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communicator. designer. changemaker.

Writing & Design Portfolio

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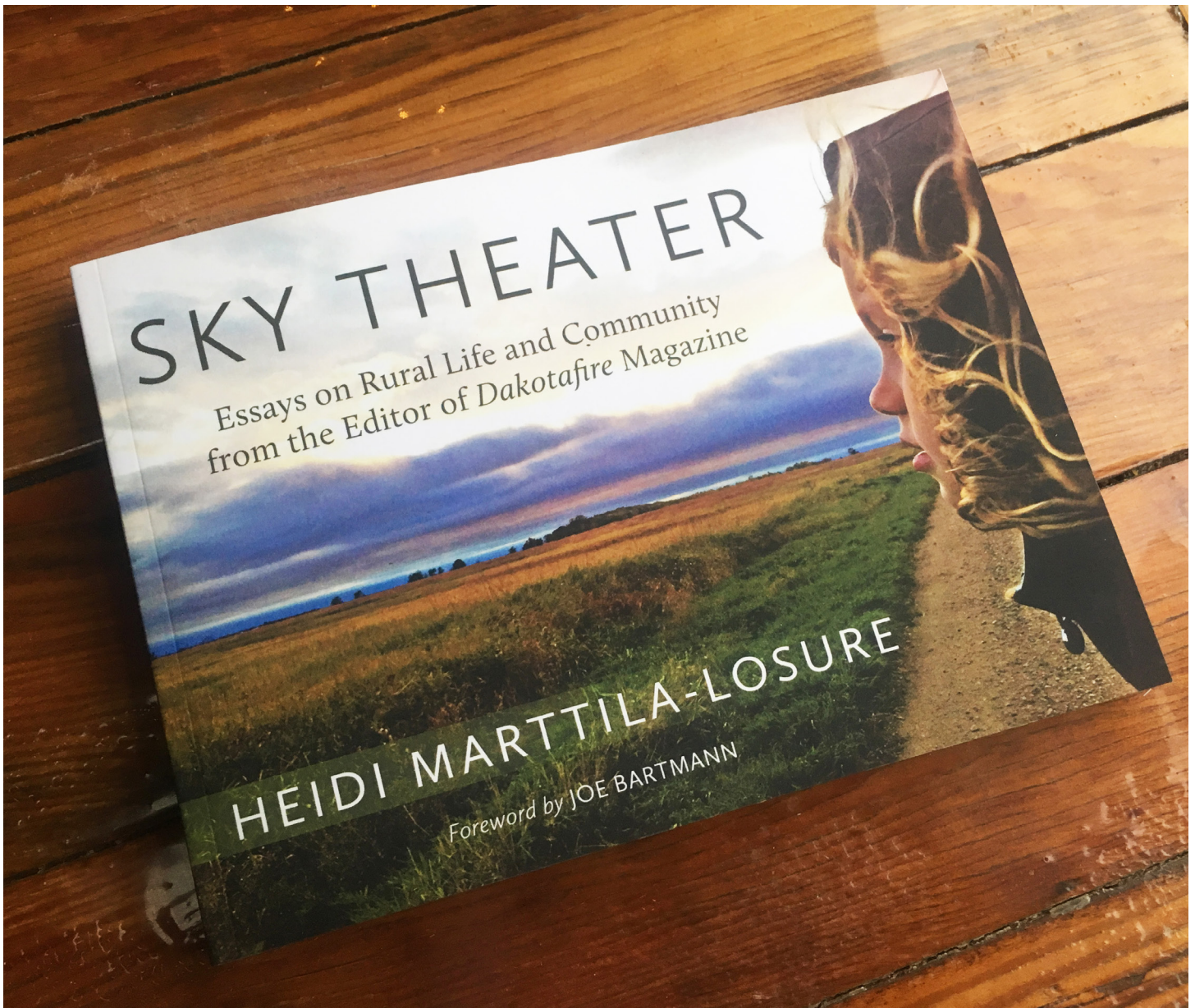
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WRITING & DESIGN

From *Sky Theater*



On the following pages are excerpts from my book, *Sky Theater*, which is a compilation of opinion writing from my time as editor of *Dakotafire* magazine. The photos are my work as well and support the title: One of the assets of rural places is the entertainment of the ever-changing sky. I designed and laid out the book.

I've included the introduction, which explains the *Dakotafire* project, as well as two pieces that are relevant to the work of democracy.

I've added a short explanation for why that piece relevant at the beginning of each article. Each selection also includes the date it was published and a short explanation intended to help readers of the book.

The introduction to *Sky Theater* explains my viewpoint as a rural journalist, and touches on why I think news literacy education is important.



Erik Losure, jumping on hay bales, October 2017

INTRODUCTION

This book presents the viewpoint of a person who is rural by choice.

By that I mean that I am not living rural by default—I didn’t “get stuck” here, and my husband and I had opportunities available to us in other places. But we were drawn to make a life in this place—on my family’s farm, seven miles from the nearest town, population 200. And that gives me a perspective that’s increasingly uncommon in America today.

And yet, even though I’ve chosen a rural life and I love many things about it, I know rural living in this country is far from idyllic. Many systems, including in agricultural policy and education, are set up in ways that tend to make the nation more urban, and to make urban places stronger than rural places. I point out the pro-urban tendency of those systems when I see it and suggest ways those systems could be made fairer for the benefit of everyone.

Directing our energy outward toward those big systems is important—and in a democracy, we have a responsibility to do so. But we have much more power when we direct our energy toward our own smaller systems, changing how we relate to our communities, our families, and ourselves. The challenge is that we tend to fight against that kind of change at first. It’s a self-preservation mechanism—even if making the change would mean we are better off in the end.

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I write about how we can change ourselves, too, even though I know this voice isn't always popular, because I know rural could be much better. We could do much better. I believe in and care about rural places and people enough to think that we should try to live up to our potential.

* * *

This book is a collection of the majority of the opinion writing I did from 2012-17 that was part of the *Dakotafire* project, and so it will make more sense to you if you have a bit of an understanding of what that project was about.

Dakotafire was a project of Dakotafire Media, LLC, and its tagline was “sparking rural revival, one story at a time.” We¹ started with a grant from the Knight Foundation as part of its Knight Community Information Challenge, which encouraged community foundations to get involved with news projects. The South Dakota Community Foundation applied for the grant and then hired us to do the work.

As we described it initially on our website, “*Dakotafire*’s alliance of reporters and editors works together to produce in-depth, regionwide coverage of issues vital to the sustainability of the area’s rural communities. This alliance, which connects these journalists online, allows them to cover topics they could not address as successfully alone.”

We were awarded a three-year grant in 2011 that funded all of our work.

In 2014, we partnered with Grow South Dakota to receive a Community Innovation Grant from the Bush Foundation. This funded an 18-month project called the Prairie Idea Exchange, which brought together economic and community development professionals to talk about what was happening in their rural communities. We created magazine issues around those conversations, then held public

events to discuss what we’d learned. Some of those magazine issues went out to more than 50,000 households in the Dakotas.

Along the way, our mission evolved beyond the tagline to become “sparking a rural revival in the Dakotas and beyond by encouraging conversations that help rural residents rethink what’s happening and reimagine what’s possible.”

Were we successful? Well, it depends how we define success. We fulfilled the requirements of both of the grants we received. We did some interesting reporting that would not have happened otherwise. I’d like to think we succeeded in ways that are harder to measure—changing mindsets in ways that really encouraged people to reimagine what’s possible in their communities. But evidence of that is harder to come by.

My attempts at creating a sustainable magazine business model without grant funding were definitely not successful, though this is par for the course in journalism these days. The real nail in the coffin was the November 2016 election—and not because of the final result, which, however history might look at it, was a foregone conclusion in the Dakotas. What made me decide this was time to let this project go was the conversation that preceded the election: I could tell that voters were not using journalism as a helpful guide to their voting decisions.

I had used this phrasing in the first grant application: “*Dakotafire* will serve as a common voice and connective thread for the people of the region, so that despite the vast distances between them, they can see one another as allies in facing their common challenges and opportunities, and so that with the spark that *Dakotafire* provides *they can ultimately make better decisions about the issues that affect their lives.*” But I wasn’t seeing information—including the information that *Dakotafire* provided—helping people make better decisions. Politics had become a team sport instead of the contest of ideas that it needs to be for democracy to work—and almost everything had become politics.

That might sound like an insult to my rural audience, but it’s not. It’s a description of a structural problem. Journalism was no longer working as I’d

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¹ Dakotafire Media, LLC, started as a partnership between Troy McQuillen, owner of McQuillen Creative Group of Aberdeen, S.D., and me. He left the business in 2014 to pursue other opportunities. Many others also helped along the way, including Wendy Royston, who became managing editor; the Dakotafire Brain Trust (Joe Bartmann, Paula Jensen, Sarah Gackle, Laura Ptacek, Beth Davis, Jamie Horter, Wendy Royston, Dee Sleep, and Mike Knutson); Bob Sutton and Noel Hamiel at the South Dakota Community Foundation; other staff members; our newspaper partners; freelancers; and volunteers.

I deeply appreciate all those who supported this work.

INTRODUCTION, *continued from page 4*

believed it was supposed to work, at least among this audience, in this place. It was time to look for a new strategy.

At this moment, I don't know exactly what that strategy is, though my gut tells me it includes civic and news literacy education at the K-12 level. This book is not part of that solution. But perhaps this book is part of an answer to a different problem.

For months after the November 2016 election, and to some extent still now, as this book is being published in the second half of 2017, the national conversation seemed perplexed about what motivated rural voters. *What the heck are rural people thinking?* was the unspoken question—with perhaps a stronger word for “heck.”

This writing is not a direct answer that question—it was written for a rural audience, not about one. It most clearly shows my view of the world, but most people probably wouldn't consider me a typical representative of my community. (That's a nice way of saying I'm kind of an odd duck.) But maybe, because I've lived in some other places and understand the thinking of people from elsewhere a bit too (though I'm still more rube than city slicker), this writing can serve as a bridge to understanding rural more generally.

Some other notes may help you make sense of the writing in this book:

- The articles were intended for a specific rural audience, but I've provided a few words of introduction for each that give a little context for general readers.
- The writing has been lightly edited to fit this format—for example, long blog post titles

have been shortened to work better as chapter titles, and some references to *Dakotafire* magazine articles have been removed.

- Some of the articles were editorials that ran in the magazine; two were columns that ran in the magazine; and the rest were blog entries at dakotafire.net. It's probably unlikely that any one person has seen all of this writing, since the audiences for the magazine and the website didn't overlap that much.
- This book includes only opinion writing, not straight reporting. If you are interested in the topics covered in the magazine issues, back issues for most issues of *Dakotafire* are available at www.dakotafire.net/product-category/back-issues/.
- These articles were intended to be invitations to conversation. If you have something to add, you can find me most easily on Twitter: @DakotafireMedia.

I want to add one final note about this book. This is the writing that happened along the *Dakotafire* journey, and as with all journeys, it has a beginning, a middle, and an end. But in another sense, I feel as if I am still in the middle of a much larger story about rural places and community building. My part in it isn't finished, but more importantly, it's not my story alone. I am not writing the book about that larger story, however, so I'm not sure how it ends.

In the meantime, I'll be here on the prairie: doing the work I know how to do, walking along a gravel road in the evening, and taking in the show in the sky.

—hml

Valuing neighborliness means many Dakotans avoid conflict. We gave readers tools to think about and discuss hard topics, such as asking “What if ...?”.



Beginning of the spring thaw, March 2014

MAY 2014

Water flows downhill. Whether you are uphill or downhill from your neighbor has typically affected how interested you are in discussing water management. This article argues that we all need to be involved in this conversation, difficult as it may be.

Getting Uncomfortable

“**W**hat if ...?”

Those two words convey a powerful idea: The willingness to consider another way of looking at the world, which is how innovation happens.

That’s the kind of shift in perspective that’s happened in the last decade or so in the Netherlands as citizens reconsider their approach to managing water.

