25-2 for Legal. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

Chairman Sutton declared the Executive Session closed with No Action taken.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Moved by Commissioner Dennert, seconded by Wiese to adjourn the Brown County Commission at 9:18 a.m. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

Lynn Heupel, Brown County Auditor

Published January 21, 2026 at the total approximate cost of \$115.65 and may be viewed free of charge at www.sdpublicnotices.com. 26454



**CITY OF STRATFORD TRUSTEE VACANCY NOTICE**  
 Notice of Vacancy  
 City of Stratford  
 The following office will become vacant due to the expiration of the present term of office of the elective officer:

TRUSTEE (THREE-YEAR TERM)

Circulation of nominating petitions

Please notify Anna Kwak if you are interested. Petitions will be made available at the Community Center on FEBRUARY 1st, 2026.

First day to begin petition circulation is FEBRUARY 2nd, 2026. Deadline is FEBRUARY 23rd, 2026 at 5:00 PM.

Submitted by:  
 Anna Kwak  
 Finance Officer

Published January 14 and 21, 2026 at the total approximate cost of \$16.97 and may be viewed free of charge at www.sdpublicnotices.com. 26447



**Notice of Vacancy**  
 Municipality of Warner, SD  
 The following office will become vacant due to the expiration of the present term of office of the elective officer: Trustee, Gaylon Townsend. This is for a three-year term.

Circulation of nominating petitions may begin on February 2nd, 2026. Petitions may be filed in the office of the Finance Officer located in the Warner Community Center, 11 West Main Street, Warner SD 57479 between the hours of 9:00AM and 12PM, Monday, Thursday or Friday and no later than Tuesday, March 24th, 2026 at 5 PM central time OR sent via registered mail, postmarked by that date and time.

Nichol Townsend, Finance Officer

Published January 14 and 21, 2026 at the total approximate cost of \$14.71 and may be viewed free of charge at www.sdpublicnotices.com. 26446



**NOTICE OF DEADLINE FOR FILING NOMINATING PETITIONS FOR THE PRIMARY ELECTION AND FOR FILING INDEPENDENT CANDIDATE PETITIONS**

The deadline for filing nominating petitions for the primary election is March 31, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. central time. If a petition is mailed by registered mail by March 31, 2026 at 5:00pm central time, it is considered filed.

Nominating petitions for the offices of Brown County Commissioners At Large (3), Brown County Auditor, Brown County Sheriff, Brown County Register of Deeds, Delegates to the Republican State Party Convention, Precinct Committeeman and Committeewomen for the Republican Party, must be filed in the office of the Brown County Auditor, 25 Market St., Suite 1, Aberdeen, SD between the hours of 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. central time.

Nominating petitions for the offices of U.S. Senator, U.S. Representative, Governor and Lieutenant Governor, State Senate District 1, State House of Representative District 1, State Senate District 3, State House of Representative District 23, Water Development District 23, must be filed in the Office of the Secretary of State, State Capitol Building, Pierre, SD 57501 between the hours of 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. central time.

The deadline for filing nominating petitions to run as an independent candidate in the general election is April 28, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. central time. If a petition is mailed by registered mail by April 28, 2026 at 5:00 p.m., it is considered filed.

Lynn Heupel, Brown County Auditor

Published January 14 and 21, 2026 at the total approximate cost of \$33.37 and may be viewed free of charge at www.sdpublicnotices.com. 26443



**NOTICE OF VACANCY MUNICIPALITY OF CLAREMONT**

The following office will become vacant due to the expiration of the present term of office currently held by

Frank Rasmussen, Trustee - Three Year Term.

Jason Spencer, Trustee - Three Year Term.

Circulation of nominating petitions may begin on February 2nd, 2026, and petitions may be filed at City Hall located at 606 6th Ave., Claremont, SD, not later than the 24th day of March, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.

