

# The Groton Independent

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## Groton School Board accepts resignation of Opportunity Coordinator, retirement of two long-time district employees

by Elizabeth Varin

Monday night's school board meeting included an emotional moment as members faced what several described as a difficult decision.

The board accepted the resignation of middle school/high school Opportunity Coordinator Jodi Schwan, who has served in that role since August 2017. Jodi Schwan is married to district Superintendent Joe Schwan, who sat silently during the discussion.

Before taking action, board members discussed the possibility of tabling the item and expressed appreciation for Schwan's work and dedication to students and staff during her tenure.

Board member Tigh Fliehs made the motion to accept her resignation, "out of respect for her and her families, and I know that's what their wishes are."

Several members voiced their support for Schwan and her family, praising the impact she has made in the district over the past eight years.

"This has been hard, I know. The students, the teachers, the staff have all reached out," said Grant Rix, board president. "This is going to be hard for our school district to move on. Tell Jodi she did an excellent job with teachers and staff, students. The students' all loved her.

"This is something that they want for their family," Rix continued. "It's a good movement for them. I understand wanting to think about it a little bit more. I will entertain a motion to table it, but don't believe that will change anything."

Ultimately, the board voted to accept her resignation, acknowledging both the challenge of the decision and the contributions she has made to the school community.

Marty Weismantel seconded the motion to accept Jodi Schwan's resignation, "with the understanding that she has the full support of all of us in this room, and her family does too. And to thank her for everything she's done.

"I know I've got one daughter who thought the world of her when she was here," he added.

Low voices answered when Rix called for the vote. Weismantel was the lone "no" vote, commenting on opposing his own second.

### More personnel decisions made

The board also accepted the retirement of two long-time district staff members.

Diane Kurtz, middle school/high school English teacher, has spent 34 years teaching in Groton, but plans to leave at the end of the school year, according to the retirement letter read by the board.

Also leaving at the end of the school year is Kami Lipp, paraprofessional at the elementary school.

The board approved reassigning Kelly Oswald from paraprofessional to administrative assistant/study hall effective Monday.

The final personnel-related item approved Monday was hiring a grade 5-12 instrumental music instructor for the 2026-2027 school year. The board approved hiring Megan Dockter to fill the position for the next school year.

Dockter graduated from Northern State University in spring 2024. She is currently studying for in the master's degree program in clarinet performance at North Dakota State University. She already has experience in Groton as well, having been a student teacher in spring 2023.

While plans are in place for the next school year, the instrumental music teacher position remains open and applications are still being accepted for the spring semester. However, Sharon Schwan, who

spend more than 30 years as the director of the Warner High School Mighty Monarchs pep band and marching band, has stepped in as substitute teacher.

### Emergency closure policy change discussed

Board members also spent time discussing a possible revision to the district's emergency closure policy, weighing whether activities should remain at the administration's discretion on no-school days or be automatically canceled.

The policy change was among a handful of others brought before the board for a first reading at Monday's meeting.

The proposed emergency weather change would require that all games, contests, meets, events, practices and district facilities be closed when school is called off.

Board members voiced arguments on both sides of the issue, but no decision was finalized. Superintendent Joe Schwan said he would bring that policy back for further consideration at a future meeting.

Middle school and high school math and social science teachers updated the board on their classes and curriculum changes.

Greg Kjellsen, who teaches algebra, pre-algebra and pre-calculus this year, has seen a downward shift in his class numbers, some of which is due to students taking college algebra online.

While the number of students in algebra are down this year, there are some positives, he said. It allows for a class of just eighth graders instead of sixth, seventh and eighth graders combined. There's also a class of sophomores, juniors and seniors, which allows Kjellsen to see if they are struggling with any of the concepts and slow down if needed.

Jordan Cason discussed integrating technology into math lessons, like GeoGebra, which allows students to break down shapes on graphs better understand them. He also discussed the personal finance class, inviting any professionals who want to come and speak to the class to reach out to him.

Rounding out the math group, Eric Swenson discussed some of the difficulties with the middle school class sizes. Currently there are 51 seventh graders in his class and 31 eighth graders. A total of 16 have independent education plans or 504 plans, meaning about 20 percent of those classes need extra support.

All three spoke of a curriculum review they will undertake next year.

Social science teachers know well about curriculum changes, being challenged to implement new state standards.

Both Scott Thorson and Shaun Wanner said it's been a challenge to get the new curriculum in place.

Eighth grade civics class has been changed to social studies, Thorson said. Government is now condensed into a semester in senior year, which is going to make it harder.

The new standards went more into Native American and South Dakota history, and a lot of it is online, Wanner said. It's been a work in progress getting it into place.

- The board approved moving funds to purchase a transit van, something officials have been looking for for awhile. The district will move \$42,500 from cash on hand to the transportation fund for vehicles to purchase the 14-person transit van.

- The district has been in discussion with Langford about forming a cooperative agreement for wrestling beginning with the 2026-2027 school year.



## Recycling Trailer returns!

After a long drought of no recycling trailer, Heartland Sanitation of Mobridge brought over a recycling trailer on Monday. It is located in the same place as the old one, just west of the city shop. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

## Lady Tigers grind past Panthers, pull away for 51-28 win



**Senior Mia Crank reaches for the loose ball.** (Photo by Paul Kosel)

The Groton Area Lady Tigers worked through another slow start before pulling away in the second half for a 51-28 non-conference victory over Great Plains Lutheran on Monday night.

Great Plains Lutheran jumped out to an early 8-4 lead, and the game was tied twice in the opening quarter before Groton rallied to take a 9-8 lead at the end of the first. The Panthers briefly regained the lead early in the second

quarter at 10-9, but the Tigers responded by tying the game at 12 and 15, then closing the half on an 8-0 run to take a 27-18 halftime advantage.

Despite the lead, Groton head coach Matt Locke said the Tigers were still searching for consistency early in the game.

"I don't know what's going on with these starts," Locke said. "I felt like we started slower defensively than we did offensively again tonight. We talk about it, we emphasize it, but we haven't been able to shake it yet."

Groton took full control after halftime, dominating the third quarter 14-3 to push the lead to 41-23 entering the fourth. Locke credited defensive adjustments and improved focus for the second-half separation, including putting Taryn Traphagen's length on Katherine Prah.

"We didn't need to get out on her on the perimeter," Locke said. "Once she passes it, the first thing she's going to do is basket cut. She's a give-and-go player and a big, strong kid. Putting Taryn on her made a difference in holding her down."

The Tigers finished the night 13-of-34 on two-point attempts (38%), 6-of-24 from three-point range (25%), and 7-of-16 at the free-throw line. Groton controlled the glass with 38 rebounds and added 15 assists, 10 steals, and two blocked shots, while committing just 11 turnovers.

Locke acknowledged fatigue may have played a role as the Tigers navigated a busy stretch of games.

"I thought I saw a little fatigue tonight," he said. "That Thursday, Saturday, Monday stretch can catch up with you. But it's a grind, and you've got to push through that."

Taryn Traphagen led Groton with 15 points, knocking down three three-pointers. She added four rebounds, one steal, and two blocked shots. Jayden Penning scored nine points with seven rebounds and two assists, while Rylee Dunker turned in a strong all-around performance with five points, 10 rebounds, six assists, and two steals.

McKenna Tietz contributed six points, five rebounds, two assists, and one steal, while Jerica Locke added four points, five rebounds, three assists, and two steals. Kella Tracy and Sydney Locke each scored two points, and Mia Crank recorded two assists and two steals.

Great Plains Lutheran was led by Katherine Prah with 12 points, eight of which came in the first half. Julia Prah finished with 10 points, and Emily Moritz added six points on two three-pointers. The Panthers shot 11-of-35 from the field (31%) and 4-of-8 at the free-throw line, committing 15 turnovers.

While pleased with the win, Locke said the Tigers' attention now

shifts to improving practice habits ahead of a key matchup later in the week.

"We've got to come to practice with energy and focus," Locke said. "We don't need to go long, but we need productive practices. You can't have four kids doing one thing and one doing another. Whether we're right or wrong, we've got to be on the same page — because if we're not, we're all wrong."

Groton improves to 13-5 on the season and will host Moberidge-Pollock on Saturday in a doubleheader. Great Plains Lutheran falls to 7-10.

### Junior Varsity

Groton also claimed the junior varsity contest, pulling away for a 50-35 victory. The Tigers used an 8-0 run late in the first quarter to take a 12-10 lead, led 26-19 at halftime, and opened the second half with a 13-point run to go up 43-23.

Ashlynn Warrington and Kella Tracy each scored 10 points for Groton. Makenna Krause, Sydney Locke, and Tevan Hanson added six points apiece, while Taylynn Traphagen scored five and Brynlee Dunker finished with four. Evelyn Prah led the Panthers with 14 points.

**The games were 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. Shane Clark did the commentary, Jeslyn Kosel ran the camera and Paul Kosel did the stats and technology. The junior varsity game was sponsored by Grandparents.**

## Lady Tigers Break Through at DAK12/ NEC Clash, Defeat Canton

MADISON — The Groton Area Lady Tigers made history Saturday at the DKAD XII / Northeast Conference Clash, knocking off the Canton C-Hawks 51-38 for their first-ever win at the annual event.

Groton Area trailed early but used two decisive scoring runs to pull away, improving to 12-5 on the season.

Canton jumped out to a quick 9-2 lead and held a 12-9 advantage after the first quarter. The Tigers clawed back to tie the game at 12-12 and 14-14 before briefly taking the lead at 16-15. Canton answered once more to go up 17-16, but Groton closed the half on a 9-0 run to take a 25-21 lead into the break.

The C-Hawks again made a push in the third quarter, tying the game at 28-28, before Groton delivered the knockout stretch. The Tigers rattled off a 13-point run to seize control and carried a 41-30 lead into the fourth quarter, then closed out the win from there.

Jayden Penning was named Player of the Game after recording a double-double with 13 points and 13 rebounds. Jerica Locke led all scorers with 15 points, adding three rebounds, six assists, and three steals. Taryn Traphagen finished with 11 points, knocking down three three-pointers while pulling down six rebounds. Rylee Dunker added seven points and a game-high 14 rebounds, along with two assists and four steals.

Kella Tracy scored three points and grabbed one rebound, while McKenna Tietz chipped in two points, three rebounds, one assist, and one steal. Sydney Locke pulled down two rebounds and handed out two assists.

Groton shot 42% from two-point range (13-of-31), 16% from beyond the arc (5-of-31), and 71% at the free-throw line (10-of-14). The Tigers dominated the glass with a 42-rebound night, committed 13 turnovers, and finished with 12 assists and 10 steals.

For Canton, Camryn Skiles led the way with 15 points, while Mya Anderson added 12. Aubrey Deurmier scored eight points, Callianna Halverson had two, and Norah Devitt added one. The C-Hawks shot 22% from the field (10-of-44) and finished 12-of-20 at the line.

After the game, head coach Matt Locke emphasized the importance of sustained effort and physical play.

"We just need to stay activated for full quarters and quit stacking bad possessions," Locke said. "Once we did that, I thought our physicality really showed, and we rebounded the ball extremely well."

Groton Area will look to keep the momentum going Monday when the Tigers host Great Plains Lutheran. Groton moves to 12-5 on the season while Canton drops to 9-7.

**The game 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. Jeslyn Kosel ran the camera and Paul Kosel did the commentary, stats and technology.**



**Senior Talli Wright made eight points in the fourth quarter and had five rebounds.** (Photo by Paul Kosel)



**Jaedyn Penning was named the Player of the Game, having her first double-double of the season with 13 points and 13 rebounds.** (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

**NEC Boys Basketball Standings**

	(C)	(S)
Clark/Willow Lake	7-0	15-2
Groton Area	8-1	12-4
Hamlin	5-1	13-2
Britton-Hecla	5-3	11-6
Webster Area	6-3	9-7
Roncalli	4-5	5-9
Milbank	3-5	9-7
Sisseton	2-6	7-9
Deuel	1-4	5-10
Tiospa Zina	0-6	4-12
Redfield	0-7	2-13

**Roncalli (3-4)**

Roncalli 75, Redfield 48  
Webster Area 55, Roncalli 52  
Sisseton 65, Roncalli 60  
Roncalli 71, Tiospa Zina 37  
Clark/WL 64, Roncalli 28  
Roncalli 59, Britton-Hecla 53  
Groton Area 85, Roncalli 50

**Britton-Hecla (5-2)**

Britton-Hecla 56, Tiospa Zina 25  
Webster 58, Britton-Hecla 47  
Britton-Hecla 51, Deuel 34  
Britton-Hecla 53, Milbank 51  
Britton-Hecla 62, Redfield 36  
Roncalli 59, Britton-Hecla 53  
Britton-Hecla 45, Sisseton 37

**Groton Area (7-1)**

Groton Area 55, Hamlin 50  
Groton Area 66, Sisseton 33  
Groton Area 81, Redfield 32  
Groton Area 63, Webster 43  
Clark/WL 56, Groton Area 39  
Groton Area 83, Tiospa Zina 9  
Groton Area 57, Milbank 36  
Groton Area 85, Roncalli 50

**Milbank (2-4)**

Clark/WL 61, Milbank 38  
Britton-Hecla 53, Milbank 51  
Milbank 65, Redfield 42  
Groton Area 57, Milbank 36  
Milbank 46, Deuel 38  
Hamlin 71, Milbank 42

**Redfield (0-6)**

Roncalli 75, Redfield 48  
Groton Area 81, Redfield 32  
Britton-Hecla 62, Redfield 36  
Milbank 65, Redfield 42  
Sisseton 64, Redfield 41  
Clark/WL 84, Redfield 28

**Sisseton (2-3)**

Groton Area 66, Sisseton 33  
Sisseton 65, Roncalli 60  
Sisseton 64, Redfield 41  
Hamlin 63, Sisseton 21  
Britton-Hecla 45, Sisseton 37

