

PRESS RELEASE FROM: Meade County Commissioner Alan Aker response to false rumors and disinformation about the Stagebarn Zoning District (Stagebarn District):

*** The Stagebarn District is not a project of the City of Summerset.**

It was not requested by the City of Summerset. It was initiated by the Meade County Commission.

*** The Stagebarn District will not affect property taxes.** Property taxes are determined by assessments and levies. The district would not collect an added levy. The district could not add a levy after it is formed; state law would not allow it. The district would have no power over assessments. Property assessments will continue to be determined by the Meade County Equalization Office, and property owners will continue to have a right to appeal assessments directly to the Meade County Commission.

*** The reason for the Stagebarn District is protection of property values.** For many area residents, their home is their major investment, and that investment would be devalued if a noisy, unsightly, or odor-causing business were located nearby. Examples of such businesses are quarries, landfills, feedlots, and salvage yards. These kinds of businesses are welcome and valued in Meade County, but it's important that we create buffer areas between existing residential areas and new businesses which could de-value those residences. The Stagebarn District enables Meade County to protect part of the county with zoning without zoning the whole county. Lawrence and Pennington Counties protect their property values with zoning, as do most other jurisdictions in the state, so zoning is not an unusual activity for a county government.

*** The Stagebarn District will not affect annexation by the City of Summerset.** The district would not make it easier for Summerset to annex. If the district is formed, Summerset would have less reason to annex neighboring subdivisions, since the district will help protect property values in the whole area. Summerset has not attempted any annexations since it was incorporated. Summerset proved it was not interested in annexing neighboring subdivisions when it voted to allow Piedmont to incorporate as a separate municipality. Summerset has been a good neighbor in Piedmont Valley, and Summerset officials have been supportive of many community improvements outside its boundaries: safer paths for kids walking and biking to school, improved library services, and construction of new schools. There were flaws in the way Summerset was incorporated, but no current Summerset official had any responsibility for that.

*** The Stagebarn District would be a zoning district, not a school district.** It would have a zoning board appointed by the Meade County Commission to make recommendations on zoning and platting within the district boundaries. Final action on zoning and platting would continue to be made by the elected Meade County Commission. Summerset

would not appoint any members of the Stagebarn Zoning Commission. Although the Stagebarn District would nearly surround the City of Summerset, Summerset itself would be outside the boundaries of the Stagebarn District.

*** The Meade County Commission voted unanimously to approve the boundaries of the Stagebarn District and proceed with a census of the district, which is required by statute prior to final action to create the district.** The Meade County Commission will likely vote on creation of the district at its regular monthly meeting in May. The Stagebarn District would be the first of its kind in South Dakota. In all other counties with zoning, the entire county is governed by one zoning ordinance, with one planning and zoning commission. The legislature only recently allowed counties to form zoning districts, largely at the request of Meade County.

*** Many of the controversial billboards in the railroad right-of-way through Meade County could have been prevented if Meade County had had zoning districts. Zoning districts like this one will prevent problems like that before they happen. Zoning is like homeowner's insurance: you don't miss it until your house burns down, and then it's too late.**