

E Grooton Independent South Dakota Growing Families & Opportunities Vol. 137 No. 18 \diamond Groton, South Dakota \diamond Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2019 \diamond Established in 1889

From frost to a blizzard



There was thick frost on the trees over Christmas and the day after Christmas, leading up to a major winter storm.

A winter storm watch was issued on Friday and it turned into a winter storm warning on Saturday. Then on Sunday, it was upgraded to a blizzard warning before settling down to a winter weather advisory Monday morning.

I-90 was closed from Watertown to the Canadian border.





Big snow flakes were falling Saturday morning.



There was little wind Saturday morning as the light on the flag accents the snow at the Chris Frost home.







Terri Mount Seljeskog posted a video on Facebook that showed semi after semi north of Sioux Falls in the ditch shortly after the interstate was opened. This video was shot at 2:30 p.m. on Monday.

Dollar General, Subway and the Groton Dairy Queen did not even open on Sunday and many of the church services were cancelled from the blizzard conditions. On Monday, many businesses opened late. The City of Groton office was closed on Monday as were the non-essential Brown County offices. The state opened up offices at 1 p.m. on Monday.

10.5 inches of snow

As of Saturday morning, there was 2.5 inches of snow with a moisture content of 0.23 inch.

Fifth Avenue East was blown shut as was Fifth Avenue West. Areas of town had eight feet snow drifts from the wind.

Sunday morning recorded an additional 4 inches of snow with a moisture content of 0.31.

On Monday morning, an additional 4 inches of snow fell in Groton with a moisture content of 0.41.

So for the total three-day event, 10.5 inches of snow fell with a moisture content of 0.95 inch.

For the year, Groton has recorded 28.60 inches of moisture with the average being 21.68 inches.

On that note . . .





Classifieds and Card of Thanks

The following rates are for Classifieds published in both the Groton Daily Independent and the Groton Independent, and posted online at www.grotonsd.net. Cut rate in half if you just want it in the GDI or just the weekly. 1 Week: \$9 for first 30 words, 20¢/word thereafter 2 Wks: \$17 for first 30 words, 38¢/word thereafter 3 Wks: \$24 for first 30 words, 54¢/word thereafter 4th consecutive week is free **605/397-NEWS (6397)**

PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

CARD OF THANKS

We would like to thank everyone for their prayers, visits, love, and support. We appreciate all of you. Praise the lord for his strength -Glory to him ! We wish you a blessed 2020.

Love

Penny and Bill

BIDS

ATTENTION CONTRACTORS: Plankinton School is accepting sealed bids until 12 p.m. Noon on January 13, 2020 for its Replacement and Repair of its Parking Lot. Contact the School Business Manager at (605) 942-7743 for bid forms and specifications.

EMPLOYMENT

The Groton Area School District is accepting applications for the position of Certified Sign Language Interpreter. Applicants should complete and submit the certified staff application form along with a current cover letter, resume, and three letters of recommendation. All materials should be submitted to Joe Schwan, Superintendent PO Box 410 Groton, SD 57445. EOE

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR, Hill City, SD. Seeking a working Public Works Director experienced in team building & long-range planning. Staff of 6. Job description at www. hillcitysd.com.

FARMERS IMPLEMENT & IRRIGATION is now hiring full-time service technician positions in Brookings & Watertown. Apply online at www.farmersii. com or call 605-692-6153 or 605-878-0262.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR/PROFESSIONAL EN-GINEER -City of Custer, SD - responsible for the activities, operations, maintenance and construction of Streets, Parks, Buildings, Water & Wastewater. www.custer.govoffice.com

THE WHITE RIVER SCHOOL DISTRICT 47-1 is seeking applications for the following positions: Network Administrator - Associates degree in Network Administration preferred or related degree and experience. Salary dependent on qualifications and experience, with benefits. Applicant must also be able to pass a criminal background check. Position is open until filled. For an application and further information contact Tom Cameron at the White River School District's Central Office, P.O. Box 273, White River SD 57579 or call (605) 259-3135 or https://www.whiteriverschools.com/ employment. White River School District is an equal employment opportunity employer.

THE NORTH DAKOTA NEWSPAPER ASSOCIA-TION is accepting applications for the position of EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR. Candidates must embrace challenges, progress, teamwork and change. Newspaper/journalism background preferred. Responsibilities include overall association management, member contact and development, legislative/lobbying work, management of newspaper content sharing and advertising placement programs, personnel management for a staff of 5, and working with a board of directors/member committee structure. Competitive salary and benefits package. Application deadline is Jan. 31, 2020. Anticipated start date is May, 2020. Send letter, resume and salary requirements to: NDNA Search Committee, 1435 Interstate Loop, Bismarck, ND 58503-05671, or newsmonitor@wahpetondailynews.com.

THINKING ABOUT HEALTH

Congress Leaves Promising Health Care Cost Reforms in Limbo

By Trudy Lieberman, Community Health News Service

Health care as an issue landed with a thud in late December as members of Congress packed up and went home for the holidays. Two important pieces of legislation for patients didn't make it to the finish line. Passage of either measure next year is a crapshoot since it's an election year.

One of my journalistic colleagues from the online site Axios summed up the Congressional end-of-the year stalemate this way: "There are lots of goodies for the industry, while patients will get the worst kind of holiday surprise—more medical bills" after Congress failed to enact two promising pieces of legislation.

First, seniors on Medicare and everyone else will continue to see their prescription bills zoom upward. Second, every American unlucky enough to need hospital care, but particularly emergency room care or surgery, will be at risk for financial complications they didn't expect.

In fact, unexpected medical costs are the public's top health concern. Studies indicate families are far more worried about getting socked with surprise bills than they are about getting hit with sky-high deductibles and premiums, or even paying their rent or mortgage. In other words, those unexpected bills are a very big deal. So far, though, Congress has declined to end such practices.

Special interest groups – doctors, particularly anesthesiologists and emergency room physicians, hospitals, air ambulance companies, insurers, and employers – have all lobbied mightily to protect their financial interests. Although those stakeholders agree patients should be protected, there's no agreement on how much doctors should be paid.

Patients who receive a surprise bill, usually from an out-of-network doctor, would pay their deductible, copays, and coinsurance as if the doctor was in the network. Doctors who send these bills would then be paid by insurers based on the average payment for a service in the geographic area or a sum determined by an outside arbiter, depending on what the eventual legislation requires.

A coalition of employers and insurers prefer negotiated rate settlements while physician groups favor arbitration.

When Congress adjourned at the end of December, a possible solution was deferred until next year.

A bill that would begin to tackle the high prices of prescription drugs passed the House, but Senate approval is uncertain. The bill championed by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi calls for the government to begin negotiating prices for between 50 and 250 drugs paid by the Medicare program. Recall that the 2003 law that gave seniors the benefit prohibited such negotiations.

If prices were negotiated, the bill projects that both consumers and the government would save huge amounts of money. Consumer drug spending would drop by 55 percent and government spending by some \$400 billion over the next 10 years. Democrats would like to use that money to expand Medicare coverage to include hearing, vision, and dental benefits.