Published January 21 and 28, 2025, at the total approximate cost of \$12.44 and may be viewed free of charge at www.sdpublicnotices.com. 26455



**INVITATION TO BID NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that the Groton City Council of the City of Groton, South Dakota, will open bids for the painting of the exterior of City Hall/Wage Memorial Library on February 3rd, 2026, at 7:00pm (local time) at City Hall, 120 N Main Street, SD 57445. Received sealed bids will be opened publicly and read aloud.

Please mail sealed bids to PO Box 587, Groton, SD 57445 or drop them off at 120 N Main Street before 5:00pm on February 3rd, 2026.

Any questions concerning specifications or other information may be directed to the City Finance Office. The City reserves the right to refuse any and all bids, to waive any informalities in the bidding, and to award the contract in the best interests of the City of Groton, South Dakota.

Published January 14 and 21, 2026 at the total approximate cost of \$17.53 and may be viewed free of charge at www.sdpublicnotices.com. 26445

# King Crossword

## ACROSS

- 1 Melville captain
- 5 Bottle part
- 9 Schlep
- 12 Petty of "Tank Girl"
- 13 Jai —
- 14 Navarro on "The View"
- 15 Tangy fruit pie
- 17 White wine cocktail
- 18 Night light?
- 19 Comic Chase
- 21 Prove untrue
- 24 Converse
- 25 With (Fr.)
- 26 Woo with a tune
- 30 Rule, for short
- 31 Ohio's "Rubber Capital"
- 32 Crone
- 33 Genius
- 35 Speck
- 36 Fireplace fuel
- 37 Golf great Sam
- 38 "Untrue!"
- 40 Stated
- 42 Jargon suffix
- 43 Small digit
- 48 "Caught ya!"
- 49 Leading man?
- 50 McGregor of film

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12				13				14		
15				16				17		
			18				19	20		
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48				49				50		
51				52				53		

- 51 Grier of "The L Word"
- 52 Really pesters
- 53 Pixels
- DOWN**
- 1 The whole enchilada
- 2 Weed whacker
- 3 Branch
- 4 Having superhuman strength, say
- 5 Post-WWII alliance
- 6 Flair
- 7 Lot vehicle
- 8 Chef's workplace
- 9 Sierra Nevada resort
- 10 Prof's employer
- 11 Actor Sinise
- 16 Born abroad?
- 20 Solo of "Star Wars"
- 21 Biting remark
- 22 Always
- 23 Defendant's defenders
- 24 Gator's kin
- 26 Takes to the slopes
- 27 Epoch
- 28 Facts and figures
- 29 "Zounds!"
- 31 Luanda resident
- 34 Cyclades isle
- 35 Truly
- 37 Part of RSVP
- 38 Tide type
- 39 Job-safety org.
- 40 Male deer
- 41 \$ dispensers
- 44 Journalist Tarbell
- 45 Pair
- 46 Feedbag bit
- 47 USN rank

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## Claremont Town Jan 13 Meeting

January 13, 2026  
The Board of Trustees for the Town of Claremont met on January 13, 2026, at 8:00 p.m. President Spencer called the meeting to order with Trustees Thompson and Rasmussen present. Also present was Rick Pahl.

The minutes of the December meeting were reviewed and, on a motion by Rasmussen and seconded by Thompson, were approved as read.

On a motion by Thompson and seconded by Rasmussen, the following warrants were allowed.

General: Full Circle Ag, dyed diesel, 193.10. IRS, federal payment/deposit, 60.75. JVT, phone, internet, S. phone, 161.47. NWE, street lights, 661.88. NWE, City Hall, 96.63. Charla Rye, wages, 500.00. Post Office, stamps roll, 78.00.

WSSW: Ecolab, pest elimination, 190.74. BDM, water purchased, 1,093.35. NWE, pump house power, 83.31. NWE, sewer, 85.59. NWE, storm sewer, 38.03. Jacobs Construction, storm sewer completion, 36,351.69. USDA Rural Development, water loan, 576.00.

There was discussion for gravel on streets. It was tabled until next meeting.

Discussion on meters (water) was to be completed and up and running hopefully by March. Many thanks to Melinda Collins and Jason Spencer for the time they are putting into that project.

With no further business before the Board, a motion to adjourn was made by Rasmussen and seconded by Thompson.

