

OPINION

letters to the editor

Better than the tax credits

As many are aware, mortgage interest rates are at near historic lows. Yet for first-time buyers (as well as repeat buyers) today's rates actually can do more for home buyers than the \$8,000 Federal Tax Credit for first-time buyers and \$6,500 for repeat buyers which expired April 30 did.

Let me explain: Last week South Dakota Housing Development Authority lowered their fixed rate for first-time buyers from 4.5 percent to 3.75 percent for fixed-rate 30 year financing. During the tax credits period, SDHDA was at 4.75 percent. Assuming a mortgage amount of \$150,000 (SDHDA actually defines affordable housing as homes under \$160,000), savings due to rate change would save the borrower more than \$8,000 by just the sixth year of the loan! In fact, the total saving over the life of the loan would be over \$23,600! This is all without any "strings" as how long the homeowner must keep the home.

Wow! I've had many buyers share with me that they regret not taking advantage of the tax credit program, but they are actually better-off having waited to take advantage of the better mortgage rates of today and save even more.

It's said "around every cloud has a silver lining" and this is a little silver for home buyers who missed out on the tax credits. The savings for repeat home buyers who missed the \$6,500 tax credit will typically be ever greater.

One other thing I am quite sure of is that these great rates, just like the tax credits, won't be around forever. If you missed the tax credits, this is your second chance

at a bonanza, but don't wait too long. It's a quite likely a limited-time offer.

SCOTT HODGES, Realtor
Brookings

Farmers have defense and need to respond

As fall quickly approaches, there is only one thing on a farmers mind, harvest. So when hundreds of farmers in South Dakota, and thousands across the nation received a letter from East Coast lawyers requesting they "settle things" by repaying 80 percent of the money received in return for selling grain to VeraSun Energy two years ago, you can understand their frustration.

This is not right, and it will not stand. Thousands of producers did nothing wrong and it's sad to see Park Avenue lawyers hiding behind fancy stationary attempting to take money away from the people producing food, feed, fuel and fiber for our country and the world. The majority of our nations farmers involved in this mess have valid defenses and WILL NOT lie down.

While farmers have good defense, it is critical that you respond. This is not intended to be legal advice, but all producers should contact an attorney for advice on their specific situation.

As president of the South Dakota Corn Growers Association, I can assure you that our group is working hard to share what information we have with all of our state's producers. To stay up to date, please visit our website at SDCORN.org, and for instant updates, follow South Dakota Corn on Facebook and Twitter (@SDCORN).

GARY DUFFY, president
South Dakota Corn Growers Association

other views

Aberdeen American News, Sept. 7

Meeting information easier to access

It's now easier to track public officials' actions and to get the same information they get.

A law passed by the 2010 Legislature stipulates that among other rules, the public may see the materials that officials do.

Printed materials that are given to public officials before their meeting must be made available to everyone. The information is available from the governing body's website or at its office at least 24 hours before the meeting or at the time that the officials themselves are given the materials.

Then if the documents aren't posted to the website, a copy of them must be available in the meeting room while the governing body is considering the material.

In addition, South Dakota governments must make the unapproved draft of their meeting minutes available within 10 business days after the meeting. This rule doesn't apply if there's a recording of the meeting on the government's website.

And there's more: Teleconference meetings of any official public body are open to the public as well. And the public board must provide at least one place where members of the public may listen to and

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