The bill would also cap out-of-pocket spending on drugs for Medicare beneficiaries at \$2,000 a year. Currently some seniors can pay as much as \$15,000 annually for a single prescription drug.

"Patients scored a major victory in the fight for lower drug prices" when the House passed its bill, says David Mitchell who founded the advocacy group Patients for Affordable Drugs Now. "The House has

done its job. Now the Senate must act."

Whether it will is a big question mark. While the House drug bill indeed would be landmark legislation if it passes, it's hard to see drug makers giving up the fight.

It's estimated that the House bill would cause pharmaceutical industry revenues to drop by about one \$1 trillion in the next decade. That explains why the industry has fought long and hard to influence members of Congress to make sure nothing is enacted that derails their gravy train.

Hardly a day went by in recent months without the industry pushing its point of view in sponsored content in Politico, an online publication widely read in Washington. Sponsored content is really advertising, but it's presented in a way that makes readers think they are reading a legitimate news story.

Axios summed up the latest health care efforts in the House this way: "These policies will materially benefit pretty much every sector within an industry that already wields more financial power than ever."

Consumers, on the other hand, will find themselves pretty much in the same boat they've been sailing in for many a year.

How would you profit if the proposed legislation were to pass? Write to Trudy at trudy.lieberman@gmail.com.



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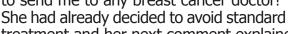
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Mrs. B came into the emergency room one night, years ago, with some stress related issue. After taking her history, I began to suspect there was something else bothering her. As I was beginning her physical exam she blurted out, "I know there is a breast mass but you're not going to send me to any breast cancer doctor!"





By Richard P. Holm, MD ~ Prairie Doc® Perspective

treatment and her next comment explained why, "My aunt suffered because of awful unnecessary surgery and chemotherapy," she said. I sensed there was no changing her mind and that meant trouble for my patient.

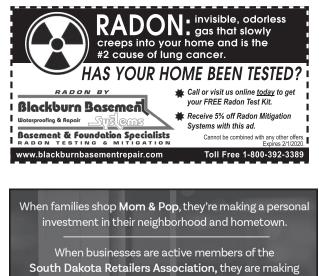
The story evolved as my patient's breast cancer grew and eroded through her skin to become a weeping and tender sore. She soon sought out unconventional treatment by a nonphysician from a neighboring town with an internet degree of some kind who promised to help her. The treatment involved a curious machine with flashing lights and an unusual noise which apparently indicated which group of herbal supplements the patient needed to buy in order to cure the cancer "naturally."

More women are diagnosed with breast cancer than any other malignancy, except for skin cancer. If the breast cancer hasn't spread outside of breast tissue, then, with treatment, the five-year survival is about 99 percent. If the cancer has spread to lymph nodes just outside the breast, then, with treatment, the five-year survival is about 90 percent. Even if the cancer has spread to distant parts of the body, which happens only in about six percent of the cases, then, with treatment, more than 25 percent are still alive after five years. Since 1989, the number of people who die from breast cancer has been steadily decreasing which is the direct result of improved methods for breast cancer screening, detection and treatment.

My patient died less than a year from our meeting in the emergency room. I still regret not convincing her to get help from a science-based breast cancer physician. She may have lived years longer and in more comfort. Many people are now being saved who were previously lost to all types of cancers. Even when lifesaving is not possible, current cancer treatment can at least improve the quality of the time that remains.

Bottom line: The fear of death and the fear of suffering keep some people from seeking medical help. Please shed those fears and seek science-based help.

Richard P. Holm, MD is founder of The Prairie Doc® and author of "Life's Final Season, A Guide for Aging and Dying with Grace" available on Amazon. For free and easy access to the entire Prairie Doc® library, visit www.prairiedoc.org and follow Prairie Doc® on Facebook featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show streaming on Facebook and broadcast on SDPB most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.



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FDA SAYS TOBACCO AGE **NOW 21**

PIERRE (SD) – The U.S. Food & Drug Administration says that the federal minimum age of sale for tobacco products is now 21 years of age, effective immediately.

Last week President Trump signed legislation that raised the federal minimum age for purchase of tobacco products from 18 to 21. Although provisions in the law allow for a rulemaking period, a statement on the FDA website declares the law in immediate effect.

Here is the full statement:

"On December 20, 2019, the President signed legislation to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, and raise the federal minimum age of sale of tobacco products from 18 to 21 years. It is now illegal for a retailer to sell any tobacco product – including cigarettes, cigars and e-cigarettes – to anyone under 21. FDA will provide additional details on this issue as they become available."

Although South Dakota state law has not been updated to align with the federal law, retailers should heed FDA guidance.

Shed Those Fears of Cancer Treatment

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Thank you for your past patronage and we look forward to serving you in the 2020s!



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Brown County Dec. 24, 2019

Meeting Minutes December 24, 2019 - GEN-ERAL 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, Kippley, and Wiese (teleconference). Commissioner Sutton was absent. Commissioner Kippley led the Pledge of Allegiance. MINUTES:

Moved by Feickert seconded by Kippley to approve the General County Commission meeting minutes of December 17, 2019. Roll call vote: Feickertaye, Sutton-absent, Wiese-ave, Kippley-aye, Fjeldheim-aye. Motion carried.

CLAIMS/PAYROLL:

Moved by Feickert seconded by Kippley to approve the following claims:

PAYROLL: Commission \$4,285.10; Auditor \$8,592.44; Treasurer \$12,069.40; SA \$22,514.50; SVAWA \$1,193.49; Maintenance \$7,927.28; Assessor \$12,514.12; Register of Deeds \$8,812.21; VSO \$2,560.77; GIS \$2,367.50; IT \$8,558.22; HR \$2,153.85; Sher iff \$38,853.00; Jail \$45,491.85; Court Security \$4,707.82; JDC \$23,274.84; Welfare \$2,057.70; Museum \$6,916.13; Parks/Fairgrounds \$4,905.76; Fair Board \$3,280.77; Planning & Zoning \$4,122.54; Highway \$48,522.43; Dispatch \$26,427.39; Emergency \$4,079.58; Teen Court \$678.24; JDAI \$1,576.93; 24/7 Sobrietý \$3,206.25; Lándfill \$13,105.76; Matching Benefits: FICA \$19,352.74; Medicare \$4,526.04; Health Savings Accounts \$175.00; Blue Cross Blue Shield \$123,3470.57; Delta Dental \$7,056.00; Dear born National \$1,094.12, SDRS \$40.545.91.