**Webster Area (4-3)**

Webster 58, Britton-Hecla 47  
Groton 63, Webster 43  
Webster Area 55, Roncalli 52  
Webster Area 71, Tiospa Zina 29  
Webster Area 52, Deuel 44  
Clark/WL 68, Webster Area 36  
Hamlin 68, Webster Area 30

**Clark/Willow Lake (5-0)**

Clark/WL 61, Milbank 38  
Clark/Willow Lake 56, Groton 39  
Clark/WL 68, Webster 36  
Clark/WL 64, Roncalli 28  
Clark/WL 84, Redfield 28

**Deuel (1-3)**

Britton-Hecla 51, Deuel 34  
Webster Area 52, Deuel 44  
Milbank 46, Deuel 38  
Deuel 82, Tiospa Zina 33

**Hamlin (4-1)**

Groton Area 55, Hamlin 50  
Hamlin 80, Tiospa Zina 22

Hamlin 68, Webster Area 30  
Hamlin 63, Sisseton 21  
Hamlin 71, Milbank 42

**Tiospa Zina (0-6)**

Britton-Hecla 56, Tiospa Zina 25  
Webster Area 71, Tiospa Zina 29  
Hamlin 80, Tiospa Zina 22  
Groton Area 82, Tiospa Zina 9  
Roncalli 71, Tiospa Zina 37  
Deuel 82, Tiospa Zina 33

**Feb. 5**

Groton Area 55, Deuel 24  
Webster 66, Redfield 42

**Feb. 6**

Roncalli 58, Milbank 48  
Clark/WL 56, Sisseton 29

**Feb. 9**

Webster 59, Sisseton 48

**Feb. 10**

Hamlin 72, Roncalli 40  
Clark-WL 64, Britton-Hecla 29  
Milbank 67, Sisseton 43

**Feb. 12**

Deuel at Hamlin

**Feb. 13**

Deuel at Redfield  
Sisseton at Tiospa Zina

**Feb. 16**

Clark/Willow Lake at Deuel

**Feb. 17**

Britton-Hecla at Hamlin  
Deuel at Sisseton  
Clark/WL at Tiospa Zina

**Feb. 19**

Roncalli at Deuel  
Webster at Milbank  
Hamlin at Clark/Willow Lake

**Feb. 20**

Britton-Hecla at Groton Area  
Redfield at Tiospa Zina

**Feb. 23**

Hamlin at Redfield

**Feb. 27**

Tiospa Zina at Milbank

**NEC Girls Basketball Standings**

	(C)	(S)
Clark/Willow Lake	7-0	14-2
Hamlin	6-0	14-1
Groton Area	6-2	13-5
Roncalli	6-2	12-4
Milbank	5-4	12-4
Webster	3-6	5-12
Sisseton	3-5	6-10
Deuel	2-3	4-11
Tiospa Zina	1-6	5-11
Redfield	1-6	4-12
Britton-Hecla	1-7	4-12

**Roncalli (5-1)**

Roncalli 57, Redfield 24  
Roncalli 50, Webster Area 36  
Roncalli 37, Sisseton 28  
Roncalli 71, Tiospa Zina 21  
Clark/WL 50, Roncalli 38  
Roncalli 43, Groton 31  
Roncalli 58, Britton-Hecla 15

**Britton-Hecla (1-6)**

Tiospa Zina 48, Britton-Hecla 44  
Webster 62, Britton-Hecla 39  
Deuel 38, Britton-Hecla 33  
Milbank 58, Britton-Hecla 12  
Britton-Hecla 29, Redfield 28

Roncalli 58, Britton-Hecla 15  
Sisseton 56, Britton-Hecla 30

**Groton Area (5-2)**

Hamlin 46, Groton Area 21  
Groton Area 40, Sisseton 36  
Groton Area 42, Redfield 20  
Clark/WL 38, Groton Area 34  
Groton Area 71, Tiospa Zina 3  
Groton Area 54, Milbank 45  
Roncalli 43, Groton 31  
Groton 58, Webster 28

**Milbank (4-3)**

Clark/WL 61, Milbank 42  
Milbank 58, Britton-Hecla 12  
Milbank 72, Tiospa Zina 23  
Milbank 55, Redfield 29  
Groton Area 54, Milbank 34  
Milbank 60, Deuel 22  
Hamlin 39, Milbank 36

**Sisseton (2-2)**

Groton Area 40, Sisseton 36  
Roncalli 37, Sisseton 28  
Sisseton 50, Redfield 48  
Sisseton 56, Britton-Hecla 30

**Redfield (0-6)**

Roncalli 57, Redfield 24  
Groton Area 42, Redfield 20  
Britton-Hecla 29, Redfield 28  
Milbank 55, Redfield 29  
Sisseton 50, Redfield 48  
Clark/WL 57, Redfield 19

**Webster (3-5)**

Webster 62, Britton-Hecla 39  
Roncalli 50, Webster 36  
Webster 64, Tiospa Zina 24  
Webster 52, Deuel 29  
Clark/WL 58, Webster 34  
Hamlin 54, Webster 21  
Groton 58, Webster 28  
Hamlin 69, Sisseton 39

**Clark/Willow Lake (5-0)**

Clark/WL 61, Milbank 42  
Clark/WL 38, Groton 34  
Clark/WL 59, Webster 34  
Clark/WL 50, Roncalli 38  
Clark/WL 57, Redfield 19

**Deuel (2-2)**

Deuel 38, Britton-Hecla 33  
Webster 52, Deuel 29  
Milbank 60, Deuel 22  
Deuel 60, Tiospa Zina 47

**Hamlin (5-0)**

Hamlin 46, Groton 21  
Hamlin 83, Tiospa Zina 11  
Hamlin 54, Webster 21  
Hamlin 69, Sisseton 39  
Hamlin 39, Milbank 36

**Tiospa Zina (1-6)**

Tiospa Zina 48, Britton-Hecla 44  
Webster 64, Tiospa Zina 24  
Hamlin 83, Tiospa Zina 11  
Milbank 72, Tiospa Zina 23  
Groton 71, Tiospa Zina 3  
Roncalli 71, Tiospa Zina 21  
Deuel 60, Tiospa Zina 47

**Feb. 5**

Roncalli 52, Milbank 33  
Groton Area 45, Deuel 27  
Redfield 52, Webster 41  
Clark/WL 56, Sisseton 43

**Feb. 9**

Sisseton 45, Webster 32

**Feb. 10**

Hamlin 50, Roncalli 36  
Clark-WL 64, Britton-Hecla 24  
Milbank 49, Sisseton 41

**Feb. 12**

Tiospa Zina at Sisseton  
Deuel at Hamlin

**Feb. 13**

Deuel at Redfield

**Feb. 16**

Hamlin at Redfield  
Clark/WL at Deuel

**Feb. 17**

Britton-Hecla at Hamlin  
Deuel at Sisseton  
Clark/WL at Tiospa Zina

**Feb. 19**

Roncalli at Deuel  
Webster Area at Milbank  
Hamlin at Clark/WL

**Feb. 20**

Britton-Hecla at Groton Area  
Redfield at Tiospa Zina

**Girls Region 1A**

#	Name	Season			Seed Pts
		W	L	PCT	
1	Aberdeen Roncalli	12	4	.750	44.250
2	Groton Area	13	5	.722	43.778
3	Milbank	12	4	.750	43.267
4	Sisseton	6	10	.375	39.400
5	Webster Area	5	12	.294	38.529
6	Redfield	4	12	.250	37.625
7	Britton-Hecla	4	12	.250	37.133

**Boys Region 1A**

#	Name	Season			Seed Pts
		W	L	PCT	
1	Groton Area	12	4	.750	44.250
2	Britton-Hecla	11	5	.688	41.312
3	Webster Area	9	7	.562	41.250
4	Sisseton	7	8	.467	40.533
5	Aberdeen Roncalli	5	8	.385	40.462
6	Milbank	8	7	.533	40.267
7	Redfield	2	13	.133	35.867

**Boys State Standings**

#	Name	Season			Seed Pts
		W	L	PCT	
1	West Central	17	0	1.000	47.000
2	Sioux Falls Christian	13	1	.929	46.429
3	Hamlin	12	2	.857	46.071
4	Clark/Willow Lake	14	2	.875	45.438
5	Groton Area	12	4	.750	44.250
6	Vermillion	12	5	.706	44.062
7	Mahpiya Luta	14	2	.875	43.938
8	Stanley County	14	2	.875	43.750
9	Lennox	10	5	.667	43.533
10	Pine Ridge	11	6	.647	43.294
11	St. Thomas More	11	4	.733	43.267
12	Flandreau	11	5	.688	43.188
13	Sioux Valley	12	5	.706	42.882
14	Cheyenne-Eagle Butte	10	3	.769	42.846
15	Wagner	13	2	.867	42.733
16	Winner	10	5	.667	42.533

**Girls State Standings**

#	Name	Season			Seed Pts
		W	L	PCT	
1	Hamlin	14	1	.933	46.667
2	Mahpiya Luta	17	0	1.000	46.250
3	Sioux Valley	14	2	.875	45.438
4	Sioux Falls Christian	15	3	.833	45.000
5	Clark/Willow Lake	14	2	.875	44.933
7	Wagner	14	2	.875	44.933
8	West Central	13	4	.765	44.765
9	Rapid City Christian	15	3	.833	44.500
10	Mobridge-Pollock	12	3	.800	44.400
11	Aberdeen Roncalli	12	4	.750	44.250
12	Groton Area	13	5	.722	43.778
13	St. Thomas More	13	4	.765	43.625
14	Lakota Tech	12	4	.750	43.500
15	Milbank	12	4	.750	43.267
16	Miller	13	4	.765	43.176



The Seattle Seahawks are the new NFL champions after dominating the New England Patriots 29-13 on Sunday. There were a ton of storylines coming into this game, and most analysts believed this would be a tightly contested matchup. Instead, Seattle's run game controlled the clock while its defense suffocated second-year QB Drake Maye.

I could do a deep dive into the game, breaking down every drive, but to be honest, the game was pretty boring through the first three quarters. There were 13 combined punts (eight by New England and five by Seattle). The only points came from four Seattle field goals, giving us a 12-0 score heading into the final fifteen minutes.

Both teams started to wake up in the fourth quarter. Seattle finally found the end zone, extending their lead to 19 points. New England responded quickly, going 65 yards on three plays to put seven points on the board.

After the Seahawks punted on their ensuing drive, the Patriots were marching down the field, and it looked like the momentum was finally swinging their way. And then Drake Maye threw interceptions on back-to-back drives, one resulting in a Seahawks' field goal and the other taken to the house for a pick-six. The Patriots did score another touchdown, but it was too little, too late by that point.

Kenneth Walker III was named the Super Bowl MVP after accumulating 161 total yards on 29 touches.

Despite not even playing in the game, the Vikings still lost on Sunday after watching the QB they let leave hoist the Lombardi Trophy. Darnold was just one of several former Vikings playing in the Super Bowl – Cam Akers and Chazz Surratt both won rings, while Stefon Diggs, Garrett Bradbury, Josh Dobbs, Vederian Lowe, and Khyiris Tonga were all playing for New England.

Like most Vikings fans, I'm happy for Darnold. He was a great player during his brief time in Minnesota. But I'm also a little salty, knowing the Vikings let him walk despite winning 14 games for us in 2024. However, like I said last week, hindsight is always 20/20. The decision to let him go was a logical one, considering the Vikings had just drafted a QB in the top 10 the year before. But knowing the decision was logical doesn't make it sting any less watching Darnold hoist the Lombardi Trophy while confetti rained down.

Looking ahead, the Vikings have a huge offseason in front of them. There are question marks up and down the roster, including at quarterback. With the firing of Kwesi Adofo-Mensah, and no GM in place to replace him, head coach Kevin O'Connell and defensive coordinator

Brian Flores will have full control of the roster to shape it how they see fit. If the team falters again in 2026, there will be nobody else to blame, and we'll be looking at another overhaul of the coaching staff a year from now. The NFL scouting combine will take place in a couple of weeks, and free agency begins March 9. Before then, we'll be doing a deep dive into the roster to get you prepared for what should be an exciting couple of months.

## The Groton Independent

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## "Spring into Seasonal Allergies"

The groundhog may have seen his shadow, but Spring will be here soon. While many of us look forward to warmer days and blooming flowers, those who suffer from seasonal allergies know that the return of grass, budding trees, and blooming flowers can lead to more sneezing than smiles. Welcome to the Spring allergy season.

If your seasonal allergies seem to be getting worse each year, it is not in your head.

A Study from the National Academy of Sciences in 2021 found that over the last 30 years the North American pollen allergy season has increased by approximately 20 days. Pollen concentrations have also risen 21%. The Spring tree pollen season has been starting earlier and the Fall ragweed season has been ending later.

Seasonal allergies can develop at any time in one's life. The most common risk factor for developing seasonal allergies is family history. If have family members with allergies, you have an increased risk of developing them as well. Seasonal allergies are the sign of an overactive immune system that has mistakenly identified harmless substances, like pollen, as dangerous threats to the body. This triggers an inappropriate defense response that leads to the common symptoms of allergies like runny nose, congestion, watery eyes, itching, and sneezing. The immune system is trying to fight pollen like it would fight a cold. This is why it can be difficult to differentiate between allergies and illness.

There are a few ways to help decrease the risk of children developing allergies. Several studies have shown that children who visit a farm in their first year of their life or have furry pets have a lower risk of allergies. In that first year of life, the immune system is busy trying to figure out what things the body needs to defend against and what things are safe to ignore. The environment on the farm has so different allergens, that it allows the immune system to become tolerant of the harmless pollen and animal dander. However, once someone has allergies, and the immune system is sensitive to these substances, further exposure to allergens that are on a farm will not help. It will just make the allergy sufferer more miserable.