The Dutch have battled back the sea throughout the country’s existence. Historically, they approached the task with massive infrastructure, including the dikes, dams and windmills for which the country is famous.

But lately, as described in an April 9 article in *The New York Times*, they are approaching the problem differently: They are letting the water in.

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Getting Uncomfortable, *continued from page 6*

The impetus for their change in thinking is the rise in sea levels that climate change is likely to cause. There's not a whole lot of room for denial when much of your country is at or even below sea level.

"With the increasing threat caused by climate change, Dutch engineers have developed strategies that go beyond trying to keep water out. They city of Rotterdam, for instance, is building floating houses and office buildings and digging craters in downtown plazas that will be basketball courts most of the year but will fill up with water during high-water periods, taking the strain off surrounding streets."

— Russell Shorto, "How to Think Like the Dutch in a Post-Sandy World," *The New York Times Magazine*, April 9, 2014

The Dutch are also looking beyond planning at the city level; they are planning in regions, because water does not respect political boundaries. The goal, Dutch planners say, is "the dawn of a 21st-century approach to living with nature," building in ways "that take ecology, economy, infrastructure and weather uncertainty into account."

I invite you to read the entire article, which gives a really interesting perspective on how a nation's citizens realized that they were all affected by the problem, and they could all be part of the solution.

If we used those criteria of those Dutch planners to measure our approach to managing water in the Prairie Pothole Region—considering ecology, economy, infrastructure and weather uncertainty—how would we rate?

We probably would do fairly well on economy. Our local economies are in large part based on the farm economy, and that does much better with the water management practices that are common now.

How about ecology? Are we considering what works for the natural system?

Are we considering infrastructure that is affected, or additional infrastructure that is needed, because of our water management decisions?

Are we planning for increasing weather uncertainty—both downpours and droughts?

What if we added "community" to the list: Are we managing water in ways that respect and enhance

the communities we are part of, or the communities downstream that are affected by our actions?

I am not going to answer these questions for you. But in researching for this issue, what I learned left me a little bit uncomfortable. I don't think we'd get a stellar report card if this is what we are tested on.

I hope that small feeling of discomfort finds you also. Not because it's pleasant—it isn't—but because without that little bit of dissatisfaction, we aren't going to move forward. If we think we've already achieved the best we can achieve, there's no point in thinking differently or trying something new.

Our world doesn't stand still. Yesterday's ideas don't always work with the information we learn today, and today's solutions may not work in the world of tomorrow.

One idea I'd like to challenge is the idea of the inevitability of trade-offs: That if one side wins, another has to lose. John Mackey, the CEO of Whole Foods, argues that doesn't have to be the case. He's built his business model on the idea, working to ensure that all the stakeholders in his business benefit—from its investors to its newest employees, as well as its suppliers (including the farmers who grow or raise the food they sell).

"If you look for trade-offs, you will always find them—that is guaranteed," Mackey said. "But if you look for win-win synergies, more often than not you will find those too. Human creativity is essentially unlimited, especially when it is motivated by a deeper purpose than just self-interest."

Are there ways to manage water on our land in which wildlife, water quality, and downstream neighbors (both near and far) all benefit—and farmers get an adequate income?

The purpose of this issue is not to call out any one stakeholder as wrong or right. The purpose is getting us all to edge into that uncomfortable space where we think a little harder about creating a system that is better for all of us.

Read. Consider. Ponder past the point where it's comfortable. Then give those powerful words a try:

"What if ...?"

Many of the stories we did for the Dakotafire project were collaborative efforts: Weekly newspaper journalists did basic reporting from their communities, and after they sent those reports to me, I served as “story maestro” and wove those pieces into feature stories that were printed in those weekly newspapers.

Shelterbelts, one of the great soil conservation measures of the 1930s, are being removed

BY HEIDI MARTTILA-LOSURE,
Dakotafire Media

Reporting by DOUG CARD, *Britton Journal*, BILL KRIKAC, *Clark County Courier*, GARRICK MORITZ, *Faulk County Record*; KERI SAILER, *LaMoure Chronicle*

About 75 years ago, farmers from Texas to North Dakota were at work on a significant project: planting trees to stop the prairie wind from carrying off their topsoil.

Those farmers had watched, helpless, as the dust storms of the 1930s gave dramatic evidence to the damage that 50 years of short-sighted farming practices had wrought. President Franklin Roosevelt is credited with putting forward the plan to plant shelterbelts all along the drought-stricken Great Plains to slow down the wind. Some criticized the plan to plant trees in the “Great American Desert,” but others—especially as the first successes were reported—took to it with the zeal of a crusade.

“No forestry project was ever closer to the hearts of those who were dedicated to its conduct, or to the farmers and others whom it directly benefited,” writes Paul H. Roberts, former director of the Prairie States Forestry Project, in the 1977 book *Trees, Prairies and People* by Wilmon Henry Droze.

In recent years, and especially last fall when an early harvest left farmers time to work on side projects, many of those trees so eagerly planted in the 1930s are being uprooted. No one keeps track of exactly how many shelterbelts or windbreaks have been removed, but several Natural Resource Conservation Service employees said they would guess



Trees removed from a windbreak in LaMoure County are piled up to dry. The wood will likely be burned later. Aging shelterbelts and windbreaks are being removed all over the eastern Dakotas.

Photo by the LaMoure Chronicle

significantly more are being taken out than planted.

“Almost every time there is a sale or land auction, one of the first things they do seems to be to clear that land in the name of efficiency,” said Grady Heitmann, district conservationist for Faulk County, S.D.

Even though many of those shelterbelt projects were financed in large part with government funding, those trees aren’t accounted for once the farmer or landowner is no longer in the program. After the shelterbelts have been established, they are completely the landowners’ property, Heitmann explained.

Farmers say they don’t need these shelterbelts anymore for wind erosion, but many NRCS employees caution that shelterbelts still have important roles to play on the Dakota landscape.

Goal is efficiency

Many of the trees planted in the Dakotas in the 1930s were what people here call Chinese elm but what is actually Siberian elm (*Ulmus pumila*), a fast-growing but somewhat short-lived tree.

This means, as the years and various storms have taken their toll, farmers and landowners must decide: Do they maintain or replant an ailing or dying shelterbelt, or just remove it?

From a farmer’s perspective, there are many reasons to take out a shelterbelt or windbreak, and not nearly as many to maintain them or plant new ones.

One reason is that with modern no-till farming practices, the need for erosion control from tree rows is significantly reduced.

“At the time they (windbreaks) were put in, the technology wasn’t there, the equipment wasn’t there” to do no-till, explained one Dickey County, N.D., farmer who asked that his name not be used. “(Field windbreaks) had a purpose then.”

Today, the farmer said, managing wind erosion using various farming techniques is entirely possible—though that doesn’t mean it always happens. The farmer said he’s been concerned looking around the county at all the black soil as farmers till their fields to deal with cold, wet ground.

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Shelterbelts, *continued from page 8*

Heitmann said a look around the county last spring showed that additional wind erosion control is still needed. “Even with no-till farming being a long accepted practice, there was still plenty of dirt being blown around all spring and summer,” he said.

Darin Hirschhorn, district conservationist in LaMoure County, had the same opinion.

“All you have to do is look at the snow in the road ditches and see how dirty it is to notice that there is still a lot of wind erosion happening,” Hirschhorn said.

Another reason farmers have wanted to take out windbreaks is to make it easier to turn equipment. In the wet years two and three years ago, when sloughs took over parts of fields, tree rows made it harder to navigate tractors and combines—especially since equipment is all larger than it was years ago. The Dickey County farmer said he had removed several windbreaks for this reason—not only because it was difficult to navigate around where they were planted, but because dying trees and branches frequently flopped into crop ground.

Tree rows can also make it more difficult to move irrigation equipment, and farmers also have to worry about herbicide drift damaging shelterbelts, explained Diane Erickson, district conservationist in Clark County, S.D.

But in recent years the most persuasive argument for removing tree rows is the little bit of land underneath that could be growing \$7 corn or \$15 soybeans.

“It’s hard to leave a tree belt sit there, when land, like in Brown County, sells for \$13,000 an acre,” the Dickey County farmer said.

Multipurpose asset

Several NRCS employees said there are nevertheless good reasons to maintain shelterbelts or plant new ones.

“Our biggest planting reason now is for farmstead and livestock protection,” explained Wanda Franzen, Marshall County Conservation district manager.

Trees around farmsteads can reduce energy bills by blunting the cooling force of the winter wind or providing shade from the summer sun, and trees in pasture areas can do the same for livestock.

Tree rows can provide living snow fences if they are planted in strategic locations, which can reduce the amount of snow removal required to clear roads and driveways.

Trees have been used to reduce odor from livestock production facilities. In recent years, trees have also been planted along creeks or streams to help filter water.

Trees can also provide an important refuge for wildlife. Two years ago, with the snow was very deep, wildlife suffered when their grass and food plots were buried, Erickson explained.

“Deer and pheasant loss was high,” Erickson said. “Shelterbelts or thick tree plantings are their main source of shelter and even a good food source. Wildlife needs habitat, and tree belts are the best winter habitats.”

The Dickey County farmer said he has done some tree plantings on his land to support wildlife, which he hopes his children and grandchildren will be able to enjoy.

It does, however, depend somewhat on what type of wildlife a person wants to support: “Numerous wildlife studies have shown the native wildlife species prefer open grassed areas over wooded areas,” explained Hirschhorn, “which makes sense, as that is the way most North Dakota species started.”

But high crop prices are putting pressure on grassed areas as well, since more money can be made from cropping land than leaving it as pasture. Shelterbelts can therefore provide even native species a place to nest or den up undisturbed.

Still, for some farmers, the return on the investment of removing shelterbelts is high enough that they are willing to do that work, even if they lose the benefits listed above.

Heitmann cautions farmers to make sure they are thinking about long-term effects as well as short-term benefits.

“It does bother me when shelterbelts

in our records, planted by the taxpayer, are cleared away, and those thousands of dollars that were spent are simply gone,” Heitmann said. “But I don’t put the blame on the individual making a business decision. They’re trying to make a buck, trying to make a living. ... I want them to make money—but I don’t want them to make that money just for one or two harvests, but for as long as they are in business.”

Government funding

If farmers or landowners do decide they want to add tree plantings on their property, several government programs are available and could foot the lion’s share of the bill—though they are in limbo until the next farm bill is decided.

The No. 1 program for shelterbelts right now is the Continuous CRP program, Franzen explained. Trees must be planted on land that has a cropping history, but the cost share for planting and fabric is 90 percent, and producers receive a land payment on those acres for 15 years.

Another option is including tree planting as part of a plan through the Environmental Quality Incentive Program, in which the farm is rated on its conservation practices, and some parts of those practices could receive 75 percent funding. EQIP does not have an annual payment, however.

Many producers have taken advantage of these programs. In the past decade, nearly a million trees have been planted in Marshall County; last year, 64 acres were planted. In Faulk County, tree plantings are down considerably from their peak of 163.4 acres planted in 2006—just 37.1 acres were planted in 2012.

Heitmann said he would recommend planting trees as an important part of keeping agriculture viable for the future, and also to preserve wildlife and hunting traditions in South Dakota that depend on shelterbelts deeply.

“The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago,” he said, “and the next best time to plant a tree is right now.”

This was one of my favorite stories to report, because those teachers were really enthusiastic. It's an example of the kind of stories we did for *Dakotafire* magazine: Solution-focused journalism that spread good ideas around the region.

MAKING SCHOOL **MATTER**

New teaching methods hold promise for engaging students, invigorating teachers, and connecting schools and communities

Story and photos by HEIDI MARTTILA-LOSURE



These Woonsocket teachers plan to help their students learn about their town's swans, which attempt to hatch out cygnets every year but don't have much success. The teachers themselves don't know the reason, so it will be a learning process for everyone. They plan to incorporate a naming contest for the swans, and knowledge from the local community. Pictured from left are Kylie Pauly, Title I; Judy Hinker, kindergarten; and Sarah Jensen, first grade. In the background are other teachers from across the region working on project planning for their own schools.

