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SPARKING RURAL REVIVAL
ONE STORY AT A TIME.

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2016

The work of **'WE THE PEOPLE'**



This sticker has
the power to bring
voters to the polls.
A little, anyway. Page 12

How are we doing
at our job of running
the country? Page 4

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Dakotafire is sparking a revival in rural communities of the Dakotas and beyond by encouraging conversations that help rural residents rethink what's happening and what's possible.

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Moody County Auditor Kristina Krull plans to try using "I Voted" stickers to increase turnout.

See the story on p. 12.

Photo by Emily Firman Pieper



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With therapists' help, stroke won't keep farmer from harvest

The staff of the therapy department at Faulkton Area Medical Center is working toward one big goal when Elmer Hamburger comes in to his appointments: Helping the Seneca farmer get back into the combine this fall.

The staff makes a point to know a patient's own goals. For Hamburger, the goal is sitting in the driver's seat during harvest. "They have that in the back of their mind when they are giving me therapy," Hamburger said.

The farmer from Seneca had a major stroke in March and was paralyzed on one side. FAMC is able to provide all three kinds of therapy Hamburger's doctor recommended: physical, occupational, and speech. Hamburger also appreciates the friendly, personal attention of the staff—he knows they know him and care about his progress.

"It's fun to have Elmer here," said Donna Crook, a physical therapy assistant. "Every time you see him, he's doing a little bit more."

In less than five months, he's progressed to walking with a cane and

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driving himself to appointments.

"God's the healer," Hamburger said. "But they do good work (at FAMC). I have to give them credit."

FAMC therapists work with people of all ages and with a variety of needs—from hospital in-patients to out-patient rehab to sports-related diagnoses.

For those who start therapy while in the hospital, the staff of the PT, OT and speech therapy departments may be the medical professionals that patients see most consistently through the whole healing process, explained physical therapist Jen Bauer. "We get to discharge them at their optimal function," Bauer said. "That's pretty cool to watch."

The goal is not just helping people get back the function they had before whatever incident brought them to therapy, according to occupational therapist Jean Mitchell, but to go beyond that.

"We want them to be able to do whatever they want to do without limitations," Mitchell said. "We like the Faulkton slogan, 'We believe in possible.'"

The staff develops skills that bring specialized help to their patients—for example, Mitchell is working toward certification in hand therapy, and physical therapist Chelsea Odden is learning the Graston Technique of soft tissue mobilization. The department uses Accelerated Care Plus equipment—as good as or better than equipment found in much larger facilities—which includes regular, research-based training on how to make the best use of that equipment to improve patient outcomes.

"We take the time to learn new techniques," Odden said. "Overall, we want to provide high-quality care. We want people to come here and know they will get better."

Hamburger knows he is better. And he knows that with a little help, he will get better yet. Harvest time is coming, and he is planning to be ready for it.

Members of the FAMC therapy department have helped Elmer Hamburger, seated, recover from a stroke this spring. Pictured, standing, from left, are Jen Bauer, physical therapist; Donna Crook, physical therapy assistant; Jean Mitchell, occupational therapist and Chelsea Odden, physical therapist. Not pictured is Alison Winter, speech pathologist.



The purpose of public education



Editor Heidi Marttila-Losure can be reached at heidi@dakotafire.net.

Our public schools are pushed and pulled in the direction of whatever is getting top billing in the headlines: One day, there's a call to improve reading. On another day, our technology skills are a crying shame. Tomorrow, it will be something else. And the paperwork and expectations increase all the while.

It's helpful, in this time of competing demands, to step back and consider why we have these institutions in our communities in the first place.

We often think about "public education" in terms of where the money comes from—it's education paid for by the public. But just as importantly, it's also education *of* the public. And in a democracy, the "public" is no small thing. It is, in fact, the essential thing—the structure of our nation is based upon the decisions that the public makes.

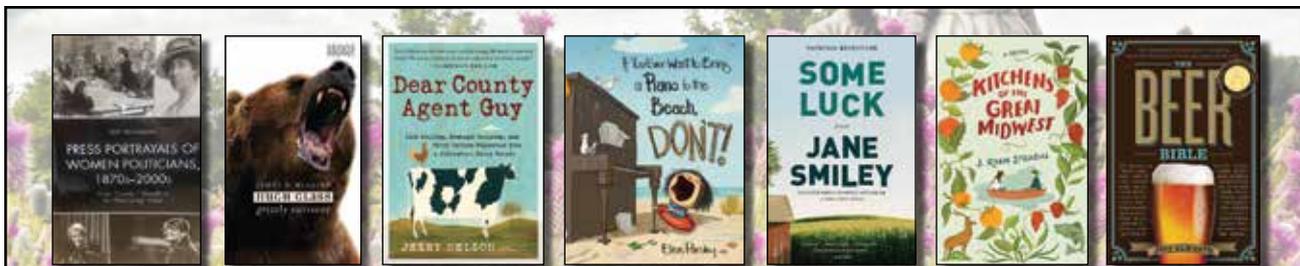
Even now, this is kind of a radical notion, and it certainly was when the nation was founded: We're going to let *just anybody* have a say in the rules we live by in the United States?!

Those who remember their U.S. history know that wasn't the plan right away. At first democracy was only meant for men of the white, property-holding variety. Literacy tests at the polls were sometimes implemented to keep away the uneducated or as a veil for racism. But eventually, we've gotten to where we are now: All citizens age 18 or older have the right to vote.

(More or less. There are a few exceptions, and some people have more hurdles to jump over than others. But we've come a long way.)

But even back when running the country was only the job of a select few, the founders recognized that it wouldn't work to let "just anybody" vote if they didn't understand or weren't informed about the decisions that needed to be made.

"The founders of the nation were convinced that the republic could survive only if its citizens were properly educated," historian David Tyack writes in "Seeking Common Ground: Public Schools in a Diverse Society." "This was a collective purpose, not simply an individual benefit or payoff to an interest group ... The common school ... was a place for both young and adult citizens to



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discover common civic ground, and, when they did not agree, to seek principled compromise.”

This means that public education in a democracy has a purpose that it does not have in other forms of government. In countries run by kings, dictators or oligarchies, it doesn't matter much if the people know how the government works, how to pass laws, how to debate ideas or how to compromise. But here, it does.

I think that idea doesn't get enough credence today.

Take a look at what our educational institutions say they are trying to achieve. The mission of the U.S. Department of Education, for example, is “to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.” Those are good goals, but there's no mention of how to be a competent citizen.

The Common Core State Standards Initiative, which is now setting the baseline for learning in the majority of schools in the country, has the tagline “preparing America's students for college & career.” What about preparation for citizenship?

Is education just an extensive job training program? Because if that's the case, industry could just set up and pay for its own schools.

Clearly, there's more to public education than career readiness.

I know it's not easy to get any of the many things on a teacher's to-do list accomplished. In many cases, they are working with kids with two strikes against them before they even step out the door in the morning.

But teaching our young people how to be thoughtful, informed citizens is vitally important to the future of our democracy. And helping kids understand that they live in a country where their opinion matters, where the best ideas can win the day, can be empowering in itself.

Sure, the system isn't perfect, and we should work to make it better. But that just means the public has some work to do.

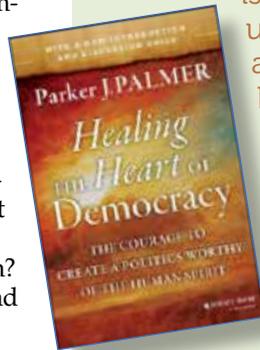
We should make sure our public schools are training the public to do that work. *

“Talking about ‘those people’ (in Washington, D.C., on whom we like to blame our ills) instead of talking with each other is a poor excuse for genuine political discourse. It is also a path to political disempowerment, a way to make sure that ‘We the People’ will have little or no leverage on the social and economic problems that concern us, and no way to discern and give voice to the common good. ...

“Being grown-ups in our private and public lives means taking responsibility for whatever is within our reach. And politics is always within our reach—if we understand it first and foremost as the business of ‘We the People’ and only secondarily as the business of the people we elect to office. **Every time we talk with family, friends, classmates, colleagues, strangers—including those who see things differently than we do—about the state of the Union, we have a chance**

to assume our share of responsibility for a democracy founded on citizen convictions of the common good. In statistical terms, our individual shares are insignificant, to be sure. In moral terms, however, they are vital. History has always been made by individuals doing their small parts in ways that have the potential to add up to something big.”

—From “Healing the Heart of Democracy” by Parker J. Palmer, published in 2011 by Jossey-Bass



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We the People

... apparently have some work to do

The one thing people seem to agree on this presidential election season is how awful it is.

by HEIDI MARTTILA-LOSURE

They look at the candidate from the other party, or from both major parties (who are both disliked by significantly more people than view them favorably), or at all four candidates on the ballot, and wonder how the pickings could be so poor. People might say something like, "Hey, who's running this show, anyway?!"

Well—we are.

The U.S. Constitution set up a system in which "We the People"—not kings, not dictators—run things. Much of our patriotism focuses on the rights that belong to us as citizens, including the right to vote. But there are also responsibilities that belong to us as citizens, including the responsibility to vote. We can't say we govern ourselves if we don't actually do the work of governing ourselves—and, in a representative democracy, that means voting. (Including, if the choices are terrible, finding ways to make the system more likely to produce good candidates.)

