



Clark County Courier

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Rural libraries survive and thrive with community support

A story by **Dakotafire** dakotafire.net

By Heidi Marttila-Losure, Dakotafire Media
Reporting by Britton Journal, Clark County Courier and Faulk County Record

At a time when the news could be pretty bad coming from rural libraries in the James River Valley, area communities report that their libraries are holding their own or even thriving:

- The library in Britton, which moved to fine new quarters in 2002, is a social gathering spot for the community. "There is always a jigsaw puzzle in the works and coffee available," said Britton Public Library head librarian Peggy Sastrang. "Some people come in two or three times a week to put pieces in the puzzle, and others come in just to have a cup of coffee and visit a little bit. It really is a community place. It's busy, but it's a good place to be."

- The new librarian in Clark, Samantha Hensley, is coming up with creative programming for youth, such as a sleepover at the library for stuffed animals (the kids went home for the night). A new mural for the children's area is also in the works.

- Gackle's library is closed—but that's only because a new library is being built.

- Faulkton's librarians just re-decorated to incorporate a new comfortable reading area, and they have also upgraded their technology to, among other things, go to an automated card catalog system.

Nationwide, the report from rural libraries is not so upbeat. In the face of a dire financial situation, "library administrators and trustees are grappling with incredibly difficult decisions to reduce services, programs and staffing," according to a presentation given at the Association of Small and Rural Libraries conference in September. When budgets are tight, local government officials sometimes question the relevance of libraries in an increasingly digital world.

In the James River Valley and in the Dakotas more broadly, however, libraries are still valued and supported.

"A lot of times in rural areas, the library can be a focal point for the community," said Al Peterson, president of the North Dakota Library Association. "The nice thing about a library, it's open to anyone and everyone. You don't have to be rich, you don't have to be poor. You don't have to be Catholic, you don't have to be Lutheran. You can be anybody you want to go to a library."

Doing more with less

In the Dakotas and elsewhere, the costs that rural libraries have to pay are going up: Postal increases, for example, affect their budgets because interlibrary loan book exchanges are done through the mail, Peterson explained.

Annie Brunskill, past president of the South Dakota Library Association, said that other costs have gone up as well.

"Books cost more—anything you want to do costs more," Brunskill

Rural libraries (continued on page 3)

Schools adjust to school lunch regulations

▲ Fewer calories with more fruits and vegetables being served

"What's for lunch" has turned into what's not for lunch in some cases at area schools. School lunch has really changed due to a federal mandate promoting healthier eating habits for America's youngsters.

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, encouraged by First Lady Michelle Obama, proposes a new plan to reduce calorie intake in the elementary grades to 650, middle school to 700 and high school to 800.

It is well documented that in the United States, obesity, chronic disease and a lack of exercise is a vital concern with our youth and this is an attempt to control food intake. These changes haven't been entirely seamless throughout the U.S.

Also, legumes and orange vegetables must be served once a week

in a typical four day week. More whole grains must be used and only a half cup of a starchy vegetable like potatoes per week is allowed. More fruits and vegetables are encouraged and less grains and proteins.

The three head cooks at the three area schools, Clark, Willow Lake and Henry were asked their thoughts on the changes to the school lunch menu/program.

"The state is doing everything they can to help with training to help the schools in the change," says Lonna DesLauriers, head cook at the Clark School.

"It's a big adjustment for all of us. There is a lot of extra paperwork now and additional reports to fill out. I come in on most Fridays to catch up with the bookwork to get it done. I have a 280 page regulation book that goes with this program."

What are the biggest adjustments to implement this new program? "We've had to order different spoons, a spoon ladle combination, that measures out a half cup and three fourths cup. Our hot dish portions have to be smaller now and we've had to cut back on the condiments such as ketchup, mustard and barbecue sauce due to the calories and sodium restrictions. Last year we changed from 2% milk to skim and 1% milk," said DesLauriers. "I don't hear a lot of complaining. The kids seem to be adjusting."

"So far, so good," says Carrie LaMont of the Willow Lake School lunch changes. "It's a little different than what we're used to. Before, we just cooked. We would watch it a little of course on portion size but

School lunch (continued on page 2)

A new Courier tradition started this month

How perceptive are you? Did you notice, with the first issue of this month, the Clark County Courier began a new tradition on the letterhead.

On the front page of the Courier letterhead, a different out of county subscriber, picked randomly, will be printed, along with the community in which the respective subscriber resides.

Community newspapers are alive

and well and this is a way of showing that fact and the appreciation that goes with that, as many subscribers are life long subscribers.

(Editor's note: I didn't look at this week's selection before the article was written, but a nicer, more appropriate pick could not have been made. She always sends positive 'feel-good' notes and is very proud of her Clark County roots. Bill)

WEATHER

Ryan Eggleston - Official Weather Observer

	HI	LO	PR
Nov. 20	57	23	0
Nov. 21	62	31	0
Nov. 22	38	12	0
Nov. 23	21	10	0
Nov. 24	32	19	0
Nov. 25	28	10	0
Nov. 26	20	8	0
2012 precipitation to date	17.64"		
2011 precipitation to date	21.42"		



Sign is up at Schlager Court

Earlier this week members of the Clark Lions Club put up this sign, "Clark Lions Club - Lee Schlager Memorial Basketball Court", the final step in this project.

