

# THE Groton Independent

South Dakota  
Growing Families & Opportunities

Vol. 136 No. 50 ♦ Groton, South Dakota ♦ Wednesday, Aug. 7, 2019 ♦ Established in 1889

## Walking for \$10,000 for Wounded Warriors Project

Jerry Meadows is on a mission. His goal on this part of the journey from Sisseton to Aberdeen was to raise \$3,000 for the Wounded Warriors. One donor donated \$3,000 on Wednesday on the website.

He started the last leg of this journey July 31 from Sisseton and eventually end up in Aberdeen. His first walk raised over \$7,000. His goal is to ultimately reach \$10,000.

He is not alone on this journey. His wife of 27 years, Virginia, drives the Jeep with a USA Flag and Wounded Warriors flag mounted on the back. It has become a team effort. Jerry, at age 61, has to have an oxygen tank. "I really couldn't do this without her," Jerry said. "She makes sure my air tanks are properly full and that I drink tons of water." Virginia used to be Jerry's home care nurse and that's where they met.

He is known as the "Road Walker" for Wounded Warriors. When he first started walking earlier this year, he was known as the "Walking Dead" before that got changed to "Road Warrior" and now "Road Walker."

When he reaches Aberdeen, it will end the 310 mile trek. Jerry said his feet were bleeding and Virginia's knees were swelling up. The journey took its toll on the Meadows, but they are very happy with the accomplishments. Jerry said that even at one point, someone walked a mile with him along the journey.

The Wounded Warrior walk was something that Jerry had been thinking about earlier this year. He said that his wife wanted to go on a vacation. So he pondered the idea. "She always wanted to go to Minnesota and she wanted to see Paul Bunyan and the Blue Ox." So they started driving to Bemidji. "I had to carefully plan this out," he said. He wanted to do a walk for Wounded Warriors. He cast the idea to his wife. When Virginia was asked what she thought about it, she said, "Do you really want me to tell you the truth?! I told him he was crazy!" When she was asked why she is along for the journey, she said, "I had to make sure he got back. And besides, it is for a good cause. We love our Vets."

On Jerry's birthday, March 14, the walk began at Bemidji. He said that reporters have told him that people 2/3 his age would never make the journey. But Jerry said that the journey was not about him. "It's about the Wounded Warriors." While the Veteran's Administration is funded with tax payer's dollars, Wounded Warriors is privately funded.

Jerry and Virginia recalled at one point in the trip where several Eagles were flying overhead for many miles. "An Indian legend says that when Eagles follow you, it's good luck," Virginia said. "They would fly overhead and go ahead of us by a couple of football field lengths," Jerry said. "When we would catch up with them, they fly above us again and ahead of us. It was awesome."

The money is used to help wounded warriors adjust to life and provide support for the families. "It helps them adjust to life after their injury," Jerry said. "It changes them. It's because of people like that where you have the freedom to preach behind the podium."

Jerry and Virginia pulled into Pierpont Saturday where they had the local mechanic look at their breaks. The mechanic ended up making a mad dash to Britton to get the parts. He installed the parts with only the cost of materials. While in town, they attended church at Heaven Bound Ministries in Pierpont. Jerry said, "This worked out so well. I was wondering where I was going to go to church at this week."

Jerry has established a motto during the trip. "Stop looking at your feet and start looking at the horizon." He said when you look at your feet, all you see is garble. When you look at the horizon, you see the beauty of God's creation."

Jerry said, "If you love America, relearn to love it again. There is so much to see."

As Jerry reiterated several times. "It's not about me. It's about the Wounded Warriors. All of the money we raise goes to the Wounded Warriors program. That's what makes this a success."

When he arrived in Groton on Sunday, the Groton Police Department escorted the Meadows to the local motel, which was paid for by the Groton American Legion Post #39. In addition, Jerry said that there was another issue with the breaks on the way to Groton where there was a squeal. He took the vehicle to Groton Ford where they found a couple of rocks in the breaks. The repairs were done at no cost. "I really want to thank the fine folks in Pierpont and Groton Ford for their generosity. And also thanks to the Groton Legion for providing us a room Sunday night."

You can donate by going to his website at: <https://bit.ly/2XK9SBf>

Or you can mail a check to: Wounded Warriors Project, PO Box 758541, Topeka, Kansas 66675 - put "Road Walker" in the memo box on your check.

- Paul Kosel



Robert Wegner, left, receives the Wound Warrior Project flag from Jerry Meadows. It was called the "hand-off" where the flag is presented to the Legion as Meadows puts a new flag on his vehicle. (Photo by Tina Kosel)



Virginia and Jerry Meadows (second and third people from the left) are pictured with some of the members of Heaven Bound Ministries of Pierpont. The Meadows attended church in Pierpont last night. On the left is Dan Riedl, and the three on the right are Jeff Snaza and Ole and Lorna Olson. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Carter and Halle IntVeld from Bruce stopped to talk with the Meadows and they even gave them a few dollars for the cause. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



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SEEKING HS ENGLISH teacher, MS/HS Art teacher and MS/HS Instrumental Music teacher for the Mobridge-Pollock School District 62-6 for the 2019-2020 school year. Signing bonus offered. Contact Tim Frederick at 605-845-9204 for more information. Certified Application and Resume can be mailed to: Mobridge-Pollock School District 62-6; Attn: Tim Frederick; 1107 1st Avenue East; Mobridge SD 57601. Open until filled. EOE.

CERTIFIED LAW ENFORCEMENT and non-certified security wanted for SD State Fair, Aug. 29-Sept. 2. To apply or for more information, call 605.353.7340.

EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY K-6 TEACHER - full-time at Custer Elementary School, complete application online www.csd.k12.sd.us, . Custer School District, 527 Montgomery St., Custer, SD 57730, 605-673-3154

**MISCELLANEOUS**

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**Brown County  
July 30, 2019  
Meeting Minutes**

JULY 30, 2019 – GENERAL MEETING

Meeting called to order by Commission Chair Fjeldheim at 8:45 A.M. in the Commissioner's Chambers, Courthouse Annex, Brown County, SD. Present were Commissioners Feickert, and Sutton. Commissioner's Kippley and Wiese were absent. Commissioner Feickert led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**MINUTES:**

Moved by Sutton, seconded by Feickert to approve the General County Commission meeting minutes from July 23, 2019. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

**CLAIMS:**

Moved by Feickert seconded by Sutton to approve the following claims: Insurance: SD Public Assurance Alliance \$699.76. Machinery & Equipment: Little Falls Machine Inc \$42,865.00. Professional Fees: 3 Doors Down \$100,000.00; AYWCC \$5,000.00; Alexandria Hypnosis \$3,650.00; Angie's Clean-All \$6,200.00; Apollo's Beacon \$300.00; Rene Axness \$40.00; Bantz, Gosch & Cremer LLC \$1,080.82; Phil Baker \$1,200.00; Karen Bartell \$40.00; B&R Enterprises \$100,000.00; Bohm's Family Entertainment \$4,000.00; Joy Braun \$40.00; Marsha Braun \$40.00; Br Co. Old Time Tractor \$1,200.00; CPM Touring \$26,000.00; City of Aberdeen \$258.64; Aaron Cech \$150.00; Avera Medical Group Anesthesiology \$149.52; AMG Cardiovascular Specialists \$73.86; AMG Infectious Disease \$255.03; Avera St. Lukes \$8,991.14; Avera McKennan Hospital \$3,720.89; Cogley Law Office \$8,035.72; Dakota Kids Pedal Pull \$751.00; Ric Dias \$40.00; Disc-Connected K-9's \$5,800.00; Dohrer Law Office \$8,035.72; Phyllis Donat \$40.00; Dylan Robinson \$30,000.00; Jacey Engelhart \$1,000.00; Becky Erickson \$40.00; Faulk County Sheriff's Office \$6,885.00; Lisa Fedeler \$100.00; Wayne Fisher \$100.00; Gateway Group #2 LLC \$106.25; Susan Gerlach \$40.00; Jeremy Geske \$300.00; Ann Gibbs \$40.00; Stan Gonsoir \$150.00; Good Shepard Lutheran Church \$3,500.00; Judy Gulleston \$40.00; Christopher A. Haar \$8,063.52; Harmelink, Fox & Ravensborg Law \$190.40; Hub Area Habitat for Humanity \$1,000.00; Duane Jark \$80.00; Cathy Jorgenson \$40.00; Kerri Cook-Huber \$197.24; Robert Kramer \$150.00; Florence Kraus \$40.00; Lew's Fireworks \$5,000.00; Lutheran Social Services \$2,152.08; Russell Maier \$150.00; Jerald M. McNearly \$19,561.17; Marilyn Maloney \$40.00; Karen Mikkelsen \$40.00; Minnehaha County Auditor \$112.50; Mogen's Heroes \$1,150.00; NE Mental Health Center \$75.00; Nelson Talent Agency \$1,000.00; Kathy Novstrup \$40.00; NSU Women's Swim Team \$6,500.00; On the Run \$600.00; Pauer Sound & Music \$12,500.00; Sherry Perrion \$40.00; Red Sun Rising \$20,000.00; Marilyn Trefz \$116.25; Richardson, Wylly, Wise, Sauck \$731.50; Romeo Entertainment \$72,000.00; Sanford Clinic \$340.85; Keyli Sawatzky \$40.00; Cindy Schnabel \$40.00; Jessica Schumacher \$40.00; SD Nurse's Assoc. \$1,000.00; SD Snow Queen Festival \$1,000.00; Ashley Seeklander \$40.00; Christy Griffin-Serr Law Office \$8,035.72; Gretchen Sharp \$40.00; Jared Sherlock \$5,000.00; Evalyn Smith \$40.00; Sound Exchange \$5,250.00; Spotslam \$2,653.00; Diann Steinheuser \$40.00; Sutton Rodeo \$42,000.00; Taliaferro Law Firm \$11,070.87; TMS \$47,400.00; Linda Thurston \$40.00; Russell Thyen \$150.00; University of North Dakota \$102.00; US Bank \$2,012.37; Whitney Vogel \$100.00; W.H. Petting Zoo \$2,000.00; Courtney Wolff \$40.00; Tayler Wolff \$80.00; Yankton County Sheriff Office \$50.00; Yankton County Treasurer \$350.50; Zylstra Investigations \$2,027.50. Publishing: Aberdeen American News \$; Groton Independent \$153.10; Midstates Printing \$5,071.67; US Bank \$124.98; World Wide Audio Media Inc \$600.00. Rental: Brick's Roto-Rooter \$12,000.00; Fire Safety First \$325.00; Gompf Display \$1,885.00; NB Golf \$17,700.00; Three Seasons Tent Rental \$1,165.00. Repairs & Maintenance: Aberdeen Clean All \$185.00; Clark Engineering Inc \$5,231.50; GCR Tires & Service \$1,173.39; Grote Roofing Co. \$1,583.66; Hoven Auto Repair \$56.65; Jensen Rock & Sand Inc \$93,533.60; Little Falls Machine Inc \$1200.00; Pierson Ford Lincoln Mercury \$68.68; Ringgenberg Electric \$1,203.30; Sewer Duck \$85.00; Tru Green Chemlawn \$90.00; US Bank \$206.44; Woodman Refrigeration \$780.86. Supplies: Agtegra