CLAIMS: Professional Fees: Aberdeen Advanced Care Ambulance \$218.74; AMG-Emergency \$132.41; Avera St. Luke's \$198.89; Brevik Law Office \$438.50; Certified Languages \$1,659.90; Cogley Law Office \$6,756.30; Dependable Sanitation \$26,060.44; Faulkton Area Medical Center \$44.51; GBR Interpreting & Translation Services \$150.00; Haar Law Firm \$1,021.40; Karlen Electric \$1,721.01; Kennedy Pier Loftus \$251.00; Kuck Law Office \$30.40; Matthew Payne \$200.00; Sanford Health \$79.00; SD DOT \$13,244.63; Sheriff of Woodbury County \$38.00: Taliaferro Law Firm \$2,659.25; WSP \$28,030.55. Publishing: Aberdeen American News \$889.46. Repairs & Maintenance: Aberdeen Plumbing & Heating \$312.45; Cintas \$94.65; Crawford Trucks & Equip. \$51.48; Dakota Doors \$99.95; DMI \$2,950.00; Exhaust Pros \$49.33; Forterra \$124,526.00; GCR Tires & Service \$205.00; Graham Tire \$677.80; Grote Roofing \$1,493.25; Houston Radar \$97.00; Hoven Auto Repair \$427.94; Jake's Heating & Cooling \$253.81; Midstates Printing \$779.00; Midwest Pump & Tank \$371.44; Pantorium Cleaners \$55.00: Productivity Plus \$43.88; TranSource \$239.40; Volk Upholstery \$125.00. Supplies: Advance Auto \$1,020.03; American Solutions for Business \$84.04: C. Scott Bader \$131.18; BPro \$1,200.00; Butler Machinery \$52.57; Cash-Wa \$14.65; Century Business Products \$929.49; Commtech \$5,981.30; Crawford Trucks & Equip. \$2,760.95; DFP \$156.39: Farm Power Mfg. \$1,555.77; Farnams Genuine Parts \$52.46; Fastenal \$894.56; GCR Tires & Service \$163.00; GovConnection \$1,477.22; Harr Motors \$368.00; Hedahl's Auto \$31.77; Houston Radar \$14,796.25; Interstate Battery System \$230.90; J Gross Equip. \$100.36; Karlen Elec-tric \$1,828.95; Marco \$74.08; Menards \$126.02: Midstates Printing \$80.00; Midwest Pump & Tank \$147.39; Productivity Plus \$269.97; RDO Equip. \$1,424.54; Running's \$165.85; Satellite Tracking \$559.00; SD DOT \$22,097.47; TranSource \$98.69; US Bank \$138.71; Violet Dinger Estate \$12,164.28; Volk Upholstery \$40.00; West Payment Center \$1,820.29; Jennifer White \$80.92. Travel & Conference: Stan Beckler \$36.66; City of Groton \$97.20; Darwin Bettmann \$30.48; Dale Kurth \$225.06; David North \$175.80; Jerome Streckfuss \$58.30; Gavin Wright \$190.82. Utilities: CenturyLink \$2,316.09; Dependable Sanitation \$165.00; Economy Propane \$1,853.25;

NWPS \$596.98. Roll call vote: Feickert-aye, Sutton-absent, Wiese-aye, Kippley-aye, Fjeld-heim-aye. Motion carried.

AUDITOR'S REPORT OF AC-COUNT:

Moved by Feickert seconded by Kippley to approve the following Auditor's Report of account for November 2019: Total Cash and Checks on Hand 7700 Total Checking Account Balances: 10039890.38 Total Savings Account Balances: 1680447.42 Total Certificates of Deposit: 5488180.7 Grand Total Cash and Balances: 17216218.5 General Fund Cash and Investment Balances by Funds: General Fund 5328327.95 Road & Bridge Fund 1996693.12 Road & Bridge Fund - restricted 423243.27 911 Service 290277.82 Emergency & Disaster 17214.33 Domestic Abuse 580 Teen Court 31430.49 Grant 2490.15 JDAI -16535.87 Richmond Youth 21916.96 24/7 Sobriety 17254.27 ROD M&P 122462.95 Tif Debt Service 8977.42 Landfill + cash change 2682479.1 Landfill restricted 1364284 Trust and Agency Funds 4925122.54 GRAND TO-TAL GENERAL FUND CASH AND INVESTMENTS 17216218.5. Roll call vote: Feickert-aye, Suttonabsent, Wiese-aye, Kippley-aye, Fjeldheim-aye. Motion carried. LOTTERY APPLICATION:

Moved by Feickert, seconded by Kippley to approve and authorize the Chair sign the following application: Aspire Foundation for lottery to be held at the expo building on January 4th, 2020, or until tickets are sold. Roll call vote: Feickertaye, Sutton-absent, Wiese-aye, Kippley-aye, Fjeldheim-aye. Motion carried.

HR RFPORT:

Moved by Kippley, seconded by Wiese to approve the following HR Office Report:

Acknowledge reclassification of Bailey Sipple, from part-time JDC Correctional Office (no benefits) to regular part-time JDC Correctional Officer; effective December 29, 2019.

Approve hiring of Elizabeth Hovendick as full-time Brown County Treasurer Deputy at \$15.64 per hour effective January 13, 2020.

Approve pay increase for Brown County Sheriff Jail Supervisor by \$2 per hour effective December 29, 2019. (Linn Kamin @ \$ 26.92 per hour)

Approve pay increase for Brown County Sheriff's Department 24/7 Coordinator by \$1 per hour effective December 29, 2019 (Henry Fulda @ \$ 15.19 per hour)

Approve advertising internally for temporary internal hire of Brown County Sheriff Jail Sergeant

Approve the following emplovee step increases effective December 29, 2019: Adelaide Mounga @ \$19.85, Sandra Woytassek @ \$17.64, Heather Kulwicki @ \$17.09, Lucas Champlain @ \$17.09, Brandon Wiest @ \$17.09, Sonje Oban @ \$17.23, Kyle Kost @ \$19.08, Gerald Lehrkamp @ \$19.63, Mickey Schulz @ \$18.49

Roll call vote: Feickert-aye, Sutton-absent, Wiese-aye, Kippley-aye, Fjeldheim-aye. Motion carried

CENTENNIAL VILLAGE CON-TRACT:

No Discussion- will discuss at a later meeting. BUDGET SUPPLEMENTS:

Time and place, as advertised for 2019 Budget Supplement Hearing. No one appeared with questions or comments. Moved by Kippley, seconded by Feickert to approve the following Budget Supplement for year 2019: General Fund - Court Appointed Attorney 101.5.214 @ \$375,000.00; County Fair 101.5.524 @ \$110,000; Mental Illness Board 101.5.445 @ \$25,000; Planning and Zoning 101.5.711 @ \$40,000, Court Security 101.5.214 @ \$35,000 funded by undesignated sur-plus cash in the General Fund 101.5.101.99 @ \$585.000. General Fund - Maintenance 101.5.161 @ \$455,000 funded by sale of county property 101.4.374 @ \$200,000 and surplus cash in the General Fund 101.5.101.99 @ 255.000. Solid Waste 504.5.322 @ \$150,000 funded by undesignated surplus cash in the Solid Waste fund 504.1.101.99. Federal State Grant/POD 234.5.222.426 @\$281.79 funded by undes-ignated surplus cash in the Federal State Grant/POD Fund 234.1.101.99. Roll call vote: Feickert-aye, Sutton-absent, Wiese-aye, Kippley-aye, Fjeld-heim-aye. Motion carried. COUNTY SEAL PROJECT: Troy McQuillen met to discuss donating a County Seal. Board appreciated donation.

