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A Story of Dedication, Growth, and Community Impact



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— FROM THE — CEO's Chair

Ted Haeder, President/CEO
Greater Huron Development Corporation

I'll be 50 in April.

It doesn't feel like a significant milestone is approaching or some dreadful and unavoidable event is about to happen. My feelings toward reaching the half century mark can be summed up with one simple word – "meh."

My dad reacted the same way when we found out he was on the list to be recognized with a 50 Year Pin from the State Bar of South Dakota. Actually...that's not true at all. When we asked dad if we could attend the ceremony with him, he told us, emphatically, "I'm not going! This just means I'm old!!"

So, we did not celebrate dad's 50 Year Pin.

I'm not one for excessive celebrations either, but I'll do more than boycott the event completely. My birthday plans include eating too much and spending time with my family. If the weather is nice, and the course is open, I'll play a round or two at Broadland Creek. If the weather doesn't cooperate, I might spring for a movie rental if there's something I want to see.

I have everything I need and way more than I deserve so celebrating, for me, includes simply being grateful for all of the amazing things in my life – a great family, the greatest job I have ever had, and living in my favorite part of the world.

Business Briefs

City of Huron Mayor Gary Harrington presented the Mayor's Award for Excellence to Kelsi and Jordan Stricherz – K & J Holdings at the Annual Celebration hosted by the Huron Chamber & Visitors Bureau and Greater Huron Development Corporation on February 22, 2024. K & J Holdings owns several rental homes in Huron and two commercial properties. Their investment in the River's Edge building at 259/261 Dakota Avenue S represents one of the largest capital investments in Downtown Huron.

Kelsi and Jordan have three kids and another on the way. Kelsi is the owner of True Reflections Counseling and Jordan is a Pharmacist at Walmart. The cover story article details their community contributions that help make Huron a great place to live, work, and play.

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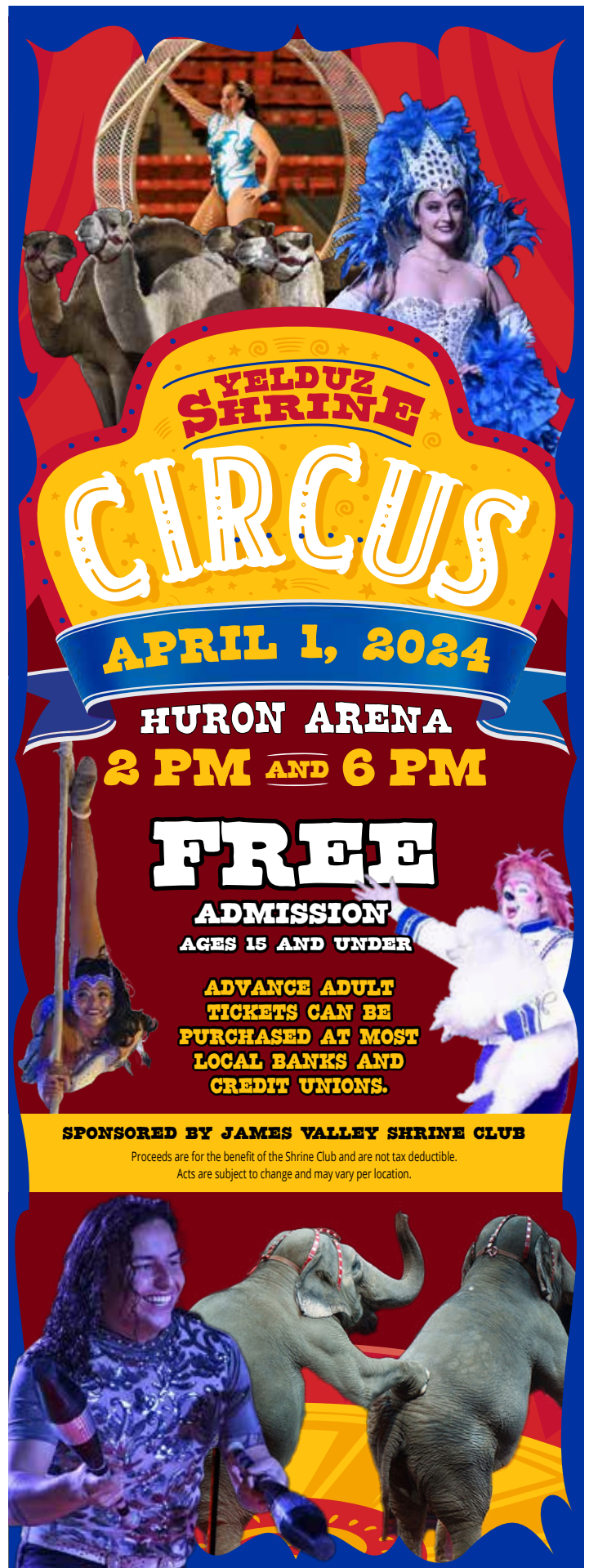
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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

- Feb 15 - Mar 15 **Huron Community Foundation Grant Period**
- Mar 1-2 **PRCA Rodeo**
7pm • The DEX
- Mar 2 **Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation**
Huron Event Center
- Mar 2 **Outta the Attic - OPEN**
11am • 225 Lincoln Ave SE
- Mar 2 **Beadle County Izaak Walton League Fishing Derby**
11am • Ravine Lake
- Mar 2 **Meat Bingo**
2pm • Hurst's Corner
- Mar 5 **Huron Rising 2.0**
6pm • Huron Community Campus Center
- Mar 6 **Ribbon Cutting, Mary Neugebauer, Realtor**
10am • 1544 Dakota Ave S
- Mar 9 **Annual Memorial Pool Tournament**
11am • Hurst's Corner
- Mar 9 **Bingo**
6:30pm • Holy Trinity Multipurpose Room
- Mar 10 **Huron Elks Pancake Feed**
9am • Huron Elks Lodge
- Mar 12 **Chamber Mixer**
4:30pm • Legacy Financial Partners
- Mar 16 **Spring has Sprung Craft & Vendor Fair**
9am • Huron Event Center
- Mar 16 **Windriders Abate - Chili Cook-Off**
5:30pm • Red Arrow Bar
- Mar 16 **St. Patty's Party**
Hurst's Corner
- Mar 17 **Mark Warder from Pulse Ministries**
James Valley Christian Auditorium
- Mar 21 **Food Giveaway**
11:30am • People's Transit
- Mar 21 **State of the County**
12pm • Huron Event Center
- Mar 23-24 **KOKK Radio Outdoor Show**
10am • Nordby 4H Exhibit Hall
- Mar 23 **Papa Luigi**
5:30pm • Huron Event Center
- Mar 24 **Spring Dinner**
10:30am • Holy Trinity Catholic School
- Mar 27 **Parkinson's Support Group**
1:30pm • Huron Public Library
- Mar 30 **Down the Alley Productions Barrel Race**
The DEX

REOCCURRING MONTHLY EVENTS

- Every Tuesday **MS Society Fundraiser - Crown the King!**
6PM • Red Arrow Bar
- Every Tuesday **GriefShare**
6:30PM • Living Hope Alliance Church
- Every Friday **Chase the Ace of Spades**
6:30PM • Hursts Corner
- Every Friday **VFW Bingo**
7PM • Huron Mall
- Every Friday **Karaoke**
9PM • Sportsmen Bar



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Kelsi and Jordan Stricherz: A Story of Dedication, Growth, and Community Impact

BY TED HAEDER, Greater Huron Development Corporation President/CEO

Kelsi and Jordan Stricherz have been an integral part of the Huron community, embodying a remarkable story of dedication, growth, and community impact. Coming up on their 9th wedding anniversary this April, the couple has shown time and time again that with hard work, dedication, and unity, great things can happen.