In a nation where only a little over half of the people who could vote did so in 2012, apparently not everyone takes that responsibility seriously. "People think they have more responsibility to mow their lawns than to vote," one participant said during the Summit on Civic Education & Engagement in Pierre, S.D., in June.

Participants at that event, which was sponsored by the Chiesman Center for Democracy based in Rapid City, saw a variety of factors that are decreasing civic engagement. They also discussed a variety of ways to get more of "We the People" involved in the job of running this country. We used that discussion as a starting point for the reporting that follows.

What's happening?

Voter turnout has a lot of room to improve.

By one measure, we aren't doing too bad in the Dakotas in terms of voter turnout. North and South Dakota ranked 10th (45 percent) and 11th (44.9 percent), respectively, in voter turnout in 2014, according to FairVote.org. That's better than the national average of a 35.9 percent, which was the lowest it's been in a midterm election since 1942.

But both the Dakotas' and the national statistics are terrible compared to the voter turnout numbers for the most recent major elections in other developed countries. At least 22 developed countries had turnouts of 60 percent or higher in 2014-16, according to the Pew Research Center.

(We will likely have a higher turnout this year, since more people vote in presidential elections. Turnout in 2012 was about 53 percent.)

And South Dakota has a clear problem spot: Young people (ages 18-30) aren't voting. Plenty of them register, but they don't show up at the polls. In 2014, only about one in five 18- to 30-year-olds actually voted.

In 2012, they did a little better—36.4 percent, according to the Council of State Governments

Knowledge Center. But they were beaten by the national average for 18- to 29-year-olds (45 percent) and the turnout rates of South Dakota's neighbors, North Dakota (51 percent) and Minnesota (58 percent).

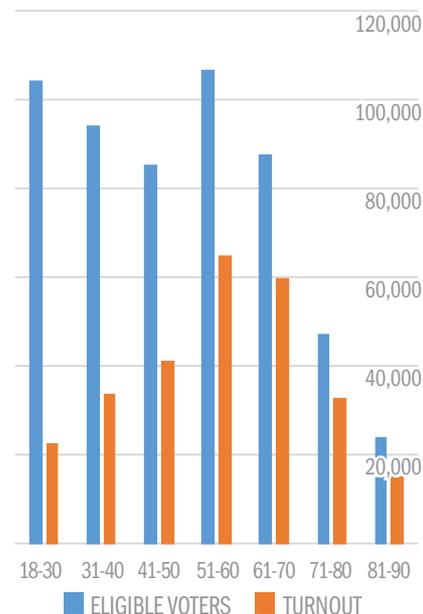
"We're getting beat" both regionally and nationally, said South Dakota Secretary of State Shantel Krebs. She's said that to some of the students she's visited when she's attended high schools to talk to students about the importance of voting.

Most of us don't trust the government.

Krebs, who spoke at the civic engagement summit, said she asks the students if they are registered

2014 general election by age group

About one in five 18- to 30-year-olds voted in 2014. That turnout is far less than any other age group.



Information provided by S.D. Secretary of State's Office

*...in order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice,
and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves
and our Posterity.*

(most of them who are of age are) and whether they are planning to vote. Those who said they weren't planning to vote had two common answers: They don't think it matters, and they don't trust government.

In a later interview, Krebs said she hasn't asked them for more details about what they mean by that lack of trust, so she's not sure if there's some fear that their votes won't be counted (in this talk of "rigged elections" this year). But, if these young people are anything like the rest of the country, the lack of trust in government has been around a lot longer than this election season.

Trust in government is at one of the lowest points since it started being measured in 1958. "Only 19% of Americans today say they can trust the government in Washington to do what is right 'just about always' (3%) or 'most of the time' (16%)," according to the Pew Research Center. Trust in government was at its highest (77 percent) in 1964. Except for a jump up to 60 percent right after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, trust in government hasn't broken 50 percent since 1973.

One interesting trend in these trust statistics: Democrats tend to trust government less when Republicans are in control of the White House, and Republicans trust government less when a Democrat is president. (The variance is greater among Republicans—Republicans' trust in government drops more when a Democrat is president. It's 13 percent now, with President Obama in the White House.)

This probably isn't unusual in a country that is increasingly partisan.

Another Pew Research Center survey looks at how Democrats and Republicans view members of the other party. "For the first time in surveys dating to 1992, majorities in both parties express not just unfavorable but very unfavorable views of the other party," according to the center. "And today, sizable shares of both

Democrats and Republicans say the other party stirs feelings of not just frustration, but fear and anger."

Civic conversations often aren't civil conversations.

This increasing animosity about the "other side" is likely at least a partial cause of one trend that the participants at the civic engagement summit in June said they noticed: Politics is often nasty.

Of course, this isn't unprecedented. It doesn't take a deep dive into history to unearth some of the jaw-dropping insults that were lobbed across the aisle in the nation's early years, not to mention duels. But former legislators speak of a time not too long ago when Democrats and Republicans ate at the same lunch tables and socialized together after hours. Those connections across the aisle are all but gone today.

One other factor that feeds this animosity is that people are limiting their news sources. Participants at the civic engagement event were asked where they got their news. The most common answer? Facebook.

Facebook can help people stay connected over distance, but it can also keep people from hearing other viewpoints, as people tend to select friends that are like themselves.

When there are no positive emotions about the other side—just fear and anger—playing hardball is easier. One participant at the summit said he had told his neighbors he was running for office, and their response was, "Why would you put yourself through that?"

That limits the kind of candidates who want to run for office. And we end up right where we started this article, with slim pickings and frustration all around.

So, what can we do about it?

Read some strategies on the following pages.



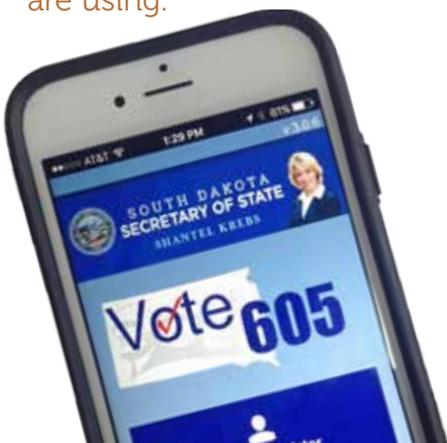
Participants in the South Dakota Summit on Civic Education & Engagement explored ideas on how to get more people to engage in their communities. Photos by Wes Brown/Chiesman Center for Democracy



Many groups are working to help voters

by WENDY ROYSTON

With absentee voting starting Sept. 23 for the general election, several entities are attempting to increase voter registration and/or turnout. Here are some of the strategies they are using.



Vote605 app

Voters can go to the websites of the secretaries of state for both North and South Dakota to find election information. The next step, according to South Dakota Secretary of State Shantel Krebs, is reaching voters where they are with an election app for iOS or Android devices.

"The majority of South Dakotans own some sort of mobile device," she said, adding that she's heard interest in the app from voters of all ages. "On this mobile app you can find your polling place, you can view your sample ballot, you can view your legislative district, you can access the county auditor's information and (request your) absentee ballot ... I think (the app) makes the process more 'at your fingertips' and more relevant to today's society."

The Vote 605 app is free and available for download at sdsos.gov/elections-voting/voting/VOTE605.aspx.

Candidate meetings

"The people who are going to vote should know the people they are voting for," said Lois Ivers Altenburg, president of the League of Women Voters of North Dakota.

The national LVW was created in 1920 by women who fought for the right to vote. They had been told women were not smart enough nor educated enough to handle the task, so they set about ensuring that all voters were empowered and informed—work that continues today.

One strategy the league uses is hosting candidate meetings. Altenburg said the organization aims to bring candidates and constituents together from the local level all the way up to the congressional level.

"We have had less luck with the top of the ticket, mostly because of scheduling," she said, so they mostly focus on county and state candidates.

The meetings are covered by local

Possible, probable, powerful: Three ways to make civic engagement better

How do you know if a strategy for civic engagement is going to do any good?

Hahrie Han, a political science professor from the University of California—Santa Barbara, has suggested some questions that those who want to do something to improve voter participation can use as a guide. Ask: **Does the action I want to take make voter participation more:**

- **possible?** Does it remove barriers to participation or otherwise make it easier to vote?
- **probable?** Does it make people want

to take part?

- **powerful?** Does it help people have an actual effect on policy, or directly people's lives?

The best strategies will do all three.

Here's an example: Some states have adopted automatic voter registration, which removes one barrier to participation, making voting more possible. But it doesn't help voting become more probable or powerful.

One strategy for making voting more probable is helping people see how they

have skin in the game—how the policies they are voting on could affect them personally.

Ethan Frey of the Ford Foundation, which published an article on Han's work, suggests that the clearest way to make participation more powerful is to take action in numbers. "Most institutions, especially government, don't respond to individual demands (unless you have a lot of money) as well as they do to collective action," Frey writes.

This means that even if civic engagement starts with voting, it probably shouldn't end there.



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South Dakota Secretary of State Shantel Krebs spoke about voter turnout in Pierre, S.D., on June 23. Photo by Heidi Marttila-Losure



in October, and carried by candidates throughout the state.

