

Clark County Courier

The voice of Clark County since 1880

Martin Luther King Jr. Day is Monday



Wednesday, January 10, 2024

Vol. 143, No. 28

www.clarkcountypublishing.com

\$1.00

The hometown newspaper of Neil Heiden, Eagan, Minn.

Protecting property rights takes courage and advocacy

By Lura Roti for South Dakota Farmers Union

County Commissioners have the power to protect landowner rights. It requires bravery. And, if you think your land is not in danger of private interests using eminent domain to lay claim to it – just wait.

These were the messages shared by panelists to a packed convention hall during the Landowner Rights panel discussion held in Huron during the South Dakota Farmers Union State Convention November 30.

“Ultimately, this all comes down to you on the ground. And, it comes down to courage,” said Brian Jorde, Managing Lawyer, Domina Law Group. “Last session, legislators did not have courage. For those of you who have not been active on this, we need you, because you are next. If slow but steady erosion of property rights is not confronted, you will be next.”

Jorde was joined by Suzanne Smith, Spink County Commissioner; Drew Dennert, Brown County Commissioner and Curt Soehl, Sioux Falls City Councilor.

“The panelists did an outstanding job expressing the intimidation these County Commissions had to go through to protect their landowners – but, the ordinances worked. They were upheld by the Public Utilities Commission,” said Ed Fischbach, a fourth-generation Mellette crop and cattle farmer who has been advocating for property rights since receiving a survey notice letter from Summit Carbon Solutions July 2021.

The ordinances Fischbach references were established by County Commissions and put setbacks in place that restrict how close a CO2 pipeline can be to residences and high concentration areas such as schools and roadways.

Today, only five South Dakota counties have ordinances in place with more need to follow suit, said Smith, who has served as a Spink County Commissioner since 2017.

She urges other counties to pass ordinances because they protect property owners and citizens of the county.

“We were harassed from the very beginning on this from Summit. We are going to sue you, we will sue you.” “That’s fine, go ahead and sue us.” And they did,” Smith said.

Smith shared that when a chair of another county commission told her she was brave for writing the ordinance, she said, “There’s nothing brave about doing the right thing.”

The other counties that have similar ordinances are: Brown, McPherson, Moody and Minnehaha. To view Spink County Hazardous Liquid Pipelines ordinance, it is on the homepage of the county website www.spinkcounty-sd.org.

Safety of rural citizens is a concern

Using eminent domain for private gain goes against landowner rights policy established by South Dakota Farmers Union members decades ago, said Doug Sombke, president of the organization. And, because current state laws do not fully protect private property rights, Sombke encourages county

governments to step up to protect landowners’ rights.

“Every problem that we face is local. The one way to stop this and keep our families safe is if County Commissions across South Dakota pass ordinances to make it safe for their citizens,” Sombke said.

In addition to violating property rights, safety of a CO2 pipeline was another concern discussed.

“My concern would not be for the City of Sioux Falls, who has one of the top 37 fire departments in the country. I don’t know what a rural volunteer fire department would do... We all know they (CO2 pipelines) are very dangerous if they were to erupt. If you have a rural fire department that is taking care of these pipelines I would every concerned for safety of the crews or the residents,” said Soehl, who served 20 years on Sioux Falls Fire Department and was captain in the Hazardous Materials Unit.

Safety is also a concern expressed by Fischbach. “This pipeline is only buried four feet in the ground. How many of us have buried our combines more than four-feet in a wet year? And, if you hit it, you are done,” said Fischbach referencing the fact that if a CO2 pipeline springs a leak, the result is much different than a natural gas or fuel pipeline. “The gas will asphyxiate you. You will not be able to breathe. This is the testimony I heard from first responders to a CO2 leak in Mississippi.”

Safety concerns are among the reasons Ipswich farmers Lance and Sarah Perrion called on their Coun-

ty Commissioners to establish an ordinance a while back.

“When we asked what the county would do to protect us from a leak, they said it would be our responsibility,” explained Sarah Perrion. “So, they expect my kindergartener to carry a gas mask to school?”

While the Perrions wait for Edmunds County to implement an ordinance, they join a growing number of rural citizens willing to show up to support South Dakotans First Coalition. It’s the nonpartisan coalition South Dakota Farmers Union helped launch in October of 2023.

South Dakotans First Coalition is dedicated to safeguarding and upholding the property rights of individuals against the encroachment and profit-seeking actions of corporations. The bottom line is no eminent domain for private gain.

Yankton farmers David and Ione Cap are grateful that something is being done to help protect the land that has been in David’s family for more than a century.

“The ground that our cattle graze today was cared for by my forefathers who had it before me. They took good care of it,” said Cap, 82. “I have taken good care of it, and I hope that when I pass it on to our grandchildren it is in even better shape than when it was passed to me.”

To learn more about South Dakotans First Coalition, visit www.southdakotansfirst.com. And, to learn more about how South Dakota Farmers Union supports family farmers, ranchers and rural communities, visit www.sdfu.org.



Hofer places top three in state snow queen talent competition

Kaylyn Hofer, pictured in the photo above, finished in the top three competitors of the Senior Talent division at the South Dakota Junior Snow Queen Festival on Saturday in Aberdeen. She sang “Rainbow” by Kacey Musgraves, accompanied by Kati Knock, pianist.

Hofer is a junior at Willow Lake High School and is the daughter of Derrick and Cherri Hofer of Carpenter.