With three children under the age of six and another one on the way, both Kelsi and Jordan manage full-time jobs and an impressive real estate portfolio that includes rental houses in Huron, Little Rock (Arkansas), and Memphis (Tennessee), as well as commercial properties in Huron. Their educational background is equally impressive, with Kelsi holding a master's degree in counseling and Jordan a PharmD both received from South Dakota State University.

Their journey, filled with hard work and commitment, has been shaped by the support and synergy they share. Kelsi, a graduate of Lennox High School and Jordan, a graduate of Waverly South Shore High School, quickly found their home in Huron. "The Walmart Pharmacy job opening brought us to Huron because we needed to be closer to Brookings so Kelsi could finish her master's degree," said Jordan.

The couple's move to Huron in 2015, unknown to them at the time, was marked by both personal and professional aspirations. Jordan's pursuit of the Pharmacist position was not just a career move; it was also a step toward supporting Kelsi's academic endeavors at SDSU. The couple quickly made relationships with Huron area residents they met through several venues. Jordan, the extrovert, made acquaintances on the basketball court and golf course. Kelsi, the introvert, was invited by her hair stylist to a new church, "It was a great experience and we immediately felt welcome by the members of Bethesda. Being part of the church really helped us connect with people in Huron." Their integration into the community was smooth, a testament to their open and welcoming nature.

Kelsi's professional journey, from starting at Community Counseling Services to establishing her own practice, True Reflections Counseling, highlights not only her professional growth but also her commitment to mental health and well-being of the community. Her practice resonates with individuals of all ages and stages of life, "The name True Reflections Counseling is based on my philosophy on counseling," said Kelsi. "I implement cognitive-behavioral and strength-based strategies in a professional, relaxed, and conversational-style session. I also specialize in Play Therapy. Just as adults use words to communicate, play is a child's primary form of language that allows me to develop a connection encouraging children to express and communicate in a safe way."

Their real estate endeavors, such as the redevelopment of the River's Edge building, demonstrate their commitment to enhancing the local business landscape and providing value to the community. Their collaboration with local entities and the thoughtful execution of their projects epitomizes their dedication to supporting the community's growth. "We spent a few years focused on paying off my student loan debt, which took a lot of commitment," Jordan shared. "This allowed us to acquire our first rental house. Thankfully, it was move-in ready. We purchased a few others since that needed work, Kelsi and I fixed up several houses by ourselves, sometimes with our kids running

around while we painted. Most of our projects are done by other contractors now because we don't have enough time to do it on our own anymore."

The River's Edge building near the intersection of 3rd Street and Dakota Avenue in Huron was their first commercial redevelopment project. They acquired the building from Terry and Nancy Schiltz and put together a plan for office space on the main floor and apartments upstairs.

Several funding options were considered. Ultimately, with direction from American Bank & Trust's Ben Nelson, they were able to put together a financial package that included loans from the South Dakota Housing Development Authority and the Greater Huron Development Corporation.

Picek Construction acted as the general contractor on the project and finished work on the lower level first to provide space for Edward Jones, Mac Daddy Phone Repair, Wager Family Chiropractic, and True Reflections Counseling with additional space still available for lease. There are eight apartments on the 2nd floor ranging from one to three bedrooms that are ready to lease.

Their story is not just one of professional success but also a testament to their strong family values. Amidst their bustling professional lives and real estate pursuits, they prioritize their time for family, acknowledging that achieving a balance is key to their overall fulfillment. Focusing their time on family comes first while time directed to careers and real estate comes second.

Kelsi put emphasis on that by stating, "Time is our greatest value. We worked really hard early on, so we have time for our kids and for each other now. Jordan's meticulous planning is what really made this work. He's the brains that figured out how to get the work done and make sure that everything worked financially." Kelsi adds, "Our house isn't perfect. The beds aren't made and there are dishes everywhere most of the time, but I think that too, reflects where we spend our time. We're playing together, going on drives, or playing basketball in the garage. Things aren't perfect, and I think that is important to normalize and acknowledge. We work together and stay on the same page with the goals and vision we have for our family."

Jordan was quick to note, "Kelsi is unique and allows me to do things like this. None of this would have happened without her. Both of us help to meet each other's needs." The partnership they share is built on mutual respect, support, and admiration for each other's strengths.

The intricate balance between their professional aspirations and personal values has made them pillars of strength in the Huron community, showcasing its potential as a place to live, work, and thrive.

Kelsi and Jordan Stricherz stand as a profound example of how dedicated individuals can positively impact their community while nurturing a fulfilling family life. Their story is a testament to the potential for growth and success that Huron offers as a great place to live, work, and play while serving as an inspiration to others to pursue their dreams while lifting up those around them.

Leadership Huron Spotlight

The 2023-2024 Leadership Huron class session is underway! Our class consists of 14 Huron-area professionals from the fields of Banking, Health Care, Child Education, Financing, Realty, City Government and Manufacturing. While some members of our class are lifelong Huron residents, we also have class members who are newer to the Huron area. With class starting a little bit later than previous years, we are just getting started. We have been guests at State of the Schools Luncheon, and recently took a field trip to Pierre to tour the capitol and learn about what our state leadership is doing.

For our 2023-2024 class project, we were tasked with selecting a worthy charitable cause to support. As we discussed the communities needs and different projects going on we landed on three different projects to support. We chose to support the Huron Public Library, the Huron Chamber & Visitors Bureau and the Huron Parks & Recreation Department.

The Huron Public Library has seen an exponential growth in the students attending afterschool activities and is looking to expand their supplies, activities and furniture. As well as funding for snacks so that they have a well-rounded program for the students. The library has plans that will benefit the afterschool program and also benefit participants in the summer reading program.

With the updates we are seeing in the downtown area of Huron, the Huron Chamber & Visitors Bureau is looking to update the banners that are seen around town. There are currently six different banners that are hung throughout the year, many of them are weathered, and need to be replaced. This is a great way to spruce up the look of the town, and create an inviting atmosphere to those who travel to Huron. In addition, to showcase pride of our community throughout the seasons.