2020 ASSESSMENT PLAN: Moved by Kippley, seconded by Feickert to acknowledge the 2020 Assessment Plan as presented by the Director of Equalization, Gene Loeschke. Roll call vote: Feickert-aye, Suttonabsent, Wiese-aye, Kippley-aye, Fjeldheim-aye. Motion carried. GRANARY TRANSFER- SET

HEARING DATE: Moved by Feickert, seconded by Kippley to set hearing date and authorize advertising to transfer the granary from Brown County to the Dacotah Prairie Museum Foundation. Hearing set for January 21, 2020, at 8:45 a.m. Roll call vote: Feickert-aye, Sutton-absent, Wieseaye, Kippley-aye, Fjeldheim-aye. Motion carried.

PLATS:

Commissioner Kippley offered the following resolution:

RESOLUTION 65-19

"Be it resolved by the board of County Commissioners of Brown County, South Dakota, that the plat showing; Geist Subdivision in the N1/2 NE1/4 of section 29-T123N- R62W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota, having been examined, is hereby approved in accordance with the provision of SDCL 11-3, and any amendments thereof." Seconded by Commissioner Feickert: Roll call vote: Feickert-aye, Suttonabsent, Wiese-aye, Kippleyaye, Fjeldheim-aye. Resolution adopted.

Commissioner Kippley offered the following resolution:

RESOLUTION 66-19 "Be it resolved by the board

of County Commissioners of Brown County, South Dakota that the plat showing, Wayne Cutler Subdivision, in the NE1/4 of section 9-T125N-R60W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota, having been examined is hereby approved in accordance with the provision of SDCL 11-3, and any amendments thereof." Seconded by Commissioner Feickert: Roll call vote: Feickert-aye, Suttonabsent, Wiese-aye, Kippleyaye, Fjeldheim-aye. Resolution adopted.

SOLID WASTE SPECIAL AS-SESSMENT FEES - 2020

Commissioner Kippley offered the following Resolution:

RESOLUTION #67-19

WHEREAS, Title 3, Solid Waste Management System, Chapter 3.07011 of the Second Revision Brown County Ordinances, effective March 12, 1997, as amended, requires the Board of County Commissioners to establish the Solid Waste Special Assessment fee schedule for the following year.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the following Solid Waste Special Assessment fees shall be effective January 1, 2020, through December 31, 2020, for the Brown County Sanitary Landfill:

SOLÍD WASTE SPECIAL AS-SESSMENT FEE SCHEDULE

(Assessment plus applicable sales tax billed with the Real Estate Tax Notice)

1. Households within Incorporated Cities or Civil Townships that require curb service @ \$33.00 per year

2. Households within Incorporated Cities or Civil Townships that do not require curb service @ \$83.00 per year

3. Condominiums taxed as single units within Incorporated Cities or Civil Townships that require curb service @ \$33.00 per year

4. Condominiums taxed as

SCHEDULE - 2020

Commissioner Kippley offered the following Resolution:

RESOLUTION #68-19 WHEREAS, Title 3, Solid Waste Management System,

Chapter 3.07010 of the Second Revision Brown County Ordinances, effective March 12, 1997, as amended, requires the Board of County Commissioners to establish the fees for use of the landfill.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the following Solid Waste Tipping Fee Schedule shall be effective January 1, 2020:

SOLID WASTE TIPPING FEE SCHEDULE

PRICES EXCEPT MINIMUM CHARGE DO NOT REFLECT AP-PLICABLE SALES TAX

ALL LOADS MUST BE TARPED AND SECURED

ALL WASTE MUST BE SORT-ED AND PUT INTO PROPER AREAS

Type, Fee Appliances: Refrigerators,

Freezers, Air Conditioners, Dehumidifiers, \$12.50 per item With or Without FREON

Asbestos1: Friable – Powdery or Dusty state, can be crumbled and reduced, \$ 5.00 per bag, to powder by hand

Compost: Grass, Leaves and Light Garden Residue, FREE

Contsoil: Gas and Diesel Contaminated Soil (notification

and analysis required before disposal), \$14.00 per ton Contsoilsp: Contaminated Soil Special (i.e. NW Energy,

Coal Gasification), \$38.00 per ton E-Waste: Electronic Waste

- TV's, Computers, Copiers, Printers, etc, \$100.00 per ton

MSWRB: Rubble waste placed in Unit 1, \$20.00 per ton INDSW: Industrial Solid

Waste, \$38.00 per ton

MSW1: Municipal Solid Waste IN COUNTY (Paper, plastic, cardboard, carpet, upholstered furniture, mattress, box springs, etc.) (Check with Landfill for material not accepted), \$38.00 per ton

MSW2: Municipal Solid Waste OUT OF COUNTY (same as

MSW1). \$38.00 per ton MSWCR: Rural container site collection waste, Assess per ton MSWDA: Carcasses (notifica-

tion required prior to dumping), \$38.00 per ton Rubble 1: Construction de-

bris-lumber, shingles, sheetrock etc., \$20.00 per ton

Rubble 2: Heavy debris, concrete, dirt, rocks etc., \$14.00 per ton

Rubble 3: Pallets, \$20.00 per ton

Mobile Homes: - all sizes, \$250.00per unit

Scrap Metal: Metals, \$20.00 per ton

Sludge: Sump waste (analy-sis may be required), \$20.00 per ton

Tires: Large quantities priced per ton, \$200.00 per ton

Tires Count: Car and light truck, \$ 2.50 per tire

Tire Shreds: Shredded tires (cell disposal), \$38.00 per ton

Tree Chips: Wood chips from trees, \$14.00 per ton Trees1: Trees less than 8

per ton Trees 2: Trees more than 8

inches in diameter (must be 8' or shorter in length), \$14.00 per ton Minimum Charge (except on

per item fees) 4 1/2 % Sales Tax included, \$ 3.00

The following items are accepted free:

Moved by Kippley, seconded by Feickert to adopt Ordinance 153, an Ordinance to amend Title 4- Zoning, Second Revision Brown County Ordinances, to rezone the following described property from its present zoning designation as Chapter 4.06 Agricultural Preservation District (AG-P) to Chapter 4.10 Lake Front Residential District (R-3), said property described as follows: Lot 2C of Lot 2, "Schaeffer Richmond Lake Subdivision" in the NW ¼ of Section 25-T124N-R65W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota. South Dakota. Feickert: Roll call vote: Feickert-aye, Sutton-absent, Wiese-aye, Kippley-aye, Fjeld-heim-aye. Ordinance adopted.

Frederick Town

Dec. 21, 2019

Special Meeting

2nd Reading Appropriation

The Frederick Town Board

met Saturday morning, December 21, 2019, at 10 AM in the

Frederick Community Center

to pass the 2nd Reading of

Supplemental Ordinance #213.

Attending the meeting were Chairman R. Scott Campbell,

Board Members Troy Millard and

Jeff Kosters, Assistant Finance

Officer Mariah Heine, and Fi-

der by Chairman Campbell and

all followed him in the Pledge of

to pass the 2nd Reading of

the Appropriation Ordinance #213 with Chairman Campbell

seconding the motion, Motion

to adjourn the meeting at 10:03

AM, and Jeff Kosters seconded

the motion. Motion Carried.