Cooperative \$2,184.54; Alexandria Hypnosis \$100.00; American Business Forms \$164.39; Apollo's Beacon \$2,700.00; Behnke Pit \$30,736.16; Bob & Beachcombers \$3,000.00; Dawn Breedlove \$25.13; Century Business Products \$590.34; Crossroad Station Music \$3,500.00; Dakota Supply Group \$23.86; Disc-Connected K-9's \$1,200.00; Hanlon Brothers \$97,870.57; Jensen Rock & Sand Inc. \$312,412.58; Delany & Deliah Johnston \$300.00; Jones & Company \$1,000.00; Jump Zone Inflatables \$5,100.00; Lang's Audio TV & Appliance \$234.98; Leidholdt Tool Sales, LLC \$2.07; Leidholt Electric LLC \$630.77; MB LLC \$366.15; Mac's Inc. \$972.00; Marco Inc \$22.13; Marty Davis Show \$3,800.00; Matthew Bender & Co Inc. \$174.30; Menards \$163.66; Mogen's Heroes \$850.00; Pan-torium Cleaners \$70.00; Ronald Parker \$4,200.00; Pauer Sound & Music Inc \$585.00; Piles of Smiles \$1,700.00; Premier Biotech Inc \$1,037.91; CNH Industrial America LLC \$330.72; Rewinder \$2,800.00; Robby Vee \$3,000.00; Runnings \$1,382.41; Satellite Tracking of People \$633.75; Sherwin Linton \$2,000.00; Sherwin Linton \$154.10; Sound Exchange \$1,750.00; TMS \$13,000.00; US Bank \$10,410.17. Travel & Conference: Karen Bartell \$39.39; Joy Braun \$24.91; Marsha Braun \$69.94; Aaron Cech \$335.58; City of Groton \$185.76; Lisa Fedeler \$166.38; Wayne Fischer \$118.44; Jeremy Geske \$267.90; Judy Gulleston \$55.37; Cathy Jorgenson \$26.98; Kesslers \$99.80; Robert Kramer \$208.68; Kuck Law Office \$8,070.52; Russell Maier \$55.84; Karen Mikkelsen \$55.46; Roberta Nichols \$69.46; Sherry Perrion \$27.07; Corrie Sprinkel \$187.29; Sarah Swenson \$29.14; Russell Thyen \$196.46; US Bank \$2,806.68; Whitney Vogel \$129.72; Courtney Wolff \$54.90; Tayler Wolff \$54.90. Utilities: Qwest Corporation \$236.93; Montana Dakota Utilities Co. \$32.19; Northwestern Energy & Communication \$3,900.21; US Bank \$1,175.67. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

**HR REPORT:**

Moved by Sutton seconded by Feickert to approve the following HR Office Report, which includes the following personnel changes: Acknowledge resignation of Scott Richards, full-time, JDC Officer at the Sheriff's Office, effective July 24, 2019 and acknowledge request to fill vacancy. Approve hiring of Sasha Bunke as full-time Museum Office Clerk, effective August 19, 2019 at \$15.39/hour. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

**FAIR CONTRACTS:**

Moved by Feickert, seconded by Sutton to approve the following fair contract: JoAnn Donley (4H Judge) declined payment. All members present voting aye. Motion Carried.

**LEGAL ASSIGNMENTS:**

Moved by Sutton, seconded by Feickert to approve and authorize the Chair sign documentation to assign 5 claims against individuals to Credit Collections Bureau for the purpose of collecting a lien. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

**LEASES:**

Moved Feickert, seconded by Fjeldheim by approve the following lease agreement: Tyler Fish for lease of Richmond Lake Youth Camp Lodge August 24th -25th, 2019 with approved alcohol use permission form. All members present voting aye. Motion Carried.

**CONTRACT:**

Moved by Feickert, seconded by Sutton to approve and authorize chair sign contract with Boys and Girls Club for 2019 operation of Brown County Fair Grandstand Concession Stands. All members present voting aye. Motion Carried.

**ZONING FEE SCHEDULE**

Commissioner Sutton offered the following Resolution: RESOLUTION # 40-19WHEREAS, by authority of Chapter 4.26 Second Revision Brown County Ordinances, the Board of Brown County Commissioners may alter or amend the fee schedule, charges, expenses and a collection procedure for building or zoning permits, and WHEREAS, it has been determined that the fee schedule established by Resolution #22-08, be amended; and WHEREAS, it has been determined that fees will be based upon the valuation of the project as shown in "FEE TABLE 2019", and WHEREAS, it has been determined that a minimum fee be set; and WHEREAS, it has been determined that an "Administrative Fee" be applied when any construction has commenced prior to application and/or prior to receiving a Permit; and WHEREAS, it has been determined that a "Surcharge" be applied when any construction has commenced prior to an application being submitted or prior to obtaining a building or zoning permit. NOW, THEREFORE

BE IT RESOLVED by authority of Chapter 4.26 Second Revision Brown County Ordinances, the following fee schedule for building and zoning permits is hereby approved and adopted to be effective July 30, 2019 as shown in Table 2019 "ZONING FEE SCHEDULE": Permits: - as in Table 2019 "Permit Fee Schedule"; Moving Permit - \$10; Demolition Permit - \$10; Fence Permit: (for inside community, not rural) - \$10; Flood Plain Development Permit (FPDP) - \$20; Sign: face replacement - \$20; Sign: new construction set - \$100; Construction: - as in Table 2019 "Permit Fee Schedule", \$25.00 minimum fee for any construction from \$0 to \$8,350; \$3.00 per \$1,000 of valuation of project construction after \$8,351 Administrative Fee; failing to obtain a building/zoning permit prior to construction (\$50.00) Surcharge; construction has commenced prior to an application being submitted or prior to obtaining an approved building/ zoning permit [0.5% (1/2%) times total project valuation] Dated this 30th day of July, 2019. Seconded by Feickert. Roll call vote: Commissioner Feickert - aye, Sutton- aye, Wiese- absent, Kippley -absent, Fjeldheim - aye. Resolution Adopted.

**APPLICATION FEE SCHEDULE:** Commissioner Sutton offered the following RESOLUTION: RESOLUTION #41-19 WHEREAS, Second Revision Brown County Ordinances, the Board of Brown County Commissioners may alter or amend a fee schedule, charges, expenses and a collection procedure for application fees, and WHEREAS, it has been determined that there was not a previous application fee schedule established; and WHEREAS, it has been determined that application fees will be as shown in Planning/Zoning Table 2019 "APPLICATION FEE SCHEDULE", and NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by Second Revision Brown County Ordinances, the following fee schedule for application fees is hereby approved and adopted to be effective July 30, 2019 as shown in Table 2019 - "APPLICATION FEE SCHEDULE": PRELIMINARY PLAT - \$25 PRELIMINARY & FINAL PLAT - \$100 VACATION OF EXISTING PLAT - \$100 VARIANCES - \$100 SPECIAL EXCEPTION - \$200 CONDITIONAL USE - \$200 REZONE PROPERTY - \$350 ORDINANCE APPEAL (ANY ITEM NOT LISTED IN VARIANCE, SPEC EXC OR COND USE) - \$100 CONCENTRATED ANIMAL FEEDING OPERATION (CAFO) - \$300 Dated this 30th day of July, 2019. Seconded by Feickert. Roll call vote: Commissioners Feickert - aye, Sutton- aye, Wiese- absent, Kippley -absent, Fjeldheim - aye. Resolution Adopted.