"The voters' guide ... is very popular—legislative candidates in particular going door-to-door will carry the voters' guide," she said.

Visits to schools

Krebs has been active in trying to improve South Dakota's poor turnout among 18- to 30-year-olds.

Her office sends letters to high school government classes, reminding students to register to vote as soon as they turn 18. And by Election Day, she will have visited dozens of schools, speaking to students about the importance of voting.

When students tell her they aren't planning on voting, she explains why voting matters to both them and their communities.

"(Voting) on a local level specifically affects you ... (your) school system, your roads, your football field, your gas tax," Krebs said about what she tells the students. "Who decides how much tax is going to be on a can of Coke or on a gallon of gas?"

The main message, she said, is explaining to students how voting relates to them—that through voting, other people are making decisions that affect their lives and their pocketbooks.

She also tells them that individual voters have a lot of power in local elections. In municipal races, a tie vote is determined by a coin toss, or some other form of drawing of lots. And that happened in the Platte mayor's race in 2015. One voter would have made the difference in that race. *

television crews to increase the probability that the average voter will be able to witness the meeting.

The League of Women Voters also organizes meetings to educate voters on ballot measures, and hosts speakers at its monthly meetings in Fargo and Bismarck. In recent years, the league sponsored conversations about local, state and federal childcare policies, as well as funded studies.

"Some of the agreements we came to through those studies really did change the landscape of childcare in North Dakota," Ivers Altenburg said.

Voter guides

About 40 years ago, the League of Women Voters began publishing easy-to-read voter's guides.

"Because it's technical and has to meet certain rules for format, reading about an initiated measure or a referred measure on the ballot ... is difficult for people," Ivers Altenburg said.

This year's guide will be published

Whose job is improving voter turnout?

While South Dakota Secretary of State Shantel Krebs has been actively encouraging young adults to register, North Dakota Secretary of State Al Jaeger doesn't see "getting out the vote" as part of his job description.

"I'm not comfortable using tax payer money to increase voter turnout. I will use it to educate the people about the voting process, and then it's up to them to decide whether to vote, and (up to) the candidates ... to get their message across as to why people should vote," Jaeger said. "That, to me, is not my job. My job is to be sure that we administer elections in a fair and efficient manner, and educate the people about the process of voting."

Jaeger said he does not believe he could have an effect from his position anyway.

"There isn't a secretary of state in the country who has the power to increase voter turnout," he said. "Voter turnout is completely driven by issues, candidates—what's on the ballot—and my position here is that we will educate the people on the process of voting, but I will never do anything saying we encourage you to vote, or turn out to vote."

A federal judge recently ruled that a different branch of North Dakota government was less encouraging of turnout than it should have been. U.S. District Judge Daniel L. Hovland said a 2013 voter ID law passed by the North Dakota Legislature was unfair to Native Americans, who are less likely to have the kinds of ID that the law allowed. Hovland's ruling means the law won't be in effect in the upcoming election.

North Dakota's elections have also received praise recently, however: The Pew Charitable Trusts rank North Dakota the top state in their Election Performance Index. South Dakota is 21st.

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Roscoe, SD

Trust starts with real

by MIKE KNUTSON

I came to realize the importance of trust back when I was doing local economic development work.

Occasionally, the economic development efforts that I helped lead were met with skepticism. Like most community leaders, I was heckled by the occasional, "What? You want to bring that business to our town?"

Luckily, I received some great advice from my friend Jim Beddow: "When two people have a problem, the problem often isn't the real problem," he said. "The problem is the state of their relationship."

Nice.

But how do we build relationships—especially among people who are not our close friends? And how do we build the trust in those relationships so that we can make things happen?

First, create opportunities for conversation. Sociologists Robert Putnam and Ray Oldenburg bemoaned the loss of trust (i.e., social capital) among community residents and blamed the loss of "institutions" where people hold informal conversations. The logic goes that if people don't bowl together in bowling leagues, if people don't come together for conversations after church or bump into each other on Main Street, then people won't get to know each other. And when people don't know each other, it's difficult for them to trust one another.

There are lots of ways to create these opportunities for conversation, the most obvious of which is go up to someone you don't know and start a conversation. Simple. On the other end of the spectrum, you could host a community engagement meeting that brings together the entire community for a conversation about something important. Very productive (when done well), but also very time-consuming.

I've employed an in-between option with a board that I have helped chair for the last year. It's a regional board, and we only meet four times a year. To help people get to know each other in a meaningful way, I've started each meeting by asking a question that causes people to share something about both themselves and the organization.

My guess is that some board members think it's hokey or that it wastes time. But if we can improve our relationships and increase trust, it will pay dividends in the end.

Second, listen with curiosity and wonder. I learned the phrase in some facilitation training that I have gone through. The idea is that curiosity and judgment can't exist in our minds at the same time. It's true.



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And while curiosity may have killed the cat, nothing kills a conversation more than judgment.

Listening with curiosity and wonder starts by not rushing to offer answers and arguments. Just listen and try to ask, "I wonder why this person feels that way?"

I recently read an article by Benjamin Mathes, who set up a "Free Listening" station at the Republican National Convention. One of the people who came up to his station was a lady who wanted to talk about her belief that abortion is murder.

Listening to her talk was difficult for Mathes, who held opposing views. But instead of jumping in with his opinions, he let her finish before asking a powerful question. "Thank you for sharing that. (What is) your story? I'd love to know how you came to this point of view."

After sidestepping the personal nature of the question, she finally relented.

"My whole life, I knew I was meant to have children. Then, when I was 18—18!—the doctor told me I'd never have children. My ovaries were damaged, or missing ... it doesn't matter which. I kept it a secret, and when my husband found out, he left me. I'm alone, my body doesn't work, I'm old ... who will ever love me?" (urbanconfessional.org/blog/howtodisagree)

The situation of this woman's life had shaped her views on this controversial topic. To understand her and the strength of her convictions on this issue, one must hear her story.

People empathize when a person shares this type of a story. Empathy and trust go hand in hand.

Finally, share stories about yourself. The above example shows the power of building trust by asking someone to tell you their story. But why wait for someone to ask you to share your story? Look for your own opportunities.

Too often, leaders are afraid of sharing their stories and letting

people get to know them. But as storytelling expert Annette Simmons writes, when people don't know you very well, they formulate their own story about you as a defense mechanism. It's easier for them not to trust you.

Personal stories that reveal our humanity, however, become the antidote. **When we reveal our humanity, people see us for who we are, and they begin to trust us.**

One way to tell a story that accomplishes this goal is to tell your "who am I" story—your story about why you do the work that you do, or why you volunteer to serve on a board or committee. Or maybe it's a time when something didn't go right for you, and you learned a lesson. Obviously, not all situations are appropriate for these stories. But if you look, you'll find the right time. People will see you for who you are, and they will trust you a little bit more.

Yes, relationships matter

Building trust isn't guaranteed by using the three ideas I shared above. They will help, but you still have to prove that you are trustworthy by doing the "right thing."

And if there's only one lesson that you take from this article, it's this: Relationships matter, and we have to invest time and energy into building trust with those with whom we work. It's a lesson I wish our national leaders would learn. *

Through his business, MAK(e) Strategies, Mike Knutson of Watertown, S.D., is a community coach and facilitator. Among his many activities, Mike currently serves as a community coach in Home Address, a Dakota Resources program designed to build community capacity for strategic housing development, now and in the future.



