

# THE Groton Independent

South Dakota  
Growing Families & Opportunities

Vol. 137 No. 32 ♦ Groton, South Dakota ♦ Wednesday, April 08, 2020 ♦ Established in 1889



## City Council suspends baseball season and pool

The Groton City Council grappled with how to deal with the COVID-19 virus and its impact on the city's recreation facilities. The final results are as follows:

The City Park will remain open; however, the playground equipment, picnic shelter, bathrooms and picnic tables will remain off limits. The campground will remain open.

The basketball and tennis courts will remain open as long as people follow the CDC guidelines of no more than 10 at a time and everyone six feet apart.

The playground at the ball field is closed.

The summer recreation programs, including the pool and baseball program, will be suspended until further notice. The soccer field will also be closed.

Mayor Scott Hanlon thanked the businesses in the community that have voluntarily altered their business access.

In other action, the council postponed its Ward 2 election to June 2, to correspond with the school board election and the state-wide primary.

Authorized Clark Engineering to begin advertising for the water tower project.

Adopted the Families First Coronavirus Response Act.



### Studying Hard

Now that's a way to do school work! Madison Sippel took advantage of the nice weather yesterday to work on her school work. (Photo by Wynella Abeln)



### Plop!

The snow took a slide down the pool and into the dry bottom of the pool. Will the pool even be open this summer due to the COVID-19 virus? Only time will tell!



### Sewing Masks

The following was posted on Kory Anderson's Facebook Page:

Mom (Donna Anderson) is sewing up masks so fast they are flying off the machine. As a nurse for over 35 years she continues to serve in any way possible. God bless the doctors, nurses, hospital workers, and all first responders on the front lines of this battle. Thank you for all you do!

### No in-person school for the rest of the school year

Governor Noem, in her news briefing on Monday, said that South Dakota Schools should not be in personal session for the rest of the year. She said bringing the students back into school would not make an sense at this stage of the COVID-19 virus.

### Winter and Spring SDHSAA Sports events are cancelled

With the Governor's announcement of in-person school closure for the remainder of the school year, all remaining SDHSAA events for 2019-20, to include all spring activities and all postponed winter events, are cancelled. This is an unprecedented time across our state and country, and we do not make this decision lightly. We thank all of the participants, their coaches/directors/advisors/administration, their parents, and everyone else who has dedicated tremendous amounts of time, passion, and effort to these events. To our senior participants-we thank you for everything you have done for your schools and communities and wish you the very best in your bright futures. This is difficult, but the lessons you've learned and friendships you've made through high school activities will last your lifetime. The cancellation will be formalized at the April 21st Regular Meeting of the SDHSAA Board of Directors. We look forward to the resumption of high school activities during the 2020-21 school year, and will continue work on those events at this time. The SDHSAA thanks everyone involved for their patience and understanding throughout this process.

- Dr. Dan Swartos, SDHSAA Executive Director

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 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  
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**605/397-NEWS (6397)**  
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GREAT PAYING JOBS! Statewide construction jobs, \$17.00 - \$23.00 hourly + benefits. Summer or permanent. No experience necessary, great career opportunities. Apply Online www.sdwork.org.

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4-6 FT. BLACK HILLS SPRUCE and Colorado Blue Spruce, \$35 each. Madison, SD, 605-256-2410.

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**NOTICES**

ADVERTISE IN NEWSPAPERS statewide for only \$150. Put the South Dakota Statewide Classifieds Network to work for you today! (25 words for \$150. Each additional word \$5.) Call the Groton Independent at 605/397-6397 for details.

Cheer someone up! Send a balloon! This one is \$9 (31") (includes delivery in Groton & Tax)  
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**COVID-19**

**Older adults are at HIGHER RISK for severe illness.**

There is currently no vaccine for coronavirus. The best way to prevent it is to practice social distancing:

- Stay home
- Avoid social gatherings
- Stay 6+ feet away from others
- Wash your hands often with soap and water

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH** covid.sd.gov

## Brown County March 31, 2020 Meeting Minutes

March 31, 2020 – GENERAL MEETING

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

**MINUTES:**  
Moved by Wiese seconded by Feickert to approve the general meeting minutes from March 24th, 2020. Roll call vote: Commissioner Feickert – aye, Sutton – aye, Wiese – aye, Fjeldheim – aye, Kippley – aye. Motion carried.

**CLAIMS/PAYROLL:**  
Moved by Fjeldheim, seconded by Feickert to approve the following claims and payroll:

Payroll: Commission \$4,285.10; Auditor \$8,721.00; Treasurer \$13,495.39; SA \$21,969.72; SWAWA \$1,193.49; Maintenance \$8,314.63; Assessor \$12,798.96; Register of Deeds \$8,983.41; VSO \$2,213.26; GIS \$2,387.50; IT \$4,442.28; HR \$2,173.85; Sheriff \$41,810.67; Jail \$46,559.39; Court Security \$6,001.83; JDC \$22,464.08; Welfare \$2,077.70; Museum \$7,154.94; Parks/Fairgrounds \$4,986.55; Fair Board \$4,089.68; 4-H \$654.30; Weed \$825.02; Planning & Zoning \$4,522.11; Highway \$48,235.73; Dispatch \$23,949.94; Emergency \$4,740.03; Teen Court \$556.58; JDAI \$1,596.93; 24/7 Sobriety \$3,511.34; Landfill \$13,436.81; Matching Benefits: FICA \$19,476.13; Medicare \$4,554.87; Discovery\_HSA \$200; Wellmark BCBS \$122,663.52; Delta Dental \$7,078.05; Dearborn Life \$1,084.94; SDRS Retirement \$39,786.25. CLAIMS: Insurance: SDPAA \$200.50. Professional Fees: Cogley Law Office \$6,250.00; De Castro Law Office \$684.00; Ryan Dell \$6,250.00; Dohrer Law Office \$9,224.30; Haar Law Office \$6,284.00; Mark Katterhagen \$21.00; KCH Law Office \$150.97; Kuck Law Office \$6,365.80; Lucy Lewno \$270.00; Darcy Lockwood \$21.00; Jerald McNery \$6,250.00; NEMHC \$1,768.00; Christy Griffin-Serr Law Office \$6,250.00; Taliaferro Law Firm \$10,130.00. Publishing: Aberdeen American News \$346.07; Groton Independent \$700.60; The Norman Transcript \$19.65. Repairs & Maintenance: Custom Glass & Repair \$192.05; Gardner Locksmith \$65.00; Gillund Enterprises \$6.00; Midstates Printing \$921.00; Sioux Falls Crane & Hoist \$17.71; The Glass Doktor \$126.50; Woodman Refrigeration \$1,072.46. Supplies: Ameripride \$76.28; Century Business Products \$2,561.41; Gillund Enterprises \$206.16; GovConnection \$2,587.41; Heartland Paper \$1,798.91; Christeen Krahl \$85.18; Lab-Source \$1,116.17; LG Everist \$6,695.10; Lucy Lewno \$8.75; Matthew Bender Co. \$58.44; McLeod's Printing \$60.35; Menards \$10.88; Midstates Printing \$178.00; Pantorium Cleaners \$21.00; PharmChem \$18.00; Plumbing & Heating Wholesale \$130.09; Running's \$453.79; SD Federal Property Agency \$2,827.00; Share Corp. \$96.00; Sioux Falls Crane & Hoist \$22.75; Steven Lust Automotive \$10.33; The Glass Doktor \$76.85. Travel & Conf.: Mary Baird \$37.60. Utilities: AT&T \$247.85; CenturyLink \$56.63; Midcontinent \$128.81; Montana-Dakota Utilities \$113.10; NWPS \$4,088.09. Roll call vote: Commissioner Feickert – aye, Sutton – aye, Wiese – aye, Fjeldheim – aye, Kippley – aye. Motion carried.

