

Clark County Courier

The voice of Clark County since 1880



Daylight-Saving Time Ends

Set your clocks back ONE HOUR before going to bed on Saturday

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The hometown newspaper of Don Doyen, Spearfish, SD



The Clark Elementary playground has undergone several nice improvements after the removal of the pea rock, a year ago.

The final equipment upgrades, an obstacle course unit and web climber were put together last week by FFA members and community members.

At left, last Wednesday afternoon, FFA advisor Greg Janisch directs the start of the obstacle course construction, with superintendent Luanne Warren to Janisch's left.

At right, students played on the web climber Monday morning at recess.



The east side of Clark Elementary is one giant, fun, new playground

During the last couple of years the Clark Elementary playground has received quite a makeover.

Last Wednesday was a perfect day to put the finishing touches on the playground, as it probably was the nicest day that we will see in quite some time, with high temperatures of 60° and not a lot of wind to speak of. Since Wednesday

it has been very windy and cold.

The elementary playground now has many sections, options and personalities to it, with the equipment being finalized last week to bring completion to the playground.

"Mr. Greg Janisch and his FFA classes put everything together," said Clark superintendent and elementary principal Luanne Warren.

She explained that it would have been a very costly project if the company from which the equipment was purchased would have installed the obstacle course unit and the climbing web unit. "I was so impressed with all the hard work done on the playground by the students and Mr. Janisch. Those kids pitched in and really took charge."

The web climber is located at the southeast corner of the playground, just east of the obstacle course. The obstacle course is a great test for youthful agility, mainly for the older kids.

As the playground has been upgraded and renovated, the first thing to go was the pea rock. Then a big grass section was put in at the

northeast corner. Also, the large cement slab for basketball, etc. was also re-done and earlier this summer the preschool playground area was added.

Fourth grade teacher Bobbi Bohnet donated shrubs and perennials that students planted just east of the elementary school building on the west edge of the playground.

Prior to the students doing this planting, community residents Tom LaBrie and Brian Cook gave a presentation to the students on the care of plants and the correct way of planting shrubs and flowers. Plants and flowers donated included tiger and other lilies, hostas, sedum and barberry shrubs.

Clark Area Snow Queen Festival is November 11

The 49th annual Clark County Snow Queen Festival will be held Saturday, November 11, 2017, beginning at 7:00 p.m. at the Clark High School gym. Five girls from the Clark County area will be vying for a chance to be named Miss Clark County Snow Queen 2018.

Eight girls will be competing for the Junior Snow Queen title.

Cinderella is the theme for this year's festival and Tavie Guzman will be the emcee.

Winners of the 49th annual Clark County Area Snow Queen Festival will go on to the State Snow Queen Contest in Aberdeen in January.

Snow Queen Jocee Nelson and Junior Snow Queen Saylor Burke will make their final walks across the stage as reigning royalty and will speak on the last year's experiences.

Various talent acts will again be competing for berths in either the junior or senior divisions.

The Senior Snow Queen contestants are Cheyenne Jones, daughter of Christine and Craig Heki; Mackenzie Lutz, daughter of Teresa and Ron Lutz; Karli Paulson, daughter of Kimberly and Doug Paulson; Alexandria Thomas, daughter of Chad and Tara Thomas and Laney Ulschmid, daughter of Kathy Ulschmid.

Junior Snow Queen contestants are McKenna Kretschmar, daughter of Wayne and Jackie

Snow Queen
(continued on page 4)

Mystery Snowman Clue 49th Annual Snow Queen Festival Mystery Snowperson Contest

"Who would know that my senior year I would make 1st team All State Basketball and All State Chorus and over 30 years and my job is still the same. I enjoy golfing in the summer and bowling in the fall and winter. I am good at keeping time."

Send guesses to: The Clarkettes, 400 3rd Ave. NE, Clark, SD 57225. Mail no later than Nov. 9

PUC dismisses Crocker Wind Farm application

On Wednesday, October 25, the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission (PUC) dismissed the Geronimo Energy Crocker Wind Farm application.

The PUC consists of chairperson Kristie Fiegen, Chris Nelson and Gary Hanson. The PUC voted 3-0 to reject the Crocker Wind Farm.

The proposed project calls for up to 200 wind turbines located on approximately 30,000 acres north and northwest of Clark, entirely in Clark County.

When the PUC received the Crocker Wind Farm application in late July it was announced at that time that there was a six-month window as to a decision granting a wind facility permit.

A public input hearing was hosted by the PUC at Clark Elementary on Sept. 13.

On Oct. 10, the Concerned Citizens through their lawyer Reece Almond, Sioux Falls, requested the PUC to dismiss the application.

Last Wednesday's meeting was held in the Capitol, at Pierre, with seven Concerned Citizens in attendance. The recording of the proceedings is one hour and 11 minutes.