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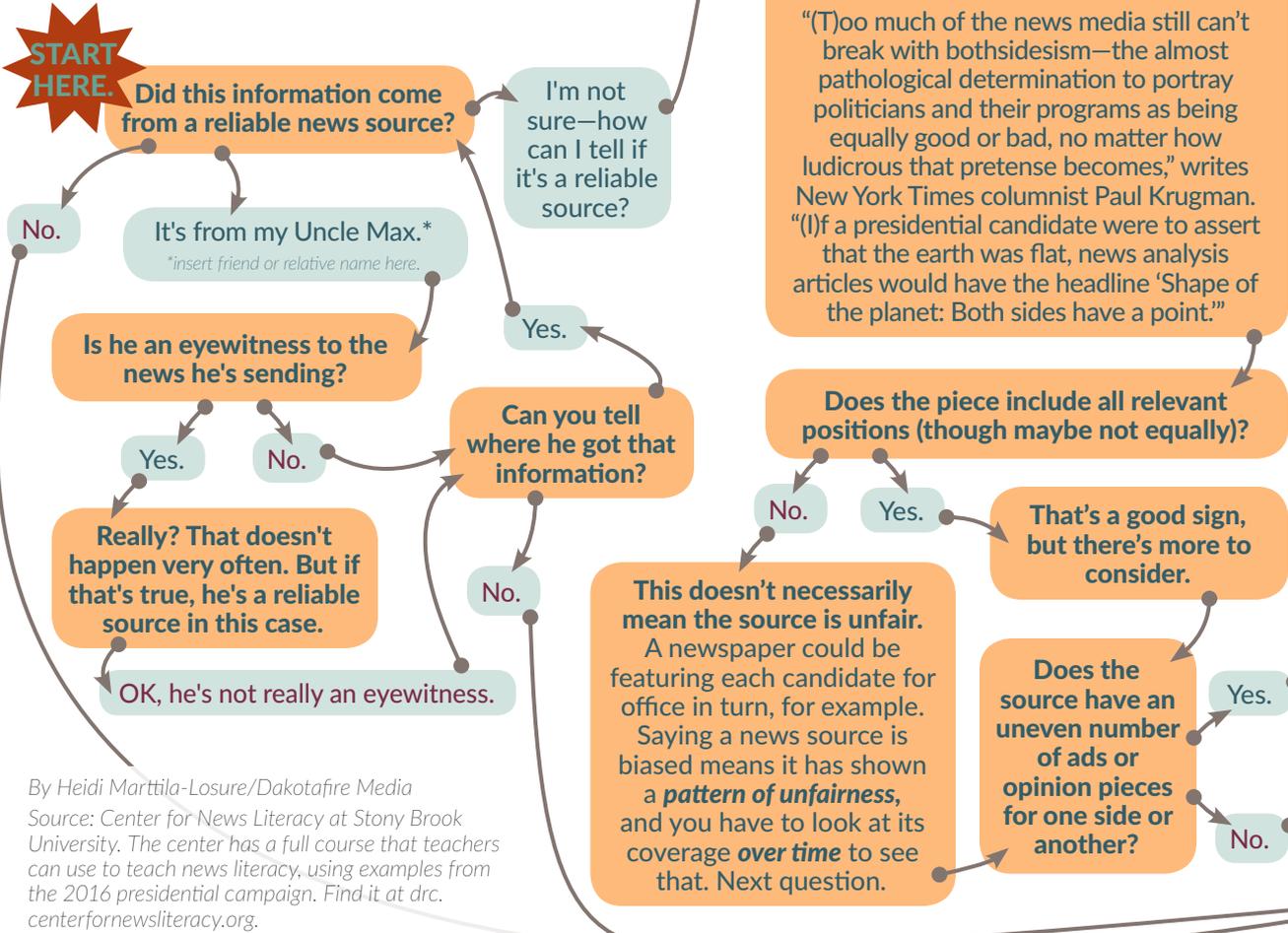
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Navigating the news

For democracy to work, voters have to be informed. The problem for citizens today is that it isn't easy to navigate the vast sea of information available. With so many new sources for news, how can you tell what's good information and what's the work of shysters? **Here's our brief guide to learning this increasingly important skill called news literacy.**



By Heidi Marttila-Losure/Dakotafire Media
Source: Center for News Literacy at Stony Brook University. The center has a full course that teachers can use to teach news literacy, using examples from the 2016 presidential campaign. Find it at drc.centerfornewsliteracy.org.

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This can be an indication that this news organization has a stated political preference. But it doesn't necessarily mean that the news coverage from that source is biased. Good journalists are bound by ethical guidelines and aren't influenced by what happens in the ad space (where people with more money can buy more space) or on the opinion page (where a small but passionate minority can write lots of letters).

Is the news source independent (it isn't run by someone clearly in favor of one side)?

Yes. No.

This can be relevant information (going to a campaign website to find out what a candidate thinks, for example), but realize that you are getting—at best—half the story. At worst, you are getting deliberate misinformation.

Have the facts of the story been verified as accurate—ideally by at least one source that has no "skin in the game" (Census data, nonpartisan offices, etc.)?

No. Yes.

This is NOT information you should use to inform your voting decisions. Look elsewhere.

Is the news source accountable if it makes mistakes? (Does it print or broadcast corrections?)

No. Yes.

Reliable news organizations value accuracy more than the appearance of perfection and will correct the record if they screw up.

I'm not sure—how can I tell?

Is it news or opinion?

News. Opinion.

OK. Is it opinion journalism, or just opinion?

Follow this advice from the Center for News Literacy: "Look who's talking." In print, news is written by reporters, staff writers, editors and correspondents; on TV, it's reported by reporters, correspondents, and anchors. People with the titles columnist and commentator offer opinion. It's harder to tell with analysts, contributors, consultants, pollsters, and strategists. These people often have allegiances that influence the information they provide.

"Look at how they're talking." People speaking in the first person are often giving an opinion. Other signs of opinion, according to the center: "exaggeration, emotionally loaded words and sarcasm."

Sigh. Spell it out for me.

Opinion journalism can be a valid source of information for voters—if it's opinion journalism, not just opinion. "Savvy news consumers turn to straight news reports to become informed and then turn to opinion journalism for insight and understanding," according to the Center for News Literacy. "Both are based on principles that distinguish journalism from all other media: verification, independence and accountability. By definition, opinion journalism is one-sided, but it always draws conclusions from a fact-based inquiry with an allegiance to the truth."

Doesn't look like it's fact-based.

It's journalism.

This COULD be good information for your voting decisions, but don't rely on this alone. Find other sources as well.

This is most likely to be good information for your voting decisions. Watch to make sure this source keeps following journalistic standards!



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WHAT'S POSSIBLE: STICKTIVISM



Stickers can bring more people to the polls

by EMILY FIRMAN PIEPER

Did you know that running errands on Election Day could help increase voter turnout? It might, if you're wearing your "I Voted!" sticker.

Sporting the sticker after voting is more than just a fun way to show that you exercised your constitutional right to vote—it's also being recognized as a tool to increase voter turnout.

"People see the sticker and think to themselves, 'Oh yeah, I forgot to vote. I've got to do my civic duty as well,'" said South Dakota Secretary of State Shantel Krebs.

The state does not provide stickers to voting precincts, but Krebs is encouraging county auditors to consider having the stickers available on Election Day. The S.D. Secretary of State's Office will conduct a training for auditors this fall in preparation for the upcoming general election. One of the action items is for the auditors to "strongly consider" using the "I Voted!" stickers.

Krebs estimates that 40 to 42 out of 66 South Dakota counties already use the stickers.

Whether North Dakotans see the stickers is a local decision. Rachel Bergquist, election administration system manager with the North Dakota Secretary of State's Office, didn't have numbers associated with county use.

"This is a county preference where they buy them as a courtesy for the voters," Bergquist said.

Moody County voters will likely have the option of wearing stickers out of their polling locations this November.

"We hope it will remind people to go out and vote," said Kristina Krull, the Moody County auditor based in Flandreau, S.D. Krull is exploring



Moody County Deputy Auditor Kathy Lunday shops for "I Voted" stickers to give to voters on Election Day. Photo by Emily Firman Pieper

different options for purchasing the stickers to have on hand for voters. When a roll of 1,000 stickers comes up on Amazon.com for around 2 cents per sticker, the potential increase in voter turnout seems worth the expense. "It's just a little encouragement," Krull said.

Recent studies suggest this might be a courtesy more auditors will want to extend.

"Individuals will embrace behavior that is socially encouraged," according to a paper published in 2013 by professors from Yale, Loyola and the University of Mississippi. The paper, entitled "Social Judgments and Political Participation: Estimating the Consequences of Social Rewards and Sanctions for Voting," concludes that if your peers witness you having returned from the voting booth with your slick new "I Voted!" sticker, they will not only hold you in higher esteem, they'll want to vote as well.

The paper goes into much deeper discussion on social norms and political participation, but for the sake of the sticker discussion, we have our answer: Publicly displaying your "I Voted!" sticker helps increase voter turnout on Election Day.

Auditors, take note of what grade-school teachers and potty-training parents have known for years: If you want to get results, put a sticker on it. *

Guide to ballot measures

OK, folks, roll up your sleeves: It's time to dig into your democratic duty.

North Dakota has five ballot measures this year; South Dakota has 10. (One additional measure, to allow corporate farming, was on the ballot in North Dakota's primary in June. Voters rejected the measure.)

You can find the exact text of the ballot measures, plus explanations by the state attorneys general, pro and con statements, and contact information for the measures' sponsors on the two states' secretary of state websites: sos.nd.gov and sdsos.gov.

Why are these measures called different things?

The name of the measure shows how it came to be and/or how it will take effect if it's passed.

Initiated Measure or Initiated Statutory Measure: If passed, this changes statute (state law). Sponsors of the measure had to get a certain number of signatures (13,871 in South Dakota and 13,452 in North Dakota) in order for the measure to be placed on the ballot.

Referred Law or Referendum: If passed, this would keep a law that was recently passed by the state legislature from taking effect. The sponsors of

the South Dakota referred law had to gather 13,871 signatures before it could be placed on the ballot. There are no referenda on the ballot this year in North Dakota.

Initiated Constitutional Amendment: This measure would change the state constitution. Constitutions are intended to be harder to change than statutes, so signature requirements for a constitutional amendments are higher than for the other two measures—27,741 signatures in South Dakota or 26,904 signatures in North Dakota.

NORTH DAKOTA

keywords are highlighted for easier reference.

