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# Nine in '09

WHOM TO WATCH: You may not know all their names, but expect these nine people to make news in the coming year.



Ryan Soderlin/Journal staff

Environmental officer John Scheetz manages the removal of water from the Sanford Underground Laboratory at Homestake in Lead.

## John Scheetz, Sanford Underground Laboratory environmental officer

It's water quality, not quantity, that controls progress on the dewatering of the Sanford Underground Laboratory at Homestake, according to John Scheetz.

Scheetz leads the team responsible for pumping water out of the former gold mine. They hope to lower the water level to the 4,850-foot level by spring.

At least 30 people work in the mine and

on the surface to remove the water.

Pumps and the water treatment plant operate 24-7. A lot depends on the timely and successful removal of the water. Scheetz said his team realizes a lot of people are watching what they do.

"The pressure is obviously for all the people who live in the community, for the people that work here, for the scientists,

even from the governor's office, the Legislature," he said.

But, emptying the mine is not as simple as turning on the pumps and running water into Whitewood Creek.

Discharge permits control the quality of the water and limit the volume of water that can be released into the creek.

— Andrea Cook

# NAU online president left Iowa under fire

PARTYING AT COVE: Paxton was Iowa college president who resigned amid controversy.

By Barbara Soderlin  
 Journal staff



National American University's new online division president resigned as president of an Iowa college in August after a picture was published of him partying on a boat with his son and several young women.

Bob Paxton, 53, also was controversial in Iowa for his administration's involvement in transcript fraud at the college.

NAU moved in the last two weeks to hire Paxton anyway, based on his experience and skills, said Ronald Shape, chief operating officer and chief financial officer.

"At the end of the day, when we looked at all the information surrounding Mr. Paxton, it was his record and his experience and his accomplishments that led the university to offer him the position," Shape said.

Paxton is in the process of moving to Rapid City and will start Jan. 15 in the position of distance learning campus president. The former online president, Blake Faulkner, left after a 14-year career with

Bob Paxton is in the process of moving to Rapid City and will start Jan. 15 in the position of National American University's distance learning campus president.

See PAXTON, Page A5

# Airport eatery sues city after losing its lease

GATE CHANGE: After 20 years, restaurant owners are bumped from their location in main terminal.

By Emilie Rusch  
 Journal staff

Holiday travelers passing through Rapid City Regional Airport noticed a big change this weekend when they went to grab a snack or a cup of coffee.

Darlene's at the Airport, the sit-down restaurant that had served Rapid City travelers for 20 years, was gone. In its place is Air Host, a new grab-and-go establishment.

Airport officials hope the new vendor's quick service will better fit the needs of travelers. Not everyone, though, is pleased with the change, including the owners of

## Lease violation?

The lawsuit, filed in July, centers on whether the city of Rapid City, operating through the Airport Board, violated its contract with Hospitality Systems by not extending the restaurant's lease.

See AIRPORT, Page A4



Kristina Barker/Journal staff

Rapid City businessman Stan Adelstein is returning to the state Legislature after a four-year absence. He hopes to focus on health care and education issues.

## Stan Adelstein, incoming senator

For as long as Sen.-elect Stan Adelstein can remember, his Northwestern Engineering Co. has been housed at 1309 W. Main St., where it was when his parents brought him home from the hospital 77 years ago to their house next door.

But as he returns to elected office in 2009 after a four-year absence, Adelstein's engineering and property management companies will be settling into beautiful new offices at 314 Founders Park Road, which offer scenic views of M Hill and nearby Rapid Creek on the former Federal Beef packing plant property.

NWE Management, which owns rental properties in five states, is not only weathering the national economic downturn and credit crisis, but is

growing and thriving, he said.

"I'm thankful for the strength of the company and assured that moving forward in 2009, we're in a strong position," he said.

And he's thrilled to be back in state government.

"I'm looking very much forward to restarting my work in the Legislature."

As the new chairman of the state Senate Health and Human Services Committee, he'll focus on "issues that are really important to me," including Medicaid funding problems and health insurance gaps.

As a philanthropist who donated \$165,000 in 2008 to keep Rapid City's public elementary school band and orchestra programs intact, he also wants to focus on the state's school-aid formula.

— Mary Garrigan

See the other Nine in '09, pages A6-A7



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## Fighting for care

A boy needs treatment for a brain tumor, but insurance does not want to pay

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RAPID CITY JOURNAL: NINE IN '09



Seth A. McConnell/Journal staff

Dave Boone, Sturgis city manager, says residents want him to focus on economic development.