The first line over-the-counter treatment for seasonal allergies is intranasal corticosteroids such as Fluticasone (Flonase), Mometasone (Nasonex), and Budesonide (Rhinocort). These nasal sprays have been shown to be more effective than over-the-counter oral antihistamines such as Loratidine (Claritin), Fexofenadine (Allegra), and Cetirizine (Zyrtec). If the spray does not give adequate control, then adding an oral antihistamine can help.

If these medications are not effective, then seeing an Allergist is the next step to enjoying everything that comes with April showers and May flowers. The groundhog says we have six more weeks to prepare for Spring. Regardless of when it comes, everyone can enjoy Spring if they understand seasonal allergies and how to treat them.

*Dr. Jill Kruse is a hospitalist at the Brookings Health System in Brookings, SD. She serves as one of the Prairie Doc Volunteer Hosts during its 24th Season providing Health Education Based on Science, Built on Trust. Follow The Prairie Doc® at [www.prairiedoc.org](http://www.prairiedoc.org), Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Tik Tok. Prairie Doc Programming includes On Call with the Prairie Doc®, a medical Q&A show (most Thursdays at 7pm on SDPB, YouTube and streaming on Facebook), 2 podcasts, and a Radio program (on SDPB, Sundays at 6am and 1pm).*



Jill Kruse, DO

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## Dunker had double-double night in Tigers win over Deuel

CLEAR LAKE — The Groton Area Tigers shook off a slow start Thursday night and used a dominant defensive stretch to pull away from the Deuel Cardinals, earning a 45-27 victory in a Northeast Conference matchup.

The game was a defensive battle early, with Groton holding a slim 5-4 lead after the first quarter. The Tigers began to find their rhythm late in the second quarter and into the third, putting together a decisive 17-point run that turned a 12-9 advantage into a commanding 29-9 lead.

Groton led 23-9 at halftime and extended the margin to 33-18 after three quarters before cruising to the win.

"We struggled early just getting used to what they were doing defensively," head coach Matt Locke said. "It's not something you see every day, but once we made some adjustments and settled in, I thought we did a much better job."

Defense fueled the Tigers' surge. Groton forced 27 Deuel turnovers while committing just 12 of its own, recording 17 steals on the night. The Tigers also dished out 13 assists compared to just three for the Cardinals.

"I really liked our anticipation," Locke said. "Everybody was getting into the passing lanes, not just our guards. We've just got to finish better when we get those opportunities."

Groton shot 44% from two-point range (14-of-32) and went 8-of-17 from the free-throw line. The Tigers struggled from beyond the arc, hitting 3-of-18, but made up for it with pressure defense and ball movement. Deuel finished 9-of-29 shooting on two-pointers, 2-of-12 from three, and 3-of-6 at the line.

Rylee Dunker recorded another double-double, leading Groton with 11 points and 11 rebounds. Jaedyn Penning continued her strong stretch of play with 11 points, four rebounds, three assists, and three steals.

"Jayden's had a really good year so far," Locke said. "She's been looking to score and knocking down shots, and we need her to keep doing that."

Kella Tracy added eight points, three rebounds, and two steals, while Jerica Locke chipped in seven points, four rebounds, three assists, and three steals. McKenna Tietz finished with six points and four assists, and Sydney Locke scored two points with two steals. Taryn Traphagen contributed defensively with two rebounds, a steal, and a block.

Deuel was led by Camdyn Peterreins with nine points, followed by Graclyn Nielsen with eight and Morgan Theisen with six.

Deuel won the rebounding battle narrowly, 30-28.

With the win, Groton Area improves to 11-5 on the season and will travel to Madison on Saturday for a DAK12/NEC clash with the Canton Hawks at 5 p.m. Deuel drops to 4-9.

JV: Groton Area 27, Deuel 10

Groton also claimed the junior varsity contest, pulling away for a 27-10 victory. The Tigers led 9-2 after the first quarter, 19-6 at halftime, and 25-9 after three quarters.

Mckenna Krause led Groton with seven points, followed by Ashlynn Warrington with six and Taylynn Traphagen with four. Sydney Locke, Kinsley Rowen, Brynlee Dunker, Kella Tracy, and Teagan Hanten each added two points.

For Deuel, Parker Holt scored five points, Amelia Giese had three, and Lilly Mabior finished with two.



**Rylee Dunker had her second consecutive double-double on the night with 11 points and 11 rebounds.** (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



**Taryn Traphagen dribbles past her defender.** (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

## Groton Area clamps down defensively in road win over Deuel

CLEAR LAKE — The Groton Area Tigers boys basketball put together one of their most complete defensive efforts of the season Thursday night, rolling past the Deuel Cardinals boys basketball 55-24 in a Northeast Conference road victory.

Groton seized control early, jumping out to a 12-4 lead after the first quarter before stretching the margin to 32-14 at halftime. The Tigers continued to pull away after the break, leading 49-21 through three quarters and cruising to the 31-point win.

Defense set the tone all night long. Groton limited Deuel to just two players in the scoring column and forced a staggering 34 Cardinal turnovers, turning those miscues into transition chances and easy baskets. The Tigers finished with 15 steals and allowed just 24 total points, committing only three team fouls in the game.

"I thought our effort was really good," said head coach Greg Kjellsen, who noted the team's continued work on its matchup zone defense. "It's not anywhere close to where we want it to be yet, but the way you get better is by doing it. I liked our activity — hands on the ball, deflections, and guys flying around."

Offensively, Groton relied on efficiency inside rather than the perimeter. The Tigers were 23-of-40 (58%) on two-point attempts while going just 2-of-13 from beyond the arc. They added 16 assists on the night and out-rebounded Deuel 27-23.

Keegen Tracy led the Tigers with a strong all-around performance, finishing with 13 points, three rebounds, four assists, and five steals. Karson Zac added 10 points, three rebounds, an assist, and a block, while Gage Sippel chipped in eight points, five rebounds, two steals, and a block. Ryder Johnson also scored eight points to go with three rebounds, two assists, and a steal.

Becker Bosma contributed five points, six rebounds, four assists, and three steals, and Easton Weber added three points, four rebounds, and three assists. Additional scoring came from Ethan Kroll, Jayden Schwan, Logan Warrington, and Anthony Tracy, who each finished with two points.

Kjellsen pointed to Sippel's response after having a couple of shots blocked as a teaching moment during the game. "We told him, so what if someone blocks your shot — go right back at them," Kjellsen said. "I thought he stayed engaged, rebounded well, and made plays after that. That's growth."

Deuel was led by Troy Jensen with 16 points, including three three-pointers, while Jaxtin Winter added eight. The Cardinals shot 3-of-12 from three-point range and 7-of-26 on two-pointers.

Groton improved to 11-4 on the season and will travel to Frederick on Tuesday to face the Leola-Frederick Titans.

JV dominates early

The Groton Area junior varsity also turned in a lopsided win, defeating Deuel 62-13. The Tigers jumped out to a 28-1 first-quarter lead and never looked back.

Easton Weber knocked down four three-pointers to lead the JV with 14 points. Jace Johnson scored 11, Asher Johnson had 10, Ryder Schelle added nine, and Anthony Tracy finished with eight. Ethan Kroll scored six, Jordan Schwan added four, and Riley Schellenberger chipped in three.

Case Schreienbeck led Deuel with five points, while Braxton Winter scored three, Carsen Wiesner added two, and James Ulmer had one.

**The varsity games were broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Avantara - Groton, Agtegra, Bierman Farm Service, Bary Keith at Harr Motors, Blocker Construction, Dacotah Bank, Dan Richardt at Groton Ford, Full Circle Ag, Groton Ag Partners, Groton Chamber, Groton Ford, John Sieh Agency, Heartland Energy and The MeatHouse in Andover. Rich Bosma and Mike Imrie did the commentary, Jeslyn Kosel ran the camera and Paul Kosel did the stats and technology. The boys junior varsity game was sponsored by Jerry and Becky Johnson. The girls junior varsity was sponsored by grandparents.**



**Karson Zak looks for a teammate to pass off the ball.** (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



**Gage Sippel goes up for a basket towering over his defenders.** (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

## Grapplers take second at Big Dakota Conference

The Groton Area wrestling team turned in a strong showing at the Big Dakota Conference Tournament on Saturday in Fort Pierre, highlighted by multiple placewinners and a milestone moment from heavyweight Gavin Englund. Englund picked up the 100th win of his high school career on his way to a second-place finish at 285 pounds, while Groton also saw podium finishes from Wyatt Hagen, Kyson Kucker, Aiden Strom, Ben Hoeft, Isaiah Scepaniak, Walker Zoellner, Luke Gauer, and Parker Zoellner as the Tigers finished second overall in the team standings.

At 106 pounds, Preston Hinkelman opened the tournament with a quick pin of Aiden Spotted Horse of McLaughlin in 29 seconds before being pinned in the quarterfinals by Mason Stoesser of Stanley County. Hinkelman later added team points in the consolation rounds but did not place. Also at 106, Bentley Ehresmann dropped his opening match, then rebounded with a consolation-round fall over teammate Hinkelman before being pinned by Hazen Garrett of Stanley County.

Groton earned a third-place finish at 113 pounds from Luke Gauer, who bounced back after an opening-round loss by pinning Hunter Wientjes of Mobridge-Pollock and advancing through the bracket to place third and score 11 team points.

At 120 pounds, Parker Zoellner fought through the consolation bracket to earn fifth place, closing his day with a major decision win over Hunter Oestreich of Todd County. Also at 120, Wyatt Hagen advanced to the championship match after back-to-back technical falls before finishing as the conference runner-up, scoring 19 team points.

Kyson Kucker delivered another big performance at 126 pounds, recording a first-round pin and a semifinal technical fall to reach the finals, where he placed second overall and added 21.5 team points. At 132 pounds, Noah Scepaniak opened with a pin and went on to finish fourth after falling in the third-place match, contributing 11 points.

Groton picked up a third-place finish at 138 pounds from Aiden Strom, who rebounded from an early loss to post three pins, including a fall in the third-place match, to score 17 team points.

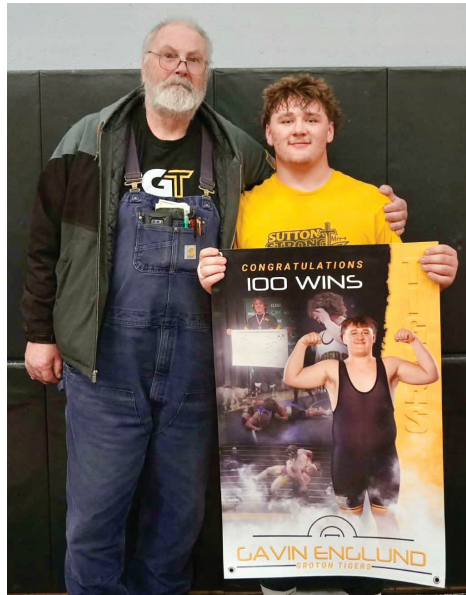
At 144 pounds, Grayson Flores earned a consolation-round pin before being edged in sudden victory, finishing the tournament with three team points. Kason Oswald placed fifth at 150 pounds, collecting five points after navigating the consolation bracket.

Ben Hoeft turned in a strong effort at 165 pounds, battling back with two consolation-round pins to earn third place and 14 team points. At 175 pounds, Isaiah Scepaniak also placed third, highlighted by a major decision in his final match.

Walker Zoellner had an impressive run at 190 pounds, recording three pins and winning his third-place match in sudden victory to score 16 team points. Layne Johnson advanced to the semifinals at 215 pounds with two pins and ultimately placed fourth, adding 18 points to the Groton total.

At 285 pounds, Englund reached the championship match after a semifinal pin, a win that marked the 100th of his career, before finishing as the runner-up in a hard-fought final.

Groton Area totaled 167.5 points to finish second in the team race, trailing Winner, which claimed the conference title. Chamberlain placed third, followed by Miller/Highmore-Harold and Stanley County to round out the top five.



**Gavin Englund is pictured with his grandpa after capturing his 100th win at the Big Dakota Conference Wrestling Tournament.** (Photo from Gavin Englund's Facebook page)

## Tigers Outlast Deuel/Deubrook 42-39 in Clear Lake Dual

The Groton Area wrestling team edged Deuel/Deubrook Area 42-39 in a tightly contested dual Thursday night in Clear Lake, using a strong run through the middle and upper weights to secure the victory.

The dual opened with Deuel/Deubrook claiming early momentum, as Dusty Bolden pinned Preston Hinkelman at 3:39 in the 106-pound bout, followed by Bentley Fokken's fall over Luke Gauer at 1:35 at 113 to put the Cardinals ahead 12-0.

Groton answered quickly at 120 pounds, where Wyatt Hagen delivered a momentum-shifting pin of Brock Mellendorf in just 50 seconds. Kyson Kucker followed at 126 with another fall, putting Gage Landmark on his back at the 1:31 mark to close the gap.

Deuel/Deubrook picked up a narrow win at 132, as Erich Fokken edged Noah Scepaniak by a 7-6 decision, before regaining control with a string of falls. Aiden Warren pinned Aiden Strom at 1:08 (138), Tyson Hagberg defeated Grayson Flores by fall at 2:27 (144), Ryker Gauger pinned Kason Oswald at 1:21 (150), and Zane Miller closed the stretch with a fall over Donavon Block at 4:41 (157).

Groton Area responded when it mattered most in the upper weights. Ben Hoeft picked up a key fall over Hayden Landmark at 3:39 at 165 pounds, and Isaiah Scepaniak followed with a pin of William Foulk at 3:12 in the 175-pound match.

The Tigers continued to build their lead with forfeits at 190 and 215 pounds, as Walker Zoellner and Layne Johnson each collected six team points. At heavyweight, Gavin Englund capped the night with a fall over Raymond Klein at 1:55, sealing the dual victory for Groton.