What's it really about?	Who is sponsoring?	What PACs are working for or against it?*
CONSTITUTIONAL MEASURE NO. 1 (SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 4010): This amendment would require appointed legislators to live in the district they represent.		
Currently, to be a state legislator, a person has to be a "qualified elector" (a citizen of the United States, at least 18 years old) from the district they represent. This clarifies that the rule applies to legislators who are appointed to fill terms as well: Anyone who represents a district in the legislature has to live in that district.	Sens. Rich Wardner and Mac Schneider and Reps. Al Carlson and Kenton Onstad	None
CONSTITUTIONAL MEASURE NO. 2 (SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 4003): This amendment changes how tax money gained from oil extraction can be used to support education.		
In 1993, N.D. legislators created a "foundation aid stabilization fund" that could be used to keep funding for schools stable, even if the state government overall had budget cuts. Ten percent of oil extraction taxes go into the fund, which swelled to hundreds of millions during the oil boom. This amendment says that if that fund gets 15 percent bigger than what is going to schools from the general fund, the legislature can transfer out the "extra" amount. Currently, only the governor can move money from the fund. Those transferred "extra" funds may be used for educational purposes, but the amendment doesn't require that.	The 2015 North Dakota Legislature's Legislative Management and Government Finance Committee	None
INITIATED CONSTITUTIONAL MEASURE NO. 3: This amendment would provide more rights to crime victims (A similar bill is on the ballot in South Dakota.)		
Supporters say crime victims need additional rights such as the right to privacy and the right to provide input through the whole judicial process. The amendment would also expand the definition of a victim to include family members and others with a similar relationship. Opponents say these rights are all already covered in state or federal law, and that expanding the definition of a victim will delay the judicial process.	Kathleen M Wrigley, Bismarck	PRO: Marsy's Law for North Dakota LLC CON: None
INITIATED STATUTORY MEASURE NO. 4: This measure increases taxes on tobacco products to fund veterans' services.		
This measure would increase taxes on cigarettes by 400 percent, and the tax on other tobacco products by up to 56 percent. Tobacco tax revenue would go to the general fund, to cities, to the Community Health Trust Fund, and to a new fund that would be created to support veterans' services. Supporters say an increase in taxes will decrease tobacco use, and the money generated will help veterans. Opponents say a tax on a product that a minority of the public uses, and that they hope to reduce the use of, is not a good way to fund needed programs.	Eric L. Johnson, Grand Forks	PRO: Raise it for Health North Dakota CON: North Dakotans Against the 400% Tax Increase

*PACs are political action committees. Note that PACs aren't the only indications of support or opposition for a measure.

NORTH DAKOTA, *continued*

What's it really about?	Who is sponsoring?	What PACs are working for or against it?*
INITIATED STATUTORY MEASURE NO. 5: This measure would allow the medical use of marijuana		
This measure would allow the use of marijuana for the treatment of certain medical conditions, such as cancer, AIDS, hepatitis C, glaucoma, and epilepsy. Supporters say it provides help for ill patients. Opponents say the program would cost millions a year to administer, hard to find in a time of budget shortfalls.	Rilie Ray Morgan, Fargo	

SOUTH DAKOTA

What's it really about?	Who is sponsoring?	What political action committees are working for or against it?*
CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT R: This would allow the legislature to determine some new way to oversee South Dakota's tech schools		
Right now, South Dakota's four tech schools are part of the K-12 system, which some say isn't really a natural fit. Supporters say the tech schools need special attention, important as they are to preparing tomorrow's workers. But supporters don't want them to slide under the Board of Regents' authority, either. This gives the legislature the authority to set up something else.	Placed on the ballot by the 2015 legislature	PRO: Tech Schools for South Dakota (Greg Von Wald) CON: none
CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT S: This amendment would provide more rights to crime victims (A similar bill is on the ballot in North Dakota.)		
Supporters say crime victims need additional rights such as the right to privacy and the right to provide input through the whole judicial process. The amendment would also expand the definition of a victim to include family members and others with a similar relationship. Opponents say these rights are all already covered in state or federal law, and that expanding the definition of a victim will delay the judicial process.	Jason Glodt, Pierre	PRO: Marsy's Law for South Dakota, LLC (Jason Glodt and Chrissie Hastie) CON: none
CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT T: This amendment would transfer the job of legislative redistricting to a commission.		
Currently, the legislature does redistricting. In practice, what often happens is gerrymandering—the party that is in power (and both parties do this) draws the boundaries for legislative districts so that their incumbents' races are easier to win. This amendment would give that authority to a redistricting commission. Members of the commission would be selected by the state Board of Elections, and rules would limit those members from running for office for at least three years after serving on the committee, so there is less of a chance for self-dealing. Opponents say this committee would give power to people who weren't elected.	Doug Sombke, Groton; Karla Hofhenke, Huron; Matt Sibley, Huron	PRO: #SDRTTHING2DO, (Doug Sombke and Karla Hoffenke) CON: No T (David Roetman and Jason Ravnsborg)
CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT U: This amendment would limit interest rates only on loans that don't have a written agreement. It would also block laws that try to set limits differently.		
The key part of this amendment is whether a loan has a written agreement: Its 18 percent limit only applies to loans that don't have an agreement in writing. It's hard to think of where this limit would apply, since state law requires that title loans have a written agreement (SDCL 54-4-70), and "an agreement for a loan of money" has to be in writing (SDCL 53-8-2). So, on written loans, there would be no limit to what a lender could charge. The amendment also has a provision that doesn't allow any other laws to be made that would overrule this amendment—so, if Constitutional Amendment U passes, the 36 percent cap in Initiated Measure 21 couldn't be enforced.	Lisa Furlong, North Sioux City	PRO: South Dakotans for Fair Lending (Lisa Furlong) CON: No on 'U'sury (Cathy Brechtelsbauer and Sister Gabriella Crowley)
CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT V: This amendment would create nonpartisan elections		
Right now, South Dakota has closed primaries—only Republicans can vote in the Republican primary, only Democrats vote in the Democratic primary, etc. This measure would eliminate those party primaries and create ONE preliminary election in which all candidates are on the same ballot. Party affiliations wouldn't be listed. Top votegetters would then face off in the general election. Supporters say this would allow more voters to take part earlier in the process (including independents, who now get no say until the general election), and in a state like South Dakota that is dominated by one party, it would create a more competitive general election. Opponents say this ballot will be less transparent without party labels, and if only the top votegetters face off, voters will often end up with fewer choices in the general election than they have now.	Rick Weiland, Sioux Falls	PRO: Vote Yes on V—South Dakotans for Non-Partisan Elections, Rick Weiland and Dan Foley CON: No on Amendment V, Will Mortenson

SOUTH DAKOTA, *continued*

What's it really about?	Who is sponsoring?	What political action committees are working for or against it?*
<p>REFERRED LAW 19: This law backs up the period when candidates circulate petitions increases the number of signatures required for Republican and Democratic candidates; and changes who can sign independents' nominating petitions.</p> <p>Currently, candidates circulate petitions between Jan. 1 and the last Tuesday in March. This moves that petition drive time to Dec. 1 through the first Tuesday in March, which is intended to give people more time to challenge those petitions. It changes the number of signatures that candidates have to gather in that time—Democrats and Republicans have to gather more signatures than they did before, and independents don't have to get as many. But independents may find they have a harder time getting on the ballot because Democrats and Republicans are no longer allowed to sign their petitions.</p>	Cory Heidelberg, Aberdeen	PRO: none CON: South Dakotans for Fair Elections, Cory Heidelberg
<p>REFERRED LAW 20: This law lowers the minimum wage for non-tipped employees under the age of 18.</p> <p>In 2014, South Dakotans voted to raise the minimum wage to \$8.50, to be adjusted according to the cost of living thereafter. In the last session, legislators voted to reduce the minimum wage and remove the cost of living adjustment for non-tipped employees under the age of 18. Supporters say it gives inexperienced young people an edge in hiring that they wouldn't otherwise have. Opponents say many young people do the same work as older workers and they should be treated the same.</p>	Cory Heidelberg, Aberdeen	PRO: none CON: SD Voice, Cory Heidelberg
<p>INITIATED MEASURE 21: The measure would cap certain loans (often called payday loans at an annual percentage rate of 36 percent.</p> <p>Today, there is no cap on these interest rates. Lenders can charge whatever interest rate they want, which has been as much as 574 percent when figured as an annual percentage rate. Opponents say people need those loans when unexpected needs arise. Supporters say the high interest rates can trap those people in debt they can never pay back.</p>	Steve Hildebrand, Steve Hickey, and Reynold Nesiba, all from Sioux Falls	PRO: South Dakotans for Responsible Lending (Steve Hickey and Reynold Nesiba); Yes on 21 (Cathy Brechtelsbauer and Sister Gabriella Crowley) CON: Give Us Credit South Dakota (Bradley Thuringer)

