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The hometown newspaper of Jim Olson, Tulsa, OK

Kirkeby taxis across the street and then takes off

▲ Keeps his airplanes at the house

"We love it out here," stated Anna Kirkeby of their unique airpark home located right across the street from the Clark County Airport northeast of Clark.

Dean and Anna Kirkeby's home is 1,800 square feet of living space measuring 60 x 30. Their attached garage is a 60 x 70 foot structure in which they can fit two airplanes and several vehicles with room to spare.

The Kirkebys own two airplanes, one formerly owned by Dean's uncle - Dean Bymers which is a 72 Cessna Skyhawk. The other is a 1966 Champion Citabria. "Citabria is airbatic spelled backwards as the plane was built to train aerobatics," stated Kirkeby.

"We have such a nice airport out here," stated D. Kirkeby. "I can't believe how spoiled I am, being able to taxi across the street and take off."

Currently the Clark County Airport across the highway is closed for updates but is scheduled to be finished by September 15, tentatively.

Jed Hansen is the manager of

the Clark County Airport and according to D. Kirkeby is the youngest airport manager in the state of South Dakota. Jed is a Clark High School 2012 graduate.

Kirkeby didn't give up years ago when applying eight submissions to the FAA for the airpark.

His efforts resulted in the only airpark in South Dakota across from the Clark County Airport.

Benson Airpark is its official name and Dean and Anna are the head of the Benson Air Park Association, RTTF or 'residential through the fence' describes the Benson Airpark. Three lots remain available currently.

When all of them are sold, Kirkeby has a handshake agreement for expansion to the west if necessary.

The large garage/hangar can be accessed right off of the kitchen within the home. They have three bedrooms and three bathrooms within the spacious home and a nice view looking towards the west.

Dean and Anna are empty nesters with grown sons, Jay, Joseph and Michael on their own, so there

is plenty of room in the home.

In the large attached hangar, a spiral staircase leads up to a loft office and a lot of storage space is utilized.

Dean and Anna's pet raccoon "Opie" likes to make herself at home in the garage up on the storage shelves during the day. Opie is an orphan Dean found three years ago. She knows her name when called, eats dog food and will open the refrigerator in the house if it is not locked and eat their eggs. "She's also figured out how to trip the childproof locks on the drawers," added Dean.

Their airpark home was finished three years ago in 2018.

With no planes at the airport since May first due to runway improvements and some asphalt paving starting in mid July, it's been pretty quiet in the skies northwest of Clark.

"I like hearing the sound of a small airplane flying over," added Anna. "If you like airplanes, you like that sound. We kind of miss that now."



Life is good out in the Benson Airpark just across the road from the Clark County Airport north of Clark. Their updated and handicapped accessible home will be theirs for a long, long time with the convenience of having their airplanes in the garage for easy access along with their vehicles.

An easy taxi across the street and then ready for take off will once again be available when the Clark County Airport is due to reopen after upgrades in mid September. The airport is currently closed for construction and Kirkeby's planes are being stored elsewhere for now.

Economists: Eliminating sales tax on food would aid low-income families in South Dakota

Danielle Ferguson
South Dakota News Watch

Charging sales tax on food purchases is regressive by nature but is especially unfair to low-income South Dakotans who already spend a disproportionate amount of their income to meet basic needs, two prominent South Dakota economists said.

Eliminating the sales tax on groceries could help alleviate some of the financial pressure on lower-income families that already struggle to pay for housing, transportation and other basic needs, the two economists professors said during a June 3 online panel discussion hosted by South Dakota News Watch.

The regressive nature of South Dakota's sales tax, where all consumers rich or poor pay the same tax rate on goods and services, including food, is in part preventing the state's lowest earners from reaching financial stability, the professors said.

South Dakota is one of three

states that still taxes groceries at the full state sales tax rate, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Sixteen other states tax groceries, but at a lower rate than the general sales tax. Sales taxes in South Dakota generate more than \$1 billion annually and provide about 60% of the state's general fund revenues. Individual municipal sales tax rates are added onto the state 4.5% rate.

The Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy reported that the poorest 20% of South Dakotans, or those who earn around \$20,000 or less, pay 11.3% of their income in taxes each year. The wealthiest 1% of South Dakotans pay 1.8% of their income in taxes. The institute lists South Dakota as the fourth most tax-regressive state in the country.

"If you're really serious about making life a little easier for lower-income [families], that would be the very first item that I would look at," said Evert Van der Sluis, an economics professor at South Dako-

ta State University who was part of the June 3 panel.

Taxing groceries increases the probability of low-income household food insecurity, according to a May 2021 article published in the journal Food Policy. The same study estimated that food insecurity rises with each percentage point of sales taxes on food.

Kathryn Birkeland, an economics professor at the University of South Dakota, said she would support taking sales tax off of food, and added that the state needs to take a look at its tax structure overall.