Respectfully submitted,  
Charla Rye, F.O.  
Published January 21, 2026 at the total approximate cost of \$15.27 and may be viewed free of charge at [www.sdpublicnotices.com](http://www.sdpublicnotices.com). 26457

## Claremont Town Dec. 9 Meeting

December 9, 2026  
The Board of Trustees for the Town of Claremont met on December 9, 2026, at 8:00 p.m. in City Hall. President Spencer called the meeting to order with Trustees Thompson and Rasmussen present.

The minutes from the November meeting were presented and on a motion by Thompson and seconded by Rasmussen they were approved.

On a motion by Rasmussen and seconded by Thompson the following warrants were allowed.

General: Northwestern Energy, street lights, 555.74. Northwestern Energy, City Hall, 74.06. JVT, phone, internet, S. phone, 150.61. GDI, publishing, 13.57. Jason Spencer, 9 meetings, 831.15. Bob Thompson, 9 meetings, 831.15. Frank Rasmussen, 9 meetings, 831.15. Charla Rye, wage, 500.00.

WSSW: Northwestern Energy, pump house, 42.33. Northwestern Energy, sewer, 82.10. Northwestern Energy, storm sewer, 33.11.

With no further business before the Board a motion was made by Thompson and seconded by Rasmussen to adjourn. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,  
Charla Rye, F.O.

Published January 21, 2026 at the total approximate cost of \$12.16 and may be viewed free of charge at [www.sdpublicnotices.com](http://www.sdpublicnotices.com). 26456

## Warner Town Jan 14 Meeting

TOWN OF WARNER MINUTES FOR WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14TH, 2026

MEMBERS PRESENT: Gaylon Townsend, Terry Evans, Stewart Nelson and Nichol Townsend. Dave Fair was absent. The Planning and Zoning Board was also present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A motion was made by Evans and seconded by Townsend to approve the minutes from December 10th, 2025 meeting. Motion carried.

FINANCIAL REPORTS: MSC: Evans/Townsend. Checking: Town \$325,858.52; Water \$81,671.97; Sewer \$206,661.71. CDs: Town \$35,014.25; Water \$52,781.59; Sewer \$29,869.21.

BILLS APPROVED FOR PAYMENT: MSC: Townsend/Evans.

Amazon (supplies) \$366.82, BankNorth (misc.) \$120.46, Gas-N-Goodies (gas) \$63.58, Office Depot (supplies) \$133.88, Norton (anti-virus fee) \$4.03, Tax990 (fees) \$239.70, Wal-Mart (supplies) \$693.85, Warner Post Office (supplies) \$84.08, US Bank (loan payment) \$9631.84, USDA (loan payments) \$2083, WEB Water \$5174.31, Agtegra \$333.98, TranSource (equipment) \$3758.78, Badger Meter (meter reads & annual service fee) \$431, Dakota Supply Group (supplies) \$19.55, Dependable Sanitation \$2640, Groton Independent (advertising) \$37.04, Hofer's Repair (supplies) \$732.94, Lynn Aman (CC cleaning) \$75, MACS (supplies) \$127.65, Menards (supplies) \$87.32, Midcontinent (shop & office service) \$297.96, Northwestern Energy \$2862.30, SD Assoc of Rural Water Systems (annual fee) \$410, SD Dept of Rev/Lab \$20, SD Dept of Rev/Sales Tax \$212.22, SD One Call \$8.4, Town Water/Sewer \$180.28, TranSource (supplies) \$369.28, Vosika Warner Storage Units (rent) \$2700, SD Municipal League (dues) \$665, PAYROLL: (101) \$2182.02, (602) \$906.83, (604) \$908.63 - Stewart Nelson \$3627.26, Barb Breidenbach \$46.17, Terry Evans \$55.41, Linda Johannsen \$46.17, Justin McCord \$46.17, Gaylon Townsend \$55.41, Nichol Townsend \$979.69, Paul T. Vetch \$46.17, SD Retirement Fund \$542.36, Payroll Taxes \$1211.79.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Supplemental Appropriations Ordinance Final Reading was approved. MSC: Evans/Townsend. Ordinance #122025 Supplemental Appropriations Ordinance. Be it ordained by the Town of Warner that the following sums be appropriated to meet the obligations of the municipality. 101-GENERAL FUND: 101-00000-Licenses/Dues/Fees \$4071.49, 101-00000-Ag Well \$1779.72,