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SOUTH DAKOTA, *continued*

What's it really about?	Who is sponsoring?	What political action committees are working for or against it?*
<p>INITIATED MEASURE 22: This measure revises state campaign finance and lobbying laws with the goal of reducing corruption. It also creates a way to publicly finance campaigns for statewide or legislative office.</p> <p>A lot of changes are packed into this one measure: It creates a statewide ethics commission and strengthens enforcement of ethics violations. It sets limits on how much lobbyists, political action committees and others can give to politicians. It provides more transparency to who is giving money to campaigns. And it sets up a program to finance candidates who choose to participate with tax dollars—citizens can spend two \$50 credits on whichever candidate they'd like. Supporters see this as one big boom of a measure to clean up politics in South Dakota. Opponents see wasted tax dollars and the privacy of donors being infringed.</p>	<p>Don Frankenfeld, Rapid City, and Rick Weiland, Sioux Falls</p>	<p>PRO: South Dakotans for Ethics Reform (Rick Weiland and Dan Foley); South Dakotans for Integrity (Don Frankenfeld and Henry DeHaan)</p> <p>CON: Defeat22.com (Ben Lee and Delaine Van Deest)</p>
<p>INITIATED MEASURE 23: The attorney general's entire explanation is two sentences: "This measure gives corporate organizations and non-profit organizations the right to charge a fee for any services provided. This measure takes effect in July 2017."</p> <p>The wording is vague, but this isn't really about <i>just any</i> corporation or non-profit—it's about unions, and whether they can charge a fee to those workers who aren't members of the union but who benefit from the work that unions do to negotiate better pay, benefits, working conditions, etc. In 1977, the U.S. Supreme Court said it was constitutional for unions to charge fees for non-members to eliminate "free riders" who aren't paying their "fair share" for the work of securing benefits, according to an NPR story. Opponents say workers shouldn't need to pay fees as part of having a job.</p>	<p>Scott Niles, Newell, and Will Thomssen, Sioux Falls</p>	<p>PRO: South Dakotans for Fairness, Scott Niles and Will Thomssen</p> <p>CON: South Dakotans for Freedom and Jobs, Richard Hilgemann and Robert Beiswenger; Defending Workers Rights South Dakota, Jason Ravensborg and David Roetman; and No on 23, David Owen and Rusty Fiegen</p>





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HELP WANTED:

Group strategizes on recruiting rural teachers

by HEIDI MARTTILA-LOSURE

Rural school districts face challenges from several directions when recruiting teachers.

- Baby boomers are retiring.
- Many small towns are losing population and vitality.
- Urban school districts often can pay more than rural districts.
- The education profession as a whole has become more of a pressure cooker with changing standards and more reporting requirements.

All these and more factor into rural districts' struggle to find qualified teachers—especially the kind of “teacher-leaders” that can have a dramatic impact in the lives of rural students and the communities in which they live.

These are some of the ideas that started off a two-day conversation about rural teacher recruitment and retention at Dakota Wesleyan University in June.

The event, which was sponsored by Dakota Wesleyan and the Rural Schools Collaborative, drew 69 participants from nine states. In addition to providing an opportunity to think deeply about the issue, the event was intended to build a network of people who care about rural teacher recruitment and to help the Rural Schools Collaborative work with that network to develop more successful projects.

One key insight for Mike Knutson of Watertown, S.D., one of the event organizers, was that teachers they want to recruit to rural places are not necessarily young.

“As I heard second-career teachers tell us to not forget about them,” Knutson said, “I was reminded of the research that tells us that small towns should focus their recruitment efforts on people age 30-49 because that’s the age when people decide that they want to move back to small towns.”

The group came up with a long list of insights and suggestions. Gary Funk, director of the Rural Schools Collaborative, saw promise in work that starts well before teachers step into a classroom.

“I believe teacher preparation programs that have an intentional rural focus and engage community oriented organizations are doable and have great potential,” Funk said. *



Photo courtesy the Rural Schools Collaborative

Here are some insights from the group’s conversation.

What are the roles and characteristics of outstanding teacher-leaders?

- Active in the community.
- Active in school events.
- Are mentored and become mentors.
- Innovative. They see things outside the box.
- Possess passion for people and are dedicated to their work.
- Build relationships with students, parents and community members.

How can we work together to bolster the recruitment of future rural teacher-leaders?

- Develop a network of positive role models to encourage people to become rural teachers. “Equip teachers to promote teaching as a noble profession.”
- Retell the rural story; emphasize the positive aspects of the rural experience. “We need to learn to tell the stories of place better.”
- Recruit teachers while they are still students. “Grow your own!” “Recruit future rural teachers with the same vigor we recruit college athletes!”
- Recruit mid-career professionals who may be tied to a given community.
- Develop scholarship incentives for teachers to commit to a rural teaching placement.

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Anticipating a demand for business leaders after World War II and the Korean Wars, the university was ready with new classes in accounting, marketing and management. The programs were geared toward the educational needs of returning veterans who sought an expanded role in the business world. NAU believes that a university should be built around the needs of its students—that's why we spent decades cultivating opportunities like this to meet those needs. And as NAU continued to expand in both its geographical locations, online courses and its faculty and staff, the focus remained on Harold D. Buckingham's belief in providing everyone the opportunity to pursue their education.

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Redfield

Town works for a bright future with new housing, new school, new faces and community pride

Redfield, S.D., could be called a small city or a big town. It has features that are the best of both.

“Main Street is a very interesting, fun place to go visit on a Saturday afternoon. You’ve still got those good, enjoyable family things and shopping” as in a larger community, according to Lisa Zens, executive director of Grow Spink, Inc., headquartered in Redfield. But children “can still go outside and play or ride their bike, and someone will let us know if there’s a problem.”

Zens, who raised her two biological children mostly in Sioux Falls before moving to Redfield, where she gained four more through marriage, said the way she and her husband are raising their younger children is much different from how she raised the older ones.

“In a big city, you have many amenities, but you might not go out and enjoy those things, because you don’t quite see them in the same perspective as you do when you only have those things to do,” she said.

As of the 2010 census, Redfield ranked 30th out of more than 300 South Dakota communities in population, with 2,333 people living in the community.

story by WENDY ROYSTON

photos by WENDY ROYSTON & HEIDI MARTTILA-LOSURE



Lisa Zens, executive director of Grow Spink, Inc., says Redfield's distance from larger cities has helped it become the trade center for the rural region between Huron and Aberdeen.

Housing hustle

Over the past two decades, the Redfield housing market has been actively developed by both RADC and GSI, along with help from the city. Ten single-family homes, one twin home and one four-unit building have been constructed so far in the Prairie Winds development. That development, focused on increasing the community's higher-end housing market, was started by RADC, with help from the city, in the 1990s.

Redevelopment of what once was a trailer court in the early 2000s is geared more toward moderate and low-income housing. GSI did the redevelopment on that land, and moved in two governor's houses. RADC then took over that development, and two spec houses have since been built, with two more nearing completion in what now is known as Packard's Addition.

It's an effort Chase said has had a "domino effect" on the local housing market.

"Building apartment complexes that financially will cash-flow isn't easy to do," Chase said, "so we decided we would take the top-down approach ... Some of the people who are building and/or purchasing new homes are leaving vacancies in the middle of the market. We're creating a multi-level housing movement, so to speak."

Seed money for construction came from the sale of a 10,000-square-foot building the city erected in the industrial park in the 1990s. Eventually, RADC acquired the building, the original tenant moved out, and it was rented to a series of other businesses before being sold to Wilbur-Ellis. Chase said RADC "breaks even" on the costs of materials and labor with the sale of each home.

"You go through all of this work to sell a lot, basically, but the main thing that we're doing is trying to drive the availability of housing," he said. "It's all about the people. The more people we've got coming to town, the more people you've got available to work, which might give (a business) the opportunity locally to grow."

Continued on page 22

"It's a nice-sized community to raise children," said Jim Ellenson, a longtime Redfield educator who owned the Dairy Queen in town and is on the Redfield Chamber of Commerce and 4-H Leaders boards. "And there are a lot of jobs in town—there's more jobs than people."

A recent search on the Department of Labor website shows 42 open positions in town. Redfield has a variety of small chain retailers and restaurants, mixed in with small "mom and pop shops" with local roots, plus entertainment options—including a drive-in movie theater and a bowling alley—not common to many smaller Midwest communities.

"We're kind of a 'tweener,'" said Shad Storley, superintendent of the Redfield School District. Redfield has the benefit of being big enough to support a bustling commerce, but "it's more of a small-town feeling. When you walk down the street, you're calling people by their first name, and they're calling you by your first name. That's kind of nice."

Redeveloping development

Like most communities in South Dakota, however, Redfield's population is on the decline, dipping from 2,518 at the 2000 census to the most recent 2,333 figure—a drop of 185 people, or 7 percent. As a result, the focus of the community's development groups has shifted.

"Fifteen or 20 years ago, (development) was all about trying to bring out-of-state businesses into ... our community that would bring jobs along with it, and we were always trying to bring new businesses to town," said Shawn Chase, president

of the Redfield Area Development Corporation and owner of Chase Ford.

Now, "there's not a lot of it going on in the whole state, but especially not in these small towns due to lack of available workforce. ...

You've got to work with what you've got, because it's a pipedream to think you can open a business with 50 jobs, because there aren't 50 (available) employees. ... Instead of economic development ... it's more based on community development."

In recent years, development in Redfield has focused a lot on housing.

"For a very long time, there was never available inventory" for newcomers, nor for those already in town who were looking to upgrade, Chase said. "So we thought maybe we start with housing and community development, to give people the opportunity to live here, and maybe we will be able to (focus on business recruitment again) someday."



Retired teacher and former business owner Jim Ellenson, who is active with the Chamber and 4-H Leaders Association, says Redfield is the perfect-sized town to raise a family.

