



Steele Ozone & Kidder County Press

Single Copy \$1.00

DEADLINE ALL COPY - FRIDAY NOON

WEDNESDAY January 21, 2026
OZONE - VOL. 140 - NO. 15

BOX 350 - STEELE, ND 58482
PRESS - VOLUME 120 - NO. 17

Inside...

School Board	P. 1,2
Re-election	P. 1,4
SVFD	P. 1,24
Reminiscing	P. 3
School.....	P. 11,12,13
Obituary	P. 14
Public Notice.....	P. 15
KCDHU Article	P. 23

Steele Volunteer Fire District honors three for 40+ years of Service

At the last team meeting, the SVFD awarded Rob Dewitz, Stuart Thompson, and Joel Dewitz with a 40 years (+) appreciation plaque. Here's a little history of the group, and the guys.

The Steele Fire Department was organized in 1910 with 50

members. The Steele Rural Fire Department was organized in 1964 with Albert (Nuck) Dewitz as chief. Both groups shared manpower and equipment. There were 2 groups until around 2005. Today, we have 30 volunteers on the team of men and women. In

1989, they added extrication. The group meets the first Thursday of the month at the fire hall and the group has a short meeting, then does some training. Trainings include how to use the equipment, best practices for putting out (See "SVFD" on Page 24)



Joel Dewitz, Stuart Thompson and Rob Dewitz were honored at the Annual Meeting.

Online classes, D.C. trips highlight School Board meeting

By Richard Paolinelli

The members of the Kidder County School Board held their monthly meeting on Wednesday evening at the Steele School.

High School principal Michael

Wachter reported that the school's students have combined to sign up for over 130 available online classes and that he expects that number to eventually reach 150 or more. These are classes that students are allowed to take in lieu of attending class in person.

In several cases students are taking more than one online class while others are not taking any. He did not have a percentage of how many of the school's 194 high school students are taking online classes. However, a majority of the juniors and seniors have at least one online class on their schedule.

Of concern is where to place the students who take the online classes at school. On online class has over 30 signups with only 25 available monitors in the flex room.

In his monthly report to the board, Wachter also noted that just under 20 percent of the high school student body has already missed at least eight days of school. That is a higher number than normal.

Elementary Principal Ryan Larson reported 190 students are enrolled in the lower grades. Both he and Wachter also presented a brief rundown of the North Dakota State Insights Assessment report. Overall, the school's

Kidder County Resident Announces bid for Re-election

Justice Jerod Tufte has announced his campaign for re-election to the ND Supreme Court. Tufte, a Kidder County resident is seeking his 2nd ten-year term. He is currently getting signatures for the petition.

'It has been an honor to serve the people of North Dakota on our Supreme Court, Tufte says, 'Over the past 9 years, I have worked to uphold the rule of law, ensure access to justice for all North Dakotans, and lead efforts to make our court system more transparent and efficient. With that, I am asking voters to allow me to continue that work for another term', he adds.

First Term Highlights

During his first term, Justice Tufte has been a leader in advancing judicial transparency. He led the effort to draft new Administrative Rules 41 and 41.1, which implement the state constitution's open records and open meetings requirements for the judicial branch. These rules establish clear procedures for public access to court records and ensure that judicial branch committees conduct their work openly.

Justice Tufte serves on the North Dakota Judiciary's



Justice Jerod Tufte

Artificial Intelligence Task Force, which is exploring responsible applications of emerging technology to improve court operations and access to justice. He also serves on a task force examining regulatory and policy solutions to alleviate the state's lawyer shortage.

At the national level, Justice Tufte serves as one of North Dakota's commissioners to the Uniform Law Commission, where he has contributed to drafting legislation including the Uniform

(See "Re-election" on Page 4)

large amount of money in a short time.

In mid-April, students from across the nation will compete in the We The People National Finals. The competition is simulated congressional hearings, in front of scholars, public officials, judges, and other experts, showcasing their knowledge of America's Constitution and government.

But for the local students to get there and back, the total cost will be approximately \$104,400. They currently have about one-quarter of that and would need to bring in a significant amount of the remaining balance through donations.

(See "School Board" on Page 2)

Dakota COMMUNITY WEALTH MANAGEMENT

TRUST MANAGEMENT SERVICES
701.222.9188

DAKOTACOMMUNITYBANK.COM

WEALTH MANAGEMENT: *Not FDIC Insured. No Bank Guarantee. May Lose Value.
Not a Deposit. Not Insured by any Government Agency.

YOUR LEGACY

to the land, livestock, and future generations