**Dave Boone, Sturgis city manager**

Dave Boone sees himself as a problem solver. The Sturgis city manager, who is just completing his first year, rattled some cages of conventional thinkers in this community know mostly for hosting the annual Sturgis motorcycle rally. In the past year, the city has passed an ordinance on pit bulls, saved millions of dollars by streamlining government processes, established a contract list to help plow city

streets during blizzards and hosted community meetings in which citizens could tell the city fathers their vision for the city. "We wanted to establish a community consensus. We all needed to be on the same page," Boone said. That consensus of comments from 360 participants will become the blueprint for the city's future. "This is not Dave's pre-canned plan. This is democra-

cy in action," he said. In a town in which many Main Street store fronts sit empty much of the year, it's no surprise that first on the citizens' list for improving Sturgis is to promote economic development. Boone's plan for the coming year is to continue to work well with the mayor and city council to steer the town toward the vision its citizens have established.

— Deb Holland

**Peter Henry, Black Hills VA**

Peter Henry knows change is coming to the Veterans Affairs Health Care System in 2009. With Henry at the helm, the Black Hills VA is just beginning to re-examine itself and what it will take to provide world-class health care to veterans in the 21st century. "It's the beginning of some big processes that will really shape how veteran health care is provided in western South Dakota," Henry said. Some of the changes the VA is considering will be external — like a larger presence in Pennington County, where about 30 percent of vets being served reside.



Kristina Barker/Journal staff

Peter Henry, director of the Black Hills Veterans Affairs Health Care System, is looking to reshape veterans' health care.

In the end, the changes will come down to improving three things, Henry said: quality, access and cost-effectiveness. "It's an unusual opportunity that we have," Henry said. "We have the opportunity to actually begin to shape our future." — Emilie Rusch

**U.S. Rep. Stephanie Herseth Sandlin**

This year, she'll finally have to answer the question: What's next? Coming off an overpowering re-election win in the Nov. 4 election, U.S. Rep. Stephanie Herseth Sandlin seems a lock to hold South Dakota's lone seat in the U.S. House for as long as she wants it. And she seems unlikely to challenge Republican Sen. John Thune, a formidable first-term incumbent, in 2010. So, how about the governor's race? With incumbent Gov. Mike Rounds finishing his second four-year term and barred from running for a third, 38-year-old Herseth Sandlin is considered the best chance for Democrats to win the governor's seat in decades. During the final weeks of the 2008 campaign, she said it was too early to talk about a possible run for governor. First, she had to get re-elected to the House. Then, she had to give birth to her first child. Now she's done both, beating Republican Chris Lien of Rapid City by a decisive 68 percent to 32 percent vote. Then she topped that by giving birth to Zachary Lars Sandlin on Dec. 15. So, how about that decision? Not just yet. Herseth Sandlin avoided a response when the Journal asked again during the last week of December, focusing on her House duties and problems to come — particularly the struggling national economy. "As our state's lone member of Congress, I will be squarely focused on how federal policy affects South Dakota — including policies for our nation's veterans, for our agriculture producers and for businesses and families," she said. She'll stay busy with that, all right. But she also has to settle that governor's thing. This year.



Kristina Barker/Journal staff

Rep. Stephanie Herseth Sandlin, D-S.D., had her first baby and was re-elected, and now will have to decide whether to run for governor.

**Dr. Allen Nord, physician**

In 2001, South Dakota was a leader in the smoke-free movement. Today, the state lags behind other states. Dr. Allen Nord hopes to change that in 2009. Nord, a Rapid City physician and chairman of the South Dakota Tobacco-Free Kids Network, said South Dakota's current law outlaws smoking in public places, unless the establishment has a malt-liquor license, video lottery machines, or the business is a Deadwood casino or tobacco shop. After the South Dakota law was passed in early 2000, many establishments that would have been forced to go smoke-free skirted the law by buying a liquor license or adding a video lottery machine. "It kind of thwarted the idea of the law," he said. Nord and others in the smoke-free movement will ask the 2009 Legislature to remove



Seth A. McConnell/Journal staff

Dr. Allen Nord will ask the Legislature to ban smoking in all public places.

those exceptions, requiring all public places in South Dakota to go smoke-free. Twenty-five other states already have such laws. "Secondhand smoke is way more dangerous than people realize," Nord said. Secondhand smoke contains

69 cancer-causing chemicals, he said. "Tobacco smoke is a killer," he said. "I think people have a right to clean air more than people have the right to smoke." — Lynn Taylor Rick

**Dave Janak, Rapid City schools budget manager**

In two of the three years since Dave Janak took over as budget manager for the Rapid City School District, the district has cut millions of dollars from its operating budget. It's enough to make any budget manager squirm. "Each year brings its own challenges. I think I'm more familiar than I have been in the past with the areas I need to pay attention to," he said. The district's 2008 budget crisis was then followed by Gov. Mike Rounds' announcement that 2009 would usher in an even tighter state budget. But Janak feels prepared for what the new year will bring.