Our third project is for the Huron Parks & Recreation. There is a need for a shed at Ravine Lake to protect the canoes/paddle boats during the season and provide storage for the canoes during the winter months. This will also help to eliminate trash that builds up in the current fence that is down by the water. It is important to support and protect these summer activities so they are around for years to come.

Be on the lookout for the different Leadership Huron fundraisers as we work to support these three projects. We appreciate any help we can get to leave an impact on the Huron community.

We are grateful to the Huron Chamber & Visitors Bureau and participating area businesses for giving us this opportunity to learn more about Huron's unique history as we continue to build on our strengths and polish our leadership skills.



Leadership Huron 23-24 Class Members

Amy Fleischacker
Michael Matlin
Kler Hae
Kelly Sherman
Tanya Copeland
Tanner Marone
Kristy Smith

Bridgette Moeller
Cassidy Frericks
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BY CANDI BRILEY, South Dakota State Fair Assistant Director



For over a century, the South Dakota State Fair has been a venue showcasing agriculture, livestock, 4-H, FFA, and the talents and skills that many South Dakotans have to offer. It serves as an educational platform to highlight the importance of agriculture and the part it plays in our lives each day. The State Fair is a place that reminds people of their roots in South Dakota, while showcasing many new and exciting things on the horizon.

From the opening of the Nordby Exhibit Hall for 4-H, Youth and Community in 2017, the restoration of the century old iconic and historical Grandstand in 2018, to the ribbon cutting of the DEX: Dakota Events CompleX in August 2023, we have kept our roots in the past while building for our future.

Most recently we have set out on a journey to build The SHED, the new home for Open Class Sheep during the annual South Dakota State Fair and for other livestock and non-livestock events throughout the year.

The South Dakota State Fair Foundation is at the core of progress on the fairgrounds, and helps to ensure the fair remains a place where friends and families meet, and for South Dakotans to showcase their talents. The mission of the South Dakota State Fair Foundation is to raise funds for the enhancement, preservation, and renovation of the South Dakota State Fairgrounds.

The Friends of the Fair program is a great annual opportunity to support the South Dakota State Fair Foundation and enhancements to the fairgrounds. Memberships run on an annual basis and offer special opportunities including Grandstand ticket presales!

Get a jump start on fair fun and join the Friends of the Fair as benefits offered include early bird access to State Fair VIP table sales, presale access to grandstand reserved seating and standing room tickets for the State Fair, complimentary daily gate admission passes, and recognition on the State Fair website. Friends of the Fair information, along with the membership form, can be found on sdstatefairfoundation.com.

The backrest program is another program that offers a presale on grandstand tickets. It's an advertising program that allows businesses or individuals to put signage on a backrest in the Grandstand. Backrest signage holders can purchase South Dakota State Fair grandstand tickets for their corresponding signage area prior to general and Friends of the Fair ticket sales. More details can be found at sdstatefair.com/general-information/about-us/backrest-program/.

On the topic of the fair serving as an educational platform, students' talents can be spotlighted during the fair in the Education Department in the Arts & Education Building. The 2024 Education Department handbook is now available online for educators to see how they can get their students involved in the 2024 SD State Fair by entering a project from school! Any and all classroom subjects are able to be entered. Public, private, and homeschools can enter in the Education Department. Kids love going to the fair and seeing their project on display! Teachers, we would love for you to enter, especially if you haven't in the past. Show the world the amazing things happening in your classroom!

The Education Department handbook can be found at sdstatefair.com. The deadline to submit entries is April 12. Education entries transitioned to online only this year which will be a positive change for the teacher and the fair office! A fantastic, easy to follow instructional video was made to help teachers through the online entry process that can also be found on the education webpage.



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March Athlete of the Month: Connor Johnson

BY MATT NIEDERBAUMER, CFP® Vantage Financial, Partner, Senior Wealth Advisor

Connor Johnson, a senior at De Smet High School, has learned many lessons from his involvement in sports throughout the years. Connor has competed in folkstyle wrestling his entire career and has enjoyed doing freestyle (or Olympic level) wrestling in high school. His dedication and passion for wrestling has led to many accomplishments which include



Photo taken by Craig Lee Studios

achieving his 100th career win, qualifying for state multiple times, and being named Most Improved (sophomore season) and Most Dedicated (junior season). Connor has competed for two years on the National South Dakota Wrestling team and is a captain for the Kingsbury County Wrestling team this year. Coach Steve Gilbertson praises Connor for consistently exhibiting high moral character and sportsmanship whether he wins or loses. He also highlights his dedication and motivation to continually work towards improvement, especially during the off-season, when he runs for the cross-country team. Despite finishing races at the back of the pack, Connor has found great joy in running. This experience has taught him that medals aren't necessary to be successful and that he finds achievement in hard work, discipline, and perseverance through his struggles.

Throughout high school, Connor has excelled in band, chorus, and his college level classes while participating in National Honor Society, leading the Student Council as President, and volunteering for the Cattleman's Association service projects. For the last five years, Connor has participated in Future Farmers of America where he competes in land judging, parliamentary procedures, creed speaking, and agriculture business. These events require a great deal of preparation and Connor was excited to have the opportunity to compete on the national level two years in a row for land judging. It's clear he has learned to successfully balance the demands of schoolwork, extracurriculars, and athletics while helping on the family farm. Connor heads to Lake Area Technical College in the fall to pursue Agriculture Production.

To obtain an application for the Athlete of the Month Scholarship program email bfast@vfplanning.com, visit [Vantage Financial Partners website at www.vfplanning.com](http://VantageFinancialPartners.com), or ask your high school guidance counselor. If you are a high school senior who plays sports, attends a SD high school, you are eligible to apply for a \$1,500 scholarship.

Getting to know Connor

FAVORITE QUOTE: "Hard work beats talent when talent does not work hard."

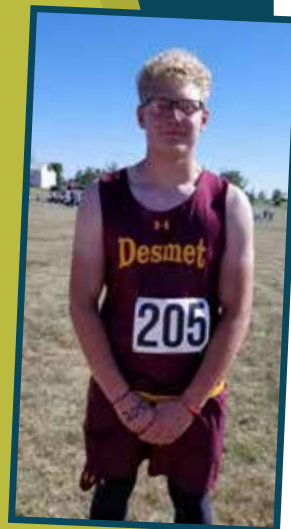
FAVORITE FOOD: Baked cheese curds

FAVORITE LATE-NIGHT SNACK: Lemon Ginger Hot Tea with a Stroopwafel.

HIGHLIGHT OF YOUR SPORT CAREER: Reaching my 100th career win in wrestling in front of a home crowd.

FAVORITE HS CLASS: Advanced Biology with Mrs. Schmidt. I found it interesting to learn more about the human body and how the body functions and Mrs. Schmidt does an excellent job making the learning process fun and educational. Also, we toured the SDSU Cadaver lab, and I almost passed out so that was a memorable experience!

FUN FACT: I am intrigued by Tesla and hope to own one of their vehicles one day.