**BRIDGE REINSPECTION PROGRAM:**

Commissioner Feickert offered the following Resolution R19-20: BRIDGE REINSPECTION PROGRAM RESOLUTION FOR USE WITH SDDOT RETAINER CONTRACTS

WHEREAS, Title 23, Section 151, United States Code and Title 23, Part 650, Subpart C, Code of Federal Regulations, requires initial inspection of all bridges and reinspection at intervals not to exceed two years with the exception of reinforced concrete box culverts that meet specific criteria. These culverts are reinspected at intervals not to exceed four years.

WHEREAS, Brown County is desirous of participating in the Bridge Inspection Program using Bridge Replacement funds. The County requests SDDOT to hire Clark Engineering Corporation IMEG (Consulting Engineers) for the inspection work. SDDOT will secure federal approvals, make payments to the Consulting Engineer for inspection services rendered, and bill the County for 20% of the cost. The county will be responsible for the required 20% matching funds. Dated this 31st day of March, 2020 at Aberdeen, South Dakota.

Seconded by Commissioner Wiese: Roll call vote: Commissioner Feickert – aye, Sutton – aye, Wiese – aye, Fjeldheim – aye, Kippley – aye. Resolution Adopted.

**BID OPENING – WEED AND PEST CHEMICAL:**  
Time and place as advertised to open, read, and consider sealed bids for Weed and Pest Chemical. Moved by Fjeldheim, seconded by Wiese to defer bids for review by Weed and Pest Supervisor. Roll call vote: Commissioner Feickert – aye, Sutton – aye, Wiese – aye, Fjeldheim – aye, Kippley – aye. Motion carried.

**ALCOHOL LICENSE TRANSFER HEARING:**  
Moved by Wiese, seconded by Feickert to approve transfer of Retail (on-sale) Liquor License, Stacy Gossman DBA Mansfield Bar and Grill, Main St. Mansfield, SE32-121-64, Brown County, SD to transfer to Stacy Gossman DBA Flying Pig, 5635 US Hwy 12, Aberdeen, SD Lot 2 Gossman Second Addition, SE 1/4 of sec 15-T123N-T65W of the 5th p.m., Brown County, SD. Roll call vote: Commissioner Feickert – aye, Sutton – aye, Wiese – aye, Fjeldheim – aye, Kippley – aye. Motion carried.

**TEMPORARY ALCOHOL LICENSE HEARING:**  
Moved by Fjeldheim, seconded by Wiese to approve Temporary Malt Beverage and Wine License, Aberdeen Area Chamber of Commerce (Business After Hours) Outlot 2 of Lieberg Outlots 1&2, SW1/4, sec15-T123N-R64W, Brown County, SD (5325 US-12

is hereby approved in accordance with the provision of SDCL of 1967, Chapter 11-3, and any amendments thereof." Seconded by Commissioner Sutton: Roll call vote: Commissioner Feickert – aye, Sutton – aye, Wiese – aye, Fjeldheim – aye, Kippley – aye. Resolution Adopted.

**WEED BOARD APPOINTMENT:**  
Discussion on possible weed board appointment. No action taken.

**LEASES:**  
Moved by Fjeldheim, seconded by Wiese to approve the following leases: Liebelts RV for lease of Expo extended until March 29, 2020; Nancy Haugen for lease of Richmond Lake Youth Camp Lodge August 8th, 2020 with alcohol permission form. Roll call vote: Commissioner Feickert – aye, Sutton – aye, Wiese – aye, Fjeldheim – aye, Kippley – aye. Motion carried.

**ABATEMENTS:**  
Moved by Sutton, seconded by Fjeldheim to approve the following abatements: Rodney Boehmer (special assessment paid) @ \$3,984.12 and Ellsbee Estates of Aberdeen (tax-exempt) @ \$1836.93. Roll call vote: Commissioner Feickert – aye, Sutton – aye, Wiese – aye, Fjeldheim – aye, Kippley – aye. Motion carried.

**APPLICATION FOR OCCUPANCY:**  
Moved by Feickert, seconded by Sutton to approve the following applications for occupancy: WEB Water Development for occupancy of Brown County Highway Number 13, in section 22, township 124, range 65 Brown County, South Dakota and Brown County Highway Number 13, Section 35, Township 124, Range 64, Brown County South Dakota for installation of potable water lines. Roll call vote: Commissioner Feickert – aye, Sutton – aye, Wiese – aye, Fjeldheim – aye, Kippley – aye. Motion carried.

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WHEREAS, Title 23, Section 151, United States Code and Title 23, Part 650, Subpart C, Code of Federal Regulations, requires initial inspection of all bridges and reinspection at intervals not to exceed two years with the exception of reinforced concrete box culverts that meet specific criteria. These culverts are reinspected at intervals not to exceed four years.

WHEREAS, Brown County is desirous of participating in the Bridge Inspection Program using Bridge Replacement funds. The County requests SDDOT to hire Clark Engineering Corporation IMEG (Consulting Engineers) for the inspection work. SDDOT will secure federal approvals, make payments to the Consulting Engineer for inspection services rendered, and bill the County for 20% of the cost. The county will be responsible for the required 20% matching funds. Dated this 31st day of March, 2020 at Aberdeen, South Dakota.

Seconded by Commissioner Wiese: Roll call vote: Commissioner Feickert – aye, Sutton – aye, Wiese – aye, Fjeldheim – aye, Kippley – aye. Resolution Adopted.

**BID OPENING – WEED AND PEST CHEMICAL:**  
Time and place as advertised to open, read, and consider sealed bids for Weed and Pest Chemical. Moved by Fjeldheim, seconded by Wiese to defer bids for review by Weed and Pest Supervisor. Roll call vote: Commissioner Feickert – aye, Sutton – aye, Wiese – aye, Fjeldheim – aye, Kippley – aye. Motion carried.

**ALCOHOL LICENSE TRANSFER HEARING:**  
Moved by Wiese, seconded by Feickert to approve transfer of Retail (on-sale) Liquor License, Stacy Gossman DBA Mansfield Bar and Grill, Main St. Mansfield, SE32-121-64, Brown County, SD to transfer to Stacy Gossman DBA Flying Pig, 5635 US Hwy 12, Aberdeen, SD Lot 2 Gossman Second Addition, SE 1/4 of sec 15-T123N-T65W of the 5th p.m., Brown County, SD. Roll call vote: Commissioner Feickert – aye, Sutton – aye, Wiese – aye, Fjeldheim – aye, Kippley – aye. Motion carried.

**TEMPORARY ALCOHOL LICENSE HEARING:**  
Moved by Fjeldheim, seconded by Wiese to approve Temporary Malt Beverage and Wine License, Aberdeen Area Chamber of Commerce (Business After Hours) Outlot 2 of Lieberg Outlots 1&2, SW1/4, sec15-T123N-R64W, Brown County, SD (5325 US-12

E Aberdeen, SD). Roll call vote: Commissioner Feickert – aye, Sutton – aye, Wiese – aye, Fjeldheim – aye, Kippley – aye. Motion carried.

**STATE'S ATTORNEY OFFICE RESPONSE TO COVID-19**

Chris White, Brown County State's Attorney, met to discuss risk mitigation in the state's attorney office. One legal assistant and one part-time state's attorney will work remotely to avoid the possibility of an entire office quarantaine.

**COVID-19 Discussion:**  
Brown County was updated by Emergency Management and department heads on ways to reduce community spread at the courthouse.

**TELECOMMUTING POLICY:**  
Moved by Wiese, seconded by Sutton to approve Telecommuting Policy. The policy allows employees to work remotely in the event of an emergency. Policy is on file at the Brown County Auditor's Office for public inspection. Roll call vote: Commissioner Feickert – aye, Sutton – aye, Wiese – aye, Fjeldheim – aye, Kippley – aye. Motion carried.

**FMLA LEAVE EXPANSION AND EMERGENCY SICK LEAVE POLICY (CORONAVIRUS):**

Moved by Fjeldheim, seconded by Sutton to approve FMLA Leave Expansion and Emergency Paid Sick Leave Policy in response to COVID-19 pandemic. The policy is temporary and expires on December 31, 2020. The policy is on file at the Brown County Auditor's Office for public inspection. Roll call vote: Commissioner Feickert – aye, Sutton – aye, Wiese – aye, Fjeldheim – aye, Kippley – aye. Motion carried.

