BROOKINGS COUNTY

Employee Newsletter

RSVP Volunteer Program

There are a several more pairs of eyes patrolling Brookings County these days.

The Brookings County Sheriff's Department now has 15 RSVP Patrol Volunteers on duty.

The RSVP—Retired and Senior Volunteer Patrol—Program provides meaningful experiences in the lives of its volunteers, age 55 and older. And they provide a valuable service to Brookings County.

Starting February 1st, 15 trained volunteers hit the roads of Brookings County. They range in age from 55 to 86. Their job is to assist with non-emergency tasks, such as calls of livestock out and stalled vehicles. The volunteers also patrol areas that aren't routinely checked—school zones, anhydrous and fuel storage sites, and electrical substa-

tions. They're also looking for road signs that may have fallen down or have been shot at, hazards on the roads, or anything that may seem suspicious or out of place. They can also check on homes when residents are away for extended periods of time and assist the Neighborhood Watch groups throughout the county.

The volunteers go out in pairs during two shifts, 8:00 a.m. to noon and 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Even though the volunteers have no law enforcement powers, they still must attend 40 hours of training provided by the Brookings County Sheriff prior to starting. The volunteers will be attending CERT training provided by Emergency

Management as well.

Marty says the volunteers are another set of eyes for the Sheriff's Department and the program is going very well in its first month. He says he may even look at increasing the number of volunteers in the future.

Art Wilber is one of the RSVP volunteers. He's standing next to the car the volunteers use to patrol Brookings County.

Technology News: What is Alchemy?

In 2004 Brookings County underwent a significant change in the way that records are archived. In April of 2004, the County implemented a document imaging system. The system is in place to allow offices to scan documents into a server and store the records electronically.

Ida Slocum, Register of Deeds, had been pursuing the idea of a document imaging system due to the amount of space required to keep paper copies of the documents her office records each year. The "electronic" records are scanned into the computer and are backed up on three locations on the county's network. The State of South Dakota also requires the records to be microfilmed, and Dakota Abstract receives a copy of the records every two weeks. At

a recent board meeting, Ida reported that her office scanned 5,092 records (21,404 pages) in 2004, and have scanned 397 records (2,335 pages) so far in 2005. The document imaging system (otherwise known as Alchemy), has reduced staff time making copies of records and has saved space in her office.

In addition, the Commission Assistant's office has been working on scanning public records such as minutes, resolutions, and agreements into the Alchemy database. If you want to explore these databases (and you are on the county's network), follow these steps:

1. Open your internet browser.

2. In the address bar at the top of the browser, type in: wilmot/alchemyweb

3. Begin to explore the database.

Alchemy has just released a software update. Once that update is installed on our system we will be holding a couple of training sessions so that everyone can get accustomed to using the software. If you are interested, look for the announcement on the training sessions and sign up.

All county offices are able to have their own database to begin electronically archiving information. To do so, you need to contact the commission office about getting a database created and the software for scanning installed. The information is stored on the county's server and backed up to three locations.

Sloppy Dress, Sloppy Work? Chance for Charity? (article borrowed from KSFY TV)

These days it seems like the business suit has been replaced with business casual in many work environments. But does sloppy dress mean sloppy work?

The dress code at the South Dakota One-Stop Career Center in Sioux Falls is business casual, but as you look around, you can see that means different things to different employees. Suits for some, sweaters for others.

Marilyn Norman is a career counselor at the center and has been in the business for 15 years. She says it's important in her position to set a good example for the people she's helping since they are looking for work. Norman admits, "When I'm more casual I'm more laid back about my work, the way I sit, the way I walk. It effects everything. I think it

does have an impact on the work place."

Her boss Greg Johnson says appearance is more about impression than production. He's the administrative director of the Career Center. "Is there a correlation between sloppy dress and sloppy work? I'm not sure I could say that but I will tell you that I believe others who look at us make value judgments when they first see us." Johnson says you don't want to give the wrong impression with your clothes.

The Career Center offers dress down day on Fridays. Employees pay a dollar to wear jeans and at the end of the year the money goes to charity.

State employees raised $47,000 in one day by wearing jeans. They gave that money to the Tsunami Relief Effort.

If you have an idea of something Brookings County employees could do to raise money for a designated charity, share your thoughts and ideas. We could set a month aside later this year to do a fundraiser.

HR Corner: Exempt vs. Non-Exempt Employees

As you read your employee manual or, around pay time, you may hear references about exempt versus non-exempt status. The most frequent question is: "What does this mean?".

A non-exempt employee is an employee who is considered to work on an hourly basis. The FLSA (Fair Labor Standards Act) requires employers to pay non-exempt employees for every hour that they work. In addition, the FLSA also

requires that non-exempt employees be paid over-time for all time worked in excess of forty hours in one week.

Certain employees are "exempt" from the FLSA time keeping and overtime requirements. These employees are considered exempt employees. Exempt employees are paid a salary—a set monthly amount— for their position. It is not tied to the number of hours worked or the quantity of work completed.

The FLSA defines only certain positions that can qualify as exempt. In Brookings County exempt positions include all elected officials, department heads, the Assistant Highway Superintendent, the Chief Deputy Sheriff, and the Jail Administrator. These positions are not paid on an hourly basis, they are paid to complete certain job duties.

If you have any questions about exempt status or being paid on an hourly basis, please contact the HR office at 696-8205.

Employee Update—The more things change...

The Sheriff's Office is seeing some change and movement. With the departure of Steve Haro as Deputy Investigator, you'll now find Steve Tietjen in that position. And with that move, Bart Sweebe is moving from being a full-time correctional officer to Jail Administrator. Pay attention next month...more changes are in store for the Sheriff's Department with the pending retirement of another of Brookings County's finest.

After a short time at the Zoning Office, Doris Knutson is back in the Equalization Office. And we have a new employee starting March 7th. Richard Haugen is the new Office Assistant in the Zoning Department.

Correcting last month's newsletter: With the move to the 1921 Building, the State's Attorney's office has a new phone number. They can now be reached at 692-8606. Their fax number is 692-6960.