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HURON AREA ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Sales Tax Collected	January '23	January '24	% Change
Sales Tax - 1%	402,543	338,625	-16%
Second Penny	402,543	338,625	-16%
Third Penny (BBB)	29,994	31,723	6%
Year-to-date combined total	835,079	708,974	-15%
**Real Estate Statistics	January '23	January '24	% Change
Sales	14	8	-43%
Average Sale Price	239,767	193,050	-19%
Year-to-date Total Sales	9	8	-11%
Active Listings	24	28	17%
Average List Price	253,846	227,418	-10%
YTD Average Days on Market	85	103	21%
Building Permits	January '23	January '24	% Change
Residential			
New Homes	0	0	0%
Garage	0	1	100%
Remodel	4	1	-75%
Estimated Value	48,800	20,760	-57%
Commercial			
New	1	0	-100%
Remodel	5	2	-60%
Estimated Value	452,487	9,000	-98%
Year-to-date combined total	501,286	29,760	-94%
Employment (County)	December '22	December '23	% Change
Total Workforce	9,219	9,119	-1%
Total Employed	9,027	8,964	-1%
Total Unemployed	192	155	-19%
Unemployment Rate	2.1%	1.7%	-19%

**Real Estate Statistics courtesy of Huron Board of Realtors

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Huron School District Foundation

In an ongoing effort to enhance support for educational initiatives and scholarships, the Huron School District Foundation is announcing an opportunity to make a lasting impact and be prominently listed on the Lifetime Giving donor wall.



There are two distinct options for donors to contribute:

1. LIFETIME GIVING ORANGE LEVEL - \$5,000 Pledge:
Immediate recognition for donors opting for a \$5,000 pledge over a 2-year period. Donors will have the benefit of having their names added to the Lifetime Giving wall immediately. This allows for recognition and showcases the commitment of support to the foundation's mission.

2. LIFETIME GIVING BLACK LEVEL - \$10,000 Pledge:
Additional option for those seeking to extend their support over a longer period of time. The foundation offers the option to pledge \$10,000 over a 4-year period. This allows donors to contribute to the foundation's educational endeavors over a more extended time period.

We will tailor a payment plan for either option that will fit your needs.

If you have already joined the Founders Club you have a head start and that amount will be applied towards your Lifetime Giving level of choice.

To make a pledge or gather more information, interested parties can contact the foundation directly at info@hsdfoundation.com.

The Huron School District Foundation looks forward to the continued support of the community and the positive impact that the Lifetime Giving Program will have on educational initiatives.

Scholarship Funds Available for Ringneck Festival Volunteers and Landowners

The Ringneck Festival Committee of the Huron Chamber & Visitors Bureau has established a scholarship for family members of volunteers or landowners of the previous year's festival. Money for the scholarship fund was raised from silent auction items donated by competing teams at the 2023 awards banquet as a thank you to the community and volunteers for hosting the event.

The committee is currently seeking applicants for their scholarship program. Scholarships will be available to any student currently seeking a technical, associate's, or bachelor's degree from an accredited institution. The student must also have a direct family member that was involved in the 2023 Ringneck Festival as either a volunteer for the bird dog challenge, Ringneck Festival competition hunt or as a landowner.

If you are interested in applying for this scholarship, applications can be picked up at the Huron Chamber & Visitors Bureau office at 1725 Dakota Avenue South in Huron or are online at www.huronsd.com/ringneck. Applications need to be returned to the Huron Chamber & Visitors Bureau by April 15, 2024.

If you have any questions, contact the Chamber Office at 605-352-0000.

Do you want to be eligible next year? For more information on volunteering for the Ringneck Festival or competing in the hunt, call Brianna at 605-352-0000 or email program.events@huronsd.com. The 2024 Ringneck Festival and Bird Dog Challenge will be held November 2-4.

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RINGER WANTS TO KNOW... WHEN IS THE KCBS JUDGING SCHOOL?



Find the answer to Ringer's question in this edition of Prairie Tracks. Call the Chamber at 352-0000 or email wanda@huronsd.com with your answer and phone number by March 15th for a chance to win **\$25 in Huron Bucks**.



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Join us in welcoming Lori to the Ace Realty Team!
Lori is no stranger to real estate having been involved with new construction, remodeling and multiple personal purchases over the years. Let Lori's blend of expertise & enthusiasm guide you through your real estate journey.

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Huron Community Foundation 2024 Grant Application Note New Procedure For Wings Foundation Grants

BY STEVE GOHN, Huron Community Foundation President

Applications for HCF grants, (the application is used for the family fund grants as well as HCF grants) are accepted February 15 thru March 15 each year.

The HCF Grant application and grant guidelines are available on the foundation website or from the Huron Chamber & Visitors Bureau office at: 1725 Dakota Ave S, Huron, SD. More information is available by contacting one of the advisory council members or by emailing hcf@huronsd.com.

Organizations awarded grants **must** complete a brief "Grant Review Form" within 60 days after expenditure of grant funds. **Failure to submit the Grant Review Form in a timely manner may impact future grant applications.**

Please download and save the grant application to your computer then email the completed HCF Grant Application to hcf@huronsd.com, or send to: HCF Grant, 1725 Dakota Avenue S, Huron, SD 57350. If submitted by mail, only one copy of completed application is required. Applications must be RECEIVED via email or regular mail not later than March 15th. The HCF is not responsible for lost, delayed or misdirected mail or email.

HCF will no longer be the conduit for WINGS FOUNDATION GRANTS. WINGS FOUNDATION GRANT INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE ON THE WINGS WEBSITE AT WingsFoundationHuron.com or by email at wingsfoundationhuron@gmail.com

Kludts Establish Sub Fund with the Huron Community Foundation

Douglas and Rhonda Kludt recently established their family fund with a gift of \$100,000 to the Huron Community Foundation.

"We are grateful to the Kludts for their continued support of the Huron area," said Steve Gohn, HCF President. "It is because of generous donors that we are able to create a true legacy for our community."

"We feel so good about doing this for the community that has given so much to us and to our children," said Rhonda Kludt. "The HCF is a prudent way to leave a legacy for all the good happening in Huron. We have witnessed first-hand the many positive programs and enhancements that have occurred since the inception of the foundation and we want to do our part to assure that will continue." Doug added, "I was born and raised in Huron and have worked here for most of my professional life. Huron has given me most of what I have. It's time to give some of that back to the community that means so much to us. The Huron Community Foundation provides our small town a chance to thrive into the future."

Rhonda grew up in Fort Pierre, attended SDSU and graduated from BHSU with degrees in Elementary Education/Early Childhood Development. She currently serves as Vice President for HCF and has been involved with the Student United Way-Huron Youth Leadership Council (HYLC) since it was structured in 2017. She has been actively involved in various community and state organizations working passionately to advance opportunities for children.

She taught Kindergarten for 20 years and helped to establish the Huron Preschool Partnership Program and serves on the boards of People's Transit and Huron School District Foundation as well as the Statewide Family Engagement Center Advisory Council.