On a Tuesday afternoon in July, when some of their colleagues were probably enjoying a deserved break from the intensity of the last school year, about 60 teachers were in Wolsey, S.D., working on plans for the next one.

And, by all outward appearances, they were having fun.

So much fun, in fact, that Mari Biehl, one of the organizers of the teachers workshop, didn't have the heart to make them stop when the schedule called for them to move on.

"What a great afternoon!" Biehl said when they finally got back together, which was followed by a "woo-hoo!" from one of the teachers.

So, what—in this era of increasing expectations, ever-changing standards, almost stagnant pay, "helicopter parents,"

and various other stressors—could make a teacher shout "woo-hoo"?

It's a new way of teaching that's really an old way of teaching, and that goes by different descriptors that may not mean much to those outside of education. But the basic idea is this: Content is taught in a way that's real, relevant and meaningful to the students.

And when it's done well, a whole string of impressive things happen: Students are motivated to learn, and they learn more and better. Schools and communities

are better-connected, and communities improve in noticeable ways.

And, as mentioned, teachers occasionally shout "woo-hoo."

Big ideas from butterflies

This teaching strategy, called transdisciplinary problem-based learning, is catching on in pockets of rural areas across the country. In South Dakota, the best place to find it is through the work of the South Dakota Innovation Lab.

Mari Biehl is now a coordinator for the South Dakota Innovation Lab (SDIL). But before that, she was a second-grade teacher at Platte-Geddes Elementary.

She was one of the first teachers to implement the learning model that SDIL

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Making School Matter, *continued from page 10*

promotes, and that experience with it left a lasting impression on her.

She decided to do a project on monarch butterflies, and she was planning on implementing the model for only one quarter. But the kids had other ideas.

"My project grew into something much larger than I thought it would be," she said.

The students learned about the monarch migration, and covered the geography of where the monarchs fly. Then they discussed the kind of plants that monarchs depend on and where they grow. And then they learned that these plants are not as common as they used to be, which is making the monarchs' numbers decline.

The kids wanted to do something about this. They learned that they could help butterflies by providing them with the plants they need, and so they wanted to plant a garden. They had to determine where the garden should be and who should take care of it. They had a local greenhouse owner come into the classroom to talk about how to plant the garden. And when it came time to present their ideas to the community, all those second-graders went to a city council meeting to present what they'd learned and ask the council to allow them to plant a butterfly garden in public park.

"By Christmastime I realized, 'This is changing my kids, and this is changing their attitude toward learning,'" she said.

The difference between this and more traditional classroom lessons is that students are working on real-world problems, and knowing that changes how they approach their work, explained some of the other teachers involved in the workshop in Wolsey.

"(They know) that they are making a difference," said Cindy Nagel, a former middle school teacher who is now an education consultant for ESA 3. "They are not just doing an assignment."

"There's a reason," added Slim Schneider, science teacher at Armour High School. "It's not just 'pleasing my teacher.' It's not just 'what we have to do.' It's something they can see."

This attitude change is important for students who might otherwise disengage from what's being taught in school. But it's just as important for students who are really good at "book knowledge."

Some students get really good at "the game"—figuring out how to take tests, or how to write for certain teachers—but still



aren't successful at life, Nagel explained. "This allows (students) to think and to learn, and to actually apply skills and not just play the 'school game.'"

"Teachers are creative"

The South Dakota Innovation Lab started about four years ago through a partnership involving the Mid-Central Educational Cooperative, Sanford Research, the S.D. Department of Education and the PAST Foundation (based in Ohio).

When it started, four schools decided to participate: South Central, Wessington Springs, Platte-Geddes and Armour. This year, there are 20, Biehl said, including Wolsey-Wessington, where the workshop was held.

What the SDIL actually does is support schools in adopting this new learning model, mostly through training and coaching teachers.

The monarch project has in it the three tiers of transdisciplinary problem-based learning that SDIL works to promote: It cut across disciplines (including geography, biology, math, writing and more). It was relevant to the students where they are (connecting them to their community and their environment). And the children learned the content through the design cycle: identifying a problem, coming up with a solution, trying the solution, evaluating the solution, sharing their ideas and learning from the whole process.

But the monarch project is just one

example. The implementation depends on the interests of the teachers and the students, and so it will look different in every classroom.

In Wolsey-Wessington, high school students looked at how to ensure good ambulance service in their rural community. In Woonsocket, teachers are planning to have their elementary students learn why their town's swans aren't having any nesting success. And in Platte-Geddes, a "Fall Fling" in which students build catapults and trebuchets to throw water balloons at the administration has become an annual community tradition.

"The glory of this is it's not a canned process," Biehl said to the teachers at the workshop. "The glory of this is it's your design. No one is telling you, this is exactly how it has to be done. That creates a little fear in us. But it also allows you to be the people you were born to be: teachers. And teachers are creative."

It sounds like the polar opposite of "teaching to the test." (And this may well be the source of that teacher's "woo-hoo.")

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Making School Matter, *continued from page 11*

But what about all the standards? What about Common Core?

Teachers can't just forget about the new standards. But they also don't have to let the standards run the show. For the most part, the standards can be integrated into whatever problem the class decides to tackle, Biehl said. It's not "one more thing on the teacher's plate"—it's a more meaningful way to do all the things on the teacher's plate.

And, as Wolsey-Wessington Superintendent Jim Cutshaw sees it, teachers today are actually free from one obligation.

"It used to be that the teacher had to be the content master," Cutshaw said. "They had to know the information, because if the kids had questions, the teachers had to answer it. Now, with the technology and information available, the teacher being the master of the content is somewhat of an obsolete idea.

"The teacher now has to be the master facilitator—getting kids to find a way to learn the information, understand it and use it."

Test scores

Even if teachers are not focusing directly on influencing test scores, the students still need to take them, and those test scores still have consequences for students, teachers and schools alike.

How do kids do on tests after this kind of project-based learning? Better than kids who did not, according to David Sobel, a professor at Antioch University in New Hampshire and an author who has written extensively about place-based education. He cites studies that suggest that test scores start to improve very soon after the program is implemented—and, interestingly, they continue to improve as the students continue through their schooling years. This has happened even in schools where achievement gaps were significant due to poverty or other factors.

The way Sobel thinks this works is that teachers who teach from subject matter they are passionate about invigorate students. And these enthusiastic students are more curious and motivated to learn, which increases their test scores.

Reconnecting with place

Transdisciplinary problem-based learning typically has some aspect of place-based education within it: The problem that the students are trying to solve is made more important to them by the fact that it affects the community in which they live.

"Place-based education is a response to the Berlin Wall that's been built between schools and the nearby environments and communities," said Sobel, speaking at a 2012 event available for viewing online. He cited a West Virginia school principal who said that after implementing place-based education efforts, "We have really opened up the school and taken the walls down so the whole community becomes the school."

This connection to a place brings with it a whole list of benefits.

One of the first benefits is getting people from that place connected, or reconnected, with the school.

"One of the best things that happened in our district was people who hadn't stepped foot in the school for 15 years because their kids had graduated ... were coming back into the building to help with student learning, serving in that role as industry expert," Biehl said.

Schneider said the best example of a content expert for his classes was a trip to see Larry Wold, a renowned taxidermist in Armour. His discussion with Schneider's students was impressive in how many disciplines it covered.

"He told us about his process," Schneider said, quoting Wold: "The first thing I have to do is smile when I greet him. And I have to sit and BS as long as they want to BS. I know I have 600 things over here to do, but I have to talk to this guy about this animal he's shot."

From this start in sociology and public relations, he continued into finances, anatomy, art, manufacturing, and more.

"Larry was great," Schneider said. "We're going back to Larry with video cameras."

Making more connections to people in the community means that if or when the school needs funding, there will be that many fewer people who need convincing that supporting the school is worthwhile.

Sometimes the teachers also benefit from a stronger community connection.

"We don't have a lot of staff that lives in their communities," Nagel said. "Some of our staff drive hours and hours to get to a school. (Community members) don't see teachers in their community. ...

When you start doing problem-based learning, that brings those teachers back to the communities, too. (Community members) can see them as people who care about the community. It's a win-win."

Sandra Jones, a teacher at Lower Brule Tribal School, said a teacher who connects to the community will also have a better connection with his or her students.

"You've got to be a part of them and their community if you want them to participate for you," Jones said.

But perhaps the best aspect of these enhanced connections with community is the way it changes how kids see the places where they live.

When the students see those community members showing what they actually do for a living, they learn that the community does have opportunities available, and if they have a passion for whatever they are working on, someday they could maybe do it and get paid for it, Biehl said.

It also gets kids to more thoroughly explore their own communities. Jones said she'd been to some conferences where students thought there wasn't anything of interest in their small towns for a project and went to, for example, Sioux Falls instead. Students, and often adults as well, think that "out there" is better than their community.

"Instead, we're trying to promote that you may be in a small town, but they have a lot to offer," Jones said. "We want them to understand that."

All of this is an investment in students, but it's also an investment in the future leadership of the community—one that could pay off for years to come, according to one 1981 study.

The study looked at a school in a small city in the Northeast in which a community-minded teacher had his students get involved with developing a master plan for the town. Thirty years later, the researchers compared the students who had been involved with the place-based education project (though it wasn't known as such at the time) and compared them to students who hadn't. The students who were involved in the project in high school were *four times* more likely to be involved with volunteer groups and twice as likely to serve on civic organizations than their peers.

"If you give students the opportunity to practice civic engagement in school settings—working on local issues and local problems—you can actually develop a disposition to be civically engaged later in life," Sobel said.

Pretty impressive. It might be enough to make all of us give up a "woo-hoo!" *

Expanding the meaning of WEALTH

by HEIDI MARTTILA-LOSURE

Is your community wealthy? How you answer that question depends very much on how you define “wealth.” You might picture as a wealthy community a place like Vail, Colo., or the skyscrapers around Central Park in New York City—places with luxury that reflects the full bank accounts of the people who live there. That is wealth in one sense of the word. But some researchers have found that when it comes to building prosperous communities, a much broader definition of wealth is necessary. Money is still important—but it is just one of the kinds of wealth that successful communities have in abundance. And focusing too much on any one form of wealth can mean the community overall suffers.

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Thinking in capitals

Cornelia and Jan Flora, researchers at Iowa State University (both now professors emeriti), pioneered this way of thinking about wealth over several decades. They called it the Community Capitals Framework.

“Based on their research to uncover characteristics of entrepreneurial and sustainable communities, they found that the communities most successful in supporting healthy sustainable community and economic development paid attention to all seven types of capital: natural, cultural, human, social, political, financial and built,” according to the ISU Department of Sociology website.

Capital, in this way of thinking, is a source of wealth—an asset that can enrich the community. And it’s all those capitals together that make a community prosperous.

It takes a different kind of thinking than traditional economic development, explained Deb Markley, managing director for the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship. Markley has been involved with a Ford Foundation-sponsored project called WealthWorks, designed to test an approach to economic development that defines wealth more broadly.

“From a more traditional standpoint, if you asked anybody, ‘What does economic development achieve?’, they would talk about things like jobs. They would talk about rising incomes. They would talk about a stronger property tax base and sales taxes and those sorts of measures—which are all really important,” Markley said. “But none of those things in and of itself is wealth.”

Continued on page 6

THE COMMUNITY CAPITALS FRAMEWORK

Studies of successful rural communities showed that they tend to value, connect and work to build up multiple forms of wealth, which led to the development of the Community Capitals Framework. Two other factors are important: local ownership of the wealth that’s created; and making sure that the wealth that’s created is broadly shared, including by helping low-income people fare better.



Adapted from the ISU Department of Sociology website: <http://www.soc.iastate.edu/staff/cflora/hccrd/capitals.html>
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Expanding the Meaning of Wealth, continued from page 13



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A person could have a job, but not be able to afford child care, health insurance, or to buy a home, for example, which means that job is just a job—"it's not leading to wealth creation in any way," Markley said.