"If you want to live in a place that has amenities and services you want, it needs to be a place that collects enough tax revenue to pay for that," she said during the June 3 panel. "Property taxes are high in South Dakota, and it adds to the housing burden to the cost of buying a house. Changing that tax structure can help for sure."

Bills to reduce or eliminate sales tax on food have repeatedly failed

in the South Dakota Legislature, most recently in the 2021 session.

Senate Bill 104 would have reduced sales tax on certain food in half-percent increments until fully eliminating state sales tax on food in 2025. The bill was unanimously defeated in its first committee hearing after legislators heard testimony from business leaders that eliminating the sales tax would create an unfillable hole in the state economy. Mark Quasney, a lobbyist for the South Dakota Bureau of Finance and Management, told legislators in January that eliminating sales tax on food would make sales tax revenues less stable and create financial uncertainty for the state.

South Dakota lawmakers who have advocated for eliminating the sales tax on food have suggested offsetting the loss with increasing sales tax revenues from online sales. A law enacted in 2018 allowed

Sales tax
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It has been hot!

▲ Inch of rain was welcome

June weather has been hot! For eight consecutive days, June 3-10, the high temperature in Clark reached 90°. During this stretch no rain fell and the average temperature was 15° warmer than the norm.

During these eight days, the high temperature reached 100° on Saturday, June 5 and the average high temperature during this stretch was 94.6°. On four of these eight days, Clark was under a heat advisory, meaning that the heat index feels like 100° or higher.

The first measurable moisture in June fell in the overnight hours in the early morning hours of Friday, June 11. The official amount in Clark was .86". This was the only measurable amount of moisture, in June, to this point.

In May, temperatures were very May-like, only averaging 0.5" above the normal. In May, Clark received 2.26" of rain. The average rain amount for May is 3.10".

During the night, June 10 into 11,

no damage was reported throughout the county. The city of Bryant in Hamlin County reported wind damage. A clap of thunder just before 5:00 a.m. was enough to wake even the hardest of sleepers. Some hail was part of the first downpour of rain.

After this system cleared out, more heat returned. Heat is also forecast for this week with a re-

Hot
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WEATHER

Robert Cole - Official
Weather Observer

	HI	LO	PR
June 8.....	.96	64	0
June 9.....	93	69	0
June 10.....	93	71	0
June 11.....	96	62	.86
June 12.....	75	57	.10
June 13.....	85	65	0
June 14.....	90	65	0
2021 precipitation to date			8.06
2020 precipitation to date			7.12

Thies/Harms farm house has been repurposed

▲ 1897 letter written in German was found in old house



From left to right, Kim Warkentien, Valerie 'Billie' Madsen and Keagan Swanhorst, show items that were once in the old Thies place along County Highway #46, (the 17-mile road which connects Clark and SD Highway 28). Madsen's great-great grandmother Clara Wagner embroidered this 1877 sampler for her daughter Lena Thies who once lived in the old home. When Warkentien and son Keagan were disman-

ting the home for its wood, Keagan came across a letter, written in old high German that told of rheumatism medicine. Gloria tonic tablets were ordered on May 17, 1897 from Milwaukee, Wis.

An older postcard was also found dating back to 1919 from the National Nonpartisan League. The postcard had a one cent stamp on it.

'This old house' finally became this new workshop on the farm home of Kim and Cynthia Warkentien between Clark and Willow Lake.

Warkentien and son Keagan Swanhorst took apart the older home that Henry Thies, Sr. and his wife Lena built shortly after their marriage in 1884. The wood was used for a new workshop.

Henry Thies, Sr. was born in 1859 in Mecklberg, Germany. He came to America in 1882 and settled in Illinois before moving to the Clark/Willow Lake area in 1884. Henry Sr. and Lena had six children. Lena was killed by a team of horses in 1895 when her youngest Walter 'Jumbo' was almost one year old. Other siblings were Freida, Minnie, Henry Jr., Carl and Otto.

Henry, Sr. later married Ida Waldow and the couple had four children. They were William, Albert and Herman 'Punch' with another sibling dying at a very young age.

Valerie 'Billie' Madsen is related to the Thies family through her mother Elsie Thies Hanson. Henry Thies, Jr. was her grandfather making Henry, Sr. her great-grandfather, who spent his life in South

Thies/Harms
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Big Mike is honored with Richard L. Hicks award

Michael Bethke known as Big Mike, was honored at this year's YLF (Youth Leadership Forum) as the recipient of the Richard L. Hicks award on June 9 in Aberdeen. Michael was nominated by Voc. Rehab counselor and Clark Alumni Laura Schmit.

Some of the criteria for this honor include participating in past leadership forums, actively involved in the community or school, gaining employment or further education status and being a positive role model to others.

While in Aberdeen to receive the honor, Michael spent time with Kevin Fielder at Ken's.

Pictured with Michael is his step-mom Kyong Bethke and Luanne Warken.