Ordinance No. 213

For the Year 2019

#213 as follows...

Ordinance

911.70

873.95

60,253.36

83,866.12

\$8,612.76

\$83,866.12

of Frederick;

ber 11. 2019

nance Officer

2019

18472

December 21, 2019

Troy Millard made a motion

Appropriation Ordinance

Supplemental Appropriations

Be it ordained by the Town of

Frederick that the following sum

is supplementally appropriated

to meet the obligations of the

municipality. 411.10 Board, Council, or

Commission, \$7,747.67 414.20 Finance Officer,

Buildings, 339.10 437.00 Cemetery, 1,198.87

419.20 General Government

452.00 Parks - Simmons,

Total General Fund, 23,612.76

Wastewater Project Fund,

Total Appropriations,

Undesignated Funds,

Contingency Fund, 15,000.00 Sewer Fund, 23,531.78

Demand Deposit, 36,721.58

Total Source of Funding,

Signed and Dated by the

R. Scott Campbell, Chairman

Troy Millard, Board Member

Jeff Kosters, Board Member

Passed First Reading: Decem-

Passed Second Reading

Published: December 31,

Diane Bruns, Frederick Fi-

Published once at the total

approximate cost of \$24.98.

Effective Immediately

Board of Trustees of the Town

Source of Funding

455.00 Library, 12,541.47

The meeting was called to or-

Troy Millard made a motion

nance Officer Diane Bruns.

Town of Frederick

Special Meeting

Ord #213

Allegiance.

Carried.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Moved by Kippley, seconded by Feickert to go into executive session to discuss personnel, legal, and contracts per SDCL 1-25-2(1,3,4). Roll call vote: Feickert-ave, Sutton-absent, Wiese-aye, Kippley-aye, Fjeldheimaye. Motion carried. The Chair declared the executive session closed with no action taken.

ADJOURNMENT: Moved by Wiese, seconded by Sutton to adjourn the Brown County Commission at 9:55 a.m. Roll call vote: Feickert-aye, Suttonabsent, Wiese-aye, Kippley-aye, Fjeldheim-aye. Motion carried. Cathy McNickle, Brown Coun-

tv Auditor Published once at the total

approximate cost of \$176.60. 18470

Frederick Town Dec. 19, 2019 Special Meeting

Town of Frederick Special Meeting

WWP Bid Award

A Special meeting was held Thursday, December 19, 2019, in the Frederick Community Center to award the Wastewater Project to the winning bidder following bid- opening by Troy Millard and Brandon Smid held Wednesday, at 4 PM, in the Frederick Community Center.

Chairman Scott Campbell, Board Members Troy Millard and Jeff Kosters, Engineer Brandon Smid of Helms and Associates,

and Finance Officer Diane Bruns were present. Chairman Campbell led in the Pledge of Allegiance after open-

ing the meeting at Noon. A motion was made by Jeff Kosters and seconded by Troy Millard to award the winning bid of \$2,463,710.51, to Dahme Construction Company, Inc., of Aberdeen, SD, for the Frederick Wastewater Project contingent upon funding from the USDA-RD, and from the Community Development Block Grant from Northeast Council of Government. Motion Carried.

Jeff Kosters made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:04 PM, seconded by Troy Millard. Motion Carried. Diane Bruns, Frederick Fi-

nance Officer Published once at the total

approximate cost of \$12.93. 18471

inches in diameter, \$20.00 **State Park Fees Increase**

single units within Incorporated Cities or Civil Townships that do not require curb service @ \$83.00 per year

5. Apartment Units and Assisted Living Units within incorporated Cities that require curb service @ \$15.00 per unit per year 6. Seasonal Lake Cabins @

\$50.00 per year 7. Mobile Home parks, out-

side incorporated municipalities, which provide or require lot side waste pickup during the entire assessment period, for deposit into a permitted landfill solid waste facility @ \$33.00 per unit per year

8. Mobile Home parks, outside incorporated municipalities, which do not provide or require lot side waste pickup during the entire assessment period, for deposit into a permitted landfill solid waste facility @ \$83.00 per unit per vear

Dated this 24th day of December 2019.

Seconded by Commissioner Feickert: Roll call vote: Commissioners Feickert-aye, Suttonabsent, Wiese-aye, Kippley-aye, Fjeldheim-aye. Resolution adopted.

SOLID WASTE TIPPING FEE

Lead Acid Batteries, Waste Oil, Paint, Grass and Leaves, Computer and Office Paper, Cardboard, #1 and #2 Plastic, Magazines, Phone Books, An tifreeze (residential only) and Propane Tanks.

Dated this 24th day of December 2019.

Seconded by Commissioner Feickert. Roll call vote: Commissioners Feickert-aye, Suttonabsent, Wiese-aye, Kippley-aye, Fjeldheim-aye. Resolution adopted.

ORD 152- ADOPTION:

Moved by Feickert, seconded by Kippley to adopt Ordinance 152, an Ordinance to amend Title 4- Zoning, Second Revision Brown County Ordinances, to rezone the following described property from its present zoning designation as Chapter 4.06 Agricultural Preservation District (AG-P) to Chapter 4.07 Mini-Ag District (M-AG): Lot "Berbos Subdivision" in the S1/2 of the SW1/4 of Section 35-T124N-R64W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota. Feickert: Roll call vote: Feickertaye, Sutton-absent, Wiese-aye, Kippley-aye, Fjeldheim-aye. Ordinance adopted.

ORD 153- ADOPTION:

select camping fees. "The modest increases for individuals would potentially mean an additional \$3 million in revenue for Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) to maintain and repair park amenities and necessities, like roads and bridges," said GFP deputy secretary Kevin Robling. "We need to make sure our parks are meeting the high standards of excellence that all our park visitors expect, now and for generations to come."

Jan. 1

PIERRE, S.D. – The New Year will bring fee changes to South Dakota State Parks.

Changes will affect park entrance licenses and

Annual licenses to state parks will be \$36 with a daily fee of \$8. A 7-day motorcycle pass to Custer State Park will be \$20. In campgrounds, prime campsites will increase to \$26, preferred sites to \$23 and modern to \$20. Fees for non-electric, tent-only sites will be going down in some cases. These sites will now be consistently \$15 statewide.

This is the first park entrance fee increase since 2014. The changes are in line with the rate of inflation and with fees in surrounding states.

S.D. retailers face uphill battle for survival amid frequent market changes

By: Mark Andersen

The rapid and expansive transformation of the South Dakota retail marketplace has cre- ing from the emergence of giant online retailated uncertainty for many businesses and the ers to evolving technology including delivery more than 97,000 state residents employed within the industry.

SOUTH DAKOTA NEWS WATCH

Retail sales remain on the rise, but the ongoing market disruptions — dramatic changes in who buys what, how and from where — are a marketplace shaped by conflicting consumer threatening some retailers, particularly in smaller towns.

Many employees and owners of some of the and enjoyable. state's roughly 13,900 retail establishments have felt the bite of rapid change.