**COURTHOUSE ANNEX CLOSURE:**

In an effort to reduce community spread of COVID-19, the board recommended the courthouse annex be closed to walk-in traffic and do business either remote or by appointment only. The following resolution was passed:

**COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS:**

Commissioner Wiese offered the following Resolution: RESOLUTION #20-20  
AN EMERGENCY RESOLUTION TO ADDRESS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS BY IMPLEMENTING CERTAIN MEASURES WHICH HAVE BEEN DEEMED NECESSARY TO SLOW THE COMMUNITY SPREAD OF CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19).

WHEREAS, the Brown County Commission has the authority to pass Resolutions, per

SDCL§7-8-20 (10), for the purpose of promoting the health, safety, morals and general welfare, of the community and the promotion of health and the suppression of disease; and

WHEREAS, an outbreak of the disease COVID-19, which is caused by the novel coronavirus, has been confirmed in more than 100 countries, including the United States; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 is a severe respiratory disease transmitted by person-to-person contact, or by contact with surfaces contaminated by the virus. In some cases, especially among older adults and persons with serious underlying health conditions, COVID-19 can result in serious illness requiring hospitalization, admission to an intensive care unit, and death; and

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization (WHO), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services have declared the outbreak of COVID-19 as a public health emergency; and

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, the President of the United States declared a national emergency in response to the global pandemic of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, on the same day, Governor Kristi Noem, issued Executive Order 2020-04 which declared a state of emergency to exist in the State of South Dakota in response to the spread of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 has been confirmed in Brown County, South Dakota; and

WHEREAS, the CDC and health experts have recommended social distancing to slow the spread of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, social distancing is a method of slowing down or stopping the spread of a contagious disease by reducing the probability of contact between infected persons and those not infected in order to minimize disease transmission; and

WHEREAS, the failure to successfully implement social distancing will likely result in higher numbers of infected individuals and has the potential to overwhelm the capacity of the County's health care providers; and

WHEREAS, it is important that control measures be taken to reduce or slow down the spread of COVID-19 in order to protect the health and safety of the County's residents, especially for seniors and those with underlying health conditions that make them particularly vulnerable to COVID-19.

WHEREAS, many services offered by the County can be conducted online, by phone, email, and mail.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Brown County Commission close the Courthouse Annex. (Market Street Entrance) Effective April 1, 2020, Brown County Courthouse Annex is closed to the general public. Brown County will continue to operate and conduct business by mail, email, online, by phone, or by appointment on a case-by-case basis.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Resolution is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, safety, and welfare of Brown County and shall become effective immediately upon passage.

Dated this 31st day of March 2020

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

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**  
Moved by Wiese, seconded by Sutton to go into executive session to discuss personnel per SDCL 1-25-2(1). Roll call vote: Commissioner Feickert – aye, Sutton – aye, Wiese – aye, Fjeldheim – aye, Kippley – aye. Motion carried.

**ADJOURNMENT:**  
Moved by Fjeldheim, seconded by Feickert to adjourn the Brown County Commission. Roll call vote: Commissioner Feickert – aye, Sutton – aye, Wiese – aye, Fjeldheim – aye, Kippley – aye. Motion carried.

Cathy McNickle, Brown County Auditor

Published once at the total approximate cost of \$143.40. 18834

**Brown County  
Ord. 165  
Meyers Rezoning**  
NOTICE  
Application has been made by Paul Meyers to the Brown County Board of Commissioners for a change of zoning. Hearing to be held in the Commissioner's Chambers, Courthouse Annex, Brown County, South Dakota on April 14, 2020 at 8:55 A.M. for the purpose of rezoning the following property from Chapter 4.06 Agricultural Preservation District (AG-P) to Chapter 4.16 Heavy Industrial District (H-1):  
Lot 2, "Luke's Landing Addition" in the N1/2 of Section 13-T123N-R63W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (13245 394th Ave)

The public is invited to attend the hearing and to present comments and testimony regarding the amendment to Second Revision Brown County Ordinances pertaining to rezoning the described property. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Brown County Commission may adopt first reading of Ordinance No. 165

ATTEST:  
Cathy McNickle, Brown County Auditor  
(0401.0408)

Published twice at the total approximate cost of \$22.92. 18806

**Brown County  
Ord. 164  
Jones Rezoning**  
NOTICE  
Application has been made by A.) Jamie Jones and Steven Goetz, B.) Bruce Jones and Sandy Jones to the Brown County Board of Commissioners for a change of zoning. Hearing to be held in the Commissioner's Chambers, Courthouse Annex, Brown County, South Dakota on April 14, 2020 at 8:55 A.M. for the purpose of rezoning the following property from Chapter 4.06 Agricultural Preservation District (AG-P) to Chapter 4.07 Mini-Ag District (M-AG):

A.) "Lockwood's Outlot 1" in the NE1/4 of Section 24/T123N-R65W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (37963 133rd st)

B.) "Jones's Outlot 1" in the NE1/4 of Section 24-T123N-R65W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota. (37963 133rd st)

The public is invited to attend the hearing and to present comments and testimony regarding the amendment to Second Revision Brown County Ordinances pertaining to rezoning the described property. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Brown County Commission may adopt first reading of Ordinance No. 164  
ATTEST: Cathy McNickle, Brown County Auditor  
(0401.0408)  
Published twice at the total approximate cost of \$26.44. 18807

The public is invited to attend the hearing and to present comments and testimony regarding the amendment to Second Revision Brown County Ordinances pertaining to rezoning the described property. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Brown County Commission may adopt first reading of Ordinance No. 162

**Brown County  
Ord. 163  
Hanson Rezoning**  
NOTICE  
Application has been made by Jeff Hanson to the Brown County Board of Commissioners for a change of zoning. Hearing to be held in the Commissioner's Chambers, Courthouse Annex, Brown County, South Dakota on April 14, 2020 at 8:55 A.M. for the purpose of rezoning the following property from Chapter 4.06 Agricultural Preservation District (AG-P) to Chapter 4.07 Mini-Ag District (M-AG):  
Lot 2, "JT Hanson Farm Addition" in the SE1/4 of Section 9-T126N-R62W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (39698 114th St)

Published twice at the total approximate cost of \$23.51. 18809

**Brown County  
Ord. 161  
Miller Rezoning**  
NOTICE  
Application has been made by Keith Miller to the Brown County Board of Commissioners for a change of zoning. Hearing to be held in the Commissioner's Chambers, Courthouse Annex, Brown County, South Dakota on April 14, 2020 at 8:55 A.M. for the purpose of rezoning the following property from Chapter 4.06 Agricultural Preservation District (AG-P) to Chapter 4.07 Mini-Ag District (M-AG):  
"K. Miller Addition" in the SW1/4 of Section 15-T122N-R64W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (38514 139th St)

The public is invited to attend the hearing and to present comments and testimony regarding the amendment to Second Revision Brown County Ordinances pertaining to rezoning the described property. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Brown County Commission may adopt first reading of Ordinance No. 161

ATTEST: Cathy McNickle, Brown County Auditor  
(0401.0408)

Published twice at the total approximate cost of \$22.92. 18808

**Brown County  
Ord. 162  
Hanson Rezoning**  
NOTICE  
Application has been made by Jeff Hanson to the Brown County Board of Commissioners for a change of zoning. Hearing to be held in the Commissioner's

Chambers, Courthouse Annex, Brown County, South Dakota on April 14, 2020 at 8:55 A.M. for the purpose of rezoning the following property from Chapter 4.06 Agricultural Preservation District (AG-P) to Chapter 4.07 Mini-Ag District (M-AG):  
Lot 2, "JT Hanson Farm Addition" in the SE1/4 of Section 10-T126N-R62W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (11396 397th Ave)

The public is invited to attend the hearing and to present comments and testimony regarding the amendment to Second Revision Brown County Ordinances pertaining to rezoning the described property. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Brown County Commission may adopt first reading of Ordinance No. 163

