

NBA Playoffs

Cavs sweep Hawks, advance to Eastern Conference Finals **SPORTS, PAGE B1**



Star-Spangled Banner

Mitchell kids choir to sing at Twins game **STATE NEWS, PAGE A3**

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Party bike will pedal through the Hills

New tourist attraction features wheels, pedals and a cold one

MAX B. O'CONNELL
Journal staff

If you were in Rapid City over the weekend, you might have seen a strange new vehicle rolling through the Hills — an open-air rolling cart that looks like a patio on wheels but with a dozen people aboard pedaling like bicyclists, and maybe imbibing with a cold one.

The vehicle is a party bike, and comes to town courtesy of the Black Hills Party Pedaler, a new business serving Rapid City with scenic tours through town.

A party bike is a vehicle with one pilot guiding while several passengers pedal together. The business is a true family affair, started by the Soriano family: brothers John, Matt and Mike; sister Gina Edwards; and Matt's wife, Lacey.

John Soriano said that the idea to turn the concept into a business came from another brother, Mark, who lives in Lincoln, Neb.

"He saw a party pedaler in Lincoln and brought it to my attention," said John Soriano said. "We thought the Black Hills would be a fabulous place to have this activity. It's a community that's open to new ideas and very small business-friendly."

The Pedaler, which moves at 4-5 mph, will welcome up to five passengers pedaling in the vehicle and 3 not pedaling on the back, with one of the Sorianos serving as a driver. The pedalers all work together to propel the bike; the seats have a small panel, that looks like a bar, in front of them.

The vehicle will ride around town, stopping wherever the customers wish, for a two-hour tour. Tours are open to group reservations for \$250 or single seats for \$25 per person, with a recommendation of at least 8 passengers per tour.

"We have designated stops in the downtown area, but it's ultimately up to the customers," John Soriano said. "It's a good way to tour the scenic downtown area whether you're from here or you're a tourist."

In addition, the Black Hills Party Pedaler will sell beverages aboard, ranging from juice, water and Gatorade for those under 21, to local beers, wine, and margaritas for people over 21. Soriano stressed that everyone aboard must be 21 for alcoholic drinks to be served. All drinks must be kept on the bike, and the pilot of the bike will remain completely sober.

Black Hills Party Pedaler is gave preliminary tours throughout Rapid City for the Cinco de Mayo weekend, and will have a grand opening Saturday. The business



John Soriano, Gina Edwards, Matt Soriano and Lacey Soriano sit atop the Black Hills Party Pedaler, which will begin initial tours this weekend and launch on May 14.

is currently taking reservations, as well as seeking sponsorships with local businesses.

"It's win-win for everybody," John Soriano said. "It's social, it involves exercise, and it's helping out the local economy, which is huge for us."

The Sorianos said that community focus is important to the family-run business, as the siblings grew up in Rapid City over the course of 20 years and developed a love of the area.

"We want to give back, start good relationships with local businesses and find local charities to support, which we can do because we're not a franchise," John Soriano said.

Those relationships include a partnership with Hay Camp Brewing Company, where all tours will start and end. Other local businesses such as Pure Bean, Firehouse Brewing Company and Wobbly Bobby will be offered as potential stops on the tour. Gina Edwards added that



The Black Hills Party Pedaler party bike will begin and end all tours near Hay Camp Brewing Company.

routes were also being planned in Spearfish, with plans to incorporate Crow Peak Brewing Company, False Bottom and other local establishments.

"We've been discussing options for taking the party bike to Spearfish in the near future," Edwards said. "In the coming years, we'd very much like to

expand our business, have multiple party bikes, and operate all over the Black Hills." Edwards said that the family was particularly happy about being able to start a business together, something they've wanted to do for years.

Please see **Party bike**, Page A6

Schools struggle to find special ed teachers

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Special education teachers are in such high demand across South Dakota that the state's two largest school districts, in Rapid City and Sioux Falls, are hiring teachers in the demanding field even before they are fully certified.

Sixty-one of the 364 teacher vacancies in the state — about 15 percent — are in the rigorous and challenging field of special education.

"It is a difficult position to fill," said Randall Royer, leadership development director for the Associated School Boards of South Dakota. "It also underscores the supply and demand. There's a demand and there just isn't enough of a supply."

The number of Sioux Falls students with special learning needs has grown by about 8 percent — or about 250 students — in the last five years, according to the Argus Leader newspaper.

The number of students with special learning needs has grown at a similar rate in the Rapid City school district, increasing by 9 percent, or 200 students, over the last 10 years. There are about 13,638 students in the Rapid City school district, and about 1,990 of them — or 14 percent — have special learning needs, according to Superintendent Tim Mitchell.

The Rapid City School District currently has eight special education position openings.

"The position that Sioux Falls is in, it's the same one we're in," Mitchell said. "We've really struggled with special education."

To more quickly fill vacant positions, both the Rapid City and Sioux Falls school districts have made it a practice to hire teachers before they complete their special education certifications, encouraging them to then attain certification while employed.

Julie Large, who has taught special education in Sioux Falls for 20 years, attributes the growing need in part to an increase of students with emotional concerns, and thinks the district is being proactive in adding positions.

However, about one-fourth of those hired last year weren't fully certified at the start of the school year, and that pushes extra work onto fully trained teachers.

"It is challenging for us because they don't fill out any of the special education paperwork," teacher Sarah Henrichs said. "That relies on teachers that are certified."



Mitchell

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DISCOVER DIGITAL

- In a draft that featured Kobe Bryant and Allen Iverson, we re-pick the 1996 NBA draft

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ADVICE/COMICS	B4,5	OBITUARIES	A4
CLASSIFIEDS	B6	OPINION	A7
CROSSWORDS	B4,8	SPORTS	B1



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City may hire firm for hiring

Mayor wants to spend \$44,000 on search firm for big jobs

JENNIFER NAYLOR GESICK
Journal staff

Mayor Steve Allender is looking to hire a search firm, and pay roughly \$44,000, to fill two open

department head positions within the city — for Director of Public Works and Director of Planning and Development Services.

Allender hopes to sign two separate agreements with Waters &



Allender

Company for Executive Search Services. Each agreement may be up to \$22,050 in costs, for a total of \$44,100 to be paid to Waters for executive search services.

The agreement first has to make its way through the city Legal and Finance Committee and then be approved by the full City Council.

Please see **Search firm**, Page A5

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