101-41900-Shop \$2680.39, 101-43100-Streets \$8360.28, 101-43160-Street Lights \$2038.99, 101-45600-Community Center, Total Appropriations - \$21457.36. Source of Funding: Transfer from other departments: 101-00000-General \$4307.89, 101-41410-Legal Fees \$500, 101-41440-SD Retirement \$880.96, 101-42200-Fire \$3639.03, 101-41950-Planning & Zoning \$184.61, 101-41920-Office \$515.37, 101-43230-Garbage \$552.95, 101-45200-Parks \$10,876.55

Total Source of funding - \$21,457.36. First Reading 12-10-2025, Second Reading 1-14-2026. Published 1-2026. Signed: David Fair, Chairman. Attest: Nichol Townsend, Finance Officer.

2026 Wages: Maintenance: Stewart Nelson \$54,236.15 annual salary. Finance Officer: Nichol Townsend \$24 hourly wage. Planning & Zoning: Linda Johannsen, Chairman \$50 per meeting plus \$52 per month for writing Building Permits. Barb Breidenbach \$50 per meeting, Paul Vetch \$50 per meeting, Justin McCord \$50 per meeting. Board of Trustees: Chairman Dave Fair \$70 per meeting, Terry Evans \$60 per meeting, Gaylon Townsend \$60 per meeting. Certified Employees (Water, Sewer, CDL) \$19 per hour. Mowers and all other temporary workers \$17 per hour.

Planning & Zoning Board discussed corrections/changes to be made to the new comprehensive plan and ordinance before recommending it to the Board of Trustees.

NEW BUSINESS: Appoint Finance Officer - Tabled due to conflict of interest w/o 3rd trustee present.

Appoint Official Bank Depository: MSC: Evans/Townsend to appoint BankNorth of Warner.

2026 Newspaper Designation: MSC Townsend/Evans to designate The Groton Independent.

Trustee Vacancy: The following office will become vacant due to the expiration of the present term of office of the elective officer: Trustee, Gaylon Townsend. This is for a three-year term. Circulation of nominating petitions may begin on February 2nd, 2026. Petitions may be filed in the office of the Finance Officer located in the Warner Community Center, 11 West Main Street, Warner SD 57479 between the hours of 9:00AM and 12PM, Monday, Thursday or Friday and no later than Friday, March 24th, 2026 at 5 PM central time. Nichol Townsend, Finance Officer

Code Enforcement was discussed and it was decided to contract with Code Enforcement Specialists. The International Property Maintenance Code will also be adopted. MSC: Evans/Townsend.

Approved 1st Reading of Ordinance #11426: AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF WARNER, SD, AMENDING THE ORDINANCES OF THE CITY BY AMENDING CHAPTER 1-1 TOWN BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING, SECTION 1-1-1 REGULAR MEETINGS. BE IT ORDAINED BY THE TOWN OF WARNER, SD that Section 1-1-1

of the Town of Warner Municipal Ordinance is hereby amended to read as follows: 1-1-1 Regular Meetings. The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Town of Warner shall be held on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:00 pm in the Community Center, OR AT SUCH OTHER TIMES AS MAY BE DETERMINED BY THE TOWN BOARD PRESIDENT TO ACT UPON ANY BUSINESS WHICH MAY COME BEFORE IT. In the case of the regular meeting day falling on a holiday, said meeting will be held one day later. Any person or person(s) who wish to be heard at the Town Meeting must be put on the agenda the Friday prior to the meeting. MSC: Townsend/Evans

SD Open Meeting Laws Brochure was reviewed as required by SB 74.

Personnel Policy Acknowledgements signed.

Personal Vehicle Statements signed.