**TOWNSHIP BOND:**

Moved by Feickert, seconded by Sutton to approve the following Township Bond for Garland Township- Clerk Derek Kiefer and Treasurer Lloyd Bundtrock. All members present voting aye. Motion Carried.

**APPLICATION FOR OCCUPANCY:**

Moved by Sutton, seconded by Feickert to authorize the Chair sign application, submitted by Northern Electric Coop for occupancy of Brown County Highway 14W, Section 35, Township 123, Range 64, Brown County, SD to provide electric service. All members present voting aye. Motion Carried.

**APPLICATION FOR OCCUPANCY:**

Moved by Feickert, seconded by Sutton to authorize the Chair sign application, submitted by Northern Electric Coop for occupancy of South Shore Drive in section NW 25, Township 124, Range 65; Brown County Highway 6 in section SW1/4, Township 124N, Range 64W; and North Shore Drive in Section SW19, Township 124N, Range 64W, Brown County, SD to provide electric service. All members present voting aye. Motion Carried.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Moved by Sutton seconded by Feickert to adjourn the Brown County Commission at 9:50a.m. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

Cathy McNickle, Brown County Auditor

Published once at the total approximate cost of \$124.30. 17902

**Brown County  
Aug. 2, 2019  
Meeting Minutes**

AUGUST 2, 2019 – SPECIAL MEETING

Meeting called to order by Commission Chair Fjeldheim at 8:00 A.M. in the Commissioner's Chambers, Courthouse Annex, Brown County, SD. Present were Commissioners Feickert, Sutton, and Wiese. Commissioner Kippley was absent.

BID – BROWN COUNTY HIGHWAY 13 COLD IN-PLACE AS-

**PHALT RECYCLING:**

Time and place, as advertised to open, read and consider sealed bids for cold in-place asphalt recycling on county highway 13. Moved by Wiese, seconded by Feickert to award bid from Midstate Reclamation and Trucking in the amount of \$506,243.51. Midstate Reclamation and Trucking was the only bid received. All members present voting aye. Motion Carried.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Moved by Sutton seconded by Feickert to adjourn the Brown County Commission at 8:07a.m. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

Cathy McNickle, Brown County Auditor

Published once at the total approximate cost of \$11.17. 17903

**Groton City  
Aug. 6, 2019  
Meeting Minutes**

August 6, 2019

The Groton City Council met on the above date at 7:00pm at the Community Center for their first monthly meeting with the following members present: Blackmun, Peterson, Wells, McGannon, Glover via telephone and Mayor Hanlon presiding. Also present were: Attorney Drew Johnson, Hope Block, Stacy Mayou, Paul Kosel, Kathy Sundermeyer, Terry Herron, Officer Bjerke, Dan Sunne and Dwight Zerr.

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

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved on a motion by Blackmun and seconded by Wells. All members voted aye.

Babcock entered the meeting at 7:02pm.

Moved by Blackmun and seconded by Peterson to authorize the following bills for payment. All members voted aye.

Payroll, \$34,143.82, Employee salaries; Executive, \$931.34; Administrative, \$3,179.69; Public Safety, \$8,833.33; Public Works, \$9,419.19; Culture & Recreation, \$11,780.27; First State Bank, \$9,796.71, SS and WH; First State Bank, \$499.98, HSA contributions; Dakotaland FCU, \$950.00, Employee savings; SD State Treasurer, \$10,354.04, Sales and excise 6/19; Afac, \$250.28, Employee insurance; Allied, \$10,180.20, Employee insurance; Colonial Life, \$299.88, Employee insurance; Guardian Insurance, \$204.05, Employee insurance; Crawford Trucks, \$36.12, Disconnect switch for yellow truck; Dakota Press, \$1,616.00, Publishing 8/18-6/19; Employers Mutual Ins, \$85.20, Employee insurance; Galls, \$115.26, Uniforms; Jacobs & Son Construction, \$43,715.18, Payment #1 Street Project; MidAmerican Research, \$280.47, White striping paint; NW Energy, \$893.90, Natural gas; Runnings Supply, \$14.34, Oil; S&S Lumber, \$615.48, Seven dust, nets, gloves, ext cords, bug spray, hammer, keys, sprayer, cable ties, concrete mix, tin snips; SD Dept of Health, \$499.00, Water testing; SD Retirement, \$7,751.57, Employee retirement; SD Supp Retirement, \$335.00, Employee retirement; Dwight Strom, \$300.00, Family crisis; Verizon, \$42.61, Dump camera communication; Western Area Power, \$17,468.94, Power; Chase Visa, \$3,939.53, Rubble site arm, postage, paper products, flowers for pool, water, cleaners, library book, rifle supplies, copy paper, chair mat, lodging for FO school, trophies, pool balls, lounge chair replacement parts, time cards; BB/5B Foundation, \$2,576.81, Remaining donation; Pauer Sound, \$7,423.19, Sound system; Geffdog, \$155.65, Banners; Stan Houston, \$129.95, Trimmer for park and shop; Full Circle Ag, \$318.41, Herbicide; Lien Transportation, \$5,263.06, Hot mix; Web Water, \$16,146.49, Water 7/19; EcoLab, \$106.00, Pest control; A&B Business, \$223.13, Copier rent; Ameripride, \$47.14, Rug rent; Menards, \$314.32, Cemetery drain supplies; Darrel's Sinclair, \$371.80, Mosquito pickup tire repair; Drew Johnson, \$1,000.00, Legal fees 7/19; Midstates Group, \$175.00, State baseball trophies; Gary's Engine and Repair, \$56.48, Chromer repair; Associated Supply, \$1,264.39, Pool chemicals; Share Corp, \$129.57, Shop chemicals; Core & Main, \$2,342.21, Fire hydrant; Van Diest, \$2,430.00, Mosquito control chemicals; DGR Engineering, \$2,000.00, Complete electric study fee; Riteway, \$734.73, Utility billing postcards;