"I think our approach to the budget this year is causing a lot less stress among the staff ... because we're not looking at the elimination of complete programs," he said. And he's expecting that his role of providing budget addresses to the school board, administration and the public will expand as he gains more experience. "I will never get a vote," he said, "but the longer I do this,



Ryan Soderlin/Journal staff

Dave Janak will guide Rapid City Area Schools budget cuts.

the more credibility I have and the more they begin to trust, or not trust, the inputs we're bringing to them." Turning the budget around

is going to take time, he said. "It's kind of like steering a battleship — it doesn't turn on a dime." — Kayla Gahagan

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— Kevin Woster

RAPID CITY JOURNAL: NINE IN '09

# Tim Hill, Rapid City Rush assistant general manager

It's not as if Tim Hill hasn't been through the start-up of a new professional hockey team. Hill, assistant general manager of the Central Hockey League expansion Rapid City Rush, oversees corporate sponsorships and sales and assists in promotions for the Rush. Hill and other team officials know that the Rush's honeymoon with local fans will be over soon, and the real test for its survival is just ahead. Maintaining excitement once the novelty has worn off, Hill said, means getting players and coaches involved in the community, along with game performance. "Putting a winning product on the ice is obviously essential, but it's also being out in the community and people knowing this is their team."

"They're going to see guys staying here during the spring and summer, because their wives are here and their kids are going to school. We've made our homes here, and a lot of the guys are looking at homes because it's a great place to raise their families," Hill said. Hill has seen that formula work before, first as a player, then as part of the front office (along with Rush GM Jason Rent) with the Bossier-Shreveport Mudbugs, which celebrated its 10th year in the CHL in 2007-2008. "In Shreveport, people knew that the guys were giving back to the community and not just taking, and that's as important as winning on the ice," he said.

— Jim Holland



Rapid City Rush assistant manager Tim Hill watches as the team takes on the Arizona Sundogs in December. Hill and others with the Rush will work to maintain community support of the expansion team in its second season.

Seth A. McConnell/Journal staff



Kristina Barker/Journal staff

Karen Waltman, senior manager of Rushmore Mall, faces the challenge of making sure the mall adapts to competition and an uncertain economy.

# Karen Waltman, Rushmore Mall manager

It's all about flexibility, says Karen Waltman, manager of Rushmore Mall.

As the economy shrinks and two large stores move across the interstate to the new Rushmore Crossing shopping center, the mall must change to survive.

But Waltman said that isn't unusual.

"The key is to be adaptable and to really focus on doing the right things that matter for the customers," she said.

Rushmore Mall has been western South Dakota's biggest shopping attraction since it opened in 1978. But the new competition will force it to evolve.

Waltman, a Rapid City native, is a senior property manager with Macerich, the company that owns the mall. The retail anchor is home to dozens of stores but lost anchor store Target in November and will lose Scheels in February.

Target Corp. owns the former home of its Rapid City store and is in charge of the 100,000-square-foot building's future. But the Scheels location, a 43,000-square foot hole, and the Target wing of the mall could be opportunities wrapped inside challenges, Waltman said.

Stores in the Target wing say the loss of foot traffic has hurt their business.

"It provides the opportunity for us to reinvent that area of the mall with new occupancies," Waltman said. "It's something that we're really focused on, and it's a top priority."

The mall has been working for a while to update its services.

In late 2007, the mall added Wi-Fi service so shoppers could have Internet access. And it built a "play park" for toddlers to use while their parents rest and socialize.

That was part of the effort to keep shoppers coming back at a time when they have more choices and more financial pressure.

There is no doubt economic turmoil has had an effect on Rapid City and the region. But Waltman said the retail market here has proven its strength before.

"In our history, our market has been a very stable and steady market," she said.

— Jeremy Fugleberg

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