The basketball court at Swimming Pool Park is a memorial to Lee, who was very instrumental in leading the Comets to a second place Class 'A' finish in 2004. In 2004 Schlager won the Ray Makens

Award, the Gatorade Most Valuable Player, was named first team Northeast Conference and Lake Central Conference, plus was named to the Class 'A' All-Tourney basketball team.

Clark Lions Club members who put up the sign include, left to right, Dick Hilmo, Merlyn Ritter, Lon Reidburn and Ken Bell.

Clark County Courier to publish early for the holidays

Christmas is now less than a month away and anytime December 25 falls on a Tuesday, it causes a change in the Clark County Courier publishing schedule.

The Courier will be printed on Saturday, Dec. 22 and Dec. 29 for the Christmas and New Year's weeks. Said simply, for those two weeks, the Saturdays will be the normal Tuesdays and the Mondays will be the normal Wednesdays.

The important part is that everyone in Clark County will receive the

Christmas Courier edition in the mail on Monday, Dec. 24 and Monday, Dec. 31. So, the papers will make the mail on Christmas Eve day and New Years Eve day.

The Christmas edition week will be a short week so all news and advertising will have to be received in time for the Monday, Dec. 24 edition and Saturday, Dec. 22 deadline.

Clark, South Dakota

Christmas Memories 2012

Chamber has many "home town promotions"

The Christmas lights will soon be up and operating in the city of Clark, there are special promotions for the shoppers and the shelves are being loaded with gift merchandise.

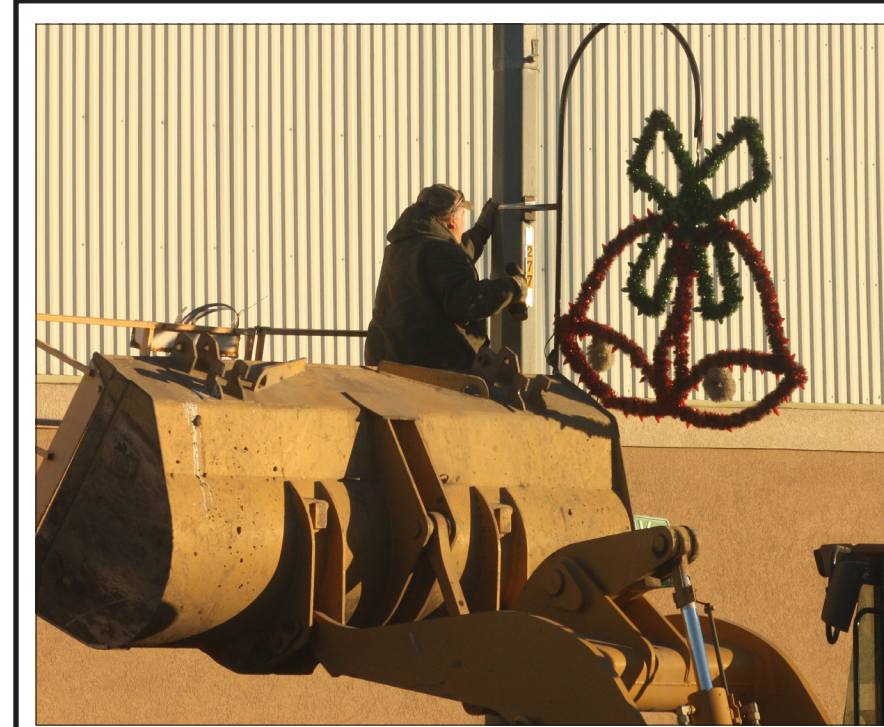
The Clark Chamber of Commerce will be sponsoring Christmas Memories 2012. Clark Bucks are the prize and punch cards are the avenue to gain or win these Clark Bucks.

Christmas Open Houses will be upcoming, with Dacotah Bank's on Wednesday, Dec. 5, Ken's Food Fair on Friday, Dec. 14 and also on Dec. 14 is Bank of the West.

The Clark Chamber of Commerce reminds everyone to remember to fill their Christmas Memories 2012 punch cards. Cards are available at any participating Chamber business. Between now and December 15 these cards can be used at any participating Chamber member business for cash only purchases, no charge purchases. Every card must have \$100 in total purchases and must be completely filled before submitting for the drawing to be held on December 15 at the Clark American Legion building.

There will also be some fun for the kids, Dacotah Bank is offering a free movie for kids on Saturday mornings. On December 1, 8 and 15, at 10:00 a.m., Dacotah Bank will be showing a movie in their basement. The movie will last approximately two hours and snacks and beverages will be provided. This week's movie is *Sponge Bob Christmas*.

The Clark Chamber of Commerce will be hosting their annual Christmas open house on December 15 at the Clark American Legion building from noon to 2:00 p.m. with free bingo, prizes and refreshments. Drawings for the prizes will be held at 2:00 p.m. One must be present to win the \$200 Clark Bucks prize. One need not be present to win the \$100 Clark Bucks or the two \$50 Clark Bucks drawings.



"It's beginning to look like Christmas...dressed in holiday style"

Getting "city sidewalks, busy sidewalks, dressed in holiday style", from atop the bucket of a payloader may not be for everyone. Fortunately, Clark city employee John Pickrel, left, was willing to dress the downtown streets in 'holiday style'.

The weather has really cooperated in November for those who want to put the Christmas touch on outdoor decorating. Whether it is El

Nino or La Nina, the weather has been dry and 15-20's above normal. Roger Blinsson, right, put out his Christmas decorations last week on S. Smith Street.

Saturday is Dec. 1 and the weekend forecast is for dry and upwards of 50'.