Sexual Harassment Policy Acknowledgements signed.

Delinquencies: 7 were noted and notices will be posted on doors.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: MONDAY, February 11th, 2026 at 7PM in the Warner Community Center.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 PM.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Dave Fair, Chairman; Nichol Townsend, Finance Officer

Published January 21, 2026 at the total approximate cost of \$63.91 and may be viewed free of charge at [www.sdpublicnotices.com](http://www.sdpublicnotices.com). 26458

## Groton School Supplemental Budget

Board Motion - Adopt Supplemental Budget #FY26-2  
RESOLUTION TO ADOPT SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET #FY26-2

Let it be resolved that the school board of the Groton Area School District, in accordance with SDCL 13-11-3.12, and after duly considering the proposed supplemental budget, hereby approves and adopts the following supplemental budget in total:

APPROPRIATIONS	GENERAL FUND
10-2213-000-111-001 Literacy Pilot PD Stipends.....	\$3,500.00
10-2213-000-210-001 Literacy Pilot PD Benefits.....	\$500.00
10 2213-000-220-001 Literacy Pilot PD Retirement Benefits.....	\$250.00
10-2213-000-411-001 Literacy Pilot Supplies .....	\$4,750.00
10-2214-000-319-660 1003 Professional Dev. Services....	\$2,700.00
TOTAL APPROPRIATIONS.....	\$11,700.00
MEANS OF FINANCE .....	GENERAL FUND
10-3129-000 Reimbursement Literacy Pilot.....	\$9,000.00
10-4158-660 1003 Grant.....	\$2,700.00
TOTAL MEANS OF FINANCE .....	\$11,700.00

Presiding Officer  
Business Manager

Published January 21, 2026 at the total approximate cost of \$17.75 and may be viewed free of charge at [www.sdpublicnotices.com](http://www.sdpublicnotices.com). 26459

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### King Crossword Answers

Solution time: 23 mins.

A	H	A	B	NECK	LUG
L	O	R	I	ALAI	ANA
L	E	M	O	N	T
NEON	C	H	E	V	Y
B	E	L	I	E	C
A	V	E	C	S	E
R	E	G	A	K	R
B	R	A	I	N	I
L	O	G	S	S	N
N	O	T	S	S	A
E	S	H	L	I	T
A	H	A	A	D	A
P	A	M	N	A	G

### Weekly SUDOKU

Answer

5	2	6	3	8	7	1	4	9
1	3	8	9	2	4	7	5	6
4	7	9	6	5	1	8	3	2
3	9	5	1	4	8	6	2	7
7	1	4	2	6	9	5	8	3
8	6	2	5	7	3	9	1	4
6	4	7	8	3	5	2	9	1
2	5	1	4	9	6	3	7	8
9	8	3	7	1	2	4	6	5



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## Weekly SUDOKU

5			8	7	1	4	
	3	8		2	4		5
4	7		6			8	
						6	
	1		6				8
		2	5		3		
4			3			2	9
5	1			6	3	7	
8	3			2	4		

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

**DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦**

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging  
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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## 2026 MITCHELL SOIL HEALTH EVENT

Thursday, February 5, 2026  
10:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. CST  
Highland Convention Center  
2000 Highland Way, Mitchell, SD

AGENDA INCLUDES:  
Navigating Weather Extremes and the Growing Season Ahead – Matt Reardon, Senior Atmospheric Scientist for Nutrien Ag Solutions  
Revisiting Management Plans to Stay Ahead of the Weeds – Eric Jones, SDSU SE Extension Weed Mgmt. Specialist  
Corn Rootworm Management Strategies – Bruce Potter, MN Extension Integrated Pest Mgmt. Specialist

For more details visit [SDNoTill.com](http://SDNoTill.com)  
Pre-registration is requested by Jan. 30, 2026.  
Please email [heidi.rients@usda.gov](mailto:heidi.rients@usda.gov); or call 605-996-1564 ext. 3; or text 605-530-5390.  
Lunch provided. CCA credits will be available.