"But if what you're really focused on is not just jobs, but a healthy environment, highly skilled people, new ideas and innovation as part of the culture—really all the forms of capital—you begin to ask some questions about how you do the work of economic development. It brings a whole other set of strategies to the table."

Whether assets increase or are used up is another difference between traditional economic development and the Floras' broader view of community development, explained Mary Emery, head of the Sociology & Rural Studies Department at South Dakota State University. Part of Emery's work has been to help communities use the Community Capitals Framework.

"If you look at some of the traditional or narrowly focused economic development programs, oftentimes they use up existing assets in communities, particularly financial capital and political capital," Emery said. For example, "we go to state government and ask for help bringing a company into the community. You can only do that a

couple of times," and then that political capital (or power, in this case) is used up.

If a community instead brings together resources from all of the capitals to get a project done, the process of bringing people together can *increase* the capital available. The connections between people are stronger, and individuals increase their human capital as they gain skills and experience, for example.

It doesn't always work that way. Sometimes there are trade-offs in which one kind of wealth is spent down to increase another. But this framework brings those trade-offs into the open.

"You can focus only on financial capital—it doesn't mean you're not impacting other forms of capital," Markley said. "This is just a way of being much more transparent about it."

Designing with the capitals in mind

Markley and Emery explained that the capitals are a planning tool for communities as they consider ventures for their communities, as well as an assessment tool to help them gauge how well they've done.

"If I want to understand everything that's going on in my community, if I want to make sure I don't miss anything, then the capitals (framework) is a way to make sure I'm looking at everything going on in the community," Emery said. "So many of our stories focus on one or two (assets) and miss other things going on."

The first step is often figuring out where a community stands now: What forms of capital does it have in abundance? What is it lacking?

This is vital, because many rural wealth

creation efforts are tied to the resources in a specific place—they often can't be copied by a community in a different place, explained John Pender, a researcher for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service and author of the book *Rural Wealth Creation*.

On the other hand, "Communities can learn from other communities that have faced similar issues," Pender said—a process that starts with communities knowing themselves first.

Planning with those capitals in mind starts to shape how communities go about creating solutions.

"If you constantly have in your head all the capitals as you make an economic development decision," Markley said, "you can then begin to ask design questions. 'What if we did it this way? Would it have a greater impact on one of the forms of capital than if we did it that way?' You see the trade-offs between forms of capital. It's being really intentional about designing the way that you do your work so you are building multiple forms of capital at the same time."

Markley described one WealthWorks project site in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, where there was a strong demand for affordable, energy-efficient housing. Unfortunately, no one in the region knew how to build that way.

There was a builder in Houston who had exactly those skills. If community leaders had not been thinking in terms of building multiple forms of wealth, they might have gone with the easy answer: Hire that builder to put up the kind of housing they wanted. But that would not have built up any assets in the community; they would in fact be sending wealth out of the region for every house

they built, now and in the future.

Instead, they told the builder what they really wanted was his help in setting up a program at the local community college to train people in the region to build energy-efficient houses. He said he'd be happy to, and spent six months in the region setting up the training program.

"Now the community college knows how to do it, people from the region are getting trained, and they are going into these jobs," Markley said. "Just having those other forms of capital in mind helped them say, 'Wait a minute. I bet there's another way to do this that could actually build these skills in the region.'"

Ideal: An upward spiral

What communities want to avoid is the destruction of one capital in order to create another one—which we do all too often, particularly the trade-off between natural and financial capital," Markley said. "If all you are focused on is creating jobs and trying to raise income levels in your community, you can do that by clear-cutting trees or taking the top off a mountain—all sorts of things that have a way of destroying natural capital and bringing into question the long-term sustainability for a place."

Instead, the overall goal is to create a system where all the sources of wealth are increasing through positive feedback loops, so that when one source of wealth goes up, another source of wealth that's connected to it also goes up.

Continued on page 9

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Expanding the Meaning of Wealth, *continued from page 14*

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It sounds kind of far-fetched—like a perpetual motion machine. But it's possible because many of the assets in a community are currently dormant; bringing those assets into the system gives the system a whole lot more energy.

"Assets," in this case, most often means people.

"Those communities that focus on getting people involved and thinking about what the community should be and working toward helping people reach that vision of what the community could be ... asking them what they are interested in and helping them find ways to act on those interests ... those are the ones where you're building assets across the capitals," Emery said.

In the work she's done in communities that are clearly becoming more prosperous, Emery has found that changing the cultural capital in a community—their everyday ways of thinking and doing—had the most profound impact on their efforts.

"The communities that are successful in mobilizing to create change—you ask them what's the most important thing that changed in this community, and they often say, **'We don't sit around saying the glass is half empty anymore,'**" Emery said. **"We know we can make a change, and we know we're the people who have to make a change."**

Local and uplifting

Besides considering multiple forms of wealth, the WealthWorks framework has two additional principles: focusing on local ownership and bringing people in from the economic margins.

One key question for development projects, Emery says, is "Where does the wealth created by this venture go?"

If the focus is on attracting industry from elsewhere, Emery said, what typically happens is the industry that comes in is a subdivision of an existing plant.

"So the wealth that's created by that economic venture is not retained in South Dakota. It goes to corporate headquarters. And it's there that people who have access to the wealth that goes there make donations to local charities. ... When you create a local business, usually the wealth that is created by the business stays in the community, and those dollars circulate in the community."

Markley said this kind of focus on entrepreneurship—helping the people who are already rooted in a community to grow and prosper—has become much more common in the 15 years she's been at the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship.

"I think there's much more of an appetite at the local and regional level to recognize what you have, and I think there is stronger social capital to begin to build relationships that you need to do this kind of economic development," she said.

Those relationships are important in part because they help to make those types of investments less risky—they bring in expertise that makes better decisions more likely, and it spreads

the risk around so it doesn't weigh too heavily on any one party.

The final principle in the WealthWorks framework is making sure that wealth reaches people on the low end of the income spectrum.

This criterion is often neglected in community planning, Markley said. And yet, it's a vital part of wealth creation in a community: "It's not wealth unless it's broadly shared," she said.

Wealth-creation policy?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture adopted a focus on rural wealth creation when Secretary Tom Vilsack took the helm in 2009, Pender explained. The USDA has used that framework for explaining the work it has already been doing—increasing built capital in communities, for example, or increasing human capital through training—as well as discussing potential policy changes. Pender thinks there will be continued interest under Vilsack to be more holistic in how USDA officials think about rural development, bringing multiple types of wealth into the conversation.

"People in local communities are already thinking this way," Pender said. "There's a lot known at local levels. How do we learn from each other? How do we learn from experiences at the local level in a way that brings that knowledge up to the policy level?"

One of his plans as a researcher is to think about how to measure wealth in other capitals—which could affect whether other forms of wealth are considered in policy decisions.

"If we can show that there are

indicators that can be used in a policy setting, then it's easier for policymakers to take them into account, and not always be dependent on employment projections. Not that we stop looking at employment, but we want to look at some other things, probably."

We measure what we value and value what we measure, as the saying goes, so some measurement might help other forms of wealth be valued more highly in government and community decision-making.

Imagine, for example, a project before a review board. "If you have people on one side that are standing there with all the numbers—how many jobs this project is going to create in the near term and so on, and people on the other side don't have anything—they just say, 'we don't really like it'—the side with the numbers tends to get more consideration, Pender said.

Developing some ways to measure other forms of wealth could help decision-makers better understand what's at stake in the proposed project.

Seeing local wealth

So, back to the question we asked at the beginning: Is your community wealthy?

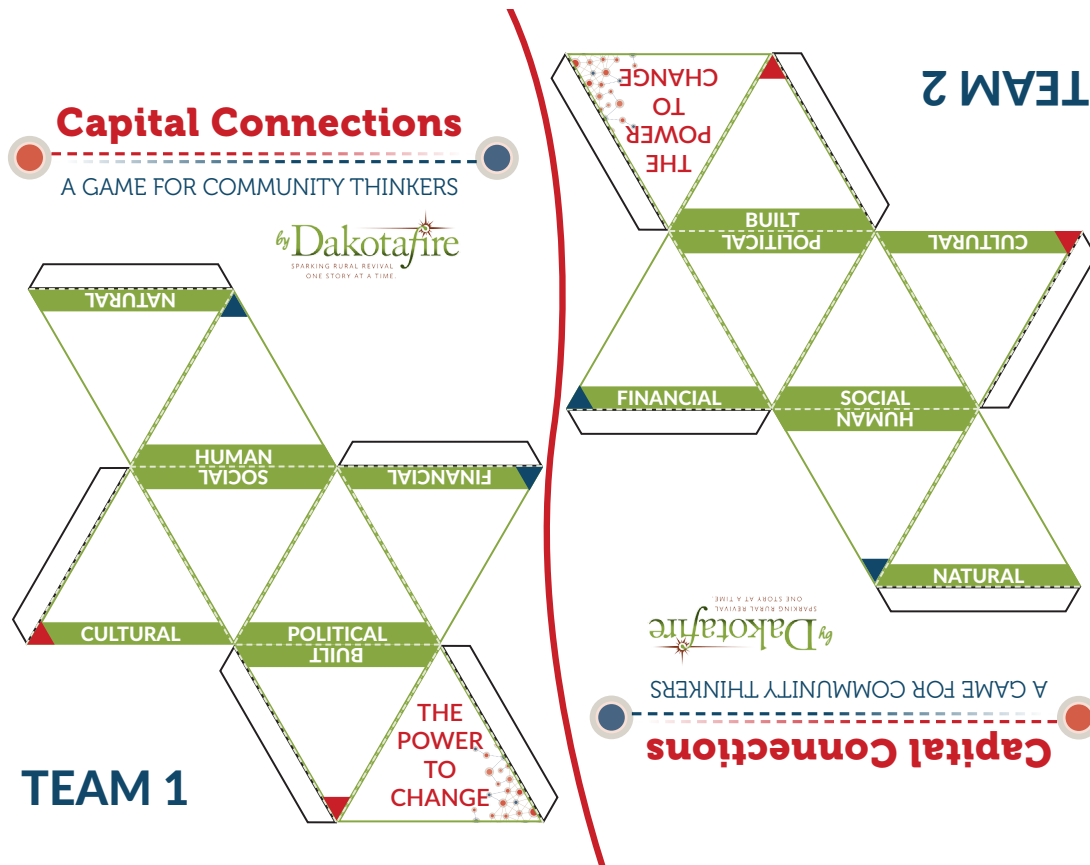
The stories that follow highlight some of the forms of wealth found in our region. Many stories show that communities are rich in more than one form of wealth.

There probably aren't too many of our neighbors sitting in the lap of luxury—but many of our communities may in fact be far wealthier than we might have considered before. *

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GAME CREATION • From *Dakotafire* magazine

I created this game for a magazine issue that encouraged readers to think differently about wealth: instead of focusing on dollars (or the lack thereof), they should think about other kinds of wealth they have or could build in their communities. The game, which included a craft project to create the dice, was a fun way to get people talking about those community assets.



Quick reference for how to score

Everyone participates in scoring. Give the idea one point for each of the following criteria it meets:

- The idea **increases** the wealth of one capital.
- The idea **doesn't decrease** the wealth of any capital.
- The idea involves **local ownership**.
- The idea helps move **low-income people** closer to the mainstream.
- The idea made someone on the other team **laugh**.

Capital Connections SCORECARD

	Your "Capital Connection"	Team 1	Team 2
ROUND 1			
ROUND 2			
ROUND 3			
ROUND 4			
ROUND 5			
	TOTAL:		

How did you do?

We'd love to hear what Capital Connections you came up with! E-mail one of the ideas (it can be the best, worst, funniest, whatever), explaining what two sources of wealth it connects, to CCgame@dakotafire.net, and we'll enter you in a drawing for some Dakotafire swag: T-shirts, mugs, and more. Include your name and address so we can send your prize to you if you win. We'll publish an assortment of the ideas we receive in the next issue.