## Groton Area Boys Sweep Presho Quadrangular; Decker Takes Third at Big Dakota Conference

The Groton Area wrestling program turned in a strong all-around weekend on the mats, as the Tigers' boys team swept all three duals at a quadrangular hosted by Lyman High School in Presho on Saturday, while the girls program added a conference medal at the Big Dakota Conference Tournament. Groton Area posted dominant dual wins over Lyman, Marion/Freeman, and New Underwood to finish the day unbeaten in team competition.

In addition to the team success, several Groton Area wrestlers completed the day undefeated across the three duals. Wyatt Hagen went a perfect 3-0 with a forfeit, a fall, and a major decision, while Kyson Kucker and Noah Scepaniak each also finished 3-0, combining pins and major decisions throughout the day. John Bisbee remained unbeaten with three forfeit victories, Preston Hinkelman went undefeated with two falls and a forfeit, and Gavin Englund closed the day without a loss, earning an injury-default win and two forfeits at heavyweight. Walker Zoellner also finished the day unbeaten, picking up forfeit wins in his matches contested.

Groton opened the day with a commanding 66-16 win over Lyman. Luke Gauer got the Tigers started at 113 pounds with a quick fall over Jaxson Richardson in just 24 seconds. Wyatt Hagen followed with a forfeit win at 120, while Kyson Kucker pinned Lief Henriksen at 126 in 3:43. Noah Scepaniak added a fall over Oakley Schindler at 132 in 2:42, and Aiden Strom needed just 19 seconds to pin Savin Langenbau at 138. At 144, Grayson Flores secured a fall over Carter Coleman in 5:13. Kason Oswald picked up a forfeit at 150, and John Bisbee did the same at 157. Ben Hoeft suffered one of the few setbacks for Groton, dropping a 13-2 major decision to Skyler Langenbau at 165. Isaiah Scepaniak responded with a fall over Tavian Schwartz at 175 in 3:24. Groton gave up points at 190 on a Lyman forfeit win, and at 215 Layne Johnson was pinned by Maverick Johnson in 3:12. The Tigers closed the dual strong as Gavin Englund won by injury default over Desmerius McGhee at heavyweight, and Preston Hinkelman capped the match with a fall over Raiden Rockwood at 106 in 3:57.

Groton then topped Marion/Freeman 60-23 in the second dual of the day. Preston Hinkelman opened with a forfeit win at 106 before Luke Gauer was pinned by Alexis Guzman at 113. Wyatt Hagen earned a fall over Josh Oleson at 120 in 1:36, and Kyson Kucker followed with a pin of Oakley McConnel at 126 in 1:10. Noah Scepaniak continued the momentum by pinning Owen Anderson at 132 in 1:01. Marion/Freeman picked up wins at 138 as Logun Pankratz defeated Aiden Strom by technical fall and at 144 where Elmer Rodolfo pinned Grayson Flores, then added another fall at 150 with Michael Blau over Kason Oswald. John Bisbee answered with a forfeit win at 157, and Ben Hoeft pinned Hunter Spangler at 165 in 1:54. Isaiah Scepaniak claimed a forfeit at 175, Walker Zoellner earned a forfeit at 190, Layne Johnson did the same at 215, and Gavin Englund closed the dual with a forfeit win at 285.

In the final dual, Groton Area secured a 62-18 victory over New Underwood. Wyatt Hagen earned a 19-5 major decision over Tel Elshere at 120, and Kyson Kucker followed with a 16-5 major decision over Trik Elshere at 126. Noah Scepaniak pinned Thomas Rhuby at 132 in 2:47. New Underwood picked up points at 138 as Coy Eddy pinned Aiden Strom in 2:46. Grayson Flores answered with a forfeit win at 144, and Kason Oswald added another forfeit at 150. John Bisbee claimed a forfeit at 157, and Ben Hoeft did the same at 165. Isaiah Scepaniak was pinned by Carl Coats at 175, but Groton rebounded with forfeit wins from Walker Zoellner at 190, Layne Johnson at 215, and Gavin Englund at 285. Preston Hinkelman finished the dual with a fall over James Edoff at 106 in 2:54, while Luke Gauer closed the day with a hard-fought loss to Tommy Studt at 113.

On the girls side, Groton Area was represented at the Big Dakota Conference Girls Wrestling Tournament, where Gracelynn Decker turned in a strong performance at 110 pounds. Decker placed third overall and scored 18.0 team points for the Tigers. She opened the tournament with a quick fall over Tyliissa Lunderman of Todd County/White River in 48 seconds in the quarterfinals before dropping her semifinal match to Lakota Tech's Jaynie Perkins by fall. Decker responded with back-to-back pins in the consolation bracket, first defeating Lakota Tech's Solarah Thunder Hawk in 28 seconds in the consolation semifinals, then closing her day with another fall over Lunderman in 2:57 to secure the third-place finish.

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## Groton Community Events

### Thursday, Feb. 12

Senior Menu: Roast beef, mashed potatoes, California blend, fruit, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Biscuits.

School Lunch: Chicken patty, mashed potatoes.

Groton Lions Club, 6 p.m., 104 N Main  
Parent/Teacher Conferences, 1:30-8 p.m.  
2nd Grade BB, 5 p.m., elementary gym  
4th Grade BB, 6 p.m., HS Gym  
HS Softball, 6 p.m., HS Gym

### Friday, Feb 13

NO SCHOOL

Senior Menu: Calico casserole, fruit, whole wheat bread.

3rd Grade Boys Basketball, 3:30 p.m., Elementary Gym

### Saturday, Feb. 14

Pickleball, 9:30 a.m., elementary gym  
SDHSAA Class B State Boys Wrestling Duals in Pierre

Basketball Double Header: Moberidge-Pollock at Groton Area (Gym: B7th-12, B8th-1, GC-2, Arena: BC-12, JVGBB-1, JVBBB-2, VGBB-3:15, VBBB-4:30)

### Sunday, Feb. 15

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.; Sunday School, 10:15 a.m.; Choir, 6 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Worship with communion at St. John's, 9 a.m.; at Zion, 11 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.

United Methodist: Worship at Conde, 8:15 a.m.; at Groton, 9:30 a.m.; at Britton, 11:15 a.m.; NO Sunday School; Coffee Hour, 10:30 a.m.

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m.; SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.

First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.

Groton CM&A: Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.

Groton Soccer Association Clinics, 11:30 a.m., Arena.

Soccer Open Gym, 2:30 - 4 p.m. elementary gym.

4th grade BB Practice, 2 p.m., Gym  
6th grade BB Practice, 6 pm., Arena  
Dance Team, 5 p.m., Arena

### Monday, Feb. 16

PRESIDENT'S Day - NO SCHOOL

Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Christian Literature Circle, 7:30 p.m.

Senior Citizens meet at 1 p.m. at the Groton Community Center

Boys Basketball at Florence: 8th at 4 p.m., 7th at 5 p.m., C at 5 p.m., JV at 6 p.m, varsity to follow.

1st Grade Boys Basketball Practice, elementary gym, 4:30 p.m.

5th/6th Volleyball Practice, Arena and gym, 5:30 p.m.

Kindergarten Boys Basketball, elementary gym, 6 p.m.

5th Grade BBB, HS Gym, 6 p.m.

### Tuesday, Feb. 17

Senior Menu: Scalloped potatoes with ham, carrots, fruit, dinner roll.

School Breakfast: Muffins.

School Lunch: Chicken breast, baby bakers.

St. John's Lutheran: Quilting, 9 a.m.

City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

Pickleball, elementary gym, 5:30 p.m.

3/4VB, HS Gym, 6 p.m.

6th Grade BBB hosts Warner, Arena, 6:15 p.m.

### Wednesday, Feb. 18

ASH WEDNESDAY

Senior Menu: Chicken noodle soup, cold cut sandwich, fruit.

School Breakfast: Oatmeal.

School Lunch: Cheese quesadilla, refried beans.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 4 p.m.; soup supper, 6 p.m. (Host executive board); League, 6:30 p.m.; Lenten Service, 7 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.; Ash Wednesday Service at St. John's, 7 p.m.

United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton Service, 6 p.m.; Groton Ad Council, 7 p.m.

Groton C&MA: Kid's Club, Youth Group, Adult Bible Study, 7 p.m.

HOSA Teddy Bear Clinic, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., HS Gym

Pickleball, Elementary Gym, 5:30 p.m.

6th Grade Boys Basketball, HS gym, 6 p.m.

3rd/4th Volleyball Practice, 6 p.m., Arena

5th Grade BBB, HS gym, 6 p.m.

### Thursday, Feb. 19

Senior Menu: Meatloaf, baked potato, broccoli, fruit, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Maple French Toast Bake.

School Lunch: Lasagna bake, corn.

Region 1 Girls Wrestling Tournament, 3:30 p.m., at De Smet

2nd Grade BB, 5 p.m., Elementary Gym

4th Grade BB, 6 p.m., HS Gym

HS Softball, 6 p.m., HS Gym

JH Boys Basketball hosts Warner (7th at 6 p.m., 8th at 7 p.m.)

### Friday, Feb. 20

Senior Menu: Breaded fish, rice pilaf, green

beans, fruit, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Breakfast boats.

School Lunch: Fish nuggets, puzzle tots.

3rd Grade Boys Basketball, 3:30 p.m., elementary gym.

Basketball double-header vs. Britton-Hecla in Groton:

(Gym:BC-4, GC-5, Arena: JVGBB-4, JVBBB-5, VGBB-6:15, VBBB-7:30)

### Saturday, Feb. 21

Pickleball. 9:30 a.m., elementary gym.

Region 1B Boys Wrestling Tournament, 9:30 a.m., Webster

Youth Wrestling Tournament Set-Up, 5 p.m.

### Sunday, Feb. 22

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.; Sunday School, 10:15 a.m.; Choir, 6 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Worship at St. John's, 9 a.m.; at Zion, 11 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.

United Methodist: Worship at Conde, 8:15 a.m.; at Groton, 9:30 a.m.; at Britton, 11:15 a.m.; Groton

Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 10:30 a.m.

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m.; SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.

First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.

Groton CM&A: Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.

Tuff Tigers Youth Wrestling Tournament, 7 a.m. to 2 p.m., HS Gym and Arena

Groton Soccer Association Clinics, 11:30 a.m., elementary gym

4th Grade BB Practice, 2 p.m., HG Gym

Dance Team, 5 p.m., Arena

6th Grade Boys Basketball, 6 p.m., Arena

### Monday, Feb. 23

Senior Menu: Goulash, corn, fruit, breadstick.

School Breakfast: Eggs.

School Lunch: Oriental chicken, rice.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.

Senior Citizens meet at noon with potluck at Groton Community Center

1st Grade Boys Basketball Practice, 1:30 p.m., Arena

JH Boys Basketball at Clark (7th at 5 p.m., 8th at 6 p.m.)

Kindergarten Boys Basketball, 6 p.m., elementary gym

5th Grade BBB, 6 p.m., HS Gym

5th/6th Volleyball Practice. 6 p.m. Arena

### Tuesday, Feb. 24

Senior Menu: Bean and ham soup, 1/2 chicken salad sandwich, fruit.

School Breakfast: Scones.

School Lunch: Tater tot hot dish, cooked carrots.

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

Biogirls, 3:45 p.m.,Elementary gym

Pickleball, 6 jp.m., elementary gym

Region 1A GBB

Need a **Babysitter** or **House Cleaner?**

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**House Cleaning Offered!**

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*I'm in Groton but am willing to drive to nearby towns!*

# Tigers Roll Past Titans Behind Defense, Big Second-Quarter Run



**Becker Bosma had nine points and nine rebounds in the Tigers win over the Titans.** (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

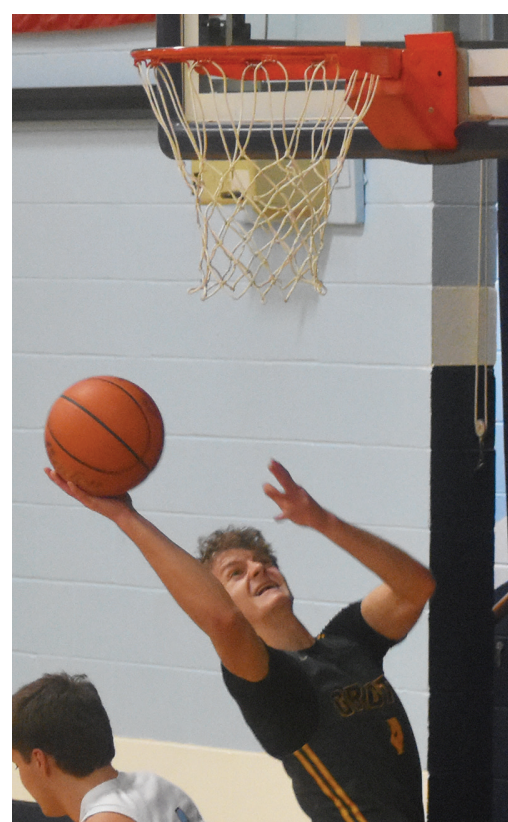
The Groton Area Tigers boys basketball team traveled to Frederick on Tuesday night and delivered a dominant 75-29 win over the Leola-Frederick Titans, fueled by a decisive 23-point run spanning the second and third quarters.

Groton jumped out to a 23-13 lead after the first quarter, extended it to 46-19 by halftime, and pushed the margin to 62-21 after three quarters before cruising to the 46-point victory. The Tigers held Leola-Frederick under 30 points for the game, continuing a strong stretch of defensive performances.

"We win by 45 and you'd think I'd be thrilled, but I really wasn't," head coach Greg Kjellsen said. "When you don't shoot the ball well, it magnifies everything else that doesn't go right. We made one three-pointer, but we were getting the ball inside and getting a lot of easy baskets."