Clark Engineering, \$34,197.22, Street project meeting, drafting, documentation, meals, Water tower 12% complete; Banyon, \$150.00, Timecard clock in module add on; Dairy Queen, \$112.00, Concession resale; Dakota Pump & Control, \$6,631.64, Water softstart and new plc unit to control pumps; GDI News, \$217.64, Publishing; PAC, \$94.16, Concession resale; Compliance Signs, \$33.50, Employee only parking sign; Groton Ford, \$360.76, Replace serp belt bucket truck; \$403.08, Clean radiator, resistor block for blower motor '04 Sierra; \$72.70, Cabin air filter installation '17 Ford Explorer

Herron reported that the gravel had been put on the last street in the street project, and paving will be done the week of August 19th. Herron left the meeting at 7:18pm.

Zerr reported that he has been busy street sweeping, helping asphalt, and that manholes have been done. Zerr left the meeting at 7:21pm.

Sunne reported fixing some loose wires, helping with asphalt and the annual inspection on trucks will be in September. Sunne left the meeting at 7:26pm.

Mayou requested to attend a class in Sisseton regarding child abuse and neglect. Moved by Blackmun and seconded by Babcock to approve Mayou to attend this meeting. All members

voted aye.

Payment request #2 from H.F. Jacobs & Son Construction for \$153,668.75 was approved on a motion by McGannon and seconded by Glover. All members voted aye.

The Change Order #2 from H.F. Jacobs & Son Construction for the street project was approved on a motion by Peterson and seconded by Wells. All members voted aye.

The 2020 proposed budget was introduced to the council, and board members will prepare for the first reading of the appropriation ordinance at the next meeting.

Moved by Peterson and seconded by Babcock to adjourn into executive session for personnel and legal items 1-25-2 (1) & (3) at 7:48pm. All members voted aye. Council reconvened into regular session at 8:41pm.

Moved by Babcock and seconded by Glover to move the temporary police officer's wage to \$24 per hour as of August 7, 2019. All members voted aye.

Moved by Blackmun and seconded by Wells to hire Tony Garcia as the full time police officer at \$52,416 annual salary. All members voted aye.

Moved by Blackmun and seconded by McGannon to adjourn the meeting at 8:44pm. All members voted aye.

Scott Hanlon, Mayor

Hope Block, Finance Officer

Published once at the total approximate cost of \$52.50. 17908

**The Life of Jim Swanson**

Jim A Swanson (66) passed on July 28, 2019 with heart complications at St Alexis Hospital in Bismarck, ND. He was born on March 10, 1952 to Oscar and Irene Swanson, the youngest of eight kids, in Aberdeen, SD. The family moved to Miami, Florida in 1962 when Jim was 10.

Jim was a big equipment operator, helping build several highways in Florida and North Dakota. He spent many summers working on the farm in South Dakota with is sister, Betty and her husband Charles Strom.

Surviving are four sisters Darlene "Melody" Swanson, AZ; Darlys Myrick, and Donna Mackiewicz, FL; and Betty Strom, SD and one brother Dennis Swanson, FL; as well as numerous nieces and nephews. He was proceeded in death by his Parents, Oscar and Irene Swanson; two brothers, Gary Swanson and Owen Swanson; and two brothers' in Law, Charles A Strom and Morton Myrick.

A graveside service will be held in Miami Florida next to his parents.

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# DAMAGING DEBT: S.D. college graduates weighed down by heavy student debt

By: Nick Lowrey

South Dakotans owe more than \$1.5 billion to the federal government on loans they took out to finance their educations and many borrowers are finding themselves crushed under the weight of their college debt, even many years after they graduated.

About 52,000 South Dakotans have some debt from direct federal student loans, according to the U.S. Department of Education. Thousands more owe millions of dollars more on other federal student loan products and to private student loan companies. Those loans were made — often to people still in their teens — on the promise that the money would help provide them with a more stable, prosperous financial future.

But promises of higher pay, strong job satisfaction and financial stability haven't panned out for many graduates. Nationally, wage growth has fallen far behind the increasing cost of higher education. In South Dakota, many graduates face high college costs and debt loads in a state known for low wages and limited white-collar job opportunities.

South Dakota college students routinely rank among the most indebted in America. Roughly 74 percent of South Dakota graduates carry some college debt, with an average of more than \$30,000 owed. Only two other states, New Hampshire and West Virginia, saw such high rates of student debt. The national average student debt load is \$32,731 at graduation. College tuition varies widely across the state and nation, but most students can expect to pay about \$60,000 to graduate from a public university in South Dakota and several times that for private schools or those located in other parts of the country.

For Valerie Scott of Sioux Falls, getting student loans and completing two degree programs at Augustana University was relatively easy compared to trying to pay off the debt she still owes nearly a decade after graduating. Scott has paid about \$42,000 on her student loans and owes about \$35,000 more, she said.