Capital Connections

A GAME FOR COMMUNITY THINKERS

Come up with creative ways to connect different forms of wealth in your community. Earn points for quality and humor. The team with the most points at the end of five rounds wins.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Divide into even teams (which can be just one on each side).
2. Cut the facing page along the dividing line, and give one half to the other team and keep the other half.

Stage 1: Brainstorming

3. Each team needs to come up with **EXAMPLES OF WEALTH IN THEIR COMMUNITY** for each capital. (See the stories in this issue for definitions.) Don't leave any blank. It works best if you pick a community you all have in common—i.e., go with a county if you're not from the same town.

Stage 2: Assemble the dice

4. CUT OUT the shape, along the SOLID lines. Then FOLD along the DOTTED lines; the printed side should be on the outside of all the folds.
5. Use gluestick or tape to affix the tabs to the inside of the paper. Bring the two orange triangles together, and then the blue triangles together; then the rest should fall into place. You may need to tape the last tabs on the outside.

Stage 3: Game play

6. Team 1 starts. Take turns rolling the two dice together. If you land on "THE POWER TO CHANGE," you are allowed to turn that die to whatever side you like. Whatever comes up, **you need to come up with a CAPITAL CONNECTION: some way to use both those forms of wealth to increase the overall wealth of the community.** You have 2 minutes.
7. The whole group scores the idea. Earn a point for each of these:
 - The idea increases the wealth of one capital.
 - The idea doesn't decrease the wealth of any capital.
 - The idea involves local ownership.
 - The idea helps move low-income people closer to the mainstream.
 - The idea made someone on the other team laugh.
8. The team with the highest score after five rounds wins.

INNOVATIVE REPORTING • From the Prairie Idea Exchange project

The Prairie Idea Exchange brought together community development professionals to harvest their knowledge about what is working in their communities. Six sessions became five magazine issues based on the topics and ideas that the professionals came up with.

BUILDING THE REGION: What's possible?



Host John Beranek helps Prairie Idea Exchange participants find some common themes in the ideas they generated during the event.

Photo by Heidi Marttila-Losure

What are some ways regional collaboration WORKS?

by HEIDI MARTTILA-LOSURE

Regional collaborations are already happening around a variety of community needs in the Dakotas.

So what do all those successful efforts have in common? The Prairie Idea Exchange participants discussed some of the characteristics of regional efforts that have some staying power.

A common goal

"Mutual interest brings people together," said Linda Salmonson, manager of Rural Electric Economic Development. "If you've got an identified project that has regional impact and regional potential, that gives you a topic to start the discussion."

And from that first project, other things can develop, once the relationships have been developed. But the process starts with a

topic of mutual interest, because that's what gets people to the table in the first place.

Having a common goal also creates an amplifier effect for the common work.

"Regionalism works when you're working on one concept ... because you're creating a regional drum for that particular concept," said Liz Hannum, coordinator of the Center of Excellence in Entrepreneurship and International Business at Northern State University. "It's multiple voices saying the same thing, versus one voice saying the same thing over and over again."

Rick Skorupski, a writer from Frankfort, S.D., said one topic that could bring most of the region together is pheasants.

"Pheasant hunters bring ... millions of dollars into our regions, and we—though we might be working separately—are working regionally to accommodate those hunters," Skorupski said.

Leadership

"Leadership is a key driver," said Todd Kays, executive director of the First District Association of Local Governments. "It takes a group of individuals, it seems, to really have a drive of some sort to work

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What are some ways regional collaboration works, *continued from page 17*

together and reach out and use their resources and their networks ... to pull together those ideas and make it actually come to a reality."

Another word that the PIE participants used was finding the "champions" for a project—the people who not only do the work but get the rest of the people to the table.

Buy-in

"The most important thing is just showing up," Kays said. "You have to have people there to buy into the relationship and then be able to say how much risk we are going to assume together."

That kind of buy-in requires several things: First, the people in the group have to be convinced that the plan is a good one and that success is a likely possibility. Second, there has to be some sort of relationship between the people around the table. No one wants to assume risk with others whom they don't know and trust. That relationship needs to be strong enough that people are willing to make at least a small sacrifice for their immediate needs to make the region better in the long run. Kays called this "dying to yourself to make everybody else stronger."

Good communication

Rita Anderson, economic development director of the De Smet (S.D.) Development Corporation, pointed out that information sharing is easier than getting to some collaborative action. But it's also true that good communication has to happen before any collaborative action can take place.

People who come from different communities—and perhaps different backgrounds and industries—have to be able to bring those different viewpoints into the conversation effectively so that those differences add to the richness of the conversation as well as the idea pool for the collaboration. Without good communication, differences could instead become points of friction.

Wanda Jundt, executive director of the Eureka (S.D.) Community Development Company, said that she had enjoyed working with a regional newspaper journalist who went out of his way to make sure Eureka's news was reported and, therefore, shared with the region.

"I think that news media is really important as far as collaboration," Jundt said. "It's a way for us to reach out ... and keep everybody abreast of what's happening in each community."

Resource sharing

A collaboration that shares resources makes itself worthwhile to its participants, and that makes the collaboration stronger and more likely to last.

One example of shared resources is shared staff. Some small communities could not afford to hire their own economic developers, for example, but they can benefit nearly as much by sharing in the cost of one employee that serves multiple communities.

Another resource that can be shared is expertise. Some people in the region are known for their expertise on housing, for example; by asking for advice from those experts, others in the region don't need to start from square one in their own housing knowledge.

One last example of shared resources is the website structure that has been developed in common for economic development organizations in northeastern South Dakota called the Prairie Gateway. Because each of the sites has a common structure that cost less to develop and now allows them to easily share content, as well as an "umbrella site" that can direct traffic to all the others, the overall cost was less and the impact was higher than if each of the organizations had tried to develop their own sites separately.

Structure for networking

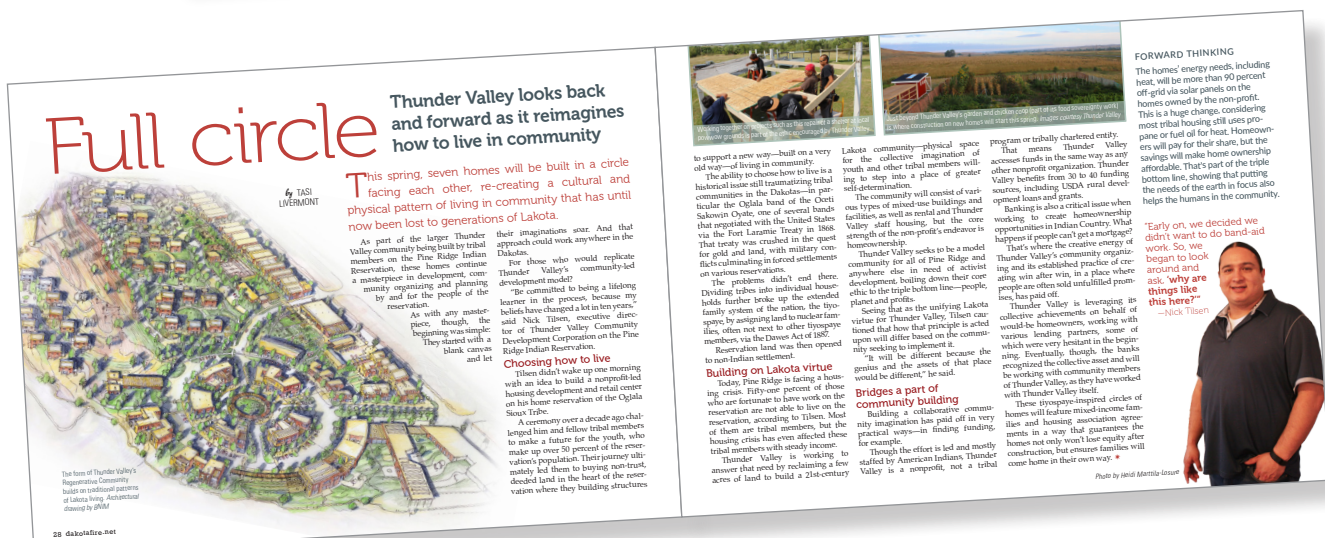
Being able to connect and share information is clearly a benefit for regional collaborations. Kelly Weaver of the Small Business Center in Aberdeen said having a regular time for networking helps to keep those regional relationships going.

"Events like (the Prairie Idea Exchange) and the regional roundtable that we had this morning are a way for people to have a way to build their network and a regular invitation to be a part of it," Weaver said. "It's not like you always have to pick up the phone. You can just go to this meeting and interact with different people and ... build your network that way."

One final piece of advice was offered by Norb Barrie of Turton, S.D.: "Take advantage of serendipity moments." In other words, if you see a regional effort coming together naturally, do what you can to help it come into being. *

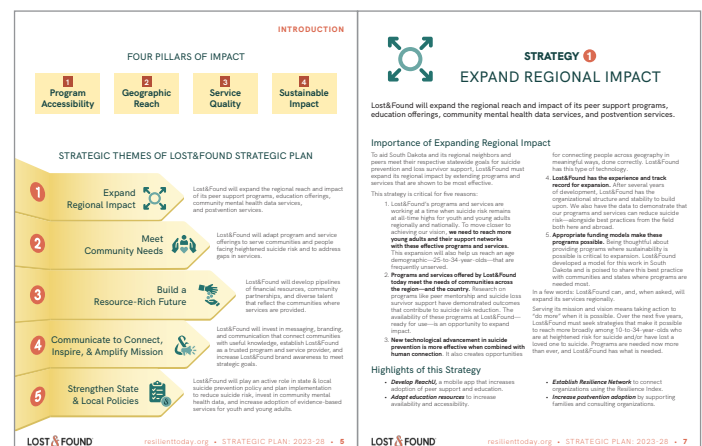
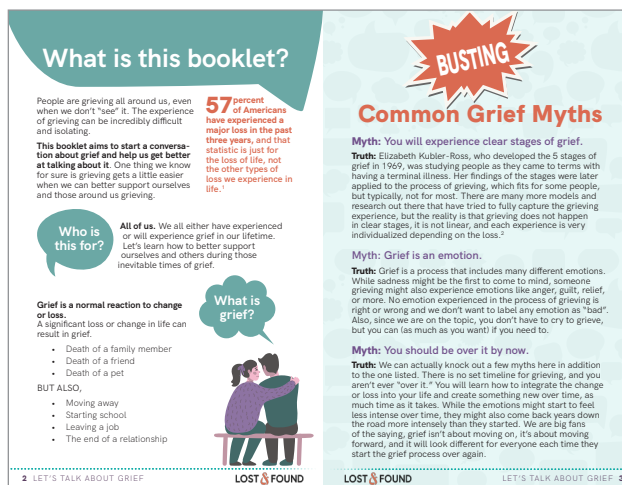
MAGAZINE DESIGN

Here are a few magazine design examples that were part of the Dakotafire project.



REPORTS/GUIDES

This is a variety of design examples that use an organization's brand standards.



EXPLAINERS/FLIERS

This is a variety of design examples that use an organization's brand standards.

LOST & FOUND Campus Resilience Index

Measuring systems of support to help students thrive.

OVERVIEW

The Campus Resilience Index (CRI) is a partnership-driven tool created by Lost&Found that assesses the suicide prevention capacity of college and technical school campuses and their communities; identifies areas of strength in prevention, and recommends programs, policies, or resources that can reduce suicide risk. Lost&Found's Research & Evaluation Services team manages and implements the CRI in collaboration with a campus contact and stakeholders identified as critical to campus prevention efforts. Through the data-collection process, campus and community stakeholders engage in understanding their own prevention strategies and efforts, where strengths and challenges lie, and where action can be taken. The CRI is intended to be repeated each year, creating an annual process of engaging, measuring, evaluating, and implementing prevention strategies. Schools will own their data and decide what they want to do with it.

WHY PARTICIPATE AND UTILIZE THE CRI?

Increasing reports of mental health conditions and suicide risk are straining prevention, intervention, and postvention efforts at post-secondary institutions in South Dakota and the surrounding region. The CRI provides a comprehensive visualization of suicide prevention capacity by measuring the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's seven evidence-based suicide prevention strategies in campus community contexts. The CRI collects data across a variety of primary sources (e.g., available counseling center programs) and secondary sources (e.g., faculty) to assess what strengths and challenges exist in current prevention strategies.