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Monday, February 9, 2026  
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## Classifieds and Card of Thanks

The following rates are for Classifieds published in both the Groton Daily Independent and the Groton Independent. Cut rate in half if you just want it in the GDI or just the weekly.

1 Week: \$9 for first 30 words, 20¢/word thereafter  
 2 Wks: \$17 for first 30 words, 38¢/word thereafter  
 3 Wks: \$24 for first 30 words, 54¢/word thereafter  
 4th consecutive week is free  
**605/397-NEWS (6397)**  
 PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

### EMPLOYMENT

**HORIZON HEALTH SEEKS FT nurse practitioner/physician assistant in Wessington Springs.** Duties include clinic and ER coverage. Horizon's full benefits package includes loan repayment and relocation bonus. Apply at [horizonhealthcare.org/careers](http://horizonhealthcare.org/careers)

**HORIZON HEALTH SEEKS FT nurse practitioner or physician assistant in Martin.** Horizon's full benefits package includes loan repayment and relocation bonus. Apply at [horizonhealthcare.org/careers](http://horizonhealthcare.org/careers)

**HAND COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPT - 4-day work week, great pay and benefits, check it out at <https://hand.sdcounties.org/employment/> for details.**

### LIVESTOCK

**KOUPAL'S B&B ANGUS BULL SALE: Monday, February 9, 2026 1:00 pm. CT, at the ranch, Dante, SD.190 Angus Bulls, 50 commercial heifers, and pick of 2025 heifer Crop Live Bidding on DV Auction. Bud Koupal 605-491-2102.**

## City Council covers summer staffing, youth baseball, disaster planning

by Elizabeth Varin

The Groton City Council tackled a mix of summer staffing salaries, a disaster sheltering agreement with the American Red Cross and radar speed sign prices during its meeting Tuesday night.

In addition, the Council heard from a member of the baseball/softball foundation board about a proposal to transition the city's Junior Teener team into a U14 Legion team. While the change would have little impact on the overall structure of the game for the 13 and 14-year-old players, it would move the team from the VFW-affiliated Teener program to the American Legion system, meaning players would wear a different uniform patch, play under Legion rules, and follow a lower pitch count limit.

It would also bring the three teen baseball teams under the same system, meaning the coaches would all be working from the same rule book, said Doug Hamilton, foundation treasurer. At a recent statewide meeting, about 23 to 25 teams indicated they planned to move from Junior Teener to Legion teams, and many regional teams are making that move as well.

Hamilton asked the council to consider transitioning away from the Junior Teener system. Baseball leaders would need to know before the early bird registration deadline in mid-May.

The council did not make any decisions on that baseball question as it was brought before them during public comment, where members of the public can speak to the council, but no action can be taken on items discussed.

The council did, though, take action on a different item related to summer recreation. The council approved its summer salary ordinance, setting pay rates for seasonal summer employees as well as reminding the public that applications for some positions are already due in less than a month.

Applications for baseball coordinator, softball coordinator, junior legion coach, junior teener coach, girls softball coaches (U8/U10/U12/U14/U18), day baseball/softball coach, concessions manager and swimming pool manager are available on the city website and are due by 5 p.m. Feb. 18.

The council also ap-

proved the first reading of an ordinance setting summer recreation employee salaries. Those salaries include:

- Public works laborer/park caretaker at \$16.50 per hour plus 25 cents for each year of service
- Cemetery caretaker at \$16.50 per hour plus 25 cents for each year of service
- Swimming pool manager at \$16.50 per hour plus 25 cents for each year of service at the swimming pool
- Assistant part time swimming pool manager at \$14.50 per hour plus 25 cents for each year of service at the swimming pool
- Swimming pool lifeguard at \$11.85 per hour plus 25 cents for each year of service
- WSI lifeguards during swimming lessons at their regular salary plus \$1 and a \$25 bonus per private lesson
- WSI assistant lifeguard during swimming lessons at their regular salary plus 50 cents per hour
- Concessions manager at \$75 daily plus 50 percent of net profits (the latter of which will be paid at the end of the season)
- Baseball coordinator at \$2,000 yearly plus \$77.32 per year of service
- Softball coordinator at \$2,000 yearly plus \$25.77 per year of service
- Junior legion baseball coach at \$3,000 yearly plus \$51.55 per year of service
- Junior teener baseball coach at \$3,000 yearly plus \$51.55 per year of service (if one coach is hired) or \$1,500 yearly plus \$38.66 per year of service (if two coaches are hired)
- Day baseball/softball coach at \$2,500 yearly plus \$50 per year of service
- Girls softball coach (U8, U10, U12, U14, U18) at \$1,000 yearly plus \$20.62 per year of service
- Baseball groundskeeper at \$11.85 per hour plus 25 cents per year of service
- Baseball gatekeeper at \$11.85 per hour plus 25 cents per year of service