Ryder Johnson led Groton Area with 15 points, adding three rebounds, one assist, and four steals. Karson Zak followed with 14 points, four rebounds, one steal, and one block, while Keegen Tracy chipped in 10 points, two rebounds, two assists, and four steals. Becker Bosma posted a near double-double with nine points, nine rebounds, two assists, one steal, and one block.

Anthony Tracy scored six points with one assist, and Gage Sippel added six points, seven rebounds, and three blocks. Easton Weber finished with four points, two rebounds, and three assists. Jace Johnson recorded four points and one rebound, while Jayden Schwan and Asher Johnson each scored two points. Ryder Schelle had two points and a



**Ryder Johnson led the Tigers with 15 points.** (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

steal, Jordan Schwan added one point and one rebound, Ethan Kroll contributed two rebounds, an assist, and a steal, and Logan Warrington pulled down three rebounds.

Groton shot 34-of-53 on two-point attempts (64%), went 1-of-8 from three-point range (13%), and 4-of-10 at the free-throw line (40%). The Tigers totaled 36 rebounds, 12 assists, 12 steals, and five blocked shots while committing just five turnovers.

"We got to the basket as well as we have all year," Kjellsen said. "I told Karson at halftime they couldn't stop him from driving, and he did a great job. One of these nights we're going to start hitting perimeter shots, and then look out."

Leola-Frederick was led by Quinn Huettl with 10 points and Win-

ston Clark with eight. Jace Thorpe scored four points, Westyn Thorpe and Titus Kippely added two apiece, and Brayden Heuer finished with one point. The Titans shot 14-of-49 from the field (28%), committed 12 turnovers, and were whistled for 16 fouls.

Kjellsen emphasized toughness and rebounding as areas still needing improvement despite the lopsided score.

"Every one of our kids was bigger than the guy they were guarding," he said. "There's no reason we shouldn't be getting rebounds. It just takes toughness and desire. If we want to beat good teams, we've got to be tougher."

With the win, Groton Area improves to 12-4 on the season and will host Moberg-Pollock on Saturday in a doubleheader. Leola-Frederick falls to 13-3.



**Logan Warrington puts up this shot over Leola-Frederick's Lucas Gulbranson.** (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

## JV: Tigers Dominate 53-15

Groton Area also controlled the junior varsity contest, rolling to a 53-15 win after opening the game on a 13-point run. The Tigers led 18-5 after the first quarter, 29-10 at halftime, and 45-13 after three quarters.

Easton Weber led the JV Tigers with 11 points. Jordan Schwan scored eight, while Ethan Kroll and Anthony Tracy added seven points each. Jace Johnson and Ryder Schelle chipped in five points apiece, Asher Johnson scored four, J.J. Muller added four, and Connor Kroll finished with two.

Quinn Huettl led Leola-Frederick with six points, Preston Sumption scored five, Noah Heuer added two, and Howard Sumption finished with one.

The 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, Dan Richardt at Groton Ford, Full Circle Ag, Groton Ag Partners, Groton Chamber, Groton Ford, John Sieh Agency, Heartland Energy and The MeatHouse in Andover. Rich Bosma and Mike Imrie did the commentary, Jeslyn Kosel ran the camera and Paul Kosel did the stats and technology. The boys junior varsity game was sponsored by Jerry and Becky Johnson. The girls junior varsity was sponsored by grandparents.**

## Ace of Hearts

The Ace of Hearts drawing was held Thursday at the Groton American Legion with the jackpot growing to \$23,800. Ticket sales for the week were \$1,305. Kevin Krueger's card was drawn. He picked card number 17 which was the five of clubs. He won \$130. Week number 29 drawing will be held Thursday. You can get your tickets from PaperPaul or at the Groton Legion.

### King Crossword

Answers

Weekly SUDOKU

Solution time: 25 mins.

Answer

ARF	LAMA	LENA	5	6	1	2	7	4	9	8	3
TIO	AVON	IRAS	4	9	8	6	5	3	1	2	7
FOOD	BANK	PINS	7	3	2	8	9	1	6	4	5
DOE	ALASKAN										
SUBTLE	ELY		2	5	6	7	8	9	3	1	4
ALL	SEA	ENSUE	3	7	4	1	2	5	8	9	6
MNOP	LID	COGS	8	1	9	3	4	6	5	7	2
EAGER	LEI	ULT									
LED	SCALIA		9	2	7	5	3	8	4	6	1
TRAILER	ELF										
ROTC	BIRDFOOD		6	8	3	4	1	7	2	5	9
ETTA	TONI	OUI	1	4	5	9	6	2	7	3	8
FINN	STAN	DRS									

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# We the People

The South Dakota Humanities Council is making available a weekly column -- "We the People" -- that focuses on the U.S. Constitution. It is written by David Adler, who is president of The Alturas Institute, a non-profit organization created to promote the Constitution, gender equality, and civic education.



By David Adler

## When the Light of Democracy Goes Dark: Arresting Journalists

Freedom of the press is the light of democracy. Without it, all hope for government of, by, and for the people is crushed. Thomas Jefferson knew this. He once wrote that if he had to choose between a government without newspapers, or newspapers without government, he would not hesitate to choose the latter. That's because he understood that the indispensable condition for the development of a free people in a free society is freedom of the press. Although Jefferson was neither a delegate to the Constitutional Convention nor a member of the First Congress that wrote the Bill of Rights, his rationale for a free press was shared by those who enshrined it in the First Amendment. Freedom of the press, he believed, was the people's right to know. At that juncture in June of 1789, the then novel and democratic theory that freedom of discourse is essential to the existence and security of free government became a pillar of republican thought that governs still.

That's why the Trump Administration's chilling arrest of two journalists—Don Lemon and Georgia Foot—has shaken the foundations of our freedom to the core. Lemon, a veteran journalist and former anchor of CNN, and Foot, a freelance reporter based in Minneapolis, have been charged with conspiring to violate the civil rights of parishioners at Cities Church, and blocking access to a house of worship. The charges are dubious, factually weak and a continuation of President Donald Trump's very public vendetta against Lemon.

Lemon and Foot were, in fact, reporting the interruption of church services by a group of activists, protesting the activities of the pastor, who reportedly serves as the acting director of an ICE field office. The journalists made it clear, while on air, repeatedly, that they were reporting the demonstration, not participating in it. Nevertheless, officials arrested the reporters for practicing journalism. In this arrest, the Trump Administration has criminalized journalism. That's the way of Putin, Orban and other authoritarian leaders who have arrested reporters as a means of silencing an independent press that can hold governmental officials accountable through exposure of corruption and the abuse of power. The authoritarian playbook, scholars tell us, emphasizes the elimination of a free and independent press as one of the first, key steps to concentrating power in the hands of the executive. That is the authoritarian way, not the American way.

Readers will recall President Trump's dangerous and demeaning treatment of journalists since his first campaign for the presidency. Trump has called reporters "human scum" and "the enemy of people." His verbal assaults on female reporters have been particularly nasty: "piggy," "stupid" and "ugly." At campaign stops, he has encouraged violence against reporters. News organizations filing stories that he doesn't like are "fake news." And such networks should "lose their licenses." Trump has made no secret of his dislike for Lemon. Unlike previous presidents, including Ronald Reagan, who occasionally criticized stories written about them, none engaged in Trump's hate mongering, for they recognized the central, indeed, integral importance of freedom of the press to American democracy.

My affection for freedom of the press has been a life-long love affair. Newspaper coverage of the Pentagon Papers represented for me a coming-of-age experience, the revelation by a free press of abuse of power, corruption and deceit so profound that the indispensability of an independent press became part of my DNA. The intrepid journalism that broke the Watergate story and brought down a crooked president affirmed those early sensations and deepened the Jeffersonian values that define me still. As a devoted admirer of a free and fiercely inde-

pendent press that can inform, and thus serve, the citizenry, it is easy to discern in the arrest of Lemon and Foot an imminent disaster. The existence of a free press that can inform the people about the activities of their government, denizens of Russia under Putin and Hungary under Orban will tell you, is an enormous privilege, for it protects the public's right to know, the foundation for self-government. It was with good reason that James Madison described freedom of the press as one of "choicest" of the "great rights of mankind" and sought to secure it in our Constitution. An injury to freedom of the press is an injury to us all. Without a free press, truth and facts become elusive, and the light of democracy goes dark.

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The Locke sisters time for playing together is winding down. Sophomore Sydney on the left and senior Jerica is pictured on the right. There are only three more regular season games left. (Photos by Jeslyn Kosel)

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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.

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### LIVESTOCK

HART ANGUS FARMS Production Sale, NEW DATE Wednesday, February 25th. 1 mile south of Frederick SD. Bid live - DVAuction. Call for catalog or [www.hartangusfarms.com](http://www.hartangusfarms.com). Brad 605-329-7211 or Alex 605-216-1019.

### NOTICES

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FEBRUARY 3, 2026 – GENERAL MEETING

Meeting called to order by Chairman Sutton at 8:45 A.M. in the Commission Chambers, Courthouse Annex, Brown County, SD. Present were Commissioners Dennert, Dinger, Gage, and Sutton. Commissioner Wiese was absent. Commissioner Gage led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

**OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT:** Scott Campbell, City of Frederick Chairman spoke to the second reading of the wind farm ordinance stating a lot of people would like to see that pass and spends a lot of time at the lake where he built the home and would hate to see a wind tower right at my back door and would knock the resale value in half. The town of Frederick passed an ordinance last spring for protection to a half mile. Commissioner Sutton stated that after the first reading some people voiced concerns, so Planning and Zoning relooked at the Ordinance. The updated Ordinance will be on the Brown County website February 3, 2026, for two weeks. The second reading and possible adoption will be on February 17, 2026. Scott asked if they put in a permit to do this before that time, is there any protection right now to the set back? Scott Bader said we have an existing wind ordinance now but will not be the same as the new ordinance. Commissioner Sutton said he believes there is a two-mile limit around a municipality in our current ordinance so that would give some protection. Scott Campbell also commented on how they never talked to the Frederick City Council.

**ORDINANCE #318—SECOND READING/POSSIBLE ADOPTION:** Moved by Commissioner Dinger, seconded by Dennert to adopt Ordinance #318. Applicant Marilyn Thum to rezone from Agriculture Preservation District (AG-P) to Mini-Agriculture District (M-AG) to bring this parcel

into compliance for its future use. Description of property: Proposed Lot 1, "Hitchcock First Addition" in the NW1/4 NE1/4 and the NE1/4 NW1/4 of Section 7-T12IN-R60W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (40751 I44th Street, Bates Twp.). All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

**ORDINANCE #319—SECOND READING/POSSIBLE ADOPTION:** Moved by Commissioner Gage, seconded by Dinger to adopt Ordinance #319. Applicant Larson Land Limited Partnership to rezone from Agriculture Preservation District (AG-P) to Mini-Agriculture District (M-AG) to bring this parcel into compliance for its future use. Description of property: Proposed Lot 3, "Larson-Wockenfuss Addition" in S 1/2 of Section 29 and N 1/2 of Section 32-T125N-R62W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (approx. 39518 I23rd Street, Columbia Twp.). All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

**ORDINANCE #320—SECOND READING/POSSIBLE ADOPTION:** Moved by Commissioner Dinger, seconded by Dennert to adopt Ordinance #320. Applicant Chad Pray to rezone from Agriculture Preservation District (AG-P) to Mini-Agriculture District (M-AG) to bring this parcel into compliance for its future use. Description of property: Proposed Lot 1, "MB Bellikka Addition" in the SE1/4 of section 30-T123NR63W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (approx. 12851 389th Avenue, Ordway Twp.). All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

**POLICY FOR CONSIDERATION OF PETITIONS FILED TO RECALCULATE & ABATE TAXES (PURSUANT TO SDCL 10-6A-4)**

Commissioner Gage brought the following Resolution:

**RESOLUTION #2026-12**  
A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING A POLICY FOR CONSIDERATION OF PETITIONS FILED PURSUANT TO SDCL 10-6A-4 TO RECALCULATE AND ABATE TAXES

WHEREAS, SDCL Chapter 10-6A allows for a freeze on assessments of dwellings of disabled and senior citizens.

WHEREAS, SDCL 10-6A-4 permits "a person failing to comply with the April first deadline for the previous year but otherwise qualifying for the real property tax assessment freeze provided under this chapter, may petition the board of county commissioners to recalculate the taxes

based on the valuation the person would have received under this program and abate the difference in taxes."

WHEREAS, the board of county commissioners has discretion in acting on said petition.

WHEREAS, the Counties desire to establish a policy for equal treatment of petitions made pursuant to SDCL 10-6A-4

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the policy of the Brown County Board of Commissioners shall be to approve qualifying petitions to recalculate and abate prior year taxes pursuant to SDCL 10-6A-4 if the petitioner had applied for and was granted a prior real property tax assessment freeze on the same single-family dwelling in the year prior to the year applicable to the petition.

Dated at Aberdeen, South Dakota, this 3rd day of February, 2026

Seconded by Commissioner Dinger.