Retailers face almost constant change rangservices to the rapid growth of low-price "dollar stores" that can hurt long-time local retailers in rural areas.

What emerges over the next decade will be desires for better convenience and lower cost versus a desire for something unique, social

Transformation has always been part of the retail story. Since craftsmen gathered in open-

> air markets through the rise of department stores and shopping malls, shoppers have hastily embraced new trends and discarded old. Across the state, struggling shopping malls and aging rural main streets demonstrate this evolution.

Even in small cities that have been aggressive and progressive in promoting local retail, such as Sisseton in Roberts County, fears remain that some businesses won't be able to keep up with the fast and frequent changes in

"It's scary when you're a smaller town, seeing people going out of town to buy groceries and gifts," said Lacey Babekuhl, who works in accounts and marketing for a Sisseton building center and formerly served as a local housing and redevelof losing everything your neighbors have worked for all of their lives. Families, friends and neighbors have



Debra Jensen owns Black Hills Bagels on Mount Rushmore Road in Rapid City with her husband, Jack. By focusing on guality and adapting when needed, the business has thrived during a time of great change. Photo: Mark Andersen, South Dakota News Watch correspondent

Meanwhile, the constant change is creating opportunities for some retailers and business owners, particularly those willing to adapt and do so auickly.

South Dakota retail sales have grown in the past several years, climbing from \$25.1 billion in 2013 to \$28.5 billion in 2018, according to state Department of Revenue data.

Many local retailers have added their own the retail marketplace. online presence and try to stay up on successful business trends.

> Debra Jensen, co-owner of Black Hills Bagels in Rapid City with her husband, Jack, said they strengthen their position in a competitive market by connecting with employees and customers in ways that chain stores cannot.

> The business has endured a years-long construction project on the road it fronts and the arrival of a competing bagel chain directly across the street.

"We can't compete on price alone," Debra Jensen said. "But there's a market for handopment official. "You formed bagels, custom sandwiches and enreally do run the risk hanced customer service."

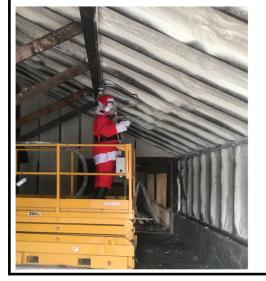
Staying vigilant about trends and being nimble in reacting to them — while also holding firm to longstanding principles — has also helped the business thrive, Jensen said.

She said the couple realized long ago that for the store to remain successful they would put their savings on the line for this com- have to pay attention to what the corporations munity." **Continues on next page**



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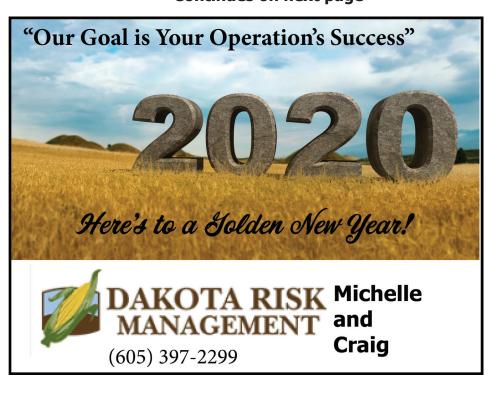
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6 ♦ Groton Independent ♦ Tues., Dec. 31, 2019



Debra Jensen, owner of Black Hills Bagels in Rapid City, stands next to a rack of hand-formed bagels with baker Michael Regan. Jensen said she and her husband, Jack, make an effort to connect with employees and customers in ways that chain stores cannot. Photo: Mark Andersen, South Dakota News Watch correspondent

Continued from previous page

were doing but do it better. Three years ago, Debra read an article that by 2020, 40 percent of restaurant business will be delivery.

They found people weren't willing to pay for delivery service, but they weren't willing to tip. Over time, larger business orders have compensated for the small ones, making the delivery system profitable.

Online evolution not slowing

For now, the pace of the current retail transformation toward online sales isn't easing. Internet sales should account for 12.4 percent of all retail sales this year, up steadily from 6 percent in 2013. Online sales are predicted to account for 14 percent of the retail market next year, and the Centre for Retail Research expects online growth will continue for a decade.

Increasingly, online also takes a larger bite of Christmas sales. Amazon collects a third or its sales revenue during the fourth guarter, according to annual reports. This holiday season, sales at online and other remote retailers are projected to surpass those at brick-and-mortar stores, climbing 12 percent over last year.

Amid last year's landmark closures at Sears, ShopKo and Kmart, the Centre for Retail Research declared a retail apocalypse, but mostly it was 17 national chains with outdated business models that disappeared. Stores in South Dakota were among them, but that alone doesn't signify the demise of local retailers.

Meanwhile, the ongoing proliferation of discount retailers further complicates matters for longtime retailers in smaller South Dakota towns. The rapid spread of dollar stores, following closely upon the spread of Walmart super centers, further erodes already slim profit margins there.

Walmart began 2019 operating 15 super centers and two clubs in South Dakota. Dollar General, which operates 15,370 Stores in 44

vious solutions came forth. Over the past five years, 39 out of 137 full-service grocery stores in North Dakota towns with fewer than 2,100 people have closed or no longer offer full service, according to the North Dakota Rural Electric & Telecommunications Development trend occurring in South Dakota.

Some South Dakota towns of roughly 1,000 people now boast competing dollar stores. Longtime retailers are countering with programs to boost customer loyalty and hoping for the best. For many rural consumers, dollar stores offer savings, competition and convenience. The danger for smaller communities is one of slipping below the critical mass of retail offerings. If shoppers must travel to larger towns for produce, meat and dairy, they will centers like Sioux Falls, Rapid City and Abering a community's decline.

In general, small towns have punched far be-

low their weight in retail trade since at least the 1990s, according to a 2017 study by Anil Giri of the University of Central Missouri and Bruce Johnson at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Using data from the Nebraska Department of Revenue between 1990 and 2015, the study shows a town's population is the single largest factor affecting retail draw.

Among the findings, towns with fewer than 500 people leaked nearly half of their retail potential to larger

stores. Dollar Tree, Family Dollar and Dollar Tree stores in 48 South Dakota, planned to open 546 more stores nationwide. Dollar stores enter towns

in volume – place additional pressure on local grocers. In August, North Dakota lawmakers began studying ways to support smaller grocers, but no ob-

states, had 52 stores in portionate sales which factor population and South Dakota last Feb- average local income. The metropolitan counruary, when the com- ties home to Omaha and Lincoln, meanwhile, pany announced plans captured \$1.4 billion of taxable retail sales to open 975 more U.S. beyond their proportionate share just in 2015.

Counties whose largest towns contained which operates 15,000 fewer than 2,500 people generally leaked retail sales while those above 5,000 drew extra customers. Towns between 2,500 and 5,000 states, including 43 in held their own, with some leaking and some gaining. Relative distance to a larger trade center, local transportation patterns and other factors were determinant.

In South Dakota, only 28 of the 312 places too small for Walmart. for which the census provides population esti-Across the Northern mates have more than 2,500 people, and only Plains, the spread of 18 have more than 5,000 people. Meanwhile, dollar stores — which fewer than 30 state cities show signs of meanbuy dry grocery goods ingful growth over the past decade, according to census figures, and roughly half of the growth appears concentrated in Sioux Falls.