Construction commotion

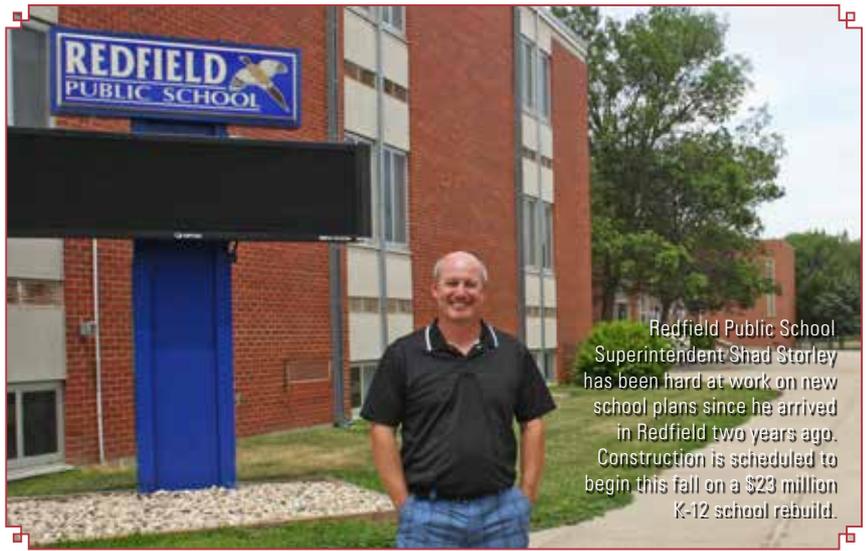
This summer, Redfield was alive with construction crews working on a Highway 212 reconstruction project through the center of town and the construction of 36 miles of the Dakota Access pipeline through Spink County—the longest stretch in any single county in the state of South Dakota. The pipeline project was anticipated to bring 1,600 workers through the area on a daily basis for about six months, and eventually will mean 10 new high-income jobs at a pump station outside Redfield for people who will be required to live in the Redfield area, according to Zens.

"There's nothing that we did to bring that to town, but it will be good for Redfield," Chase said. "Aside from the ethanol plant, in the last several years, that probably is going to be the biggest thing to happen to Spink County. ... That makes a big difference—bringing families to town. ... Nobody wants to pay a lot of taxes. Well, somebody's got to pay the taxes. The pipeline will be that 'somebody,' and it will be nice—it will be good for the school, the county."

And, while no one in the Redfield area objected publicly to the pipeline, Chase cautioned that the value of progress isn't always measured in dollars and cents.

Earlier this year, locals were "vehemently opposed" to a proposed drilling experiment in Spink County, and the project ended before it started. But, in the case of the pipeline, Chase said some accommodations should be made for the betterment of the region—and the nation.

"Nobody wants a pipeline in their backyard, but somebody needs to have it in their backyard," he said, adding that the pipeline runs through his own property. "Everybody just wants it to be somebody else. Well, that's a bit selfish. North Dakota is our neighbor, and what's good for North Dakota is usually probably pretty good for South Dakota."



Redfield Public School Superintendent Shad Storley has been hard at work on new school plans since he arrived in Redfield two years ago. Construction is scheduled to begin this fall on a \$23 million K-12 school rebuild.

Progress in education

During the 2014-15 school year, the Redfield School District began a strategic planning process that is about to result in a new \$23 million, single-story, single-facility K-12 campus.

"Is putting \$7 million to \$8 million into an old buildings prudent, or do you just do a new school?" asked Shad Storley, who became superintendent of the district the year official discussions began. "We know, out of our capital outlay (fund), we can use \$7 million over the next 20 years toward this project."

The remainder—\$16 million—was approved in a 62-38 percent opt-out decision early this year, just three months after a core team of 30 presented plans to the public.

As a result, "The future of education in Redfield is only going to progress," Storley said.

"We did not want to do something that was a Band-Aid for 10 years. Back in 1917, the people built something that has lasted for 100 years. We want to (build) something that's going to last."

Final plans for the project should be selected by the end of 2016, with pre-construction—the demolition of a former gas station for a new playground—beginning this fall. Last month, the city vacated two streets in order to allow room for the project to be accomplished with a single one-story

building, rather than several buildings in multiple blocks, as currently is the case.

Construction of the junior/senior high school should start this winter, with classes transferring to the new facility sometime during the 2017-18 school year, at which time three upper-class buildings will be demolished. Then, the elementary classrooms, an auxiliary gym, and an auditorium will be constructed. The current elementary building is expected to come down in 2019. An all-school reunion is planned for next summer, allowing alumni a last look at the old facilities before they are razed.

"Staying at the same site makes things a little bit more interesting," Storley said. "We've done a whole lot of planning in making sure that we really won't have to tear anything down until (each) new part is ready."

SDDC

Despite controversy and declining need for one of Redfield's largest and longest employers, officials say there are no plans to close the South Dakota Developmental Center.

"Difficulty in filling entry level support positions has been a challenge across the state in human services for many years, and as a result there has been a right-sizing plan—plan to reduce the population—in place for the last several years," said SDDC director Barb Abeln.

Abeln is new to the position. She first served as interim director after the former director resigned in



February after former SDDC employees presented complaints about conditions at SDDC to legislators. She was appointed director in June.

The former employees alleged that conditions at SDDC are unsafe for both staff and residents.

In August, legislators on the Government Operations and Audit Committee proposed a plan to survey employees to learn more about what is happening and what can be done to improve the situation.

Abeln said publicity surrounding the allegations has not affected recruiting efforts.

At its peak, the center served nearly 1,200 people with intellectual disabilities. Abeln said the center no longer has a record of how many employees it had then. Today, it provides 376 fulltime-equivalent jobs and serves 129 people. Locals note that the staff once numbered hundreds more. It opened in 1902, on a



tract of land given by a local donor, at a time when Spink County was thriving.

"Redfield was chosen more than a century ago, when the institution and its workforce needs were very different," Abeln said. "Spink County was growing very quickly—it went from 9500 people in 1900 to nearly 16,000 in 1910. It had a higher population, for example, than Pennington County did."

But a workforce shortage tied to outmigration is not the only reason that employee and patient numbers have dipped at SDDC.

The Developmental Disabilities Act in 1970 provided for the deinstitutionalization of people," Abeln

said. "The goal was for all people to be supported in their home community (so) providers are located across the state to meet the needs of people with intellectual (disabilities)."

SDDC provides more than employment to the Redfield area. Program recipients volunteer in and are active members of the community. Facilities are lent to the broader community, too—community swimming lessons are offered at the SDDC pool, the auditorium is used by the Redfield Area Concert Association, the gym is a practice facility for school sports teams, and the staff at SDDC provide training to local teachers and daycare providers.

"Even though we are on the edge of town, we are an integral component of the Redfield community," Abeln said.

Continued on page 24

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Bustling businesses

Redfield is home to a host of small franchise businesses—Hometown Shopko, Dollar General, Subway and Dairy Queen among them—that complement the local businesses.

"It's not so much 'a community our size,' but a community in our location" that makes vibrant commerce possible, according to Zens. "We are 45 miles from Huron or Aberdeen, so ... a lot of times ... we're staying here in town" to shop and dine.

For the smaller retailers, "every customer is important," said Keri Schade, owner of Simply Charming, a coffee and gift shop on Main Street. "Whether they come in and they spend \$5 on a drink, or they come in and they spend \$500 on furniture, you treat them all the same, because they're all important" to the success of a local business.

Schade, who grew up in Redfield and married her high school sweetheart, purchased Simply Charming with her sister-in-law three years ago.

"I loved this place," she said. "I came here all the



Redfield native Keri Schade purchased Simply Charming, a coffee and gift shop on Main Street, three years ago, finding a way to keep open a place she had loved since her youth.

time" for coffee and shopping.

The retail choices at Simply Charming have changed, but Schade and her former business partner kept the popular coffee recipes from the previous owner.

Just down the street, Simon and Heidi Appel are trying new things at County Seat, the furniture and home décor business they bought last year.

"Business in a small town can be tricky," said Heidi Appel, who also serves as Redfield's parks and recreation director. "Your customer base is small, ... people only need (furniture and home décor) so often." They also provide gift items such as candy or wine baskets that might be purchased more frequently.

Appel said locals can be too

willing to shop out of town or online, not realizing the same things often can be purchased from friends and neighbors for the same price or better.

"It's not that we can't be competitive," she said. "It's just that people don't always think of us as their first stop."

This summer, County Seat opened a wine bar, to fill what the Appels saw as a need in the community.

"We do have a few bars and restaurants in town, but nothing that would fit into the scope of your clientele for a wine bar," Heidi Appel said of the "cozy" space they created in the back of their store.

Also this summer, a new restaurant near the Highway 212-281 junction opened, after a man working



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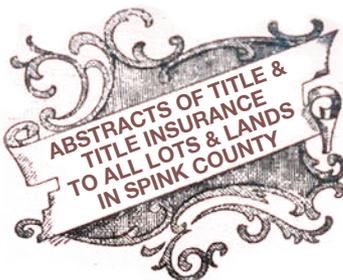
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Simon (not pictured) and Heidi Appel purchased The County Seat last year, in an effort to keep open a service they felt was essential for the community.

at the local ethanol plant noticed a vacant restaurant building adjacent to the parking lot of the Super 8 where he was staying. That man, Atanacio Nieto, originally from Mexico, called a couple of friends, and suggested the trio open an authentic Mexican restaurant in the building originally used as a Pizza Hut.