Brynn Roehrich, Clark Area 2024 Junior Snow Queen, also competed at the state festival. Nevaeh Rusher, Clark Area 2025 Snow Queen, will compete in the senior division of the South Dakota State Snow Queen Festival coming up this weekend in Aberdeen.

Submitted photo

Flyway Farms in Bradley increases Clark County inhabitants by 8,500 pigs

By Tara Knutson

The population of Clark County has increased by 8,500 inhabitants. Running a profitable, sustainable farming operation is difficult for many family farms to manage independently.

With the stresses of ever changing markets, rise in interest rates and increasing input costs, it is not surprising that there has been a decline in the number of family farms operating today.

The most recent data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture indicate that there were 200,000 fewer farms in 2022 than in 2007.

Zia Mehrabi, an assistant professor of environmental studies at the University of Colorado Boulder states, “Currently, we have around 600 million farms feeding the world, and they’re carrying eight billion people on their shoulders. By the end of the century, we will likely have half the number of farmers feeding even more people. We really need to think about how we can have the education and support systems in place to support those farmers.”

An example of this support system in the development of sustainable, productive farms is evident in northern Clark County. This system is a partnership between nine farm families and Pipestone Management, the result is Flyway Farms.

This partnership has allowed a five-building, 159,625 square feet, 8,500 sow farrowing operation to begin operation in rural Bradley this past summer.

Through this partnership, the family farms have ownership of the building, land, livestock and associated equipment while receiving assistance from Pipestone Management in the manner of labor, genetic details and financial oversight to make the operation as profitable and efficient as possible.

Pipestone’s mission is to “Help farmers today create the farms of



Above left, showcases an aerial view of the general layout of the farm along with the ongoing construction to finish up some other projects. On the right, the open pen gestation area is shown. There is a 16 square foot space for each sow. The sows have their own private space for the

tomorrow.” Additional assistance to the families include site prospecting, necessary permitting and barn design.

Pipestone state that they focus on providing a consistent, high health wean pig supply. Currently, they manage 79 sow farms and more than 400,000 sows across the Midwest in conjunction with family operations.

The design of the Bradley operation is one of the first prefabricated, all steel swine barns built in the United States. The steel swine barns are estimated to last a lifetime, offering strength and durability.

The galvanized steel materials also offer improved load-bearing features and resilience against fire and adverse weather conditions. The buildings are insulated with special metal sandwich panels. These insulated panels are one-and-a half to three inches thick and allow the attic space of the barns to be free of cellulose insulation, thus eliminating dust and bacteria that often infiltrate these areas.

Twenty-four community mem-

bers are Pipestone full-time employees at Flyway Farms. They manage the day-to-day operation of the facility with support from additional Pipestone teams.

The 8,500 sows who call Flyway Farms home will wean an average of 28 piglets per year, resulting in a production of 238,000 piglets. These piglets are then sent to up to 19 different family farms located in Minnesota, South Dakota and Iowa to be fed out and reach a desired market weight.

According to Abby Hopp, Marketing Manager of Pipestone, “This equates to approximately 24.6 million pounds of premium pork per year which will feed 48,273,000 Americans.”

The animals contained in these barns will consume approximately \$468,000 worth of locally purchased feed including 265,000 bushels of corn and 40,000 bushels of soybeans. The site has two wells for fresh water, and these sources are supplemented with rural water. The farm uses 38,250 gallons of water per day for the animals and sanitation purposes.



first month to help them through the most fragile period of gestation. After a positive ultrasound at 21 days, the pigs are moved to open pens. Photos Courtesy of Pipestone Management

Pipestone utilizes the guidance of a nutrition team, which can monitor and maintain the precise feed ration needed for the animals at each stage of their life.

Pipestone Management state that organic matter produced by this farm averages to be \$200,000 in nutrient value and is distributed to local landowners via a drag line, which will provide nutrients for approximately 2,700 acres while lowering field compaction and road use. This manure is stored in a pit under the animals until it is distributed to area farmlands. Routine treatment of the manure pits mitigate the odors that have historically been associated with animal barns.

An animal health team manages the physical condition of the animals sows daily. The team ensures the animals are free of disease by managing all potential infectious vector sources. The animal caretakers are required to have “down time” before entering the barn, meaning they can have no other swine contact for two days prior to coming into contact with the animals of Flyway.

The caretakers are required to completely shower when they enter the barn, change into facility provided work wear and shower when they leave the facility, while leaving their work clothing at the facility to be laundered.

The air in the buildings are ful-

WEATHER			
Robert Cole - Official Weather Observer			
	HI	LO	PR
Jan. 2.....	33	16	0
Jan. 3.....	32	22	0
Jan. 4.....	25	16	0
Jan. 5.....	30	16	0
Jan. 6.....	32	24	0.06
Jan. 7.....	25	8	0
Jan. 8.....	15	9	0
2024 precipitation to date 0.06"			
2023 precipitation to date 0			

The Clark County Courier office will be closed on Monday in observance of the holiday.

If you have news stories, legals or advertising for next week’s edition of the Clark County Courier, please email us at clarkcountycourier@gmail.com or call us at (605) 532-3654

by Friday of this week. Mailed items may not reach us in time for the next publication.

It’s easier for us on Tuesday, if we can get the bulk of the work done by Friday night. News correspondents can send their info on Tuesday morning or call Tuesday morning.

Thank you!



Give a lasting memorial in honor of a relative or loved one.

Sympathy envelopes are available at Dacotah Bank in Clark.