The CRI's broad, thorough view of campus prevention efforts can guide decisions on investments in existing or new prevention efforts that will best serve students. The information also helps Lost&Found to better support campus partners implementing suicide prevention programs and policies.

THE CRI IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

- Data will be collected** as available to the public from college websites, digital student handbooks, and other online sources.
- Data will be imported** into the CRI report by Lost&Found staff led by Dr. Gabe Ziskin, Research & Evaluation Manager.
- The CRI report will be shared and presented** by Lost&Found staff. Campus stakeholders will have full access to the data via web and take action on campus. Schools will own their data and can decide what to do with it.
- Lost&Found will retain CRI dashboards** for campus partners in a secure database for future comparison.
- Lost&Found will engage** with the campus contact and key stakeholders generally to repeat the process and evaluate progress alongside campus leaders.

Thank you for doing more to prevent suicide.

1 YEAR AGO: PASSAGE OF HB 1079

An Act to make an appropriation to the Department of Health to provide grants to support mental health and suicide prevention programs, and to declare an emergency.

WHAT THE BILL ACCOMPLISHED

- Set aside \$2 million in one-time funds to the South Dakota Department of Health for youth and young adult suicide prevention support programs.
- Supported three program and service areas that meet multiple strategies outlined in the 2020-2025 South Dakota Suicide Prevention Plan.
- The Department of Health was granted the authority to select vendors to meet the goals of HB 1079, selecting vendors in August 2023. Vendors selected:
 - Lost&Found:** Provide Peer2Peer Mentorship, Campus Resilience Index (CRI), and Postvention Support services to higher education institutions statewide.
 - Helpline Center:** Provide Hope Squad programs for K-12 institutions statewide, as well as postvention support services.
 - Mountain Plains Evaluation Services:** Provide data services to address trends in suicide risk and impact for youth and young adults statewide.

IMMEDIATE IMPACT - CAMPUS EFFORTS

After receiving funding from the Department of Health in August 2023, Lost&Found went to work immediately to meet statewide mental health and suicide prevention needs. As an organization that supports any and all students, as well as providing tools to administration, staff, and faculty, we focused on three things:

- Peer2Peer Mentorship:** 1-on-1, non-clinical, peer mental health support designed to meet local needs.
- Campus Resilience Index:** Dashboards and recommendations built on aggregated suicide prevention data for colleges and universities.
- Suicide Loss Response Plans and Policies:** Guidance and consulting provided to campus administrators on best practices and policies for suicide loss response.

Since the passage of HB 1079, 14 institutions of higher education are adopting one or more of these programs with additional efforts in progress going into the 2024-2025 academic year. Lost&Found is aware that Helpline Center has implemented Hope Squad at 9 school sites in Harrisburg, Brandon, and Tea. L&F currently has no information on Mountain Plains' efforts.

Campus Partner	Peer2Peer	Chapters	CRI	Postvention
Augsburg University	☒	☒	☒	☒
Black Hills State University	☒	☒	☒	☒
BSU - Rapid City	☒	☒	☒	☒
Dakota State University	☒	☒	☒	☒
Dakota Wesleyan University	☒	☒	☒	☒
Lake Area Technical College	☒	☒	☒	☒
Mount Mary University	☒	☒	☒	☒
Northern State University	☒	☒	☒	☒
SD School of Mines & Technology	☒	☒	☒	☒
South Dakota State University	☒	☒	☒	☒
SDSU - Rapid City	☒	☒	☒	☒
Southwest Technical College	☒	☒	☒	☒
University of South Dakota	☒	☒	☒	☒
University of SD - Sioux Falls	☒	☒	☒	☒
Western Dakota Technical College	☒	☒	☒	☒

LOST & FOUND • resilienttoday.org • Sioux Falls, SD • 605-549-5281

LOST & FOUND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

& PEER2PEER

Students helping students build resilience.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Peer2Peer Mentoring program connects a student who needs extra support with another student who can provide it.

One example of a **student mentee** is someone who is having trouble adjusting to the demands of campus life or who is new to campus and hasn't integrated socially yet. Typically, the **student mentor** is studying toward entering a helping profession, and participating in the program gives them training and practice in skills they will use regularly in their career.

The program helps both mentors and mentees become familiar with mental health and other resources available on campus and in the community so they are more likely to be used by students when needed.

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

Mentor pairs meet a minimum of eight times over the course of a semester. Mentors are provided a facilitation guide that gives suggestions for checking in with their mentee. Additionally, mentors are trained to facilitate meetings, listen and respond to mentee concerns, and refer to outside professionals when appropriate.

SPONSORSHIP LEVELS

\$25,000 Lead Partner	\$10,000 Builder	\$5,000 Sustainer	\$2,000 Changemaker	\$500 Founder
Provide peer support to over 150 students around the region.	Provide opportunities for 50 students to participate in Peer2Peer Mentorship programs.	Provide a full semester of mentor coaching services and support on one campus.	Provide a semester of training to peer mentors on one campus.	Provide services to one student mentee in the Lost&Found Peer2Peer Mentorship Program.

Contact us today! emuckey@resilienttoday.org or (605) 215-0421

YOUR STORY MATTERS.

Your story could help someone find hope.

Consider being part of the STORIES OF RESILIENCE project.

Lost&Found is recruiting young adults to step up to tell their stories during National Suicide Prevention Month (September). By being open about how they have found ways to move forward in the face of adversity and mental health challenges, they can inspire others to seek help and find hope.

Are you willing to share your story to help others?

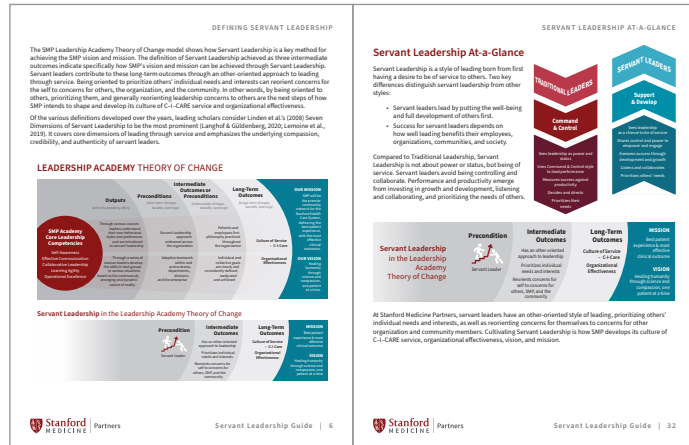
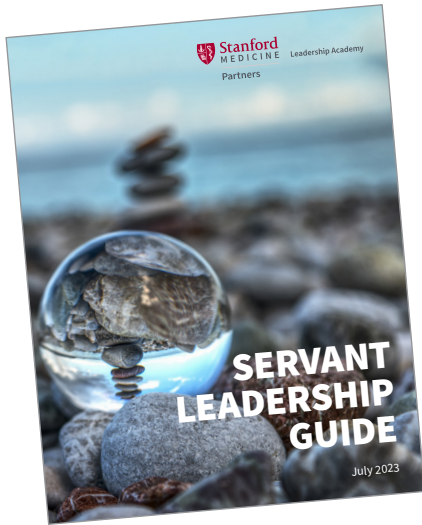
To learn more, go to 30stories.resilienttoday.org or email Heidi.Marttila-Losure@haidi@resilienttoday.org. If you are ready to share your story (or just want to view the questions), scan the code to view the form.

Read the rest of these stories and more at 30stories.resilienttoday.org.

STORIES OF RESILIENCE is a project of LOST & FOUND
319 N. Main Ave., Suite 1 • Sioux Falls, SD 57101 • (605) 549-5281 • resilienttoday.org

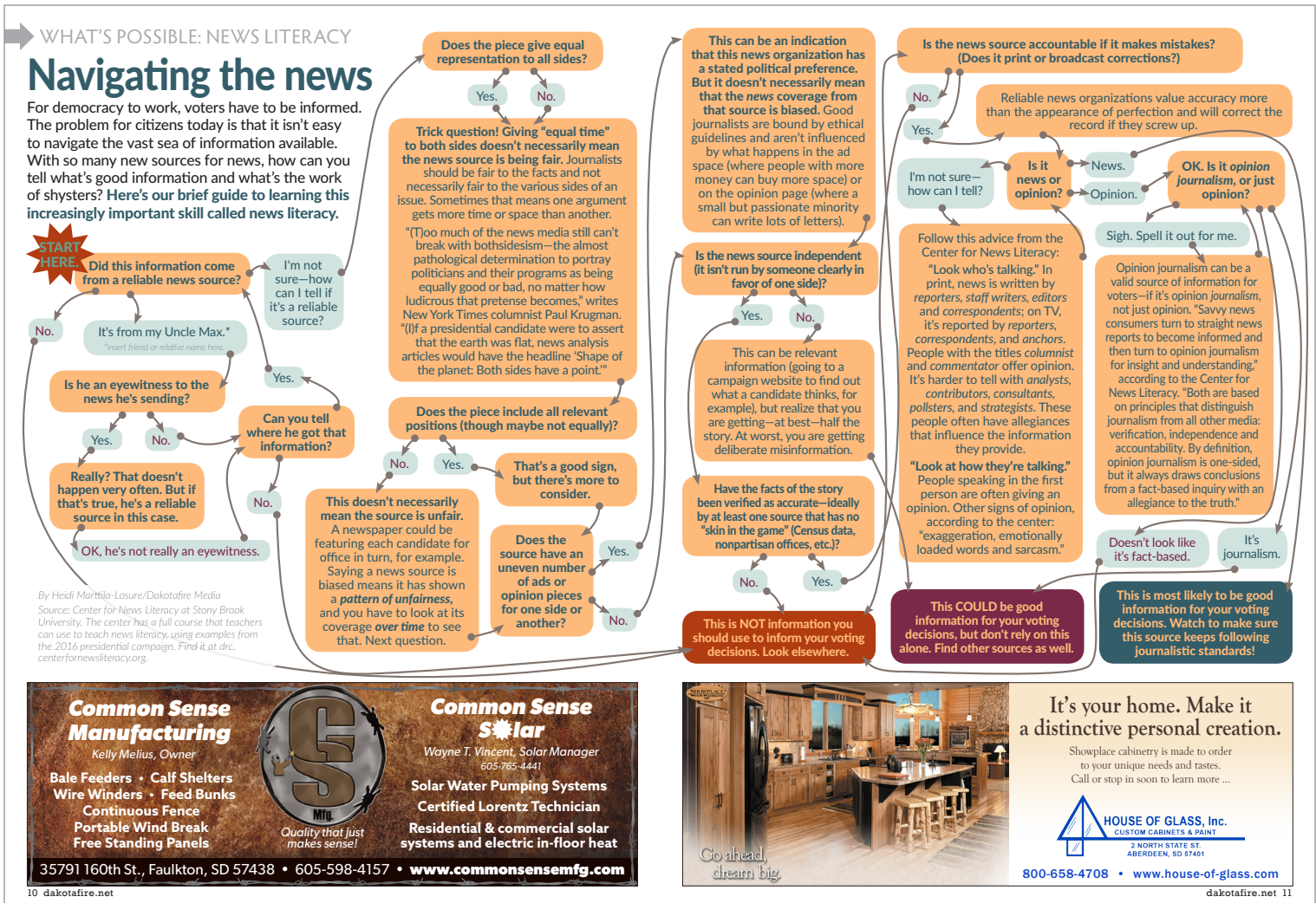
PUBLICATION DESIGN

This is a variety of design examples that use an organization's brand standards.