The council also discussed an agreement to allow the American Red Cross to use the Community Center to provide services during a disaster. After a short discussion, the council approved setting up a facility use agreement.

Finally, the council also agreed to enter into a consulting/assistance agreement with recently retired Public Works Coordinator Terry Herron. Herron can be called for help on an as needed basis by Dwight Zerr, who took over after Herron's retirement, city Finance Officer Douglas Heinrich or city Mayor Scott Hanlon. He will be paid \$39.85 per hour.

In other business, the council chose to hold off on taking action on radar speed sign quotes, requesting additional information be brought back for consideration at a future meeting.

## The Life of Richard "Dick" Neitzel



A Celebration of Life for Richard 'Dick' Neitzel, 71, of Aberdeen, SD, was held Saturday, January 31, 2026, at Spitzer-Miller Funeral Home, with Pastor Alton Vilhauer officiating. Dick passed away peacefully on Sunday, January 11, 2026, at Avera St. Lukes in Aberdeen.

Richard 'Dick' Neitzel was born August 20, 1954, to Burton and Bernice Neitzel, in Aberdeen. He grew up on a farm near Groton, where he was known for raising cain with his brothers. He attended school in Groton. He graduated from Groton High School in 1972. He worked at Scotty's where he got the nickname Big Scotty. He then went to work at Parcel Erickson before becoming a parts man at HC Clark implement, moving on to Artz Equipment as parts man, before taking a position as an equipment salesman. After retiring, Dick started his "fun" job at the Johnson and Strom farms, doing spring planting and fall harvest, which he thoroughly enjoyed. He married Wendy Pendroy on June 21, 1986 in Aberdeen, SD.

Dick loved his two daughters Steph and Angie, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Dick was a member of the Brown County Old Time Tractor Pullers, pulling with his Allis-Chalmers tractor. He was part of the Freedom Riders, loved playing cards with the guys at Young Guns, was a coach for youth trap shooting, along with trap shooting himself. He was an avid Wings and Cougar Hockey fan. Dick and Wendy traveled to many car shows with their 1955 Chevy and 2000 Pontiac Trans Am.

Dick was a hard worker, always willing to help when asked or when he saw a need. He would give you the shirt off his back. He was quick witted and had a great sense of humor. If you ever saw his hats, you would know what that means. He loved his Golden Retrievers, first Jack, and now Murphy. He enjoyed Western movies, particularly Tombstone. No worries if the sound went out on the TV because Dick could recite most lines of the whole movie!

Grateful for having shared Dick's life are his wife Wendy; daughters: Stephanie (Kris) Lee and Angela (Cory) Huff; grandchildren: Tanner (Jenn) Neitzel, Shelby Lee, Collin, Brady, and Alaina Huff; great-grandchildren: Leon and Raphael Neitzel; siblings: Deb (Alan) Redman, William (Cheryl) Neitzel, Ronald Neitzel, and Susan Linton; in-laws: Sandy (Cliff) Reirich, Susan Vickers, and Tony (Dana) Pendroy, many nieces and nephews and special dog, Murphy.

Preceding Dick in death are his parents Burton and Bernice Neitzel; parents-in-law Harry and Helen Pendroy; brother: Mike Neitzel; in-laws: Roger Pendroy and Connie Franz; and Mike Vickers; and special dog, Jack.

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