ATTEST: Cathy McNickle, Brown County Auditor  
(0401.0408)

Published twice at the total approximate cost of \$22.92. 18808

**Brown County  
Ord. 162  
Hanson Rezoning**  
NOTICE  
Application has been made by Jeff Hanson to the Brown County Board of Commissioners for a change of zoning. Hearing to be held in the Commissioner's

Chambers, Courthouse Annex, Brown County, South Dakota on April 14, 2020 at 8:55 A.M. for the purpose of rezoning the following property from Chapter 4.06 Agricultural Preservation District (AG-P) to Chapter 4.16 Heavy Industrial District (H-1):  
Lot 2, "Luke's Landing Addition" in the N1/2 of Section 13-T123N-R63W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (13245 394th Ave)

The public is invited to attend the hearing and to present comments and testimony regarding the amendment to Second Revision Brown County Ordinances pertaining to rezoning the described property. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Brown County Commission may adopt first reading of Ordinance No. 165

ATTEST:  
Cathy McNickle, Brown County Auditor  
(0401.0408)

Published twice at the total approximate cost of \$22.92. 18806

**Brown County  
Ord. 164  
Jones Rezoning**  
NOTICE  
Application has been made by A.) Jamie Jones and Steven Goetz, B.) Bruce Jones and Sandy Jones to the Brown County Board of Commissioners for a change of zoning. Hearing to be held in the Commissioner's Chambers, Courthouse Annex, Brown County, South Dakota on April 14, 2020 at 8:55 A.M. for the purpose of rezoning the following property from Chapter 4.06 Agricultural Preservation District (AG-P) to Chapter 4.07 Mini-Ag District (M-AG):

A.) "Lockwood's Outlot 1" in the NE1/4 of Section 24/T123N-R65W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (37963 133rd st)

B.) "Jones's Outlot 1" in the NE1/4 of Section 24-T123N-R65W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota. (37963 133rd st)

The public is invited to attend the hearing and to present comments and testimony regarding the amendment to Second Revision Brown County Ordinances pertaining to rezoning the described property. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Brown County Commission may adopt first reading of Ordinance No. 162

ATTEST: Cathy McNickle, Brown County Auditor  
(0401.0408)  
Published twice at the total approximate cost of \$23.51. 18809

Chambers, Courthouse Annex, Brown County, South Dakota on April 14, 2020 at 8:55 A.M. for the purpose of rezoning the following property from Chapter 4.06 Agricultural Preservation District (AG-P) to Chapter 4.07 Mini-Ag District (M-AG):  
Lot 2, "JT Hanson Farm Addition" in the SE1/4 of Section 9-T126N-R62W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (39698 114th St)

The public is invited to attend the hearing and to present comments and testimony regarding the amendment to Second Revision Brown County Ordinances pertaining to rezoning the described property. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Brown County Commission may adopt first reading of Ordinance No. 162

ATTEST: Cathy McNickle, Brown County Auditor  
(0401.0408)

Published twice at the total approximate cost of \$23.51. 18809

**Brown County  
Ord. 161  
Miller Rezoning**  
NOTICE  
Application has been made by Keith Miller to the Brown County Board of Commissioners for a change of zoning. Hearing to be held in the Commissioner's Chambers, Courthouse Annex, Brown County, South Dakota on April 14, 2020 at 8:55 A.M. for the purpose of rezoning the following property from Chapter 4.06 Agricultural Preservation District (AG-P) to Chapter 4.07 Mini-Ag District (M-AG):  
"K. Miller Addition" in the SW1/4 of Section 15-T122N-R64W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (38514 139th St)

The public is invited to attend the hearing and to present comments and testimony regarding the amendment to Second Revision Brown County Ordinances pertaining to rezoning the described property. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Brown County Commission may adopt first reading of Ordinance No. 161

ATTEST: Cathy McNickle, Brown County Auditor  
(0401.0408)

Published twice at the total approximate cost of \$23.51. 18810

**Brown County  
Ord. 162  
Hanson Rezoning**  
NOTICE  
Application has been made by Jeff Hanson to the Brown County Board of Commissioners for a change of zoning. Hearing to be held in the Commissioner's

Chambers, Courthouse Annex, Brown County, South Dakota on April 14, 2020 at 8:55 A.M. for the purpose of rezoning the following property from Chapter 4.06 Agricultural Preservation District (AG-P) to Chapter 4.16 Heavy Industrial District (H-1):  
Lot 2, "Luke's Landing Addition" in the N1/2 of Section 13-T123N-R63W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (13245 394th Ave)

The public is invited to attend the hearing and to present comments and testimony regarding the amendment to Second Revision Brown County Ordinances pertaining to rezoning the described property. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Brown County Commission may adopt first reading of Ordinance No. 165

ATTEST: Cathy McNickle, Brown County Auditor  
(0401.0408)

Published twice at the total approximate cost of \$22.92. 18806

# COVID-19

## Older adults are at HIGHER RISK for severe illness.

There is currently no vaccine for coronavirus. The best way to prevent it is to practice social distancing:

- Stay home
- Avoid social gatherings
- Stay 6+ feet away from others
- Wash your hands often with soap and water



If you have questions: Call 1-800-997-2880

TO THOSE WHO KEEP OUR COMMUNITIES SAFE,

TO THOSE WHO KEEP OUR COMMUNITIES STRONG,

TO THOSE WHO KEEP OUR COMMUNITIES SUPPLIED,

THANK YOU.

STAY SAFE. BE STRONG. SUPPORT SMALL. SOUTH DAKOTA RETAILERS

**The Groton Independent**  
 21 N Main, Groton 605/397-NEWS (6397)  
 Paul Irvin Kosel, Publisher [paperpaul@grotonsd.net](mailto:paperpaul@grotonsd.net)  
 ~ 605-397-7460  
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 News Items: [news@grotonsd.net](mailto:news@grotonsd.net)  
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**Brown County Ord. 160**

**Habeck Rezoning**

NOTICE  
 Application has been made by Clarence Habeck to the Brown County Board of Commissioners for a change of zoning. Hearing to be held in the Commissioner's Chambers, Courthouse Annex, Brown County, South Dakota on April 14, 2020 at 8:55 A.M. for the purpose of rezoning the following property from Chapter 4.06 Agricultural Preservation District (AG-P) to Chapter 4.07 Mini-Ag District (M-AG):  
 Lots 1 & 2, "C&L Habeck's 1st Subdivision" in the SW1/4 of Section 27-T124N-R63W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (12854 & 12862 391st Ave)

The public is invited to attend the hearing and to present comments and testimony regarding the amendment to Second Revision Brown County Ordinances pertaining to rezoning the described property. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Brown County Commission may adopt first reading of Ordinance No. 160

ATTEST:  
 Cathy McNickle, Brown County Auditor  
 (0401.0408)  
 Published twice at the total approximate cost of \$24.10. 18811

**Brown County Hot Water System at Courthouse Bid**

NOTICE TO BIDDERS  
 NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that sealed bids will be received in the Chambers of the Brown County Board of Commissioners at the Brown County Courthouse Annex, 25 Market St Suite 1, Aberdeen, South Dakota, until the hour of 8:45 A.M. on April 14th, 2020, at said time and place all bids will be publicly opened, read and considered by the Brown County Board of Commissioners for: Brown County Courthouse Domestic Hot Water Storage Tank & Pump Improvements in accordance with specifications.

Envelopes containing bids shall be addressed to the Brown County Auditor, 25 Market Street Suite 1, Aberdeen, South Dakota 57401 and be marked on the envelope. "Brown County Courthouse Domestic Hot Water Storage Tank & Pump Improvements" to be opened on April 14th, 2020.

Prime bidders will be required to attend a pre-bid walk thru held on April 3rd at 10 A.M. local time. Bids from prime bidders not in attendance will not be accepted. Bidders are to meet in front of the courthouse on the south side.