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

**MINUTES:** Moved by Commissioner Dennert, seconded by Gage to approve the General Meeting Minutes of January 27, 2026. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

**CLAIMS:** Moved by Commissioner Dinger, seconded by Gage to approve the following Claims: Professional Fees: American Engineering Testing, Inc \$25,397.20; Central Service Corp \$20.00; CenturyLink-Lumen \$154.93; Cogley Law Office, Prof LLC \$2,179.00; Helms & Associates \$1,090.00; Kyle Law Office \$10,367.30; Kylee Boomsma \$721.20; Lenling Law Office, Prof. LLC \$2,312.50; North Star Solutions, LLC \$1,029.00; SD Dept of Transportation \$4,702.66; SDACES \$30.00; Women's Professional Rodeo Association \$200.00; Yankton County Treasurer \$181.25. Publishing: Glacial Lakes and Prairie Tourism Association \$335.00; Groton Daily Independent \$276.55; McQuillen Creative Group, Inc \$129.74. Repairs & Maintenance: Amazon Capital Services, Inc \$98.66; Convergint Technologies LLC \$16,758.09; EcoLab Pest Elimination Division \$303.58; Geffdog Designs \$79.10; Graham Tire Inc \$778.80; Hoven Auto Repair, Inc \$1,854.07; Hub City Roofing Inc \$170.00; Kramp Enterprise and Investment \$132.65; Lawson Products, Inc \$130.67;

Montgomery's Furniture Inc \$9,517.88; Motorola Solutions, Inc \$47,018.49; Olson's Pest Technicians \$455.00; Pantorium Cleaners Inc \$32.00; Precision Kiosk Technologies \$3,000.00; Sewer Duck, Inc \$325.00. Supplies & Materials: Amazon Capital Services, Inc \$2,441.55; Century Business Products \$234.98; Cole Paper Inc \$1,052.02; Farm Power Mfg. \$95.00; Fastenal Company \$688.65; FedEx \$59.93; Geffdog Designs \$1,483.75; Great Western Tire \$4,083.37; Kuck Law Office \$315.23; Lawson Products, Inc \$1,696.43; Menards \$252.71; Midstates Group 2,582.70; Performance Oil \$560.88; Sewer Duck, Inc \$671.50; Shop 4-H/National 4-H Council \$320.95. Travel & Conference: Aleigha Allison \$19.00; CGI, LLC \$2,177.70; City of Groton \$194.40; Jon Lemke \$75.00; Keith Baker \$75.00; Kristin Barstad \$2,014.41; Lenling Law Office, Prof. LLC \$120.00; Lynn Heupel \$329.50; Northeast South Dakota Family Violence Prevention Conference \$1,500.00; Scott Kolb \$19.00; Wes Graff \$75.00. Utilities: AT&T Mobility \$185.07; CenturyLink \$498.30; Montana-Dakota Utilities Co \$48.49; Northwestern Energy \$146.18; T-Mobile USA Inc \$1,045.47; Town of Frederick \$77.00. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

**SHERIFF REPORT FOR DEC. 2025:** Moved by Commissioner Gage, seconded by Dinger to acknowledge and approve the Sheriff Report from December 2025. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

**OTHER BUSINESS:** None  
**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** None  
**ADJOURNMENT:** Moved by Commissioner Dinger, seconded by Dennert to adjourn the Brown County Commission at 8:54 a.m. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

Erin Kumpf, Chief Deputy Auditor  
Published February 11, 2026 at the total approximate cost of \$77.20 and may be viewed free of charge at [www.sdpublicnotices.com](http://www.sdpublicnotices.com). 26510

**ORDINANCE #319**  
AN ORDINANCE AMENDING TITLE 4, SECOND REVISION BROWN COUNTY ORDINANCES AS AMENDED TO REZONE CERTAIN DESCRIBED PROPERTY

Notice is hereby given that Ordinance #319, An Ordinance Amending Title 4, Second Revision Brown County Ordinances, as amended to rezone the following described property filed by petitioner Larson Land Limited Partnership was duly adopted by the Board of Brown County Commissioners on the 3rd day of February 2026 and will become effective on the 21st day of February 2026.

BE IT ORDAINED by the Brown County Commission, Brown County, South Dakota, that the zoning official for the County of Brown is hereby authorized to change the official zoning map for Brown County to reflect this Ordinance.

Passed and adopted this 3rd day of February 2026.

Duane Sutton, Brown County Commission Chairman  
ATTEST: Lynn Heupel, Brown County Auditor  
Notice of Hearing: January 7, 2026  
First Reading: January 20, 2026  
Second Reading/Adoption: February 3, 2026  
Published: February 11, 2026  
Effective Date: February 21, 2026  
Published February 11, 2026 at the total approximate cost of \$21.05 and may be viewed free of charge at [www.sdpublicnotices.com](http://www.sdpublicnotices.com). 26511

**ORDINANCE #318**  
AN ORDINANCE AMENDING TITLE 4, SECOND REVISION BROWN COUNTY ORDINANCES AS AMENDED TO REZONE CERTAIN DESCRIBED PROPERTY

Notice is hereby given that Ordinance #318, An Ordinance Amending Title 4, Second Revision Brown County Ordinances, as amended to rezone the following described property filed by petitioner Larson Land Limited Partnership was duly adopted by the Board of Brown County Commissioners on the 3rd day of February 2026 and will become effective on the 21st day of February 2026.

BE IT ORDAINED by the Brown County Commission, Brown County, South Dakota, that the zoning official for the County of Brown is hereby authorized to change the official zoning map for Brown County to reflect this Ordinance.

Passed and adopted this 3rd day of February 2026.

Duane Sutton, Brown County Commission Chairman  
ATTEST: Lynn Heupel, Brown County Auditor  
Notice of Hearing: January 7, 2026  
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Published: February 11, 2026  
Effective Date: February 21, 2026  
Published February 11, 2026 at the total approximate cost of \$21.05 and may be viewed free of charge at [www.sdpublicnotices.com](http://www.sdpublicnotices.com). 26513

**NOTICE TO: THE UNKNOWN EXECUTORS, ADMINISTRATORS, PERSON OR REPRESENTATIVE, HEIRS, DEVISEES AND LEGATEES OF KRISTIE L. SETTER,** whose last known address was Aberdeen, SD

TAKE NOTICE that on the 20th day of December, 2021, Derry Subdivision in the Northeast Quarter of Section 32, Township 127 North, Range 63 West of the Fifth Principal Meridian, according to the plat thereof of record, Brown County, South Dakota; subject to easements, reservations and restrictions of record, if any, was sold at County Treasurer's tax sale for delinquent taxes on said premises, to the County of Brown in the State of South Dakota, and said County of Brown is still the holder thereof and the right of redemption will expire and a Deed to said property will be made at the expiration of sixty days from the completed service of this notice.

Dated this 21st day of January, 2026.

/s/ Patty VanMeter  
Patty VanMeter, Treasurer of Brown County, South Dakota  
Published Feb. 4 and 11, 2026, at the total approximate cost of \$17.53 and may be viewed free of charge at [www.sdpublicnotices.com](http://www.sdpublicnotices.com). 26471



**ORDINANCE #318**  
AN ORDINANCE AMENDING TITLE 4, SECOND REVISION BROWN COUNTY ORDINANCES AS AMENDED TO REZONE CERTAIN DESCRIBED PROPERTY

Notice is hereby given that Ordinance #318, An Ordinance Amending Title 4, Second Revision Brown County Ordinances, as amended to rezone the following described property filed by petitioner Marilyn Thum was duly adopted by the Board of Brown County Commissioners

on the 3rd day of February 2026 and will become effective on the 21st day of February 2026.

BE IT ORDAINED by the Brown County Commission, Brown County, South Dakota, that the Petition to Amend Title 4, Second Revision Brown County Ordinances is hereby amended to change the zoning on the following described property from Agriculture Preservation District (AG-P) to Mini-Agriculture District (M-AG) to bring this parcel into compliance for its future use.

Description of property: Proposed Lot 1, "Hitchcock First Addition" in the NW1/4 NE1/4 and the NE1/4 NW1/4 of Section 7-T12IN-R60W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (40751 I44th Street, Bates Twp.).

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED by the Brown County Commission, Brown County, South Dakota that the zoning official for the County of Brown is hereby authorized to change the official zoning map for Brown County to reflect this Ordinance.

Passed and adopted this 3rd day of February 2026.

Duane Sutton, Brown County Commission Chairman

ATTEST: Lynn Heupel, Brown County Auditor

Notice of Hearing: January 7, 2026

First Reading: January 20, 2026

Second Reading/Adoption: February 3, 2026

Published: February 11, 2026

Effective Date: February 21, 2026

Published February 11, 2026 at the total approximate cost of \$21.05 and may be viewed free of charge at [www.sdpublicnotices.com](http://www.sdpublicnotices.com). 26511



**ORDINANCE #319**  
AN ORDINANCE AMENDING TITLE 4, SECOND REVISION BROWN COUNTY ORDINANCES AS AMENDED TO REZONE CERTAIN DESCRIBED PROPERTY

Notice is hereby given that Ordinance #319, An Ordinance Amending Title 4, Second Revision Brown County Ordinances, as amended to rezone the following described property filed by petitioner Larson Land Limited Partnership was duly adopted by the Board of Brown County Commissioners on the 3rd day of February 2026 and will become effective on the 21st day of February 2026.

BE IT ORDAINED by the Brown County Commission, Brown County, South Dakota, that the Petition to Amend Title 4, Second Revision Brown County Ordinances is hereby amended to change the zoning on the following described property from Agriculture Preservation District (AG-P) to Mini-Agriculture District (M-AG) to bring this parcel into compliance for its future use.

Description of property: Proposed Lot 3, "Larson-Wockenfuss Addition" in the S1/2 of Section 29 and N1/2 of Section 32-T125N-R62W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (approx. 39518 I23rd Street, Columbia Twp.).

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED by

the Brown County Commission, Brown County, South Dakota that the zoning official for the County of Brown is hereby authorized to change the official zoning map for Brown County to reflect this Ordinance.

Passed and adopted this 3rd day of February 2026.

Duane Sutton, Brown County Commission Chairman

ATTEST: Lynn Heupel, Brown County Auditor

Notice of Hearing: January 7, 2026

First Reading: January 20, 2026

Second Reading/Adoption: February 3, 2026

Published: February 11, 2026

Effective Date: February 21, 2026

Published February 11, 2026 at the total approximate cost of \$21.68 and may be viewed free of charge at [www.sdpublicnotices.com](http://www.sdpublicnotices.com). 26512



**ORDINANCE #320**  
AN ORDINANCE AMENDING TITLE 4, SECOND REVISION BROWN COUNTY ORDINANCES AS AMENDED TO REZONE CERTAIN DESCRIBED PROPERTY

Notice is hereby given that Ordinance #320, An Ordinance Amending Title 4, Second Revision Brown County Ordinances, as amended to rezone the following described property filed by petitioner Chad Pray was duly adopted by the Board of Brown County Commissioners on the 3rd day of February 2026 and will become effective on the 21st day of February 2026.

BE IT ORDAINED by the Brown County Commission, Brown County, South Dakota, that the Petition to Amend Title 4, Second Revision Brown County Ordinances is hereby amended to change the zoning on the following described property from Agriculture Preservation District (AG-P) to Mini-Agriculture District (M-AG) to bring this parcel into compliance for its future use.

Description of property: Proposed Lot 1, "MB Bellikka Addition" in the SE1/4 of Section 30-T123N-R63W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (approx. 12851 389th Avenue, Ordway Twp.).

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED by the Brown County Commission, Brown County, South Dakota that the zoning official for the County of Brown is hereby authorized to change the official zoning map for Brown County to reflect this Ordinance.

Passed and adopted this 3rd day of February 2026.

Duane Sutton, Brown County Commission Chairman

ATTEST: Lynn Heupel, Brown County Auditor

Notice of Hearing: January 7, 2026

First Reading: January 20, 2026

Second Reading/Adoption: February 3, 2026

Published: February 11, 2026

Effective Date: February 21, 2026

Published February 11, 2026 at the total approximate cost of \$21.05 and may be viewed free of charge at [www.sdpublicnotices.com](http://www.sdpublicnotices.com). 26513

# King Crossword

## ACROSS

- 1 Canine cry
- 4 Dalai —
- 8 Sultry Horne
- 12 Uncle, to Juan
- 13 Bard's river
- 14 401(k) relatives
- 15 Provider of free groceries
- 17 Lapel jewelry
- 18 Fawn's mom
- 19 Nome resident
- 21 Nuanced
- 24 English cathedral city
- 25 100%
- 26 Poseidon's realm
- 28 Follow
- 32 L-Q bridge
- 34 Cover
- 36 Gear teeth
- 37 Avid
- 39 Kauai souvenir
- 41 Last (Abbr.)
- 42 Conducted
- 44 Justice Antonin
- 46 Movie promo
- 50 Sprite
- 51 Campus mil. group
- 52 Eats for parakeets
- 56 Jazzy James
- 57 Singer Braxton

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12				13					14			
15			16						17			
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46	47	48				49		50				
51						52		53			54	55
56						57				58		
59						60				61		

## DOWN

- 1 Justice Dept. agency
- 2 2016 Olympics city
- 3 Gourmand's online journal
- 4 File stickers
- 5 Director DuVernay
- 6 "— Lisa"
- 7 Bracelet site
- 8 Feign singing
- 9 Composer Satie
- 10 "Peter Pan" dog
- 11 Professional gp.
- 16 Speck
- 20 Pub pint
- 21 "Ditto"
- 22 Forearm bone
- 23 Snaky fish
- 27 Be sick
- 29 1997 Vanessa Williams film
- 30 Hybrid fruit
- 31 "Como — usted?"
- 33 Louisiana symbol
- 35 — Moines
- 38 Seminary subj.
- 40 Stranded during a blizzard
- 43 Unpaid bills
- 45 TV alien
- 46 Not kosher
- 47 Indian flatbread
- 48 Envelope abbr.
- 49 Funny person
- 53 Genetic letters
- 54 Wilder's "— Town"
- 55 Insult, slangily

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Stratford Town Board Meeting  
January 13th, 2026  
6:30pm Prickett called meeting to order with Engelhardt and Kwak in attendance.

A motion was made by Prickett, seconded by Engelhardt, carried; to approve the Dec. 13th meeting minutes as read.

A motion was made by Prickett, seconded by Engelhardt, carried; to approve the financials as presented.

A motion was made by Prickett, seconded by Engelhardt, carried; to approve the following claims for payment:-  
General Fund-NWE Bills: (st Its) \$677.63, (ball pk) \$17.03, (tennis) \$12.00, (st Its2) \$179.30, (hall) \$1,061.81, (sign) \$16.85; James Valley (auto): \$44.65; Quickbooks (auto): \$40.36; PDFfiller (auto): \$20.90. -Water Sewer Fund-NWE Bills: (2nd st) \$52.67, (p hse) \$28.40; Web Water (auto): \$1,399.12 (96,215); USDA RD Loan Payment (auto): \$478.00; DPC: \$6,903.07; NESD Loan Payment (auto): \$383.71.