Juan "Carlos" Jasso drove from Kansas the following day, and the

decision was made. Soon, eight other Hispanic friends moved to town, and together they run La Cabana, which sees heavy traffic—particularly on weekends—from all over the area.

RADC helped the entrepreneurs obtain necessary funding for their business, while GSI helped the newcomers—whose primary language is Spanish—set up their equipment, comply with regulations and get

their food license. Zens said the organizations were quick to help bring the business—and its people—to town, because both were a perfect fit.

"I felt a passion from them, and I knew they were going to work hard and make it happen," Zens said.

Some residents had felt for years that the community needed something different.

"Any kind of restaurant coming in—or any kind of store—keeps people in town and spending money here," she said. Plus, those who visit for hunting, athletics or other reasons "have some options to stay here, rather than running to Aberdeen for everything."

And Jasso said Redfield is a good fit for his crew.

"Bigger towns are more expensive—the rent, the equipment," he said.

Continued on page 26

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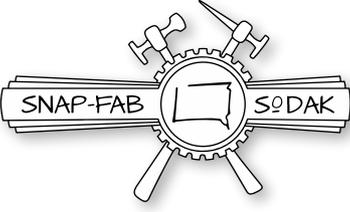


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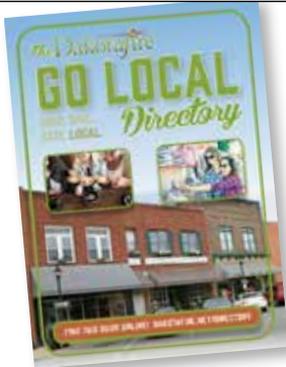
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Hunting destination

Each October, Redfield—like much of South Dakota—is flooded with a sea of orange. The Redfield area is known as “the pheasant capital of the world” due to being home of the first successful release of the Chinese ringneck pheasant in 1908. Zens said the area boasts more hunting lodges than she can count.

“As a region ... hunting and tourism definitely are a big, big push,” she said, adding that her family, like many in the area, hosts guests from multiple states each fall. “Anybody who goes to an airport around that time knows how many people come into the state.”

The town is dotted with homages to the birds, including a large pheasant atop a sign pole in front of the local volunteer fire department, the school mascot, and various business names.



Juan “Carlos” Jasso, left, and two friends opened La Cabana in Redfield this summer, bringing to town eight other friends to work with them. Jasso said the community has been very supportive of their venture. Pictured with him are, from left, Maria, Rene, and Yaki Hernandez.



Age-old entertainment

One family is working hard to keep a local icon up and running.

The Davis family—Clark and Rosa Davis; their daughter, Stacey Marlow, and Stacey’s husband, David—purchased the 60-year-old Pheasant City Drive-In Theatre in 2014.

“We didn’t want our town to lose it,” said Stacey Marlow of the still-busy drive-in, one of just six left in the state.

“We get a nice draw out of Aberdeen and (area) towns,” said

Clark Davis, who helped paint the theater’s first movie screen in 1953 and often was in the audience in the theater’s first decade.

A lot has changed in the way that movies are delivered to those who park their cars on the 10-acre lot, however. When they purchased the theater, the family immediately invested \$70,000 into a digital projector system, in order to be able to show the most recent releases on the movie screen that runs adjacent to Highway 281, one mile north of Redfield.

Some weekends, the lot is packed



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Clark Davis and Dave and Stacey (Davis) Marlow purchased Pheasant City Drive-In movie theater in 2014. The theater is one of just six drive-ins still open in the state.



From left, Shirley Jungwirth, Karen Gall, Janette Noyes and Lee Noyes are some of the faces that customers see at Leo's Good Food. Seated is one of those longtime customers, Juanita Sanger.

with cars—1,000 paying customers (those ages 11 and up) and 1,000 child guests saw the Minion movie over the course of four showings one weekend—and others, attendance is lower. It all depends on the movie, Marlow said, but children and family features tend to bring in larger audiences to the theater each summer.

“Some come for the movies. Some come for the experience,” Marlow said. “Some come (because) ‘I grew up with the drive-in. I want to take my kids to the drive-in.’”

Another tradition continues in town at Leo's Good Food, which

boasts “good food you can bank on” from a building that housed a bank until the restaurant moved there in 1983. The restaurant's evening salad bar is served in the main vault from the former bank.

Karen Gall's parents, Bill and Janette Noyes, started the business with its namesake across the street from the current location in 1964. Janette, who still routinely plays cards at the café, perfected the pie recipes, and Shirley Jungwirth, who worked for the restaurant since its opening, is “retired” but continues to work there two days a week.

“She's been here longer than I've been alive,” said Gall with a smile.

Jungwirth isn't the only thing that's stuck with Leo's for over a half-century.

“I have the same people waiting for me to open the door every morning,” said Gall, who moved home from stints in Phoenix and Vegas to offer her children a quieter life closer to family. Gall now owns Leo's with her brother, Lee Noyes.

So, what keeps them coming back?

“We're here a lot, and we care about what (and who) we serve,” Gall said. “We're a retirement community, and we see so many of our customers pass away. ... We've made a lot of friends—people who come daily, twice a day (or) sometimes three times a day.” *

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Rural change-makers connect

by WENDY ROYSTON

Until recently, a whole lot of community-minded folks who were hard at work in the crooks, crannies and corners of South Dakota may have been thinking they were alone in their desires to make their communities better.

"The big challenge of being rural is ... just the distance between us," said Heidi Marttila-Losure, publisher and editor-in-chief of Dakotafire Media, in a video from the event, created by Pinnacle Productions. "The advantage that cities have is that there is a concentration of people in one place that you can bounce ideas off of and get inspiration from. RuralX is really ... bringing everybody in that same place and creating a ... city-like experience for a day."

After converging in Aberdeen July 19-20 for RuralX, an event created by the nonprofit organization Dakota



Participants set the agenda of conversations for the afternoon through a process called Open Space. Photos by Heidi Marttila-Losure

Resources to bring together folks' RuralXperiences, those do-ers were empowered by a network of other do-ers, ready to do and create together.

"We know that connections were made and were made stronger" at RuralX, said Beth Davis, president of Dakota Resources. "We know that people learned. People had new ideas and new conversations. We know

that people felt comfortable and welcomed and happy to be together in community."

RuralX's focus was bringing the people and ideas together that could help promote rural Dakota life, but the event was a bit different than most gatherings of economic and community developers. Inspiring presentations and insightful speeches



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Emily Pieper, second from left, tells her story at RuralX. Pictured with her, from left, are Eileen Briggs, Liz Hannum, Wendy Royston and Angela Tewalt.



were sprinkled into the days' activities, but the bigger focus centered on conversations.

"There's so much less emphasis on sharing by lecturers, and so much more emphasis on sharing with each other," small-town advocate Becky McCray said in the Pinnacle film. "That is the kind of thing that really makes a difference."

Hugh Weber, CEO of OTA and the Institute of Possibility, spoke about the power of networks at RuralX.

"Research shows that your influence (extends) not only to your friends, the first degree; not only to your friends' friends, the second-degree ripples; but to your friends' friends' friends," he said. "Which means that on everything from altruism to obesity, you have an impact on everyone around you."

So if the goal is making rural communities better, change-makers will have more energy, creativity and

motivation to succeed if they are connected with others who share those goals.

McCray took it a step further in her presentation with business partner Deb Brown, saying that multi-tiered relationships are key to community-building.

"Make the connections within our community among all the experimenters, and then build the connections outside your community," McCray said. "It's not that other places don't have opposition. ... That committee of negativity is still meeting—they are still complaining, but fewer and fewer people are listening to them, because the center of power has shifted ... to you when you gather your crowd and you ... find the people who are willing to take small steps with you. Then, you have a dozen people—20 people, 100 people, all taking small steps, all trying things

out, all experimenting with you."

The summit's events inspired some RuralX-goers to look beyond that committee of negativity in their own work.

"For me personally, getting beyond that 'people don't support me' (notion) because three people don't support me" is difficult, but important, said entrepreneur Liz Hannum of Aberdeen, S.D. "The people who are naysayers usually have the power in town, and can make or break a project I'm working on. Connecting with them can be difficult, and I tend to get hung up on that, rather than trusting my supporters."

Organizers recently announced that the second RuralX Summit will happen in Aberdeen in July 2017. *

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“ This was great. This was perfect. I am head over heels with this conference and I’m glad it’s the first because that means there will be more. ”

AMANDA BECHEN, CPA

Business Owner and Community Volunteer, Wagner

After an amazingly successful RuralX Summit, Dakota Resources would like to thank you for “ruralizing your potential” with us this past July. With over 50 sponsors and 200 attendees, we are off to a great start and excited for next year. Mark your calendars for July 2017, and our next RuralX Summit at the Dakota Events Center in Aberdeen. Find details and updated information at dakotaresources.org/ruralx.



Dakota Resources is a non-profit organization dedicated to being a champion of rural communities and a catalyst for economic development.

Find out more at www.dakotaresources.org // 605.978.2804 // info@dakotaresources.org

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