Survey results that indicated a 45 percent drop in the pheasant population this fall proved to be on target as hunters struggled to bag those elusive ringnecks thus far through two weekends and two weeks of hunting.

Windy conditions have prevailed, not helping the hunter.

But predictions and weather hasn't prevented South Dakota communities from rolling out the orange carpet for pheasant hunters.

"The pheasant hunting opportunities continue to be the best in the country," said South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Secretary Kelly Hepler.

Almond was the lawyer representing the Concerned Citizens and Brett Koenecke, a Pierre attorney, represented Geronimo Energy.

Almond began by saying, "A more informed decision cannot be a bad thing here," as he was referring to Geronimo Energy submitting four possible configurations regarding setback distance.

Wind turbine locations were based on setbacks of 2,000 feet from non-participating residences.

In May of 2017 the Clark County Board of Commissioners, acting as the Clark County Board of Adjustment, issued a conditional-use permit with setbacks of 3,960 feet (three-quarters of a mile). The setback distance has been a major issue of contention.

PUC chairwoman Fiegen had a problem with multiple configurations. She said the commission rule called for 'a configuration', rather than considering 100 or 200 configurations. "It should be singular," she said.

In the eyes of the wind farm developer, this is where it has become 'tricky' as Geronimo Energy is in

court to get the setback number down to the 2,000' area, rather than 3,960'. The PUC board wants one number to deal with, rather than several options.

Koenecke, when asked by Nelson, where the project was in the process of appealing the commissioner's 3,960' ruling to circuit court, replied, "We do not have a schedule at this point."

Nelson, shortly thereafter formally called for the commission to deny the application, citing the application's lack of certainty. "The word configuration is clearly in the singular," he stated.

Nelson continued on that line of thinking, that state statute required a singular configuration and in his experience on the commission he could not recall any previous project plan when the commission received more than one configuration.

Hanson then had the floor and he noted that he originally thought that this application should continue to the evidentiary hearing Dec. 11-15, but now had second thoughts.

After a five-minute recess for Hanson to confer with two commis-

sion lawyers, he had a change of heart and made the decision unanimous, to deny application to Crocker Wind Farm.

Another issue, along with the setback's configurations, dealt with the status of negotiations between Geronimo Energy and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

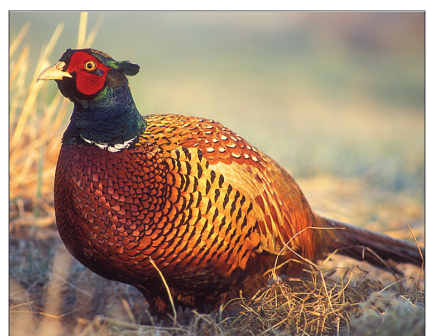
The Crocker Wind Farm proposes 41 turbines to be put on federal land. Attorney Koenecke stated that federal regulations provide for the ability to swap land. The land trades would involve exchanges of replacement property offered by the company to the agency.

Koenecke further explained that as a condition, there couldn't be findings of significant environmental impacts on federal parcels the company wants.

Nelson ended this portion of discussion commenting, "It troubles me that we don't receive all documents early-on."

In denying the application, Fiegen commented, "We make sure the application is complete when it is filed. That is what we ask."

Pheasants are a tough hunt in 2017



Hunters averaged just a half bird to a bird across the state these first two weeks of the non-resident season. The Clark County area has pretty much mirrored the state, with the .5 to one bird per hunter success, reported G,F & P Conser-

vation Officer Kyle Lenzner.

"It has been slower than I thought it would be," said Lenzner. "Those hunting near standing corn (crops) appear to be doing a little better." The game warden reported that there haven't been any road hunting issues, simply because hunting pressure is way down.

Numbers of hunters were also reported to be down across the state. Officials attributed that to less than ideal weather conditions on the weekends as well as the prediction of fewer birds this fall.

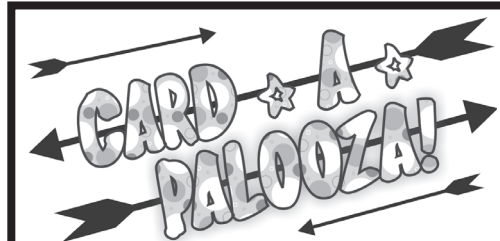
Areas to hunt have increased this fall. Over 8,000 new acres have been enrolled in the Walk-IN-Area

hunting access program within the pheasant range, adding to over one million acres of existing publicly owned land and privately leased land open for public hunting.

South Dakota's pheasant season runs through Jan. 7, 2018. Hunters can take to the fields daily from 10:00 a.m. until sunset.

Ducks

With colder weather upon us, the duck and goose migration has begun. "Starting to see more waterfowl moving," said Lenzner. "Especially swans. It is becoming a pretty amazing area and time of the year to hunt ducks."



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