OLD BUSINESS  
Reservoir burn completed by maintenance.

NEW BUSINESS  
Public concern reported about unattended animals at 118 McCloud; city recommended Brown County Animal Control be contacted.

A motion was made by Prickett, seconded by Engelhardt, carried; to approve the following salaries/pay details for the year of 2025: All members paid hourly for meetings at a rate of \$20/hr. Individual monthly salaries: Prickett, trustee and president, \$100/mo; Schley, trustee, \$10/mo; Engelhardt, trustee, \$30/mo. Individual roles paid hourly: Kwak, finance officer, \$20/hr. Schley, director of public works and certified water operator, \$20/hr; Engelhardt, facilities and maintenance manager, \$20/hr; Prickett \$20/hr for special meetings.

Public notice for open trustee position - 3 year term - start 2026 to be published this month.

A motion was made by Engelhardt, seconded by Prickett, carried; to name the Groton Independent as designated newspaper for 2026.

Stratford Community Center Rental requirements reviewed. A motion was made by Engelhardt; seconded by Prickett, motion carried; to keep the rental rates and requirements as is for 2026.

A motion was made by Engelhardt, seconded by Prickett, carried; to approve a spiking permit for the Stratford Fire Dept. for the date of February 6th, 2026.

CLOSING:  
Next meeting will be a special session working meeting in preparation for ordinance book rewrite held January 20th at 6:00pm at town hall.

Next regular board meeting is scheduled for February 10th, 2025 at 6:30pm at town hall.

A motion was made by Engelhardt, seconded by Prickett, carried; to adjourn the meeting.

-Anna Kwak; Finance Officer  
Published February 11, 2026 at the total approximate cost of \$26.58 and may be viewed free of charge at [www.sdpublicnotices.com](http://www.sdpublicnotices.com). 26514



Notice of Hearing upon Application for a Special Event Alcoholic Beverage License

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT The Groton City Council on the 24th day of February, 2026 at 7:00pm at the Groton City Hall, 120 N Main Street, Groton, South Dakota will meet in regular session to consider a special event alcoholic beverage license for Fireman's Fun Night at Groton Fire Hall, 305 E Railroad Ave, in the City of Groton, South Dakota on April 18th, 2026.

Any person interested in the approval or rejection of any such application may appear and be heard.

Dated at Groton, South Dakota, this 17th day of February, 2026.

Douglas Heinrich, Groton City Finance Officer  
Published February 11, 2026 at the total approximate cost of \$9.11 and may be viewed free of charge at [www.sdpublicnotices.com](http://www.sdpublicnotices.com). 26521



Town of Westport Zoning and Planning Committee Meeting

The Town of Westport Zoning and Committee met on February 2, 2026, 7:00 p.m. at the Westport Town Hall with Mitch Wilson, Shane Storm, Troy Tschappat, Brad and Jan Ellefson and Deb Schlosser present.

Troy Tschappat motioned, seconded by Shane Storm to recommend to the Westport Town Council to approve the plat Kolker-Hinz Addition to the City of Westport SW ¼ of Section 12, Township 125 North, Range 64 West of the 5th P.M., Brown County South Dakota.

Meeting dismissed 7:02 p.m.  
Published February 11, 2026 at the total approximate cost of \$6.79 and may be viewed free of charge at [www.sdpublicnotices.com](http://www.sdpublicnotices.com). 26515



Town of Westport General Meeting

The Town of Westport met on February 2, 2026 at 7:03 p.m., with Mitch Wilson, Shane Storm, Troy Tschappat, Deb Schlosser, Brad and Jan Ellefson present.

Troy Tschappat motioned, seconded by Shane Storm to amend agenda to include SDPAA Intergovernmental Contract. Contract was received by mail on January 31 after agenda had been published. Return date for the contract is March 1 which is before next Town meeting.

The following bills were presented:

City General: NW Energy- utilities (\$776.43), Groton Independent- January minutes (\$20.08), Menards-electric baseboards (\$138.36), Elan Financial Services-tax filing (\$11.15) Dakota Ink & Toner-printer cartridge (\$63.99), USPS-stamps (\$78.00)  
Sewer: NW Energy-Lift Station utilities (\$71.37), Dacotah Bank-resident check error (\$200.00)

Water: Public Health Laboratory-water testing (\$20.00), WEB-water (\$2068.57) Water Maintenance District-water testing (\$688.78), Dakota Ink & Toner-printer cartridges (\$213.96), USPS-stamps (\$427.00), Dacotah Bank-resident check error (\$300.00)

Shane Storm motioned, seconded by Troy Tschappat to pay all bills.

The following deposits were presented:

City General: State of SD (\$5513.99), Brown County Collections (\$136.77), Interest (\$49.09), Hall Rental (\$100.00), John Bagdley-donation (\$250.00)  
Sewer: Resident Payments (\$3345.64)  
Water: Resident Payments (\$5018.47)

Old Business: The Zoning and Planning Committee recommended the Town Council approve the Kolker-Hinz Addition plat. Shane Storm motioned, seconded by Troy Tschappat to approve Resolution 2026-01 that the plat Kolker-Hinz Addition to the City of Westport SW ¼ of Section 12, Township 125 North, Range 64 West of the 5th P.M., Brown County South Dakota be approved in accordance with the provisions of SDCL of 1967, Chapter 11-3, and any amendments thereof. Resolution adopted.

New Business: Motion by Shane Storm, seconded by Troy Tschappat to table application for Minor Non-Discharging Domestic Wastewater Treatment Facilities. Troy Tschappat motioned, seconded by Shane Storm to approve the Water District Maintenance, LLC contract for the period April 1, 1026 through March 31, 2027. Troy Tschappat motion, seconded by Shane Storm to approve SDPAA Intergovernmental Contract.

Meeting dismissed at 7:47 p.m.  
Deb Schlosser, Finance Officer  
Published February 11, 2026 at the total approximate cost of \$25.45 and may be viewed free of charge at [www.sdpublicnotices.com](http://www.sdpublicnotices.com). 26516



February 3, 2026

The Groton City Council met on the above date at 7:00pm at 120 N Main Street for their first monthly meeting with the following members present: Bahr, Wambach, Nehls, Shilhanek, Cutler, and Mayor Hanlon presiding. Also present were Attorney Chad Locken, Douglas Heinrich, Ken Hier, April Buller, Dwight Zerr, Todd Gay, and Elizabeth Varin.

Moved by Nehls and seconded by Wambach to approve the agenda with no changes. All members present voted aye.

Public comments were welcomed pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1, but none were received.

Buller and Hier provided updates on the wastewater project and progress at the airport.

Buller and Hier exited the meeting  
Department reports were reviewed and discussed.  
Zerr and Gay exited the meeting.

Two bids were received for the exterior painting of City Hall/Wage Memorial Library. The first bid was received from Custer Custom Homes & Renovations, LLC in the amount of \$29,999.76. The second bid was received from C. Eagle Construction, LLC in the amount of \$48,117.00. Moved by Nehls and seconded by Wambach to table the awarding of the bid to the next meeting to seek clarification on bids. All members present voted aye.

Moved by Shilhanek and seconded by Wambach to change Jr. Teener VFW baseball to 14U Legion baseball. All members present voted aye.

The second reading of Ordinance No. 795 - 2026 Summer Salaries was amended to reflect the change from Jr. Teener coach to 14U Legion coach on a motion by Shilhanek and seconded by Cutler. All members present voted aye. The second reading of Ordinance No. 795 - 2026 Summer Salaries was approved on a motion by Shilhanek and seconded by Cutler. All members present voted aye.

The first reading of Ordinance No. 796 - Sewer Rates was approved on a motion by Cutler and seconded by Bahr. All members present voted aye.

Quotes for the radar speed signs were reviewed. Moved by Nehls and seconded by Cutler to accept the quote from Elan City to purchase (6) radar speed signs in the amount of \$19,500.00. All members present voted aye.

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved on a motion by Bahr and seconded by Wambach. All members present voted aye.

Moved by Nehls and seconded by Shilhanek to authorize the following bills for payment. All members present voted aye.

Payroll, \$32,615.90, Employee salaries; Executive, \$563.86, ; Administrative, \$5,597.89, ; Public Safety, \$10,108.18, ; Public Works, \$15,587.53, ; Culture & Recreation, \$758.44, ; Dacotah Bank, \$4,156.57, Withholding/SS/Medicare; Dacotah Bank, \$6,913.63, Withholding/SS/Medicare; Aflac, \$534.92, Employee insurance; Colonial Life, \$69.40, Employee insurance; Health Pool of South Dakota, \$15,600.43, Employee insurance; Reliance Standard Life Insurance, \$88.10, Employee insurance; SD Retirement System, \$15,467.14, Employee retirement; SD Supplemental Retirement, \$590.00, Supplemental retirement; Metering & Technology Solutions, \$347.32, Water meters - Water Dept.; Fire Safety First, \$57.65, First aid supplies - City Shop; Team Lab Chemical Corporation, \$1,033.50, Sewer chemicals; Geffdog Designs, \$511.25, New "City of Groton" pens - City Hall; Irby, Inc., \$8,376.82, Grounding clamps, jumper sets, bladed covers, vinyl tape, sockets, wire, rubber goods testing, 1st invoice for electric metering project - Electric Dept.; Landon Johnson, \$336.25, Meal/mileage reimbursement - JUTS 2026; Sanitation Products, Inc., \$1,949.14, Parts for street sweeper - Street Dept.; Altec Industries, Inc., \$8,001.49, Kelly bar parts & installation for digger truck - Electric Dept.; Verizon Wireless, \$40.01, Wireless router - Rubble Site; SD Department of Health, \$40.00, Water testing -



Public Works Laborer/Park Caretaker Plus \$.25 per year of service	\$16.50	Hourly	Biweekly
Cemetery Caretaker .....	\$16.50	Hourly	Biweekly
Plus \$.25 per year of service			
Swimming Pool Manager\$16.50		Hourly	Biweekly
Plus \$.25 per year of service at Swimming Pool			
Asst. P/T Swimming Pool Manager	\$14.50	Hourly	Biweekly
Plus \$.25 per year of service at Swimming Pool			
Swimming Pool Lifeguard\$11.85		Hourly	Biweekly
Plus \$.25 per year of service			
WSI Lifeguards during Swimming Lessons	Regular salary + \$1	Hourly	Biweekly
Plus \$25.00 bonus per private lesson*			
WSI Assist Lifeguard during Swimming Lessons	Regular salary + \$.50	Hourly	Biweekly
Concessions Manager .....	\$.75	Daily	End of Season
Plus 50% net profit .....			
Baseball Coordinator \$2,000.00		Yearly	Monthly
Plus \$77.32 per year of service			
Softball Coordinator. \$2,000.00		Yearly	Monthly
Plus \$25.77 per year of service			
Jr Legion Baseball Coach\$3,000.00		Yearly	Monthly
Plus \$51.55 per year of service			
Jr Teener Baseball Coach (if 1)\$3,000.00		Yearly	Monthly
Plus \$51.55 per year of service			
Jr Teener Baseball Coach (if 2)\$1,500.00		Yearly	Monthly
Plus \$38.66 per year of service			
Day Baseball/Softball Coach\$2,500.00		Yearly	Monthly
Plus \$50.00 per year of service			
Girls Softball Coach (U8, U10, U12, U14, U18)	\$1,000.00	Yearly	Monthly
Plus \$20.62 per year of service			
Baseball Groundskeeper \$11.85		Hourly	Biweekly
Plus \$.25 per year of service			
Baseball Gatekeeper .....	\$11.85	Hourly	Biweekly
Plus \$.25 per year of service			
*\$25.00 bonus per private lesson (5 sessions) is only awarded upon successful completion of entire swimming pool season.			

\*\*Years of service bonuses apply to years within the specific position, unless otherwise specified.

Section II: Requirements. Final payment of wages will be paid after completion of all duties of all seasonal employees  
Passed First Reading: 1/20/2026  
Passed Second Reading: 2/3/2026  
Published: 2/11/2026  
Effective: 3/2/2026  
Scott Hanlon, Mayor  
Douglas Heinrich, Finance Officer  
Published February 11, 2026 at the total approximate cost of \$69.13 and may be viewed free of charge at [www.sdpublicnotices.com](http://www.sdpublicnotices.com). 26517

Water Dept.; Harry Implement, Inc., \$927.50, Oil for street sweeper - Street Dept.; Farmers Union Co-op Assoc., \$1,680.00, Diesel fuel - Street Dept.; Dakota Fluid Power, Inc., \$88.63, Quick disconnect coupler and penetrating oil - Street Dept.; Menards, \$105.79, Door handle - City Shop; Runnings, \$215.84, Gloves, storage rack, torx bits, magnetic drive guide, & bit tip holder - Electric Dept. ; Graybar Electric Company, Inc., \$282.60, Transformer base doors - Electric Dept.; AutoZone, Inc., \$220.44, Engine oil, diesel exhaust fluid - PD/City Shop; Dollar General, \$87.50, Coffee maker, coffee, charging cables - PD/City Shop; NW Energy, \$15.07, Natural gas service - PD generator; The Groton Independent, \$75.21, Publishing costs; S&S Lumber Co., \$12,541.27, Sawzall blades, paint pen, Sharpie, hand warmers, bar & chain oil, ice melt, materials for baseball concessions project - Multiple Depts.

Applications are being accepted for the following summer recreational positions - Due by March 3, 2026, at 5pm: Public Works Laborer/Park Caretaker, Cemetery Caretaker, Assistant Part-Time Swimming Pool Manager, Swimming Pool Lifeguards, Baseball Groundskeepers, and Baseball Gatekeepers.