Doug, a graduate of USD and USD Law School is a recently retired attorney. He was on the initial board of the Huron Community Foundation working with other like-minded Huronians to establish the foundation. He has served on numerous boards and committees and was chairperson of the Middle School Expansion Project educating the community on the need for a new facility. He served on the Huron City Commission during the Covid 19 outbreak and with the mayor and other commissioners led Huron through a very difficult time. He serves as the chairperson for Heartland State Bank Board of Directors and represents the States Attorney's Office in the Beadle County Drug Court Program.



The Kludts have two children. Rachel Kary is the Huron High School Librarian and her husband Levi is the Executive Director of the Huron Regional Medical Center Foundation. They have two boys, Leo and Connor. Their son Thomas lives in New York City with his longtime partner, Anna Friemoth. Thomas is a contributing editor for Vanity Fair.

Individuals, families and organizations can establish their own named fund under the umbrella of HCF with a minimum \$100,000 deposit. Established named funds can recommend to HCF their desire for future grants.

Learn more at www.SDCommunityFoundation.org/HCF or contact Steve Gohn at 605-354-1118.

Master the Art of BBQ Judging

The annual Original SD BBQ Championships, held in conjunction with Wheel Jam on the SD State Fairgrounds, is a Kansas City Barbeque Society (KCBS) sanctioned event. To judge a KCBS sanctioned event, judges must be a certified KCBS judge. To increase the pool of certified judges and offer continued training to those already certified, a KCBS judging school will be held at the Nordby Exhibit Hall on the SD State Fairgrounds in Huron on Saturday, April 13 from 10 AM – 2 PM.

Following the judging school, a table captain class will also be held. Taking the class will result in becoming a certified KCBS table captain.

The classes teach you the art and mechanics of judging and at the end of the class, you'll be a certified judge. Those active or interested in becoming active in competitive BBQ may also consider taking the class as it teaches what the judges look for when judging.

Registration for the judging school is \$115. Registration for the certified table captain class is \$60 and participants must be a certified judge. To register, go to www.sdbbqchampionships.com or call the State Fair Office at 605.353.7340 for more information. The deadline to register for the classes is April 3. To take either class, you must be a registered KCBS member. To become a member, go to kcbs.us and click join now.

For more information, log onto www.sdbbqchampionships.com or call the State Fair Office at 605.353.7340.

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My Enemy. My Friend.

BY CRYSTAL LIEN, PrairieTracks Contributing Writer



As believers we hear a lot about loving our enemies, praying for those who have wronged us, and forgiving others.

It's kind of what we do.

Or...it is what we are supposed to do.

Today, harboring hate and having enemies is almost trendy- even for believers; whether it's ideas, politics, or simply different walks of life, we've made being "different from us" equate to being our enemy. We are a country divided, full of spite and anger, hate and violence. We are jaded, justified and instead of being the "salt of the earth" (Matthew 5:13), we are instead salty, grudge-bearing and spiritually undisciplined.

Forgiving small offenses and grievances costs very little from the offended. We can forgive a bad day, a snarky tone, even an occasional side-eye. But what of those that truly wish harm or ill-will toward us? Or perhaps the offender has been malicious toward us or our family; someone who has interfered with our job, our ability to provide and thrive; maybe they've even been intentionally nefarious and mettlesome to the point of harassment.

What of these offenses and their accompanying human?

Those individuals, certainly, can be referred to as "our enemies" and for good reason. In fact, none would even argue against returning their evil with evil, their harm with harm, their ugly with ugly. It would certainly be viewed as "justified"...and it would feel oh so satisfying. Right?

Yet, when we walk with the mark of Jesus on our souls, we have the undeniable responsibility to carry our crosses well because the world is surely watching and waiting for us to set them down, even if only momentarily. "Loving our enemies" may not seem practical, if even possible. If someone has truly caused enough hurt, drama, harm to be classified as "enemy", they are far from deserving of our goodwill let alone our prayers of well-being and forgiveness.

And, still, that is what we must do. If not for them, then for us.

Obedying God and forgiving (and loving) as He does brings us closer to Him and more Christ-like.

Harboring hate and revenge are too heavy a burden to carry in this life. Offering the smallest olive branch of forgiveness, even if we have misgivings and feel somewhat disingenuous, is for our own hearts. It isn't about changing your enemy or justifying their wrongdoings. It's about transforming the bitterness with which we are burdened into compassion. Praying for these difficult, and often contemptuous, people in our lives will bring us new freedom. A freedom that breathes life back into our soul. Our old wounds are very real, and I'm not denying that the hurt inflicted is and was painful and very

personal. And often the platitude of "let it go" is less insulting as it is dismissive of the wrong inflicted upon us.

I'm not saying that at all.

I worry about our burdened, hurting hearts as we catalogue offenses, withhold forgiveness in lieu of apology, and record the wrongs of those enemies in our midst. Our hearts are worthy of the day-by-day and moment-by-moment healing that will come when we begin, even reluctantly, to whisper tiny prayers for our enemies. Slowly you will begin to be anointed with a healing balm as the right to be angry lessens. It's difficult to stay resentful towards someone when you pray for them-for their prosperity, and God's blessing, and their happiness. You will slowly notice God working in you as he hears your prayers, applies His healing in your soul, and helps transform your heart and bitterness into compassion.

Holding onto your anger and hurt and unforgiveness keeps you stuck in that hurt of the past and that self-pity will keep you from moving forward in your life. Take back your power from your enemy.

Remove yourself from satan's line of fire by responding to your enemies with love, prayer, forgiveness, and blessing and make room for God to handle justice as only He can. Luke 6:27-28 reminds us, "But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you." Release your enemy to God. Trust that He will delve out justice in His way and in His time.

If we desire as believers to do what pleases and glorifies Jesus, then we must pray for those who have hurt us and live in a way that our love doesn't distinguish between friends and enemies. Our God is kind and loving to all. He is for EVERYONE. All are His children; all are worthy of His salvation and forgiveness. And we are to imitate Him. Luke 6:35-37 declares "But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them, expecting nothing in return. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven."

To follow in Christ's footsteps is to walk in the way of love (Matthew 5:39,5:43-44). Jesus responded differently than the world to His enemies (1 Peter 2:23), and He is our example to follow. We must insist on being different, and it most assuredly will not be easy to walk in His ways. But in His power and with His grace and forgiveness toward us for our own transgressions we will be able to forgive much...again and again and again (Matthew 18:21-22).

Artistry Uncorked Wine & Art Exhibition

The Huron Arts Council and the Huron Chamber & Visitors Bureau have joined forces to bring an event to Huron that combines an art exhibition by local artists, shopping and a dash of grape goodness!

Artistry Uncorked will be held April 5, 2024 from 2-7pm in Huron businesses.

Artists, if you are interested in participating, please contact Spencer Nesson at (605) 352-4682 or email spencer@nesson.com.