PROPOSAL GUARANTY: No proposal will be considered unless accompanied by a certified check, a cashier's check, or bank draft for 5% of the amount of the bid, such check to be issued by either a state or national bank and payable to Brown County, or in lieu thereof a bid bond for 10% of the amount of the bid, such bond to be issued by a surety company authorized to do business in South Dakota and payable to Brown County.

PERFORMANCE BOND: Brown County will give notice to the successful bidder that the proposal has been accepted, and said bidder shall within ten (10) days thereafter enter into a contract with Brown County and furnish a performance bond in an amount equal to the contract price.

The Brown County Board of Commissioners reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids that they deem to be in the best interest of Brown County, and to waive any informalities of irregularities therein. Brown County is exempt from all Federal Excise and State Sales Tax.

Plans and specifications are on file at Mettler Sichmeller Engineering, 801 Railroad Ave. SE Aberdeen, South Dakota. Please call 605-225-4344 to request a copy by e-mail.  
 (0401.0408)  
 ATTEST:  
 Cathy McNickle Brown County Auditor  
 Published twice at the total approximate cost of \$49.95. 18812

**Brown County Budget Supplement**

NOTICE OF HEARING  
 2020 BROWN COUNTY BUDGET SUPPLEMENT

A public hearing will be held by the Brown County Commission on the 14 day of April beginning at 9:00 a.m. in the Brown County Commission Chambers, Courthouse Annex, Aberdeen, SD to consider supplementing the 2020 fiscal year budget, as follows: Modernization and Preservation Fund 251.5.163.422 @ 32,297.92 funded by undesignated surplus cash in the Modernization and Preservation Fund 251.1.101.99. The public is invited to attend the hearing and to present comments and testimony regarding the supplements.

ATTEST:  
 Cathy McNickle, Brown County Auditor  
 (0401.0408)  
 Published twice at the total approximate cost of \$18.22. 18813

**Brown County Equalization**

NOTICE OF MEETING OF COUNTY EQUALIZATION BOARD  
 Notice is hereby given that the Board of County Commissioners, sitting as a County Board of Equalization (SDCL 10-11-25) of Brown County, SD will meet in the Commissioners' Chambers in said County on TUESDAY, the 14th day of April, 2020, (being the second Tuesday in April) for the purpose of reviewing, correcting and equalizing the assessment of said County for year 2020.

All persons considering themselves aggrieved by said assessment are required to submit written notice to the County Auditor no later than April 7, 2020.

Cathy McNickle, County Auditor, Brown County, SD  
 Dated this 1st day of April, 2020.  
 (0401.0408)  
 Published twice at the total approximate cost of \$18.22. 18814

**Brown County Consolidated Equalization**

NOTICE OF MEETING OF CONSOLIDATED EQUALIZATION BOARD

Notice is hereby given that the Board of County Commissioners, Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeen School Board, sitting as a County Board of Equalization (SDCL 10-11-66) of Brown County, SD will meet in the Commissioners' Chambers in said County on TUESDAY, the 14th day of April, 2020, (being the second Tuesday in April) for the purpose of reviewing, correcting and equalizing the assessment of said County for year 2020.

All persons considering themselves aggrieved by said assessment are required to submit written notice to the County Auditor no later than April 7, 2020.

Cathy McNickle, County Auditor, Brown County, SD  
 Dated this 1st day of April, 2020.  
 (0401.0408)  
 Published twice at the total approximate cost of \$19.39. 18815

**Groton City Soft Drinks Bid Notice**

Advertisement for Bids  
 City of Groton is seeking proposals for non-alcoholic beverages to be sold at the Groton Baseball Complex for the seasons in 2020, 2021, and 2022. These will include carbonated soft drinks and non-carbonated soft drinks, juices, water, tea, and enhanced isotonic drinks. The drinks must be provided in 16 to 20 oz bottles. The products will be delivered to the Groton Baseball Complex. Coolers or vending machines must be provided.

Proposal A is for an exclusive contract for the 3 years.  
 Proposal B is for a shared contract for the 3 years.  
 Proposals are due at City Hall, 209 N Main St (PO Box 587) Groton, SD 57445 by April 20, 2020 at 5pm in sealed envelopes marked BID. Contracts will be awarded at the April 21, 2020 City Council meeting.  
 (0401.0408)

For any questions please contact City Hall at 397-8422.  
 Published twice at the total approximate cost of \$18.80. 18816

**Columbia City April 5th Emergency Mtg**

Emergency Meeting of City of Columbia Council – April 5, 2020  
 CALL MEETING TO ORDER – 5:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL – Cara Dennert, Corey Mitchell, Trevor Meints, Cole Kampa, Ellen Harr, Dana Mohr

Community –Jeremy Dosch, Brent Raba  
 Corey Mitchell called the meeting to order. Corey stated that we called this meeting to discuss the situation of Covid19 and Columbia.

Dana asked about Brent's off-sale & carry out business and if he could make it with just carry out business. Brent stated that it is hard to pay bills on just carry out. Dana brought up the 10 people rule (regarding businesses). He stated that the way the state ruling goes, the 10 could be family units – making that number of people much larger. Brent talked about grants that are available – some being forgivable. He stated that he will make whatever the city wants work. He has split apart bar stools and tables. Cole suggested that we have a rule of 10 individuals in the bar at a time with food to be taken out only. Corey thought that sounded reasonable, but we still need to pass an ordinance. Other places in town are being used – legion and churches. The council discussed the wording of the ordinance to include The Lodge's food will be take out only and only nine people will be able to be in the bar at one time (plus Brent – making 10). The ordinance will also include the Legion Hall, churches, and parks being closed to public use.

Corey stated that we will have the first reading of our ordinance this Tuesday, April 7th, 2020 at our regularly scheduled city meeting. The council will meet again the following Tuesday, April 14th, 2020 to pass the ordinance.

Cole Kampa made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dana Mohr seconded the motion. All in favor – motion carried.

Next City Meeting - Tuesday, April 7, 2020 7:00 p.m.  
 Submitted by Cara Dennert, Finance Officer  
 Published once at the total approximate cost of \$20.57. 18836

**Columbia City April 7th Meeting Minutes**

City of Columbia Council Meeting – April 7, 2020  
 CALL MEETING TO ORDER – 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL – Cara Dennert, Corey Mitchell, Cole Kampa, Ellen Harr, Dana Mohr, Trevor Meints

Community –Jeremy Dosch  
 Corey Mitchell called the meeting to order. Minutes were passed out from the March meeting. Ellen Harr made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Dana Mohr seconded the motion. All in favor – motion carried.

Warrant Vouchers: Northwestern Energy – 747.65; Web Water – 37.55; JVT – 121.65; Great Western Bank – 605.06; GDI – 35.56; Jeremy Dosch – 419.99; Kelsie Ehresmann – 335.99; Cara Dennert – 823.50; Trevor Meints – 226.87; Corey Mitchell – 279.23; Dana Mohr – 230.58; Cole Kampa – 230.58; Ellen Harr – 230.58; Runnings – 722.51; SD Federal Property Agency – 446.63; SD Unemployment Insurance – 1.13 ; Menards – 200.94; Petty Cash – 220.00; SD Governmental Finance Officers' Association – 75.00; US Treasury – 1985.09; Web Water – 39.04; Agtegra – 868.72

Cole Kampa made a motion to accept the vouchers as presented. Trevor Meints seconded the motion. All in favor – motion carried.

COMMUNITY COMMENTS / CORESPONDENCE – e-mails from SDPAA (Paytra Nichols), SAM status renewed

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – Marty Weismantel is looking at our SDPAA insurance estimate.

Nuisances – There are many tires piling up in town. With the mosquito season ahead of us, they need to be taken care of. Letters will go out to residents that are violating city ordinances (regarding their property.)

Streets – There are a few potholes that need attention. The 5th Street culvert also needs some work.

Parks – none  
 Lagoon/sewer – The first discharge may happen soon.

Rubble Site – The site has been burned. This summer the council will get the fencing project at the rubble site completed.  
 NEW BUSINESS – Trevor made a motion to table discussion on animal/pet ordinances. Ellen Harr seconded the motion. All were in favor – motion carried.

