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WATERTOWN PUBLIC OPINION

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SIOUX FALLS USPS

Delivery has improved, regional hubs pose issues

Vanessa Carlson Bender
 Sioux Falls Argus Leader | USA TODAY NETWORK

Although the United States Postal Service (USPS) mail service in Sioux Falls is now delivering packages at more than 90%, according to U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson, regional “choke points” still pose significant issues overall.

In Sioux Falls and South Dakota specifically, service has slightly improved during the last 18 months, Johnson told reporters following a private tour Thursday, April 2, at the Sioux Falls USPS Distribution and Processing Center, accompanied by Pete Sessions, Texas

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U.S. Reps. Dusty Johnson and Pete Sessions speak to the press about the USPS delays and service issues.
 SAMANTHA LAUREY/ARGUS LEADER



A September 2021 view looking toward Spearfish Canyon in South Dakota's Black Hills.
 PROVIDED BY BONNIE JONES/BLACK HILLS NATIONAL FOREST/USDA FOREST SERVICE.

Uranium drilling plan has sparked Black Hills tensions

Meghan O'Brien
 South Dakota Searchlight

A plan to drill exploratory holes in search of uranium near a southern Black Hills canyon lined with ancient Native American rock art has raised tensions ahead of a hearing next week to determine the project's fate.

At a procedural hearing in January, a tense exchange with project opponents led to an outburst by a member of the board considering the project's permit application.

“Your goal in life is to be a jerk,” board member Bob Morris told a member of the public attending the hearing.

The comment was directed toward Taylor Gun-

hammer. He's an Oglala Lakota community organizer.

“It was just profoundly unprofessional,” Gunhammer said afterward, reacting to the exchange.

Gunhammer and other project opponents were arguing for the relocation of a permit hearing from the state capital city of Pierre, in central South Dakota, to a location closer to the proposed project in the southwestern part of the state. Morris' fellow board members ultimately agreed to the move and scheduled a five-day hearing to begin Monday in the city of Hot Springs.

The hearing will be a continuation of a long-running struggle over proposed uranium mining in the

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Prairie Lakes Legacy Fund awards its first grants

Charles Rankin
 Watertown Public Opinion | USA TODAY NETWORK

The Prairie Lakes Legacy Fund has awarded its first batch of grants to support organizations in the Prairie Lakes region.

The initial round of funding is going to a variety of nonprofits working in health, human services and quality of life initiatives, according to a community announcement. Grant recipients include Human Service Agency, Community Transit of Watertown/Sisseton and Beacon Center.

The Prairie Lakes Legacy Fund is administered by the Watertown Area Community Foundation.

The Human Service Agency said it plans to use its grant to bolster mental health services.

“This support allows us to take a meaningful step forward in expanding access to care,” Kari Johnston, executive director of the Human Service Agency said in a release. “The funding will help us recruit a psychiatrist, which has been a long-standing need in our community, and strengthen our capacity to support the dedicated staff who provide essential mental health services every day. It's an investment not just in services, but in people.”

Community Transit of Watertown/Sisseton is facing growing demand for its transportation services, according to Community Transit officials.

“Right now, we are turning away nearly 50 ride requests a day,” Terry Hoffman, co-executive director of Community Transit, said in a release. “Transportation is a critical link to employment, health-care and daily life. We are incredibly grateful for this grant. It will help us keep people connected to the services they need.”

The Prairie Lakes Legacy Fund is designed to support both immediate needs and future priorities in the region.

“This funding strengthens services our community relies on every day,” Cammie Mengwasser, executive

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