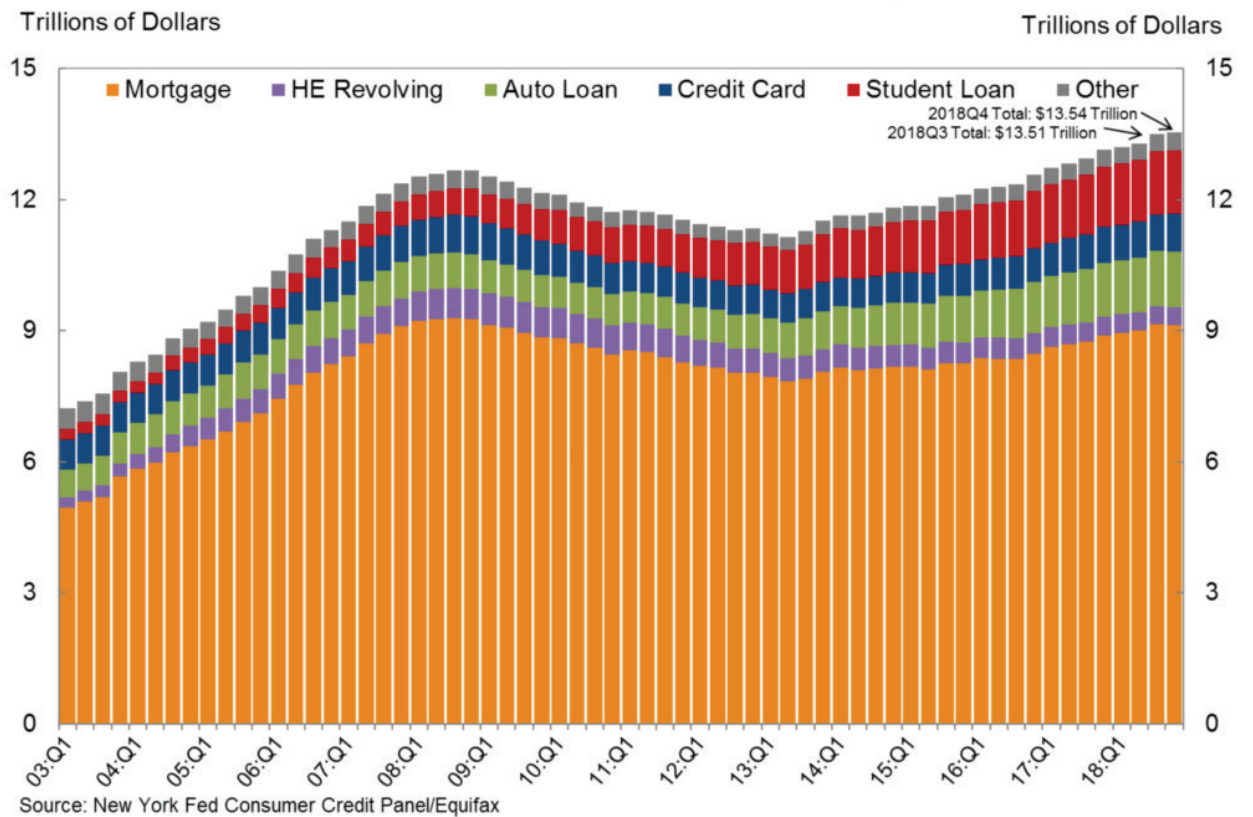
She works in medical billing, and pays about a third of her income on college loans. She said she cannot afford to purchase a home and had to borrow money from her parents to buy a used car from her grandmother.

"I approached student loans as an 18-year-old with the mindset that I'd just work hard and pay them off and it would be fine," said Scott, now 29. "When I boil it down to just me and the invisible people who lent me money, I don't know that I feel taken advantage of. I went in knowing I was going to be paying for years, but I just feel tired and wish I was done."

Scott is far from alone in feeling trapped by college debt. Research on student borrowing is beginning to show the potentially dire economic consequences of the nation's nearly \$1.6 trillion student debt load.

Studies show homeownership, which is the biggest indicator of stability for most American families, is being delayed or forgone completely at least partially due to student debt. In a 2017 report called "Echoes of Rising Tuition in Students' Borrowing, Educational Attainment and Homeownership in Post-Recession America," economists at the New York Federal Reserve Bank found that homeownership for American 30-year-olds dropped from 32 percent in 2007 to 21 percent in 2016. Up to 35 percent of the decline could be attributed to

Total Debt Balance and its Composition



**This chart shows the breakdown of types of debt carried by Americans over the past 15 years, and indicates how the percentage of debt for college loans (shown in red) has risen at a faster rate than debt for a mortgage, credit cards and auto loans.** Source: New York Federal Reserve Bank

student debt, the report said.

A 2015 study by economists at the Philadelphia Federal Reserve Bank found student debt had caused a 14 percent nationwide reduction in the number of new small businesses with one to four employees over 10 years. The number of new businesses with up to 20 employees, the largest category of small business, saw a reduction of 6.2 percent due to student debt, the study concluded. Small businesses account for about 60 percent of new, private sector employment annually.

The debt issue vexes prospective, current and former college students with no end in sight. Skyrocketing college costs, reduced state support for higher education and the ease of getting educational loans have combined to make going into debt for higher education almost a foregone conclusion for many. Meanwhile, many South Dakota graduates are enrolled in payment plans that reduce monthly loan bills but create the potential for huge tax bills later in life.

South Dakota Treasurer Josh Haeder is hoping a new program can help slow the growth of college debt in the state. He is working on a financial literacy and college savings effort that could help some students avoid debt. The plan is in its infancy right now, but he wants to roll it out in April 2020. Financial literacy and more savings are needed to address what is a growing problem in the state, Haeder said.

"There's a much broader conversation that needs to take place with 16-year-olds before they start looking at student loans," Haeder said. "We're talking about a huge issue here. This is a gigantic statewide and national issue."

## Pay now and pay later

Before taking their first federal student loan, borrowers are required to take a short, online course about the loan, which includes information about how and why it needs to be repaid. After that course, students are free to borrow as much as they can. Schools can educate their students about borrowing money but most don't do much.

Student lenders, including the federal government, are eager to give students money because the loans tend to be profitable and there's very little risk. For example, the Congressional Budget Office in 2017 predicted the U.S. Department of Education would bring in \$110 billion in profit from interest on direct loans over the ensuing 10 years. Student borrowers also aren't provided the same protections as other borrowers. It is much more difficult to discharge a student loan through bankruptcy than it is to discharge credit card debt, for example.

There hasn't been much incentive for colleges and universities to spend time educating their students on debt. The ability of a college or university to tap federal loans as financial aid is directly tied to their students' loan default rates, and South Dakotans' default rates are low.