The city is putting a truck up for surplus. It is a 1995 Ford F 800 dump truck with a 10'box and 12' snowplow. It has 45,461 miles on it. It is an automatic with a single axle. Any interested parties can call the city at 396-2655 and leave a message or e-mail the city at columbiacity@nvc.net. We will be accepting bids until our next meeting on May 5th. We have the right to accept or reject any or all bids. Paul will be contacted with the information to publish.

The council discussed and established a COVID19 ordinance that will be passed at the next city meeting, Tuesday, April 14th, 2020. Trevor Meints made a motion to accept the COVID19 ordinance as agreed upon by the council. Cole Kampa seconded the ordinance. All were in favor – motion carried.

FINANCIAL REPORT – Cara presented the 2019 Annual Report for the City of Columbia. Ellen Harr made a motion to accept the annual report as given. Trevor Meints seconded the motion. All were in favor – motion carried. It will be published in the paper. She also figured out how many stamps will be required to finish out the year – approximately 50 per month – 8 months left of 2020. She will buy 4 rolls of stamps with the current petty cash money. Bank balances were presented.

March 31, 2020 balances: SF - \$151,198.73; GF - \$148,298.24; FIT - \$13,971.99 Cash on Hand – \$40.00

Dana Mohr made a motion to accept the financial report as given. Ellen Harr seconded the motion. All were in favor – motion carried.

Cole Kampa made a motion to adjourn. Trevor Meints seconded the motion. All were in favor – meeting adjourned.

Next City Meeting - Tuesday, April 14, 2020 7:00 p.m.  
 Submitted by Cara Dennert, Finance Officer

Published once at the total approximate cost of \$40.85. 18838

**Columbia City Dump Truck Declared Surplus**

The City of Columbia is putting a truck up for surplus. It is a 1995 Ford F 800 dump truck with a 10'box and 12' snowplow. It has 45,461 miles on it. It is an automatic with a single axle. Any interested parties can call the city at 605/396-2655 and leave a message or e-mail the city at columbiacity@nvc.net. Bids will be accepted until 5 p.m. on May 5, 2020. We have the right to accept or reject any or all bids.

(0408.0415)  
 Published twice at the total approximate cost of \$12.35. 18837

**Groton City Election Date is Changed**

NOTICE OF ELECTION DATE CHANGE

The Ward 2 election for the City of Groton has been postponed to Tuesday, June 2, 2020. This is the corresponding date of the 2020 presidential primary election. Two candidates are running for the open position: Troy Lindberg and Damian Bahr. In order to vote in this election, you must be a registered voter of Ward 2 in the City of Groton. If you are in doubt about your registration status, contact your local county auditor. Voter registration ends May 18, 2020.

On election day, the City will operate polling sites from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM at the Groton Community Center. With respect to COVID-19 issues, please make good health related decisions when voting on election day.

In-person absentee voting is available at City Hall by appointment only by calling 605-397-8422. Voters may vote in-person up until 5:00 PM on the day before the election.

To receive a South Dakota Absentee Ballot Application Form call City Hall, at 605-397-8422 or email [city.hope@nvc.net](mailto:city.hope@nvc.net). Forms are also available on-line at [www.sdsos.gov](http://www.sdsos.gov).

Hope Block  
 Finance Officer  
 City of Groton  
 Published once at the total approximate cost of \$12.02. 18839

**Groton City  
April 7th  
Meeting Minutes**

April 7, 2020

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: Wells, Blackmun, Cutler, and Mayor Hanlon presiding. Also present were: Attorney Drew Johnson, Finance Officer Hope Block, Kathy Sundermeyer, and Paul Kosel.

Mayor Hanlon gave thanks to businesses and residents of the City of Groton for modifying their way of life during this COVID-19 outbreak to keep us all healthy.

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

Karyn Babcock entered the meeting at 7:02pm.

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

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

Payroll, \$31,740.62, Employee salaries; Executive, \$1,500.69, ; Administrative, \$6,805.08, ; Public Safety, \$6,619.17, ; Public Works, \$16,815.68, ; Culture & Recreation, ; First State Bank, \$10,776.07, SS and WH ; First State Bank, \$933.32, HSA contributions; Dakotaland FCU, \$2,100.00, Employee savings; Aflac, \$338.26, Employee insurance; Colonial Life, \$340.78, Employee insurance; Hauge Associates, \$360.00, Payroll garnishment; Guardian Insurance, \$140.52, Employee insurance; SD Retirement System, \$7,685.06, Employee retirement; Employers Mutual Ins, \$85.20, Employee insurance; Drew Johnson, \$1,175.00, Legal fees 3/20; April Abeln, \$91.90, Dep flex; A&B Business Solutions, \$188.17, Copier rent; Dakota Supply Group, \$66.57, Ceiling fan; Stan Houston, \$1,290.00, Barricades; Groton Independent, \$142.82, Publishing and subscription; Colonial Research, \$413.38, Hand sanitizer dispensers, refills, cleaning wipes; SD Dept of Health, \$100.00, Water testing; McLeod's, \$85.90, Election supplies; SD Supp Retirement, \$285.00, Employee Retirement; Galls, \$92.91, PD uniforms; Locke Electric, \$109.45, Service City Hall generator; Locators & Supplies, \$216.70, Paint, glasses, flags; Fire Safety First, \$123.15, First aid supplies

Moved by Blackmun and seconded by Cutler to authorize Clark Engineering to begin advertising the bid notices for the water tower project. All members voted aye.

Due to the current COVID-19 outbreak, the park will remain open with playground equipment off limits, camping areas will be open, picnic shelters and tables off limits, bathrooms closed, basketball and tennis courts remain open, and summer recreation activities will be suspended until further notice on a motion by Cutler and seconded by Wells. All members voted aye. It is important to remain utilizing sidewalks and paths for exercise. Please continue to comply with CDC regulations when exercising in groups.

Moved by Babcock and seconded by Wells to adopt the policy to follow the Families First Coronavirus Response Act and the Emergency FMLA and Paid Sick Leave Act. All members voted aye.

Moved by Babcock and seconded by Cutler to move the Ward 2 City Election date from April 14th to June 2nd. All members voted aye.

Moved by Cutler and seconded by Wells to adjourn into executive session for personnel and legal items 1-25-2 (1) & (3) at 7:40pm. All members voted aye. Council reconvened into regular session at 8:11pm.

Moved by Blackmun and seconded by Wells to adjourn the meeting at 8:11pm. All members voted aye.

Scott Hanlon, Mayor  
Hope Block, Finance Officer  
Published once at the total approximate cost of \$33.69. 18840

**School Board moves district election to June 2nd**

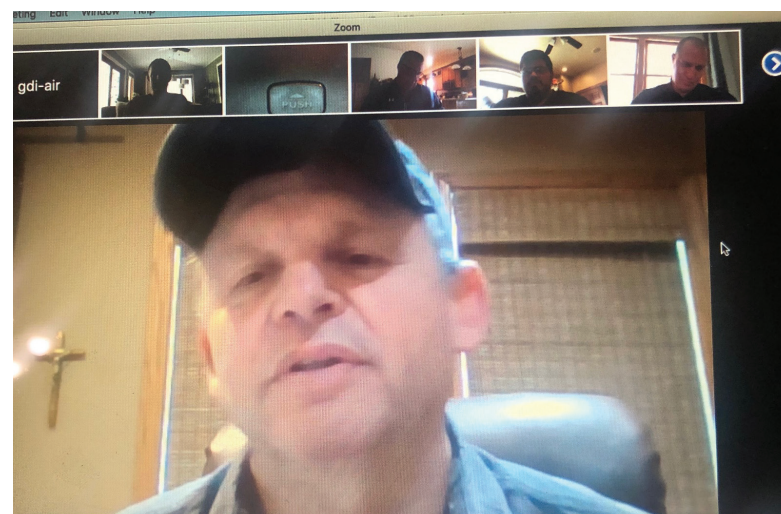
The Groton Area School Board held a special meeting Thursday evening via a Zoom conference. Six members of the board were present. The reason for the special meeting was to set the date for the school board election. It was suppose to be held in April; however, due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the state legislature allowed districts to move their elections to June.

