

Yankton County Chatter
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The budget process is complete and has been published per state law. As a part of the budget we have included the revenue generated from the recently passed Road and Bridge Levy. This money will allow us to focus more attention to our roads and bridges but will not be the ultimate fix. Yankton County has a total assessed property value at \$1.86 Billion. The property values in the City of Yankton are assessed at \$810 million, which is about 43% of Yankton County's total assessed value. As this new property tax is collected, State Laws require us to pay all organized cities 25% of the collected property tax from those cities. Incorporated cities in Yankton County will receive money from the new Road and Bridge Levy to spend within their city.

The question of the Dairy Overlay has been asked of me many times in the last few months "Do I support this and why?" I do support the Dairy Overlay as I see this as an opportunity to build on our leading industry, Agriculture. We also need to be mindful of our other industries (tourism, manufacturing, medical, etc.) as they are all strong in Yankton County. As this process continues to evolve we must find a way to work together which includes compromises and assurances that we will protect our neighbors and our property. There are many assumptions that feed lots will pollute the area with smell and dust, create added traffic of grain, animals, and manure going to and from these sites. I will assure you we will explore safe guards and implement modern technology that will address these concerns. I see the added traffic as a positive as this means that commerce is working and businesses are being profitable.

Another question asked is "Why would you want that in Yankton County?" The answer is it helps our local economy. It allows our farmers to sell their grain locally which in turn makes them more money. It saves them time and transportation costs, getting higher prices as competition (supply and demand) will increase prices. Those profits will be spent at local businesses (implement dealers, lumber yards, auto dealers, retail stores, etc) that employ us, Yankton County citizens, making our community stronger. Profitable businesses employ more people who have children in schools. State education funding is based on a per pupil basis so the more children in school keeps our property taxes down.

Take a short drive to Tyndall or Springfield and you may not notice the numerous cattle feed lots along Hwy 50 and Hwy 52. At first glance you may drive right past them as these feed lots are surrounded by tree groves (AKA buffers) about 8 – 15 feet tall. Yankton County has many established feed lots, some of which are within a few miles of Lewis and Clark Lake. Many of these Ag facilities have been around for decades. I point this out to show that livestock has not stopped tourism and shows how we can work and live together.

My challenge to you is visit a modern feed lot, hog confinement, dairy, etc. and see how modern technology has positively affected agriculture. When someone tells you that it will bring economic development or it will hurt the local property values ask a qualifying question, "Can you show me proof to support your position?" The next thing I would do is ask an expert in the field if this information is true. Many times we get caught up in "we read that on the internet or Facebook" and we believe it was written by experts. We have all seen information twisted to prove a point. The best way to defend that is to go to educational sessions and listen to all the information and make your own decision.

We are South Dakota and we are Agriculture. I grew up as a member of 4-H and the FFA. People have commented that my children won't want to work in these industries when they get out of school. I tell them they are wrong as I know many children, including mine, have a strong desire to work in Agriculture. We must find ways to bring the youth back to our county. I ask you these questions: Who is going to take over the family farm if we do not provide them with an opportunity to make a good living? Who is going to be our work force? Who will take care of us as we age and can no longer take care of ourselves? We need to invest in our youth and build a solid foundation for our communities to grow as we need all aspects of our community (welders, farmers, teachers, medical staff, law enforcement, etc). A strong community is one that has diversity of people and businesses. If one industry is having a bad year and we do not have other industries to keep our community strong then our community fails. All is needed to be a growing vibrant community. Everyone wants an opportunity to make a good living and live a good life. Let's not tell our children to do that somewhere else. Let's find a way where we can compromise and make our community stronger.