According to the 2018 South Dakota Board of Regents Fact Book, 12.8 percent of South Dakota college borrowers had defaulted over the previous three years. The state default rate was inflated by borrowers who went to for-profit colleges. For-profit college students defaulted at a rate of more than 23 percent. Public university students saw a default rate of 7.5 percent, while private, non-profit schools saw a 5.7 percent default rate. Schools lose the ability to tap federal loans for their students when default rates hit 40 percent or stay at 30 percent for three years.

Just because a student stays out of default doesn't mean they're making ends meet or paying off their loans. A growing number of student borrowers are opting to use income-based payment plans, an option that keeps them out of default but doesn't end up paying the loan off. In part because of extended payment plans and income-based payment plans, people ages 30 to 39 now hold more student debt than any other age group and have since 2014.

Income-based repayment plans, many of which were created in 2010, work by reducing a borrower's monthly payments based on how much money a borrower is making, but can



leave them with a huge tax bill decades later.

Under the plans, loan payments are based on either 10 percent or 20 percent of the borrower's income that is above 150% of the federal poverty line. If the borrower's income is less than 150% of the poverty line in a given year, they don't have to pay at all. In 2019, 150 percent of the poverty line for a single person was \$18,735 and \$38,625 for a family of four.

When income-based payment plans were created, federal officials knew many borrowers using the plans would never pay off their principal debt. Instead, they promised to forgive the loan after 20 or 25 years depending on the type of loan and whether enough qualifying payments were made. The amount forgiven would then be taxed at that time as if it were income.

By the end of the first three months of 2019, more than \$813 billion worth of Americans' direct federal student loans — currently the most common type of student loan — wasn't being paid off. Less than half, roughly \$384 billion, was temporarily deferred, in forbearance, held by students still in school or by students who had graduated less than six months earlier. About \$430 billion belonged to former students who were using an income-based repayment plan, according to the U.S. Department of Education.

Brooke Moeller, a chiropractor in Chamberlain, is an example of how income-based repayment plans may seem like a good deal at first but can have serious financial implications later. Moeller, who owed around \$200,000 on student loans in 2012, made five monthly payments of \$1,500 each but then learned that of the \$7,500 paid to the lender, her principal had been reduced by only \$700.

"The gal on the phone basically told me that I needed to apply for an income-based repayment plan and that I would never get my student loans paid off if I wanted to have a family and a home," Moeller said. "That was the moment that I pretty much broke down."

South Dakota higher education officials don't track the number of former students using income-based repayment plans, said Jay Perry, vice president of academic affairs for the South Dakota Board of Regents. They have no idea how many of their graduates aren't actually paying their debt off and will be saddled with enormous tax bills if and when their loans are forgiven.

"That might be a bigger problem in South Dakota than in other states simply because it's a low-wage state," Perry said of the prevalence of income-based repayment in South Dakota.

Data available on the U.S. Department of Education's student aid website show 19,800 South Dakotans who collectively owe \$1.1 billion on their federal loans were enrolled in an income-driven repayment plan at the end of 2018.

In 2007, under the George W. Bush administration, the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program was created. The program was designed to encourage employment in public service fields by promising potential hires that they could get their student loans forgiven by working in government or nonprofits for 10 years and making 10 years of payments. In 2017, when the first group of public employees became eligible for forgiveness, more than 99 percent of those who applied were denied. The approval rate hasn't improved much in almost two years.

## Greater investment, lower returns

On average, college graduates can expect to make about \$1 million more in income over their lifetime than non-graduates, said Perry. The extra earning potential is often called the "college premium" and it really hasn't changed much over the last few decades.

What has changed is how much a degree costs and who is paying for it.

Until 2009, taxpayers, not students, were footing most of the bill for a degree from a



**Jay Perry, vice president for academic affairs at the South Dakota Board of Regents, said big changes are needed in the way higher education is paid for in order to reduce student debt. A good place to start, Perry said, would be for the state to create a need-based scholarship program to lower costs.** Photo: Nick

Lowrey, South Dakota News Watch

**"There is no way to keep the current approach and also reduce the amount of student loan debt nationally. That math is not going to add up."**

-- Jay Perry, vice president of academic affairs for the S.D. Board of Regents

public university. As recently as 2007, South Dakota's taxpayers were covering about 55 percent of the cost of a public college education. In 2009, for the first time in state history, students themselves paid more than half, about 51 percent, of the cost of higher education. South Dakota students have been paying more than taxpayers ever since.

By 2018, South Dakota public university students were paying 56 percent of the cost of their education. In contrast, national statistics show that the parents of today's college students likely paid for just 30 percent of their own education costs. Those who attended a public university prior to 1988, meanwhile, probably were paying for closer to 20 or 25 percent of their education, according to a 2017 report by the Center on Budget Policy and Priorities, a non-profit think tank.

State funding for higher education hasn't kept pace with rising costs for everything from technology to compliance with federal rules and laws. In 2011, South Dakota made a 10 percent across-the-board cut to state spending, which added to the pressure that has forced public universities to raise tuition and fees almost every year for more than a decade, Perry said.

The nationwide average price of tuition at public colleges has jumped by more than 200 percent from 1988, when it was \$3,360, to \$10,230 in 2018, according to the College Board, a non-profit focused on college student success. As college became more expensive, more students were forced to borrow more money. A 2017 New York Federal Reserve re-

### ANNUAL UNDERGRADUATE COLLEGE COSTS ACROSS GREAT PLAINS

This chart shows the average annual cost of tuition, fees and room and board for freshmen at public colleges across seven Great Plains states. While South Dakota ranks low on this chart, state officials say the state is the most expensive in net college costs due to low levels of grants and scholarships available.

STATE	TOTAL COST/YEAR
Minnesota	\$18,973
Iowa	\$18,521
Nebraska	\$16,918
Wyoming	\$16,387
South Dakota	\$16,251
North Dakota	\$15,048
Montana	\$14,329

\*Total cost includes tuition, fees, room and board for 2019 fiscal year

port, "Echoes of Rising Tuition", said a typical 30-year-old in 2015 had actually reduced their overall personal debt load compared to a typical 30-year-old in 2003.