Bigger cities find success in reinvention

Nathan Sanderson of the South Dakota Retailers Association sees a resurgence on main streets among the whirl of retail change. In the era of decline of the shopping mall, some also see a downtown renaissance as customers seek unique social experiences and local wares.

"Take a look around at Sioux Falls main street Center. Anecdotal evidence shows the same and downtown Rapid City," he said. "Look at what Main Street Square and the presidential sculptures have done for Rapid City."

The market has seen a shift in consumer preference away from standard shopping malls toward the unique and special, the handmade items, he said. In Rapid City, Prairie Edge, a Native American arts and gift store, has become a destination, performing the role once claimed by big anchor stores in shopping malls.

But creating local retail excitement in trade likely seek other supplies there as well, hasten- deen differs fundamentally from doing so in

Continues on next page





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GENERAL CONTRACTOR

Continued from previous page

smaller towns. Sanderson does not believe, however, that city size is the main determining factor.

'The determining factor is the extent to which the people of the community invest in that community," Sanderson said. In Faulkton, Lemmon, De Smet, Winner and others, there are groups of civic minded business people interested in seeing those towns grow and thrive.

"You have a group of people in Miller making an active effort to make the community strong," he said. Town leaders in some communities are actively thinking about how to make themselves a destination and remain relevant.

These pockets of brick-and-mortar resilience belie the simplified narrative of local retail dying at the hands of expanding online.

'Internet sales are a growing component of retail, but that doesn't mean the death of retail," Sanderson said.

Of all the businesses that closed in 2019,

stores represented by just 17 retail chains – three classes of city size – below 3,000 people, the Sears and the ShopKos — account for 73 between 3,000 and 10,000, and those above percent of total closures, he said. And if you 10,000. While his findings show size does look at local ShopKos, their demise wasn't matter, it also demonstrates it's not the only related to falling sales at South Dakota stores determinant in South Dakota. but to a national business model that did not adapt.

At the same time, he said, longtime brick and than their proportionate share, as expected. mortar have embraced opportunities made possible by an online presence. Black Hills Bagels in Rapid City has created a website that allows online ordering for pickup or delivery, he said.

"A lot of businesses you wouldn't think would do so are using online technologies to make distinctions. their mom-and-pop brick and mortar stores thrive," he said.

Putting their best foot forward

Rand Wergin, an associate professor of marketing in the business school at the University of South Dakota in Vermillion, has researched the relative retail pull South Dakota communi-

ties back to 1999. For example, people from outside of Yankton spend \$1 dollar inside the city for every dollar Yankton residents spend elsewhere, giving it a pull factor of 1. A score below 1 leaks retail and above 1 demonstrates pull.

Unlike the Nebraska study, Wergin looks at



and Platte. Retail pull can be further divided into a number of economic categories, like auto sales, apparel, eating. Changes in certain categories over time can be illuminating. Sioux Falls, for example, draws heavily in clothing sales - a

For 2018, the state's largest cities — Sioux

Falls, Rapid City and Aberdeen — pulled more

Sioux Falls scored 1.4, Rapid City scored 1.2

and Aberdeen nearly 1.9. Retail is doing espe-

score of 1.7 in 2018 – but that's less than half of its 2013 score of 3.5. Over that same period, Rapid City remained strong scores across all sectors except in furniture sales. The data suggests that Sioux Falls' past successes in drawing regional clothing shoppers may explain its current pains as clothing sales move online.

One category Wergin views with special significance is "miscellaneous," a catchall which accounts for about a third of all retail sales. A town with a robust miscellaneous score means people visit for a broad variety of items, demonstrating overall strength, he said.

Aberdeen scores highest in miscellaneous. Sioux Falls maintains strong miscellaneous scores, but Rapid City scores poorly at just 0.5. Huron, meanwhile, with a population of under 14,000, scores 1.7.

Wergin said some people will



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The City of Presidents program, which includes a walking tour of sculptures of presidents including Thomas Jefferson, is a program run by Visit Rapid City which encourages tourists and be hurt by the market changes, locals to spend quality time in but a lot depends on how well the downtown retail zone. Photo:

Courtesy Visit Rapid City

Continues on next page

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"Internet sales are a growing component of retail, but that doesn't mean the death of retail ... a lot of businesses you wouldn't think would do so are using online technologies to make their mom-and-pop brick and mortar stores thrive." - Nathan Sanderson of the South Dakota Retailers

Continued from previous page

individual communities adapt. The changing marketplace doesn't necessarily spell doom. People still want that social shopping experience, he said. Girls in his University of South Dakota classes all have Amazon Prime accounts, he said, but they still like to get together, shop and have lunch.

Association

A recent New York Times story suggests that most of the retail sales force displaced by online's expansion won't be unemployed long. Workers hit by the apocalypse haven't shown up in detailed labor statistics, probably because other retailers are actively recruiting. Those hurt most by the broad retail displacement are store owners, managers and workers tively. with longtime seniority.

David Bruns, manager of the Food Center in Redfield, population 2,300, is doing what he can to keep his business thriving despite the challenges created by a Dollar General.

"They're affecting all small towns," Bruns said of dollar stores.

To build customer loyalty, the Food Center has launched a rewards program, offering points for every dollar spent, and a saver card, which gives stamps redeemable for glass products.

"It's a way of thanking customers, of build-ing loyalty," he said. "I don't know if the dollar stores give back.

The Redfield Food Center has also switched warehouses to bring in different brands, hoping to distinguishing itself from other regional stores.

Redfield customers, Bruns said, still lament the town's loss of their ShopKo, which also sold groceries. The closure, however, didn't cause much of a bump in Food Center sales. If anything, he said, people now leave town for things that only ShopKo sold, so now they also may be grocery shopping outside of town.

The lack of local competition hasn't affected his prices, Bruns said.

"I'm still trying to compete against Walmart and the bigger stores, so I keep prices aggres-sive as if there were two stores here," he said.

Bruns is also part owner of the Food Center in Linton, N.D., population 1,000. A Family Dollar there was joined a few months ago by a Dollar General.

"We'll see how things go once we get through holiday season," Bruns said. The construction of an area wind farm has helped retailers, but construction is winding down. "Once they leave, we'll see what will really happen.

The dollar stores will change the landscape, Bruns said. "It's just they're coming everywhere," he said. "It's kind of sad in my opinion."

Local businesses have been there a long time, and they've dedicated their lives to serv-

ing their small towns. "I feel for those people." Over time, Lacey Babekuhl has developed affection for Sisseton. The Sioux Falls native vacationed in the town as a kid. As a teenager she couldn't imagine living in a place with "nothing to do." Now, she can't imagine living anywhere else, and saving the town is part of her new job.

Disagreements get handled differently in Sisseton, where almost everyone knows everyone, Babekuhl said. People hash out their business differences over coffee and then share a beer socially that same night.

Sisseton has about 2,400 residents, and the population hasn't changed much in 20 years.