Reminder: Applications for the following summer recreational positions are due by February 17, 2026, at 5pm: Baseball Coordinator, Softball Coordinator, Jr. Legion Coach, 14U Legion (formerly Jr. Teener) Coach, Girls' Softball Coaches (U8/U10/U12/U14/U18), Day Baseball/Softball Coach, Concessions Manager, and Swimming Pool Manager.

Reminder: Nominating petitions for municipal election are due by March 24, 2026, at 5pm. Varin exited the meeting.  
Moved by Wambach and seconded by Nehls to adjourn into executive session for personnel and legal matters 1-25-2 (1) & (3) at 7:55pm. All members present voted aye. Council reconvened into regular session at 8:30pm.

Moved by Shilhanek and seconded by Nehls to reschedule the next monthly council meeting for February 24, 2026, at 7pm.  
Moved by Wambach and seconded by Bahr to adjourn the meeting at 8:31pm. All members present voted aye.

Scott Hanlon, Mayor  
Published February 11, 2026 at the total approximate cost of \$57.97 and may be viewed free of charge at [www.sdpublicnotices.com](http://www.sdpublicnotices.com). 26518

Ordinance No. 795

An Ordinance entitled "2026 Summer Salary Ordinance", an Ordinance Amending Ordinance No. 786.

BE IT ORDAINED by the City of Groton, South Dakota, that Ordinance No. 795 reads as follows:

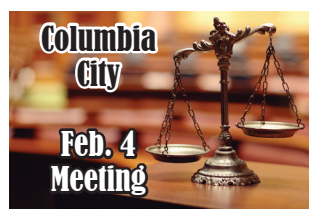
Section I: Schedule of Salaries. The salaries and time of payment of employees shall be as follows:

Public Works Laborer/Park Caretaker Plus \$.25 per year of service	\$16.50	Hourly	Biweekly
Cemetery Caretaker .....	\$16.50	Hourly	Biweekly
Plus \$.25 per year of service			
Swimming Pool Manager\$16.50		Hourly	Biweekly
Plus \$.25 per year of service at Swimming Pool			
Asst. P/T Swimming Pool Manager	\$14.50	Hourly	Biweekly
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Plus \$25.00 bonus per private lesson*			
WSI Assist Lifeguard during Swimming Lessons	Regular salary + \$.50	Hourly	Biweekly
Concessions Manager .....	\$.75	Daily	End of Season
Plus 50% net profit .....			
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Plus \$38.66 per year of service			
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Plus \$20.62 per year of service			
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Plus \$.25 per year of service			
Baseball Gatekeeper .....	\$11.85	Hourly	Biweekly
Plus \$.25 per year of service			
*\$25.00 bonus per private lesson (5 sessions) is only awarded upon successful completion of entire swimming pool season.			

\*\*Years of service bonuses apply to years within the specific position, unless otherwise specified.

Section II: Requirements. Final payment of wages will be paid after completion of all duties of all seasonal employees

Passed First Reading: 1/20/2026  
Passed Second Reading: 2/3/2026  
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Douglas Heinrich, Finance Officer  
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City of Columbia Council Meeting - February 4, 2026

CALL MEETING TO ORDER - 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL -Dana Mohr, Cara Dennert, Scott Meints, Sam Hoppock, Trevor Meints, Jeremy Dosch

Community: Julie Voeller, Pam Blair, Patti Daly

Mayor Dana Mohr called the meeting to order. Dana called for a motion to approve the agenda. Scott Meints made a motion to approve the agenda. Trevor Meints seconded the motion. All in favor - motion carried. Dana called for any conflict of interest on agenda items. There were no conflicts. Minutes were handed out from the January 7th meeting. Scott Meints made a motion to approve the minutes. Jeremy Dosch seconded the motion. All were in favor - motion carried.

Warrant Vouchers Northwestern Energy - electricity - 2287.03; Web - fire prevention - 59.46; JVT - fire prevention - 213.17; Agtegra - fuel - 556.38; Adrew Davis - park cleanup - 1750.00; Jeremy Dosch- Jan. wages -761.61 -; Cara Dennert - Jan. wages- 1317.60; GDI - publication-297.91; Runnings - shop supplies - 45.15; Menards - shop supplies - 35.02 Sam Hoppock made a motion to approve the vouchers. Trevor Meints seconded the motion. All in favor - motion carried.

COMMUNITY COMMENTS / CORRESPONDENCE: - SDPAA update, Code Enforcement Specialists contract

UNFINISHED BUSINESS- waste water project - nothing new

Nuisances - Regarding our dog ordinances, Scott talked to the Brown County Sheriff. He quoted a price of \$50 per call, asking that we try to handle the situation ourselves first with a call or letter. He said that if the issue involves a rabid dog or a dog bite, that would be covered by the county. Code

Enforcement Specialists will be in town to inspect for ordinance violations.  
Streets -  
Parks - Patti Daly gave us an update on the enclosed building project. She had 3 possible placement sites. She is still working on funding. She mentioned that Columbia Community Cares is going to take over the project going forward. They have 501c3 status. Lisa asked about security cameras in the park. There was much discussion regarding the new parks mowing for 2026. Scott and Jeremy will put together a proposal with two parts. One part will just be the mowing of the parks - the other part weeding and fertilizing the parks. This will be put out for bids - with the right of refusal of any bids.

Lagoon/Sewer- Jeremy said that the Larson trailer site area is not big enough for a drain field. There are other possibilities for the sewage. That cost would be Larson's responsibility. Jeremy is going to talk to Ted Dickey from NCOG about sewer rates for part time city residents.

Rubble Site - Dana talked to Jon Hansen about piling up the rubble site. He will submit a bid. He should be able to do it mid March.

NEW BUSINESS - none  
FINANCIAL REPORT - The annual report is under way. Cara presented bank balances. Scott Meints made a motion to accept the financial reports as given. Trevor Meints seconded the motion. All were in favor - motion carried.

January 31, 2026, balances: SF - \$ 113,473.54; SF Money Market - \$ 153,459.03; GF - \$ 192,636.38; GF Money Market - \$ 51,491.62; CD Money Market - \$ 41,816.35  
FIT - \$ 16,225.60; Cash on hand - \$0

Mayor Mohr adjourned the meeting.

Next City Council Meeting - Wednesday, March 4th, 2026 - 7:00 p.m

Submitted by Cara Dennert, Finance Officer

Published February 11, 2026 at the total approximate cost of \$35.35 and may be viewed free of charge at [www.sdpublicnotices.com](http://www.sdpublicnotices.com). 26519

**Marty Weismantel**  
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weisag@nvc.net

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CHESAPEAKE

North Star

Southwest

SFM

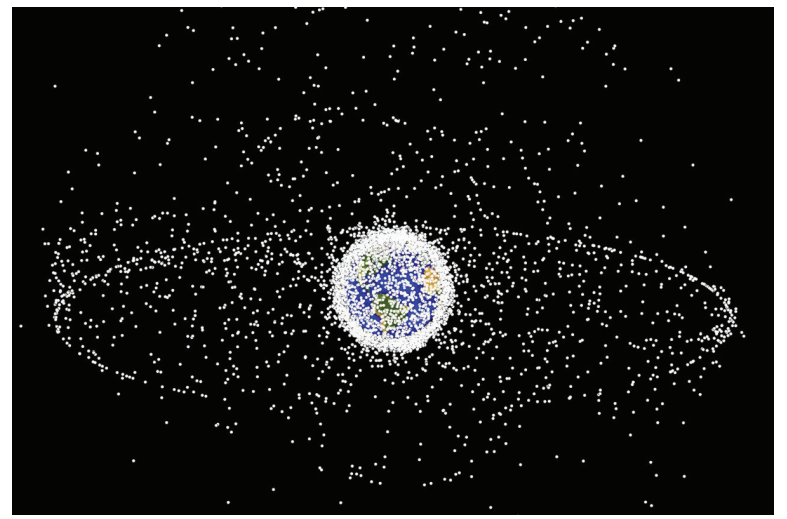
ACCESS TO MANY MORE COMPANIES!

# Exponential Growth In Space Debris Worries Environmentalists

## EARTHTALK

by Daniel Choi

Dear EarthTalk: What is space debris, and can we reduce or eliminate it? – H.B., Troy, NY



Space debris, also known as space junk, consists of defunct man-made objects that orbit Earth, including satellites, spent rocket stages and other various fragments from collisions. According to the European Space Agency, space surveillance networks are currently tracking approximately 40,000 objects orbiting Earth, only 11,000 of which are active “payloads” (still functioning satellites and other equipment), with the rest classified as space debris.

**Space debris, which makes up the majority of objects orbiting around Earth (as depicted here in this NASA-generated image), consists of defunct man-made objects, including satellites, spent rocket stages & other fragments.**

Credit: NASA Orbital Debris Program Office, Public Domain.

However, the actual amount of space debris could be over 1.2 million objects more than one centimeter in length and capable of causing catastrophic damage on impact.

Lack of proper regulation and surveillance of space debris has exacerbated conversation around the threat posed to life on Earth. In 2021, one of the International Space Station’s (ISS) robotic arms was punctured by a piece of space debris. As space debris is projected to exponentially increase in the next decade, future collisions may cause irreparable damage to satellites, technological systems that support GPS, and weather forecasting.

One major consideration in space debris is the “Kessler Syndrome” risk that describes the cascading effects of the debris as one collision creates multiple fragments that further collide and create more debris. Consider the 2009 collision between the Iridium satellite and Cosmos satellite: some 2,000 fragments created still orbit Earth today and pose significant risks to outer space systems. While most of the 200-400 large pieces of debris that reenter Earth’s atmosphere annually burn up, five to 10 percent survive.

Recently, numerous policies have been established to mitigate the effects of space debris, including the United Nations’ 25-year de-orbit rule, which recommends that spacecraft orbital stages in Low Earth Orbit (LEO) be removed from orbit within 25 years after the end of their operational life. However, the global de-escalation effort is infinitely more convoluted than simply ridding of space debris. Professor of Astronautics and Head of the Astronautics Research Group at the University of Southampton Hugh Lewis stated in an interview that “[Space

debris] is not just a technical problem we have to solve, but a social one as well,” in regards to the race between countries, governments and corporations to use space.

Though national competition for space may be inevitable, it is imperative that countries and governments work together for the best interest of our planet and strategize the use of space among one another. Space is a common resource, yet its pollution and befouling risks astronaut safety, climate security, and more. To reduce space debris, we must support stricter regulations and advocate for cleanup technologies from corporations and the private sector.

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## Groton Senior Citizens

On January 12 Groton Seniors met for their meeting and cards. Thirteen members were present. President Ruby Donovan opened the meeting with allegiance to the flag. Minutes and treasures report were read and accepted. It was brought up to quit Senior Citizens or continue. It was decided to continue. Darlene Fisher was voted to be president, Bev Sombke Treasures and Elda Stange Sec. Meeting was adjourned and cards played. The winners of each game. 1- Pinochle- John Aldrich, 2- Pinochle- Kelly Miracle, Whist- Elda Stange, Canasta -Ruby Donovan. Door Prizes Julie Shilhank, Don Hoops, Darlene Fischer. Lunch was served before going home.

On January 19th Thirteen Groton Seniors met to play cards. President Darlene Fischer had the flag pledge. Cards were played. The winners of each game, 1- Pinochle- Don Hoops, 2- Pinochle- Julie Shilhank, Whist- Darlene Fischer, Canasta- Eunice McCollister. Door prizes Julie Shilhank, Bev Sombke, and Darlene Fischer. Darlene Fischer’s birthday was celebrated with cake and ice cream,

On January 26 Groton Seniors met for their potluck dinner. Fourteen members attended. President Darlene Fischer had the flag pledge and table prayer, after dinner bingo was played. Julie Shilhank won black out. Cards were played after bingo. Door prizes Pat Larson, Elda Stange, and Eunice McCollister. Dessert was served after cards.



The Groton Area Dance Team performed at half time of the boys varsity game with Roncalli on Tuesday. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

**WAGE MEMORIAL LIBRARY**  
PRESENTS  
**PUZZLE, POPCORN & PITCHER GAME EVENT**

Each team of 4 will compete by completing a 300 piece puzzle, eating a bowl of popcorn and drinking a pitcher of pop!

Prizes will be given to teams who finish 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>!

**When: Sunday, February 15<sup>th</sup>**  
**Where: Wage Memorial Library**  
120 N Main Street  
**Time: 1pm**  
\$30 per team

Pre-register by Wednesday, February 11<sup>th</sup> by calling 605-397-8422 or email [city.kellie@nvc.net](mailto:city.kellie@nvc.net)

\*\*No more than 6 teams

**Groton** Wage Memorial Library  
**GROTON** Chamber of Commerce  
**JUNGLE**

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See Back Page for our **Valentine's Day Specials!**

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Chocolate Ice Cream  
Vanilla Ice Cream

**59¢** BEST CHOICE ICE CREAM  
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**COLD WATER LOBSTER TAIL** \$6.99  
4 Lb.

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**USDA CHOICE DEMKOTA BONELESS BREAD & BUTTER ROAST** \$5.49  
Lb.

**USDA CHOICE DEMKOTA BONELESS NEW YORK STRIP STEAK** \$6.99  
10 Oz. Ea.

**STRAWBERRIES, RASPBERRIES, BLACKBERRIES** 2/\$6  
6 Oz. - 1 Lb.

<b>GROCERY</b> KELLOGG'S POP TARTS 8 Ct. Box \$1.99	<b>GROCERY</b> BEST CHOICE CEREALS 10.6-20 Oz. Box \$1.99	<b>DAIRY</b> BEST CHOICE MILK WHOLE, 2% 1% OR SKIM 1 Gallon Jug \$3.49	<b>GROCERY</b> KELLOGG'S ZESTA SALTINE CRACKERS 16 Oz. Box \$2.99
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