There are four precinct in the district - Andover, Bristol, Columbia and Groton.

Mike Weber, business manager, reported on some of the variations of the district. He reported that the Brown County auditor has agreed to run the election in conjunction with the state's primary and the City of Groton's Ward 2 election. Brown County would hire the election works. Brown County would run the election in the Groton and Columbia precincts. The Day County auditor said they would run the Bristol and Andover precincts; however, those voters would have to go to Webster to vote. Weber said that would not be in the best interests of the district, so Groton Area would need to hire the election workers and run the election at the Andover and Bristol precincts.

The Groton City Council will be meeting April 7th and they will vote on their election date. Weber anticipates they will also choose June 2nd as its election date.

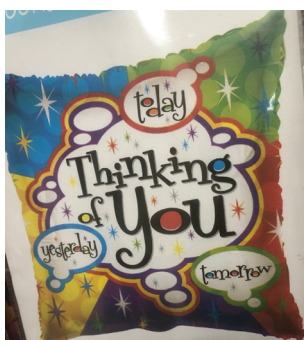
Weber said he had secured masks for the election workers, but it was recommended by the CDC that election workers do not wear gloves; but rather, use hand sanitizer after each touch of a driver's license. Weber said he had already had one election worker back out if the election would have been held in April with concern of the COVID-19 outbreak.



**President Steve Smith calls the Zoom meeting to order Thursday evening.** (Photo by Paul Kosel)



**Groton Area Middle/High School Principal Kiersten Sombke, assisted with the hand-out of food at the high school building. She is wearing a mask that was made by Karin Bartells. "We have some wonderfully talented people here at Groton Area," Sombke said.** (Photo by Paul Kosel)



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SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

covid.sd.gov

**Attention: Groton Area School District Patrons**

**The election for the Groton Area Board of Education has been postponed to Tuesday, June 2, 2020. This is the corresponding date of the 2020 presidential primary election. Three candidates running for two open positions on the school board are Jason Bickel, Steven R. Smith and Grant Rix. In order to vote in this election, you must be a registered voter of the Groton Area School District. If you are in doubt about your registration status, contact your local county auditor. Voter registration ends May 18, 2020.**

**On election day, the school district will operate polling sites from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM at Andover Other Place, Bristol Community Center, Columbia Legion and Groton Community Center. Please note that Andover and Bristol patrons will not cast a presidential primary vote at their location. Day County will hold primary voting in Webster only. With respect to COVID-19 issues, please make good health related decisions when voting on election day.**

**In-person absentee voting is available at the school business office located at 406 North 2nd Street in Groton from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM Monday through Friday. Voters may vote in-person up until 5:00 PM on the day before the election.**

**Voters may also vote absentee by mail or absentee by messenger, in the event of confinement due to sickness or disability. To receive a South Dakota Absentee Ballot Application Form call Mike Weber, at 605-397-2351 extension 1008, or email mike.weber@k12.sd.us. Forms are also available on-line at www.grotonarea.com and www.sdsos.gov.**

**Mike Weber  
Election Superintendent  
Groton Area Schools**

Published 2 times at the approximate cost of \$144.00 (408.0415)

## S.D. ethanol industry and corn growers facing economic 'bloodbath' due to COVID-19 pandemic

**Bart Pfankuch, South Dakota News Watch**

The ethanol industry in South Dakota and across the Midwest is in an economic free-fall due to decreased global demand for ethanol-infused gasoline during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Fear of spreading the deadly virus has led governments around the world to cancel gatherings and urge or require people to stay home, and many individuals are self-isolating to stay safe, significantly reducing the global demand for gasoline.

The pandemic has hit the ethanol industry at a time producers were already suffering through poor market conditions owing to the trade war with China, a glut of oil production during a price war between Russia and Saudi Arabia that sent ethanol prices tumbling and waivers from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency that enabled American refineries to use less ethanol.

"The important context here is that a lot of the ethanol industry was hanging on by a string before the coronavirus hit," said Brian Jennings, CEO of the American Coalition for Ethanol, a nonprofit national trade group based in Sioux Falls. "And we're seeing unprecedented demand destruction right now, so undoubtedly, 2020 is going to be a bloodbath for the industry."

The market upheaval has jeopardized the jobs of hundreds of well-paid ethanol plant workers in South Dakota and beyond, but has also hurt the financial fortunes of tens of thousands of farmers who provide the corn that is the basis for the biofuel and byproducts such as distiller's grains.

The per-gallon price paid to ethanol producers has fallen to record lows, dropping 37% in one month from \$1.24 a gallon on Feb. 27, 2020, to just 78 cents a gallon on March, 27, 2020, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The per-gallon price in late March was down 47% from a recent high of \$1.47 per gallon in South Dakota in late November.

The per-bushel price paid to South Dakota



**The Redfield Energy ethanol plant in Redfield, S.D., is operating at 75% capacity due to ongoing market headwinds and a low demand for ethanol-infused gasoline across the world brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.** Photo: Courtesy Redfield Energy

corn producers has followed the downward trend in the ethanol industry. According to USDA, the per-bushel price of corn fell by 16% from \$3.57 per bushel on Feb. 28 to only \$2.99 per bushel on March 27.

The U.S. is the top ethanol-producing country in the world, followed by Brazil. In 2018, American plants produced more than 16 billion gallons of ethanol, exporting 1.7 billion gallons to 78 countries. The industry supported 365,000 jobs and added \$46 billion to the U.S. gross domestic product.

Across the country, dozens of ethanol plants have closed, gone idle or reduced production as Americans and people across the world have dramatically cut back on driving amid the pandemic. Production levels for 2020 are expected to be down by 4 billion gallons, Jennings said.

About 30 of the roughly 200 ethanol plants in the U.S. have shut down, and another 80 have reduced production by 50% or more, Jennings said.

The Siouxland Ethanol plant in Jackson, Neb., just southwest of Sioux City, Iowa, ceased production in April, and Jennings said the NuGen Energy plant in Marion, S.D., has also gone idle during the market crisis (an em-

ployee who answered the phone at NuGen had no comment.)

Redfield Energy in Redfield, S.D., has reduced production to 75% of its maximum capacity amid the market slowdown, said Dana Siefkes-Lewis, chief administrative officer at the plant.

By storing excess ethanol in tanker rail cars or on-site storage tanks, the plant that typically produces 63 million gallons of ethanol a year has avoided laying off or cutting any of its roughly 50 employees, Siefkes-Lewis said. The plant has also transitioned into making hand sanitizer to aid in the battle against COVID-19 and to help keep the plant operating, she said.

"It's a day-by-day situation, and we are still running but being very cautious about the situation," she said. "We do have quite a bit of storage on our site, so we think we'll be able to continue production through the duration of the virus."

### Farmers also stung by ethanol slowdown

The ethanol market meltdown has also hurt South Dakota's roughly 12,500 corn farmers, said Lisa Richardson, executive director of the South Dakota Corn Growers Association.

In a typical year, South Dakota farmers produce about 800 million bushels of corn, about 450 million of which are used for ethanol production, 100 million for livestock feed and the rest for global food exports, Richardson said. Many corn farmers are also investors or have some type of financial stake in ethanol plants, she said.

Corn growers were looking forward to a strong growing season in 2020 given the weather so far, but that may not help them if markets for their products don't rebound,

Continues on next page

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Richardson said. The effects of the ethanol market collapse will be felt far beyond the production plants and farmers who supply them with corn, she said.

"The problem here is unprecedented," she said. "Corn is your largest commodity in the state, and ethanol is the corn producer's largest market, and agriculture is the largest industry in the state, so this is very significant."

Another concern amid the pandemic is whether global supply chains will remain viable and allow for corn and corn products to be distributed to markets around the world, she said.

Consumers can easily see evidence of the reduced demand for gasoline by the lack of motorists on the roads, and by watching the gas price at the pump. Gasoline with 10% ethanol, labeled as "Plus" or "Premium," has fallen well below \$2 per gallon across South Dakota, with prices in the \$1.85 range now common in West River and in the \$1.60 range in East River for Plus gas.