The event that stimulated retailers to take action last summer was a major road and sewer reconstruction project that detoured shoppers around the town. "This year was tough for us," Babekuhl said. Last year, a Dollar General store joined

the town's Family Dollar, but Babekuhl said most local retailers don't view the discount stores nega-

'We've never looked at any new business as a threat," she said. "We look at it as an addition to the community."

A few months ago, retailers formed a non-profit association, built and launched an app to bundle local sales deals — like an online shopper, and began recognizing local retail sales staff for exceptional service. The big focus is on educating the community about the importance of buying local.

"Amazon is not going to help fund your kid's baseball team," Babekuhl said. "That's the local businesses that do all of that."

Babekuhl works as an accounts specialist at Tri State Building Center with the understanding that promoting Sisseton is part of her job. The goal is to really connect with local customers and the community, Babekuhl said.

"At this point, we're seeing a lot of engagement," she said.

sales promotions has been downloaded 800 times.

Sisseton is seeing a comeback on Main Street and Veterans Avenue," she said. "There are new shops, and boutiques more aimed at the younger demographic.

Appealing to the next generation and creating a better experience for shoppers will be key, she said.

This is about growing the community," she said. "We want to make this a place where people want to visit and a place where people want to come back to after college."



ABOUT **Mark Anderson**

Mark Andersen of Rapid City, a freelance correspondent for South Dakota News Watch, is a graduate of the Uni-

versity of South Dakota and veteran news reporter who has worked at the Lincoln Journal Star and at the Rapid City Journal.



The North Dakota store is offering identical The app for bundled rewards programs to those in Redfield.



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From the Editors of E - The Environmental Magazine

Dear EarthTalk: Which companies are taking the lead in commitments to plastics reduction?

- Jason K., Reno, NV

Our modern world is literally swimming in plastic. According to Plastic Oceans International (POI), we produce over 300 million tons of plastic each year around the world, half of which is for single-use purposes. We then dump eight million tons of it into the oceans annually, where it accumulates up and down the food chain, with some settling into large, mid-ocean whirlpools of plastic waste called gyres.

Since the 1950s, we've produced upwards of 8.3 billion tons of plastic, and production is seemingly only just starting to ramp up: A recent study predicts we're on course to add another 26 billion tons to the planet's existing plastic burden by 2050 if production remains unchecked.

Weaning ourselves off plastic is going to be one of the great challenges of the 2020s. Consumer demand, along with governmental action, is forcing many companies to re-examine their manufacturing processes, supply chains and distribution networks to reduce the use of plastic in both products and packaging.

One leader is Ikea, which recently committed to transition much of its plastic packaging to a mushroom-based renewable alternative that can grow in a controlled environment, and, like plastic, be easily formed into shapes. If kept dry, this "MycoComposite" can be used over and



over. It can also decompose fully in just 30 days. Producing it uses only 12 percent of the energy required to make the same amount of plastic, and with 90 percent lower carbon emissions.

Another step in the right direction is Mattel's recent commitment to use 100 percent recycled, recyclable or bio-based plastics materials in both its products and packaging by 2030. Early in 2020 the company will debut its first product aligned with this new goal, the Fisher-Price Rock-a-Stack, made from sugarcane-based plastics and packaged in 100 percent recycled or sustainably sourced material.

Walmart announced in February that it seeks to achieve 100 percent recyclable, reusable or compostable packaging for its private brand packaging by 2025 and will encourage other brands it sells to set similar goals. The retailing behemoth is also working with suppliers to eliminate non-recyclable PVC plastic in general merchandise packaging altogether by 2020.

These efforts are laudable, but some worry that shifting to alternatives doesn't fully address the problem: Due to public concerns about plastic pollution, says Greenpeace's Graham Forbes, "we are witnessing a parade of corporations scrambling to look greener" by advancing false solutions that don't address our addiction to single-use packaging. Instead, Greenpeace argues, we need to get away from throwaways and refill our own containers. We'll only see real change, says Forbes, when we prioritize re-use.

EarthTalk® is produced by Roddy Scheer & Doug Moss for the 501(c)3 nonprofit EarthTalk. See more at https://emagazine.com. To donate, visit https://earthtalk.org. Send questions to: question@earthtalk.org

Weekly Vikings Roundup By Jordan Wright

The Chicago Bears came to Minnesota for the final game of the 2019 regular season and left with a 21-19 victory. Chicago finished third in the NFC North with a record of 8-8, while the Vikings finished the season 10-6, good for 2nd in the division. Minnesota now turns their attention to the playoffs, while Chicago's offseason started as soon as the final whistle blew.

With the sixth seed already locked up, the Vikings opted to rest the starters for their week 17 tilt against the Bears. Even though the Vikings were playing backups against a full-strength Chicago team, the game ended up being close. The Vikings came from behind to take the lead in the fourth quarter, and the Bears needed a field goal with 10 seconds left in the game to secure the win.

While many fans wanted to see the first-team offense get some action, since the last time we saw them they were getting destroyed by Green Bay, it was the right decision by Mike Zimmer. Injuries happen all the time in the NFL, and allowing the starters a week of rest should give them an advantage in the first round of the playoffs. This also gave the front office one more chance to evaluate the bottom third of the roster in a game situation.

Quarterback Sean Mannion got the second start of his career, and it was a disappointing performance. He completed 12 of 21 passes (57%) for 126 yards, no touchdowns and two interceptions. Mannion's performance can't be blamed on the offensive line, because the second-team unit did a great job in this game. In pass protection, they didn't allow a sack and only gave up three QB hits. The line was also opening holes in the running game, which led to the team rushing 25 times for 174 yards (which is a staggering 6.9 yards per carry against a top-10 rush defense).

One thing that became apparent on Sunday was the Vikings have a ton of depth on the defensive line. Defensive ends Stephen Weatherly and Ifeadi Odenigbo were consistently wreaking havoc against the Bears' offensive line. Weatherly and Odenigbo combined for 13 tackles, 1.5 sacks, four QB hits. Odenigbo also had a strip sack of Trubisky in the fourth quarter and returned the fumble for a touchdown, but the score was overturned after replay showed his knee down as he was collecting the ball. The player of the game on offense was Mike Boone. This might be a guestionable call, because Boone was responsible for two turnovers, but nobody else on the offense did much against the Bears, so in this situation Boone's positives outweigh the negatives. Boone finished the game with 148 yards on 17 carries and a touchdown. The player of the game on defense was Eric Wilson, who led or tied for the team lead in tackles (12), sacks (1), and tackles for a loss (2). The third-year player got his sixth start of the season and has proven to be a reliable linebacker when called upon. Looking ahead, the Vikings will travel to New Orleans, who are the three seed in the NFC. FOX will air the game on Sunday, January 05 and kickoff will be at noon (CT). The Vikings have lost the last three games in New Orleans, including the infamous NFC Championship game (aka Bountygate) in the 2009 season. However, if the Vikings can shut down Michael Thomas (and that's a big if, considering Thomas just had one of the greatest seasons by a WR in NFL history), and 'good Kirk" comes ready to play, there's a chance the Vikings could come away with a victory. Skol!