Businesses interested in participating, please contact Wanda at the Chamber, 352-0000 or email wanda@huronsd.com.

Watch future editions of Prairie Tracks, The Plainsman and the Chamber Facebook page for more information and a list of participating businesses.



BY BILLI AUGHENBAUGH,
De Smet Development Corporation



Plan to attend De Smet's 3rd annual Outdoor Show in March 9

Fields Fish & Game and the non-profit Prairie Lakes Pheasant Club will be co-hosting De Smet's 3rd annual Outdoor Show at the beautiful De Smet Event Center in March from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. The last two years have had great success with over 500 attendees. There will be lots of vendors and also activities for kids.



It's A Triple Play for Concrete Action at the De Smet Event Center Parking Lot

The City of De Smet, the Event Center Advisory Board and regional businesses have determined that it is time for some 'concrete action' for the parking lot at the De Smet Event Center with a solid Triple Play Plan. They believe 'Three's A Charm' as three segments of the community, which consist of the city, the community and the businesses, challenge each other to raise matching funds of \$10,000 each for a total of \$30,000 to begin the project and complete the first concrete segment, which will be in front of the front entrance for better accessibility for the handicapped.

The city set aside \$10,000 in their 2024 budget to begin the project. Several individual contributions totaling \$1,214 have already been given to the community's segment of the project. Recently at a night of fun Bingo, the IMPACT group determined that they would like to show the city their appreciation for having the Event Center facility available for the community's use and their IMPACT events and raised \$3,800 that evening. The group plans to raise additional funds and challenged other organizations to match their contributions. The businesses that utilize the Event Center for many types of meetings, conferences and get-togethers cover a large regional area. With the realization of the advantages of having a concrete parking lot surface for their events while unloading and welcoming customers and future outdoor shows, the businesses have begun to meet the \$10,000 challenge.

Donations are made through the De Smet Community Foundation, a non-profit 501(c)3 organization, and are tax deductible. Donations can be made by scanning this code or checks may be made to the De Smet Community Foundation - Concrete Fund and mailed to PO Box 42, De Smet, 57231 or dropped off at the Event Center or City Hall. Call Rita at 605-203-0216 for information.



Hwy 14 Tower International Designs Revealed

Community members and many others from across the state were excited to be the first to see designs created by architects from around the world for the proposed Hwy 14 Observation Tower to be erected on the edge of Silver Lake. A 'Revealing of the Top 20 Tower Designs' was held in a special social event at the Event Center with National Park Service representatives, a Jury member of the Competition Judging Team and government officials attending.

Builders, the international design organization who conducted the competition, received over 160 architectural designs from acclaimed teams of architects, engineers and creatives from multiple countries and continents. They used judges selected internationally to determine a winner and the top 40. The National Park Service staff narrowed this down to the top 20 designs that were presented at the De Smet 'Reveal' Party.

The wide variety of unique styles of towers that were submitted were amazing, along with the great amount of research and thought regarding the history and landscaping of the area that was considered in their design processes. For example, there were tall towers and others with expansive sprawling designs, one resembling conistoga wagons, another drawing inspiration from the sod dugout and pioneer homes, and another resembling a forest with no walls. The public voted on the designs with a diverse range of votes determining the top choices. Two of the favorites are pictured here.

This future observation tower will sit on the edge of Silver Lake and the Big Slough to give visitors from around the world the opportunity to discover the beauty of the area, the wildlife and the landscape that Laura Ingalls Wilder experienced and wrote about in many of her renowned books. It will be encompassed by the Hwy 14 Tower Trail that is planned in several phases along Hwy 14, across the Big Slough and through the Forest Reserve to eventually extend countywide with future visions for a statewide Hwy 14 Trail. For more information, contact the De Smet Development Corporation, 605-854-9011, jamie@desmetsouthdakota.org and visit www.desmetsd.com/Hwy 14 Tower Trail website to view the designs.



Kids! Don't miss De Smet's Annual Easter Egg Hunt

The De Smet Community Women invite all to come enjoy the morning with your 'littles' looking for Easter Eggs and fun prizes at Washington Park on Saturday, March 30th, at 10 a.m. Toddlers to 3rd graders are invited to take part and Be Aware! They might just see someone hopping around! If inclement weather, it will be held at the De Smet Event Center.

MARCH 2024 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Kingsbury County Food Pantry open every Tuesday afternoon • 1 - 4 p.m. • 221 Calumet Ave
AA Meetings @ Ward's Store & Bakery every Wednesday • 5 p.m.

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|---------------|--|---------------|---|
| Mar 1 | Kindergarten Screening @ De Smet Event Center | Mar 26 | Weather School @ Event Center- Call Event Center for details |
| Mar 5 | 'The Sharing' Community Meal @ United Methodist Church • 6:30 p.m. | Mar 27 | Red Cross Blood Drive @ Event Center |
| Mar 7 | Thursday Night Out @ De Smet Mercantile from 5-9:00 p.m.
Come for specials throughout the store + lots of fun! | Mar 27 | Feeding South Dakota Giveaway
Noon @ Washington Park |
| Mar 9 | Outdoor Show @ Event Center | Mar 31 | Easter Check area church's website or Facebook for Easter Services times |
| Mar 13 | City Council Meeting @ Event Center | | |
| Mar 14 | LifeServe Blood Drive @ Event Center | | |

Call 605-854-6060 for information on events and to schedule your event/ meeting/ conference at the De Smet Event/Conference Center!



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Meet Our New Board Members

BY JEN BRAGG, United Way Heartland Region Executive Director

The United Way Heartland Region Board of Directors is made up of volunteers from all walks of life who work together to manage the policies and finances of the UWHR. The Board includes your friends, family, neighbors, and co-workers, and is responsible for the direction of our organization. The United Way Heartland Region has three new board members who have joined, and we wanted to take this opportunity to introduce them to you. Welcome to our organization, and thank you for your dedication to our community!

LAURA CROSS

Huron has been home to Laura and her husband, Larry, for the past 28 years. They have one son, Cody, who lives in Sioux Falls. Laura is the Purchasing Manager at Trussbilt. She is an active member of the Riverview First United Methodist Church, sitting on the Finance Committee and Lead Team. She recently joined The Elks Lodge #444 and has been a member of the Rebecka and James River Lodge #32 for many years. Laura is looking forward to being a member of the United Way Board of Directors, working together to grow and strengthen the Huron community.

NEW NEW WIN

New New is originally from Thailand, and has been living in the United States since she was 12 years old. She received a bachelor's

degree in biology and a minor in psychology at Northern State University. She is currently working at the Center for Independence. This year she started her own business selling Karen clothing called Win Boutique. New New is also involved with the Connecting Cultures organization, and is a member of the Huron Community Foundation. New New is very passionate about helping others and her Karen community. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with friends and family, working out at the gym, and traveling. She is also a coffee lover.