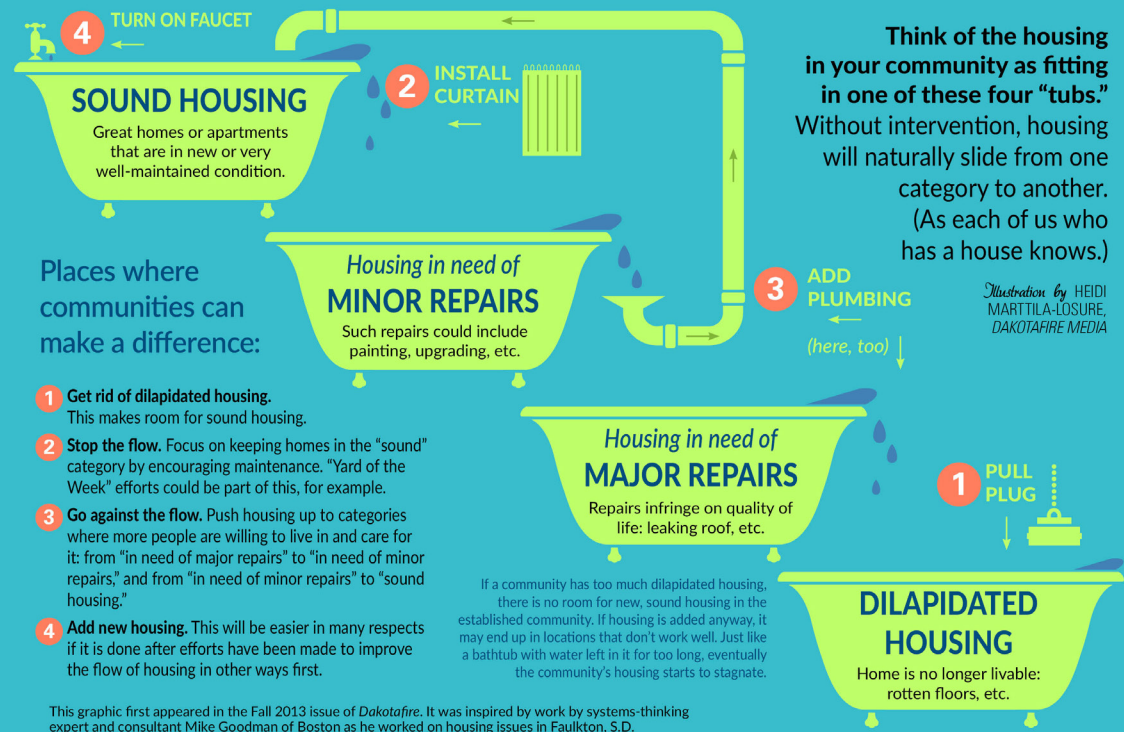
INFOGRAPHICS

This infographic was part of a magazine issue with the theme “Democracy & Education.” I made the graphic with a bit of levity, hoping to keep readers following through the whole flow chart.



Larger version: <https://dakotafire.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/NavigatingNews-graphic.pdf>

The natural flow of housing



This infographic helps to show how community leaders can think about the housing in their communities, and how they can work to improve that housing.

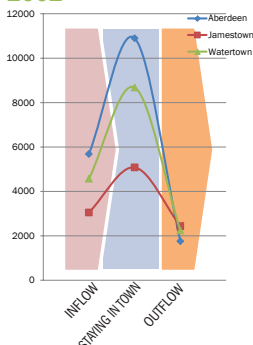
Commuting in our communities, by the numbers

INFLOWS AND OUTFLOWS

The number of people who come into, stay in, and leave a community each day for work can tell you a lot about that community, even if you didn't know anything else about it.

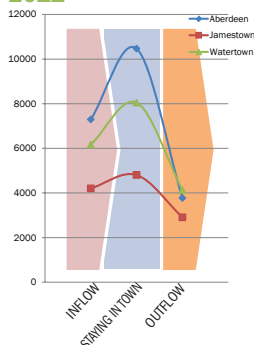
Let's start with the examples of Aberdeen, Jamestown and Watertown:

2002



The first column of dots show the number of workers coming into a community, the second column shows how many people stay in town to work, and the last column shows how many people leave for work. The specific numbers aren't terribly important; just notice lots more people stay in town to work than come to or leave it, and in 2002, all three towns could be pleased that more people were coming in to work than going out.

2011

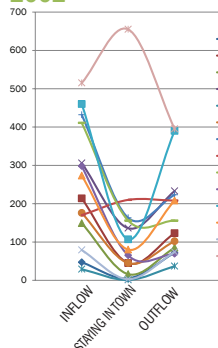


Nearly a decade later, all three towns have somewhat fewer people staying in town work, both in terms of overall numbers, and compared to those coming in or going out. But there are still many people who both live and work in these communities.

Both the inflow and the outflow have increased—basically, more people are commuting, both to and from these regional centers.

The picture is different in these Dakotafire communities. For the sake of clarity, the shading has been omitted here:

2002

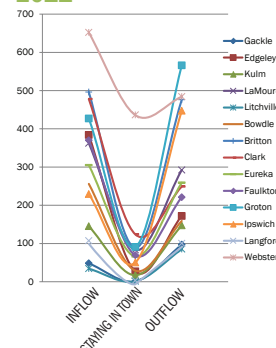


The scale is different in these graphs than in the ones to the left because of overall population differences. What we're comparing aren't the raw numbers, but the pattern.

For all but two communities, there are significantly fewer people in the second column—those both living and working in the same community. The outlier in 2002 was Webster, which had a pattern more similar to the regional centers. Clark also had a good number of workers living in town.

Nearly a decade later, the difference between these communities and the regional centers is even more pronounced:

2011



The number of people commuting in has gone up in some and down in others. Common to all of them: The number of people leaving town for work has increased.

The number of people living and working in these communities has dropped, and for all but Webster and Clark, it has dropped below 100. The "staying in town" number is especially important for recruiting EMTs and firefighters, as those services need people who can respond to emergencies during the day.

This page includes a lot of text; it's more of a graphic-focused story. But through the graphs, it helps people understand how the commuting patterns in their communities have changed in the past decade or so.

10 DESIGN PRINCIPLES for LIVABLE RURAL COMMUNITIES

A project of Design:SD • Illustrations by Paul H. Boerboom, AIA, and Jeremy Altman, Assoc. AIA

Adapted primarily from AIA's Ten Principles for Livable Communities, with inspiration from Minnesota Design Team and several other sources

Design on a human scale.

1

Communities that provide safe options for walking, biking and using public transit—in addition to driving—to places such as shops, services, cultural resources and jobs can encourage community interaction and benefit people's health.



Provide choices.

2

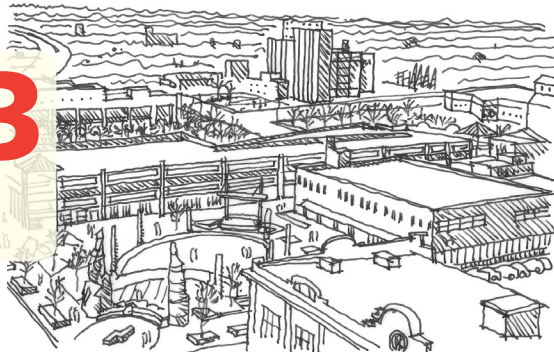
People want variety in housing, shopping, recreation, transportation and employment. Variety creates lively communities and accommodates residents in different stages of their lives.



Plan for mixed uses.

3

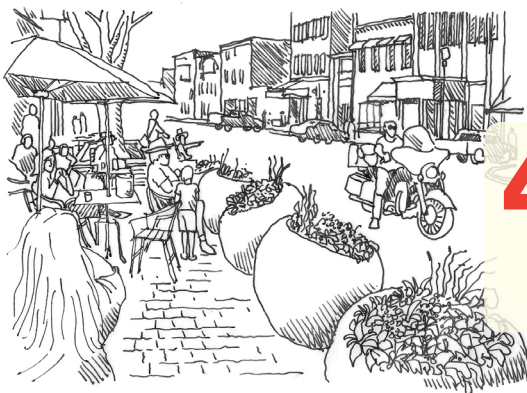
Integrating land uses that work well together, such as retail, residential and green space, and separating land uses that don't, such as manufacturing and downtown retail, creates vibrant, pedestrian-friendly and diverse communities.



Preserve the community's core.

4

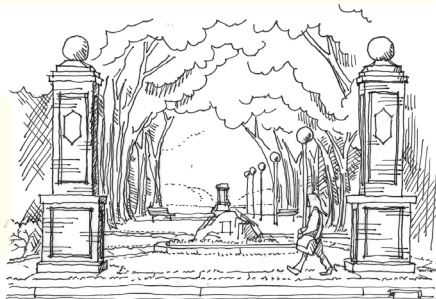
Restoring, revitalizing and infilling Main Streets and downtowns takes advantage of existing streets, services and buildings, avoiding the need for new infrastructure. Strong downtowns help preserve and enhance a community's identity.



Build connections.

5

Prominent gateways into communities, clear wayfinding and connections between neighborhoods that accommodate both walking and driving can serve as guides to help visitors and residents know where they are and how to get where they are going.



This infographic was the result of a collaborative effort. A team of design professionals wanted to give rural relevance to design principles that had been intended for urban audiences. I was part of the team that drafted the new version. I did the final wordsmithing and designed the posters.



For more information about Design:SD, go to designsd.org.

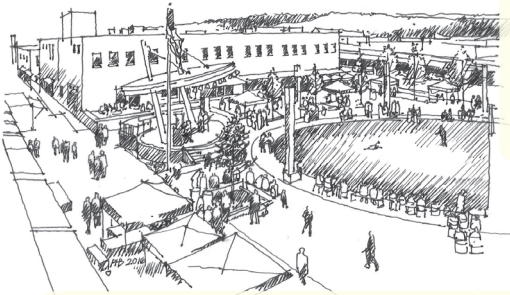
Poster design by
DakotaFire
dakotafire.net
MEDIA, LLC

continued on
page 26

10 DESIGN PRINCIPLES for LIVABLE RURAL COMMUNITIES

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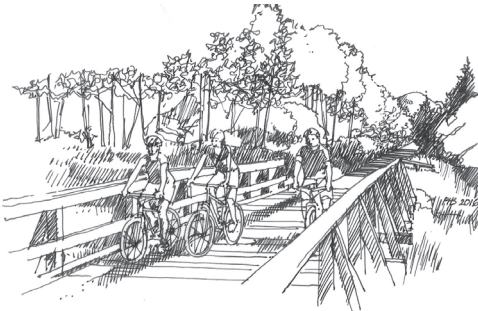
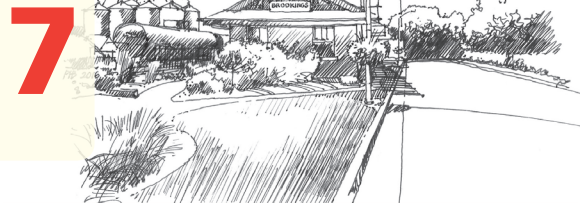


6 Create shared social and public spaces.

Citizens need welcoming, well-defined public places to stimulate face-to-face interaction, collectively celebrate and mourn, encourage civic participation, admire public art and gather for public events.

Promote community identity.

A "sense of place" gives communities a unique character, enhances appeal for visitors and creates pride in the community.

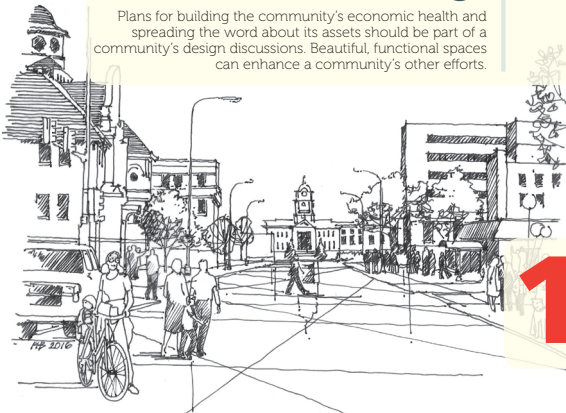
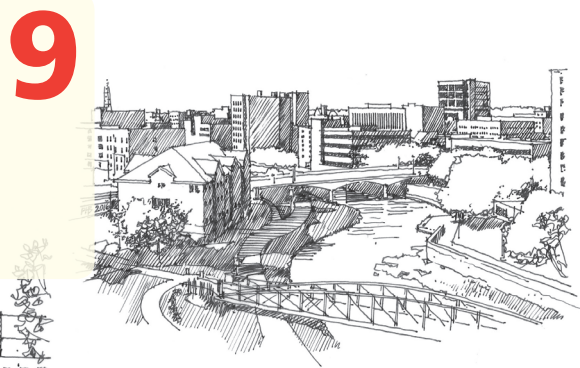


8 Conserve natural resources and landscapes.

Designing development with the surrounding natural world also in mind reduces air and water pollution, protects property values, preserves agricultural and natural systems and encourages people's connection to those systems. Vibrant landscapes can provide diverse recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.