Global gasoline demand is also way down amid the pandemic. In the United Kingdom, traffic has fallen to 1955 levels, as passenger-vehicle traffic is off 75% and bus mileage is down by 60%.

In Sioux Falls, local streets are seeing as much as 40% declines in vehicle travel, with many traffic counts down by 20% in the past month, according to street-department data reported by the Argus Leader.

South Dakota is the sixth-leading U.S. state in terms of ethanol production, with about 1.2 billion gallons produced in 2019, according to the U.S. Renewable Fuels Association. Iowa is by far the largest producer, with about 4.5 billion gallons a year, followed by other Midwest states including Nebraska, Illinois, Minnesota and Indiana.

South Dakota is home to 16 plants or related facilities, all in the eastern half of the state; depending on size and production capacity, most plants employ between 40 and 60 workers.

Sioux Falls is the corporate headquarters of one of the world's largest ethanol producers, POET biofuels, which has 27 refineries in seven states, including six plants in South Dakota. In total, POET facilities produced about 1.7 billion gallons of ethanol in 2019 and employed about 1,600 people, including 240 in its South Dakota plants and about 450 at its Sioux Falls headquarters. A spokeswoman for POET said company officials were too busy in early April to grant an interview.

The American ethanol industry arose in 2007 amid a movement to reduce consumption of fossil fuels and develop a renewable source of energy from corn. The United States requires that most petroleum producers blend ethanol into their fuel. Plants began production in South Dakota around that time.

### Good times for ethanol gone bad

The industry has seen relatively good times since then, with slowdowns tied generally to dips in the American economy, including during the Great Recession in the years surrounding 2008.

The per-gallon price for ethanol hit a national high as recently as 2011, when it reached \$2.91 a gallon, according to federal data.

Despite some ups and downs, the demand and prices have generally stalled or fallen sharply in recent months.

In addition to the placement by China of tariffs on American ethanol exports, and the Russia-Saudi Arabia price war that sent prices haywire, the U.S. ethanol market was stung by waivers granted by the Trump administration and former Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt, Jennings said.

"2019 was a terrible year for the industry," Jennings said. "We had markets taken away with the China trade war and the price wars, and then domestic markets were taken away through the mismanagement of the Renewable Fuel Standard."

Pruitt granted scores of waivers to small oil refineries that allowed them to stop blending ethanol into their fuels as required by the Renewable Fuel Standard enacted by Congress in 2005.

"The candid and honest answer is that the Trump administration was looking to do favors to the oil refiners, who have long complained about the fact the Renewable Fuel Standard eroded their market share," Jennings said.

Jennings sent a letter to current EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler on Friday, April 3, urging the agency to ensure that the full required level of ethanol to be used by American refiners remain intact despite the overall slowdown in demand and use of ethanol by consumers. He also argued against allowing any more waivers to be enacted.

Failure to uphold the required level, Jennings wrote, could cost U.S. ethanol producers \$2 billion in losses and cost corn growers \$1.35 billion in losses.

Siefkes-Lewis said Redfield Energy will do

whatever it can to protect its workforce, which she said includes employees with a unique set of skills.

"We know that if we would lay off one employee, we would lose more than that," she said. "If we shut down the plant, [employees] would need a job and they would have to get a job elsewhere, and we don't think we'd ever get them back."

Siefkes-Lewis said ethanol producers are in the difficult spot of knowing that the only possible solution to the market woes — aside from an unexpected return to a high demand for gasoline — is that other producers shut down or reduce production.

"It's sort of a perfect storm where nothing is in balance," she said. "We hate to see other plants slow down or shut down, but that may be the only way we can succeed and bring supply and demand back into balance."

The market for ethanol and prices paid to producers may continue to fall as the pandemic worsens in the U.S., further damaging the industry, Jennings said. Gasoline use is down 40% to 50% in the U.S. already and could fall by as much as 70% in urban areas where quarantine orders are strictest, he said.

"There's this wishful thinking that there's going to be this pent-up demand for gas, that once we're over coronavirus, people are going to want to get out there and drive more and the economy will shoot back up," he said. "But it's hard to see the light at the end of the tunnel right now. More shutdowns seem certain, and we're just going to have to wait and see how long this lasts."

Still, some producers are staying hopeful that the industry will bounce back once the pandemic passes.

"Summer driving season is close, though I don't know that people will be out driving this summer," said Siefkes-Lewis, who was the first employee hired at Redfield Energy in 2005. "But we've always been able to come out of it, and I don't have any doubt that we'll be able to come out of this one, too. I really believe that, and if I didn't, I wouldn't be able to tell our employees not to leave."

#### ABOUT BART PFANKUCH

Bart Pfankuch, Rapid City, S.D., is the content director for South Dakota News Watch. A Wisconsin native, he is a former editor of the Rapid City Journal and also worked at newspapers in Florida. Bart has spent more than 30 years as a reporter, editor and writing coach.

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# The Life of Jim Dittman



Jim Dittman, 70, of Highmore died March 30, 2020 at St Mary's Hospital in Pierre after one last slug fest with Multiple Sclerosis (MS). A private burial service was held at the Highmore Cemetery on April 1. A celebration will be held at a later date due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. If you would like to honor Jim in the meantime, go ahead and work 28 hours per day, eight days a week.

James Walter Dittman was born August 1, 1949 to Fred and Pearl (Bawdon) Dittman. His childhood rivaled a Huck Finn adventure: taking care of livestock on the family farm, spending more time outside than inside of his one-room country schoolhouse (After he had walked there. Uphill.

Both ways. Probably in a blizzard.), learning life lessons the hard way, and pranking the local police. "Wildman" graduated from Highmore High School in 1967.

Legend has it, Jim's farming career began at the ripe old age of six when his dad grew tired of him constantly being underfoot, so he allowed Jim to drive his own tractor and haying equipment. His life-long love affair with/addiction to the cattle business began as a teen "with one calf and my dad's corn". Jim was well-respected for his keen eye for quality cattle and his livestock marketing ability. While Jim generally preferred dealing with animals over people, he befriended a wide range of characters in the livestock industry over the years.

Throughout his entire life, Jim considered the phrase "you can't" as a personal challenge and took extreme pleasure in proving others wrong. This was never more evident than after he was diagnosed

with MS at the age of 36. He refused to use his disease and disability as an excuse; instead he relied on grit and stubbornness to expand his business and continue to support his family. Even as his disease progressed, he continued to put in a full day's work.

The best decision Jim ever made was marrying his high school sweetheart, Shirley Kusser, on February 1, 1969. Shirley served as the dedicated mother to his children, farm labor, secretary, cook, and later Jim's sole caregiver despite his advanced disease. Together they raised three daughters. His preference would have been three boys but it turns out girls can be great farmhands too. Jim frequently reminded his girls how lucky they were to "get to" work with him all summer and he loved to take credit for their work ethic.

His grandchildren will remember their Papa for teaching them to "drive" his pickup with his assistance around the farm as preschoolers and then independently once they met his stringent requirement of reaching the gas pedal and seeing out the windshield at the same time. He partnered with them to secure dessert from Grandma; gave them the opportunity to operate farm equipment; and allowed them to do almost anything else they wanted.

Jim fought the war MS had waged against him every day for over 34 years. Knowing that Jim liked to have the last word and was a sore loser, we think he would point out the pain and suffering of MS died with him, so technically they ended in a tie.

Left to tell stories about the grumpy guy are his wife Shirley; daughters: Jackie (Steve) Peck of Prosper, TX, Deb (Collin) Gengerke of Groton, SD, and Bridget Dittman of Franklin, TN; grandchildren: Kendra, Devon, Jenna, and Grant Peck; Patrick, Trey, and Brooke Gengerke; and Brandon Bates; and numerous extended family members.

Jim's dad and father-in-law, Joe, greeted him and his pristine new body on the other side with some perfectly prepared beef and a huge serving of ice cream before they set out for the feedlot.

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