KAROL VON EYE

Karol has worked as the HR Manager at Dakota Provisions for the past year. Originally from Peru, Karol has lived in Huron for 20 years. She has one son, Sebastian (18), who will be attending MTI, and one daughter, Camilla (13). In her free time, she keeps up with her daughter's activities which include band, orchestra, basketball, track, dance and swimming. She likes to travel and her favorite place to be is anywhere near an ocean.

If you would be interested in serving on the United Way Heartland Region board in the future, contact Jen Bragg at 605-352-3537, or by email at uwhurond@gmail.com.





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The 2024 Forbes ranking of America's Top Wealth Management Teams Best-In-State, developed by SHOOK Research, is based on an algorithm of qualitative criteria, mostly gained through telephone and in-person due diligence interviews, and quantitative data. This ranking is based upon the period from 3/31/2022 to 3/31/2023 and was released on 01/09/2024. Advisor teams that are considered must have one advisor with a minimum of seven years of experience, have been in existence as a team for at least one year, have at least 5 team members, and have been nominated by their firm. The algorithm weights factors like revenue trends, assets under management, compliance records, industry experience and those that encompass best practices in their practices and approach to working with clients. Out of approximately 10,100 team nominations, 4,100 advisor teams received the award based on thresholds. This ranking is not indicative of an advisor's future performance, is not an endorsement, and may not be representative of individual clients' experience. Neither Raymond James nor any of its Financial Advisors or RIA firms pay a fee in exchange for this award/rating. Please see <https://www.forbes.com/lists/wealth-management-teams-best-in-state> for more info.

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BY DARLENE DEKNIKKER

Lake Preston is so grateful for the new PRO PT outreach location here at the Silver Plains Assisted Living. PRO PT's main base is located in Brookings, they saw a need for the service here in Lake Preston and decided to try it out. It has been a big success! Kianna Hoff PT, DPT and Bre Jensen PTA would love to help you with all your needs! Kianna said she is very excited about the addition to the Lake Preston Community.



The Lake Preston 4 Lakes Forward/LP Chamber is excited to see some new faces and add some new events to our calendar. We are very passionate about supporting our local business and bringing new events to our community! So, get on board with the us!

Lake Preston residents, if you need to get registered to vote please reach out to our City Finance Officer, Brenda Klug. She has all the information and she will get it set up for you. The election is in April, so you still have time to register. City office number is (605) 847-4140.

Lake Preston Indoor Golf League has started. Check out their Facebook page for more information. The Indoor Country Club hosts several different events and they have a fun and friendly atmosphere!

The Lake Preston American Legion is open each month on the 2nd and 3rd Sunday at 4pm.

LAKE PRESTON SCHOOL ACTIVITIES:

- Reading Across America starts in March
- March 11th - Track begins
- March 18th - National Honor Society
- March 21st - All State Band @ Pierre
- March 21st - Festival of Young Voices @ SDSU
- March 28th - 4th Grade Wax Museum @ the school

Food Pantry: Every 3rd Friday at John's Barber Shop on Main Street (with the Easter holiday approaching, please feel free to contact us) Pastor Kris Larson (605) 860-8781, Michelle N (605) 203-0163, DD (605) 860-8684.

Church News: Check out our Church Facebook pages for their Lenten Services

Our community wishes all of you a Rejoicing Easter Holiday!

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Meat Processing Madness

BY JAKE LINDGREN

In February's issue of Prairie Tracks, I shared about how some friends and I got together and processed our deer meat from the 2023 hunting seasons. I thought it would be insightful to share a few more details and photos about the steps we took to make this successful.



For the prep work, we trimmed all the deer meat into golf ball-sized cubes, then ran it quickly through a grinder. For everything we were making, we chose to use roughly a 60% deer to 40% pork ratio...so we purchased enough pork roasts to make that work. In total, we had 140 pounds of deer and 110 pounds of pork.

After all meat was ground, we measured the correct deer to pork ratio for 25-pound batches, dumped in the seasoning, and used a large meat mixer, ensuring all pork, deer, and seasoning was distributed evenly.

Lastly was packaging. For the three batches of brats, we chose to make "brat patties" rather than traditional cased bratwurst. For these, we pressed them into cookie sheets and then cut them into even patties and packaged four per package. We also processed 100 pounds of breakfast sausage, 50 pounds of chorizo, and 25 pounds of Italian sausage which was packed into one-pound bags and then vacuum sealed to preserve in the freezer. This was a fun way to get several families involved, make good use of deer meat ensuring it wouldn't go to waste, and have a great variety of meats to use in meals and recipes for the next several months.



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Screening and Early Detection is Key to Effective Treatment of Colorectal Cancer



BY TERRY LARSEN, DO, HRMC Physicians Clinic General Surgeon

March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, and a good time to learn more about colorectal cancer (cancer of the colon and rectum) and how it can be prevented or best treated.

Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the United States for both men and women combined. This year, approximately 152,810 new cases of colorectal cancer will be diagnosed according to the American Cancer Society and Colorectal Cancer Alliance.

The good news is colorectal cancer is a disease that can be prevented through regular screenings, a healthy diet and regular exercise.

How can I lower my risk?

To lower your risk of colorectal cancer, the American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons recommends that you:

- Get regular colorectal cancer screenings after age 45. Between 80-90% of colorectal cancer patients are restored to normal health if their cancer is detected and treated in the earliest stages.
- Eat a low-fat, high-fiber diet.
- If you use alcohol, drink only in moderation. If you use tobacco, quit. Alcohol and tobacco in combination are linked to colorectal cancer and other gastrointestinal cancers.
- Exercise for at least 20 minutes three to four days each week. Even moderate exercise such as walking, gardening or climbing steps may help.

Can colorectal cancer be cured?

Since there are few symptoms associated with colorectal cancer, regular screening is essential. Screening is beneficial for two main reasons: colorectal cancer is preventable if polyps that lead to the cancer are detected and removed, and it is curable if the cancer is detected in its early stages.

While many colon cancers present no symptoms in early stages, being aware of potential signs can aid in early detection and treatment.

Some common symptoms include:

- Changes in Bowel Habits
- Rectal Bleeding
- Abdominal Discomfort
- Unexplained Weight Loss

Who is at risk for colorectal cancer?

The risk of developing colorectal cancer increases with age. All men and women aged 45 and older are at risk for developing colorectal cancer, and should be screened. Some people are at a higher risk and should be screened at an age younger than 45, including those with a personal or family history of inflammatory bowel disease; colorectal cancer or polyps; or ovarian, endometrial or breast cancer. There are several screening methods and costs are typically covered by Medicare and many commercial health plans.

Colon cancer is a serious condition, but with proactive steps for prevention and awareness of potential symptoms, you can reduce your risk and increase the likelihood of early detection and successful treatment.

By adopting a healthy lifestyle, undergoing regular screenings, and paying attention to your body's signals, you can take control of your colon health and potentially prevent colon cancer from impacting your life. Remember, early detection saves lives, so don't hesitate to speak with a general or colorectal surgeon or your health care provider about which screening procedure is right for you and how often you should be screened.