But the decline in debt has as much or more to do with increased use of student loans than any other factor. The report showed the typical 30-year-old in 2015 would have had 174 percent more student debt than a 30-year-old would have had in 2003, while at the same time carrying 36 percent less credit card debt and 28 percent less mortgage debt. Higher student loan balances make securing a mortgage, car loan or credit card more difficult.

Average wages, meanwhile, have increased far less than the price of a college degree. A July 2019 report by the Congressional Research Service found that inflation-adjusted wages for middle income Americans grew about 6.1 percent between 1979 and 2018. For top earners, wages increased 37.6 percent. In South Dakota, overall wages grew about 6.3 percent between 1979 and 2001 but growth slowed to 4.1 percent between 2001 and 2018, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Graduates with heavy college debt face a daunting employment landscape when seeking work in South Dakota.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the state is dominated by low-wage service jobs that pay well below the national average salary. Statistics from the department in 2017 show that 71 percent of employed South Dakota residents, about 292,000 people, make under \$40,000 a year. South Dakota ranks third-lowest in average annual pay statewide at under \$41,000 a year, with the national average at \$55,470. Meanwhile, the data show that 37% of jobs in South Dakota are in low-pay fields such as food service, administrative assistance and sales.

Meanwhile, the state ranks at or near the lowest pay in the nation in several employment categories that likely require a college degree, including architecture/engineering, education, life/physical/social sciences, arts/design/sports/media, computer and mathematical, legal fields, community and social services and business and financial operations.

Graduates who take on debt but then find an unreceptive employment marketplace can struggle to thrive or live independently.

Sara Carlson of Brookings started college at Concordia College, a private school in Moorhead, Minn., in 2008, but transferred and graduated from South Dakota State University in 2011 with a degree in graphic design. She had about \$30,000 worth of debt when she graduated.

Carlson, now 30, couldn't find a job in graphic design and currently works at the Runnings store in Brookings as a department manager making slightly more than \$34,000 a year. She now pays \$260 a month on college loans and has about two and a half years of payments left before her debt is paid.

"On my salary, my monthly budget comes about \$200 short," Carlson said.

The current funding model for college likely is unsustainable, said Perry, of the board of regents. Because students now shoulder most of the costs of college and because those costs continue to increase, the amount of debt they'll have to take on will keep growing.

"There is no way to keep the current approach and also reduce the amount of student loan debt nationally. That math is not going to add up," Perry said.

The regents have worked with South Dakota high schools to create dual-credit programs so students can earn college credits before arriving on campus, Perry said. The university system has also implemented exploratory studies programs at its campuses in an effort to help students pick a major and graduate within four years. The regents have also been lobbying aggressively for the state to create a needs-based scholarship program in an effort to bring net-costs to students down.

**Continues on next page**



## Service Notice: Leo Leshner

Services for Leo Leshner, 68, of Claremont will be 11:00 a.m., Monday, August 12th at the United Methodist Church, Claremont. Pastor Rodney Ulmer will officiate. Burial will follow in Huffton Cemetery under the direction of Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton.

Visitation will be held at the church on Monday, beginning at 9:30 a.m.

Leo passed away August 7, 2019 at Sanford Hospital, Sioux Falls.

## Damaging Debt

Continued from previous page

But Perry said none of the board's recent efforts will affect the state's current student debt load and the borrowers who owe money. He said a comprehensive set of reforms is needed to turn the tide of oppressive student debt.

"These are complex problems and we need to stop pointing fingers and start working together," Perry said. "One bill, one change, one new Board of Regents policy isn't going to solve the problem."



## Three Local Seminars Planned

A local group is working on the finishing touches to three seminars that will be put on in Groton. The first will be Sept. 11 at the United Methodist Church with the theme being, "Drugs & Alcohol". The second will be held Oct. 9 at the Groton Christian & Missionary Alliance Church with

the theme being, "Sex Trafficking and Dating Abuse". The third will be Nov. 6 at Emmanuel Lutheran Church with the theme being, "Suicide and Bullying." Guest speakers will be on hand at each of the seminars and more information will be published as details get finalized. Pictured at the meeting were going clockwise from left: Pastor Josh Jetto, Glenna Remington, David Hunter, Kim Weber, Rachel Otter, Dawn Bohlmann and Pastor Brandon Dunham. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

## SOUTH DAKOTA COLLEGES AMONG COSTLIEST IN NATION FOR NET COSTS

South Dakota's public university students pay an average of \$4,000 more per year more for college degrees than most other public college students in the country, according to a new report.

The report, set to be presented in early August to the state Board of Regents, shows the net cost of attendance at South Dakota's public universities is the eighth-highest in the nation, said Jay Perry, vice president for academic affairs for the board that governs the state university system.

Net price is the price paid after scholarships, grants and other forms of non-obligation aid are accounted for. The net price South Dakotans pay at their public universities comes in at an average of \$16,706. The national average is \$12,697, according to the report.

"We're not only the most expensive in the region on that cost, but when you compare to other states that are in the same ballpark on net cost, it's the Eastern Seaboard and it's South Dakota," Perry said.

In real numbers, the cost to attend the state's universities is actually below the national average. The total average price of attendance, which includes tuition, room and board, for South Dakota's universities is \$22,393 a year. The national average comes in at about \$23,248.

But the lack of a needs-based scholarship and other state-funded forms of financial aid in South Dakota mean the state's college students are on the hook for a much greater percentage of the price of getting a degree, Perry said.

South Dakota has the third-least amount of state grant money available to its students and the fourth-least amount of grant aid available from university endowments, the report says. Overall, South Dakota has the second-least amount of grant aid available to its students in the nation, the new report says.

The report says the consequences of high net costs already are being felt in the number of low-income students choosing to attend college in the state. The number of recipients of federal Pell Grants that aid lower-income students at South Dakota public universities fell from 31.5 percent in 2010 to 22.5 percent in 2018, the report says.

— Nick Lowrey, South Dakota News Watch



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