I'd encourage you to wear blue during the month of March and talk to your friends and family about the importance of colon cancer screenings. In addition, Huron Regional Medical Center has partnered with the HRMC Foundation's Bob Myers fund to create, "Go Blue, Get Screened to Win!" This promotion is to help spread awareness and encourage regular colon screenings. Each individual who schedules a colonoscopy during the month of March will be entered for a chance to win a local entertainment package (valued up to \$150) or dinner for two (valued up to \$50). To learn more, visit <https://www.huronregional.org/gobblue>.

Dr. Terry Larsen is a general surgeon at the HRMC Physicians Clinic and Huron Regional Medical Center. He was born in Redfield, SD and has returned to the South Dakota after serving as a general surgeon for over 15 years in the eastern United States.

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New Reporting Requirement Affects Small Businesses



BY KELLY WEAVER, Small Business Development Center, Regional Director

This may be the first time you hear the words “Corporate Transparency Act” (CTA) or “Beneficial Ownership” but it won’t likely be the last. Businesses must provide names and details about their company ownership and control in an attempt to crack down on activity such as tax fraud, money laundering, and financing for terrorism. Implementation is now in full swing. If your business or organization is created through the paperwork filed with the Secretary of State’s office like an LLC or corporation, this law applies to you. Non-profit organizations that are not tax exempt under IRS code may also fall under the Act. Sole proprietors and general partnerships are not considered reporting companies under the Act.

When is the report due? Businesses are required to report their beneficial ownership information (BOI) to the Treasury’s Financial Crime Enforcement Network (finCEN). Filing is simple, secure, and free of charge. Companies must file their initial reports by the following deadlines:

- **Existing companies** created or registered to do business in the United States before January 1, 2024 must file by January 1, 2025.
- **Newly created or registered companies** created or registered to do business in the United States in 2024 have 90 calendar days to file after their company’s creation or registration is effective.

Who is a beneficial owner? A beneficial owner is an individual who has an ownership interest of at least 25% OR who exercises substantial control over the business. Examples of substantial control include serving as a senior officer, having authority over the appointment or removal of any senior officer or a majority of the board of directors/managers, or having substantial influence over important decisions made by the company.

What needs to be filed? Generally, reporting companies must provide four pieces of information about each beneficial owner:

- name;
- date of birth;
- address; and
- a unique identifying number from an active U.S. driver’s license, U.S. passport, or other approved identification document.

While a report only needs to be submitted once, it must be updated whenever the information changes. For example, an updated BOI report may be needed if a beneficial owner changes their address, legally changes their name, or obtains a new driver’s license. If someone has been granted more authority over the company, updates may also be needed. It would be a good practice to review the BOI filing annually to confirm its accuracy.

Are there any exemptions? This is a broad law with limited exemptions. The two primary exemptions are 1) tax exempt entities and 2) large operating companies with a physical office in the U.S.; employing more than 20 fulltime employees; AND with gross receipts of more than \$5,000,000. Consult your accountant or attorney for guidance on any specific determinations.

Beware of scams! This is exactly the environment scammers love to operate in so PLEASE beware of scams! The information reported on CTA filings can, in the wrong hands, be used to steal your identity. You will likely receive many solicitations relating to CTA related services. If you engage anyone to provide those services, please make sure they are a reputable company. Be sure you only provide that information to appropriate individuals.

FinCEN is committed to providing America’s small businesses with the resources and information they need to make filing as quick and easy as possible. FinCEN’s Small Entity Compliance Guide walks small businesses through the requirements in plain language. Filers can also view informational videos and webinars, find answers to frequently asked questions, connect to the contact center, and learn more about how to report at www.fincen.gov/boi.

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Family White Board

BY TOM GLANZER, PrairieTracks Contributing Writer

When you think of a white board you think of places to jot down notes that could change your company history, set a deadline for a new project, or just record the coffee order of everyone in your office board room.

I have a white board in my office....it has a few of my 2024 goals written on it, a picture of my family and one of my dad's campaign flyers stuck to it, and an abstract drawing of Batman that my artist-daughter Kolby drew just a month ago...those three things probably won't change for the rest of the year.

For a long time the white board was the place that coaches, bosses and influencers would go to....draw, rough out or write down their ideas to set actions in motion. It took the place of a napkin in some instances where businesses would jot down numbers to see if the financial math worked out.

In the late 1900's teachers began to see their beloved chalk boards bite the dust for the new dry erase boards, and then those were not enough and the SmartBoard technology began educating our kids in almost every classroom in America.

The whiteboard signifies communication...that is why it was built. A photographer named Martin Heit is credited with inventing the first whiteboard...for simply leaving notes outside a door. Well, for our family it has come back to that exact need.

We have a large whiteboard outside our door that leads from the garage to the house. (because nobody really uses their front door do they?) We use it for communication, trash talking, picture drawing, inspirational quotes, Bible verses, and just extra family communication....and everyone sees it multiple times a day.

Of course, we have a calendar app that has all of our meetings, games, appointments and big events listed in it....of course, we have Life360 on everyone's phone so we know where we all are, and of course, we can just make a chore list of things to do in the family group text...we don't use the whiteboard for 1993 family things, we are soooooo beyond that time period. The whiteboard is just for fun, for family, for love and for anyone that walks in our door.



Our neighbor boys, Hudson and Walker love to mess around with the markers and write their names in massive messy fonts. Kolby's volleyball and basketball girls put their graffiti on the wall often, and I used to track our family "Days Since Last Incident" in one corner of the board. My father-in-law even used it to tell us he was there one day, but we were gone, but when we read it we were there again....something like that.....but we already knew we missed seeing him because of our Ring Security Cameras.

So do we need to have a family communication whiteboard so we know where, what, or when? Absolutely not....our phones and all the other technology we have does that for us....BUT....one more way to talk to your family, friends and neighbors is never a bad thing.

When we got to 100 days without a safety incident in the family we celebrated, when Kolbys friend, Maggie Decker wrote her name on the board with a fancy heart...of course I put my name behind the heart...because Maggie LOVES me. When the Chiefs made their run to win the Super Bowl, the Glanzer Family whiteboard celebrated along the way, and when our bonus-daughter Alesha added her goals to the family list of goals for 2024...my heart was extra happy.

The whiteboard isn't always easy or fun to read....when I knew one of the people in our tribe was having a bad week, I put little random notes on the board to help them see the sunlight at the end of the tunnel. Fall, Get Up, Repeat.

As humans we need encouragement, love, words of affirmation and words of challenge to make us better. For our family, the whiteboard in the garage is one more thing we use to show how much we care, we love and we enjoy each other and everyone that comes in the door.

So if you ever end up in our garage go ahead and leave cute drawing, witty saying or just your autograph on the whiteboard... it may stay for a month, it may be gone the next day. Just don't erase little Walker Joe's name from the bottom where he writes it every time...he just learned how to make his "W's" really good.

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