Develop strategies for economic development and marketing.

Plans for building the community's economic health and spreading the word about its assets should be part of a community's design discussions. Beautiful, functional spaces can enhance a community's other efforts.



10 Design matters.

Design excellence is the foundation of successful, healthy and vibrant communities.

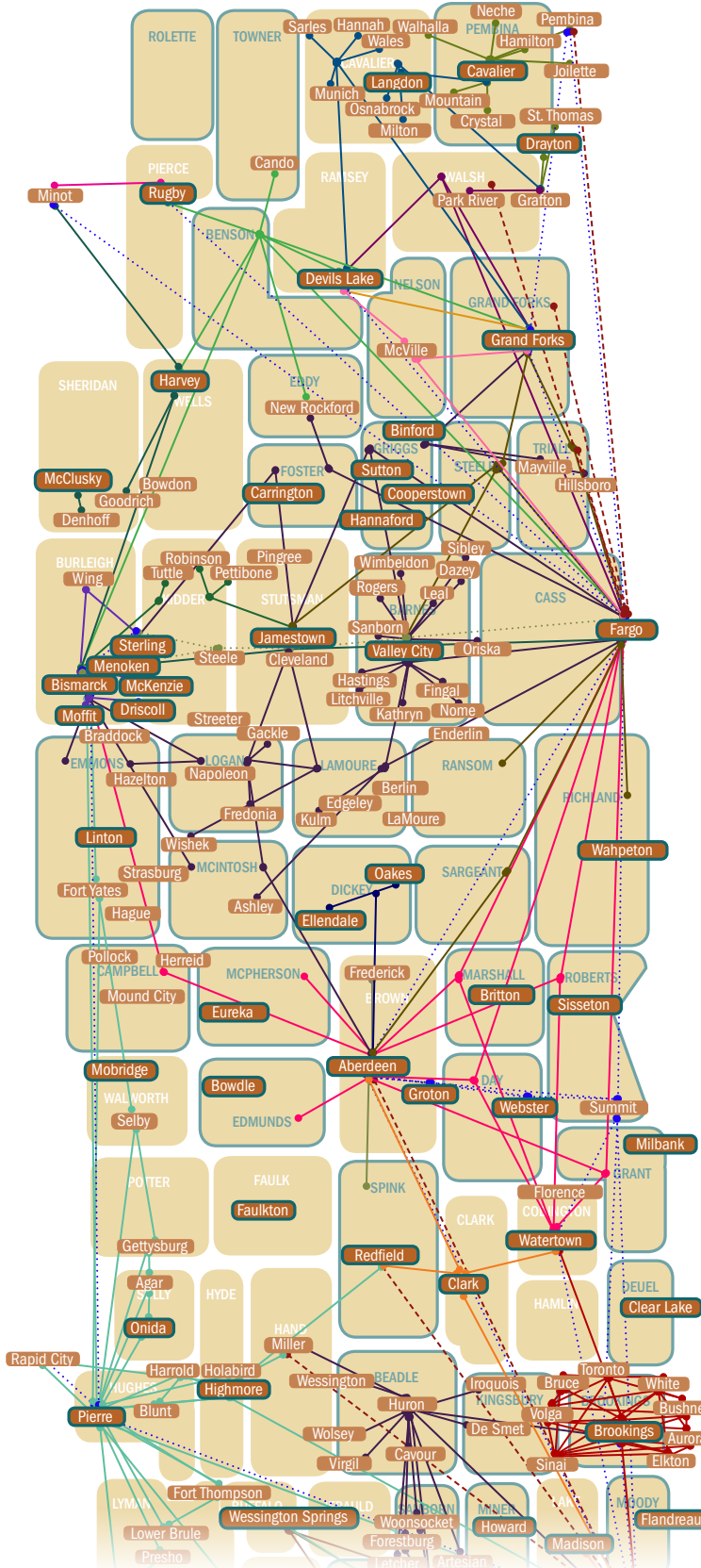
INFOGRAPHICS

This infographic went with a magazine issue about the effect of commuting on community. While the design is busy, those looking for specific transit information about their communities can see what is available.

Need a Ride?

Transportation services crisscross North and South Dakota. With the exception of a few volunteer-run services that are limited to senior citizens or those with medical needs, all of the services on this map are available to the general public. Towns or counties with teal or blue borders have city- or county-wide service available. Other services are available between the towns, as indicated.

Note: City locations are approximate. Routes are subject to change.



= CITYWIDE TRANSIT SERVICES

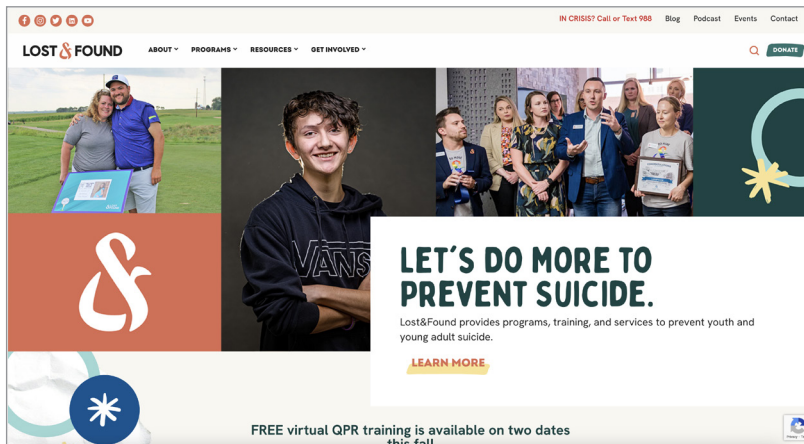
Aberdeen: Aberdeen Rideline, 605-626-3333	Devils Lake: Devils Lake Transit, 701-662-5061	Langdon: Cavalier County Transit, 701-256-2828	605-928-3311
Armour: ROCs, 605-487-7635	Drayton: Pembina County Transportation, 701-454-6586	Lennox: Estelline Community Transit, 605-873-2278	Pierre: River Cities Public Transit, 605-945-3166
Binford: South Central Adult Services, 701-845-4300	Driscoll: West River Transit, 701-391-7685	Linton: South Central Adult Services, 701-845-4300	Redfield: Spink County Public Transit, 605-472-1552
Bismarck: Bis-Man Transit, 701-258-6817	Elendale: Dickey County Senior Citizens, 701-349-4513	Jamestown: James River Public Transit, 701-252-2882; Jamestown City Taxi, 701-252-5900	Rugby: Souris Basin Transportation, 800-927-8318 or 701-852-8008
Beresford: ROCs, 605-487-7635	Eureka: Community Transit, 605-698-7511	Fargo: Fargo Metro Area Transit, 701-241-8140; Handi-Wheels Transportation, 701-232-3231; Valley Senior Services, 701-356-RIDE (7433)	Sioux Falls: Sioux Falls Transit, 605-367-7151
Bowdle: Community Transit, 605-698-7511	Freeman: Freeman Community Action, 605-256-6518	Faulkton: Lend a Hand, 605-450-8279	Sisseton: Community Transit, 605-698-7511
Brandon: Brandon City Transit, 605-256-6518	Frederick: ROCs, 605-487-7635	Flandreau: Interlakes Community Action, 605-256-6518	Sterling: West River Transit, 701-391-7685
Britton: Community Transit, 605-698-7511	Canton: ROCs, 605-487-7635	Freeman: Freeman Community Action, 605-256-6518	Sutton: South Central Adult Services, 701-845-4300
Brookings: Brookings Transit, 692-5416	Carrington: South Central Adult Services, 701-845-4300	Freeman: Freeman Community Action, 605-256-6518	Tripp: ROCs, 605-487-7635
Brookings: ROCs, 605-487-7635	Cavalier: Pembina County Transportation, 701-454-6586	Freeman: Freeman Community Action, 605-256-6518	Valley City: South Central Adult Services, 701-845-4300
Brookings: ROCs, 605-487-7635	Centerville: ROCs, 605-487-7635	Freeman: Freeman Community Action, 605-256-6518	Vermillion: Vermillion Public Transit, 605-624-7433
Brookings: ROCs, 605-487-7635	Chamberlain: ROCs, 605-487-7635	Freeman: Freeman Community Action, 605-256-6518	Viborg: ROCs, 605-487-7635
Brookings: ROCs, 605-487-7635	Clark: Med Van, 605-532-5665 or 605-532-3512 (medical only)	Freeman: Freeman Community Action, 605-256-6518	Wahpeton: Valley Senior Services, 701-642-3033
Brookings: ROCs, 605-487-7635	Clear Lake: Interlakes Community Action, 605-256-6518	Freeman: Freeman Community Action, 605-256-6518	Watertown: Watertown Transit, 605-882-5287
Brookings: ROCs, 605-487-7635	Cooperstown: South Central Adult Services, 701-845-4300	Freeman: Freeman Community Action, 605-256-6518	Webster: Community Transit, 605-698-7511
Brookings: ROCs, 605-487-7635	Dell Rapids: Dell Rapids Transit, 605-256-6518	Freeman: Freeman Community Action, 605-256-6518	Wessington Springs: ROCs, 605-487-7635
Brookings: ROCs, 605-487-7635		Freeman: Freeman Community Action, 605-256-6518	White Lake: ROCs, 605-487-7635
Brookings: ROCs, 605-487-7635		Freeman: Freeman Community Action, 605-256-6518	Winner: Yankton Transit, 605-487-7635
Brookings: ROCs, 605-487-7635		Freeman: Freeman Community Action, 605-256-6518	Yankton: Yankton Transit, 605-665-4610

= COUNTYWIDE TRANSIT SERVICES

Aurora: ROCs, 605-487-7635	Emmons: South Central Adult Services, 701-845-4300	Moody: Interlakes Community Action, 605-256-6518
Barnes: South Central Adult Services, 701-845-4300	Foster: South Central Adult Services, 701-845-4300	Nelson: Nelson County Public Transportation, 800-747-4782
Beadle: People's Transit, 605-353-0100	Grand Forks: Valley Senior Services, 800-485-1715	Pembina: Pembina County Meals & Transportation, 701-454-6586
Benson: Benson County Transportation, 701-438-2192 or 1-888-525-2104	Grant: Community Transit, 605-698-7511	Ransom: Valley Senior Services, 877-857-3743
Bon Homme: ROCs, 605-487-7635	Gregory: ROCs, 605-487-7635	Richland: Valley Senior Services, 701-642-3033
Campbell: Community Transit, 605-698-7511	Hanson: ROCs, 605-487-7635	Roberts: Community Transit, 605-698-7511
Charles Mix: ROCs, 605-487-7635	Kidder: Kidder County Transit, 701-475-2708	Rollette: Rollette County Transportation, 701-466-6421
Day: Community Transit, 605-698-7511	Kingsbury: People's Transit, 605-353-0100	Sanborn: Sanborn County Transit, 605-472-1552
Deuel: Interlakes Community Action, 605-256-6518	LaMoore: South Central Adult Services, 701-845-4300	Spink: Spink County Public Transit, 605-472-1552
Deuel: ROCs, 605-487-7635		Steele: Valley Senior Services

Full graphic: <http://dakotafire.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/transit-services-11x17.pdf>

WEBSITES & EMAILS



resilienttoday.org

I did not do the initial design for this website, but I maintain it and add content to it.

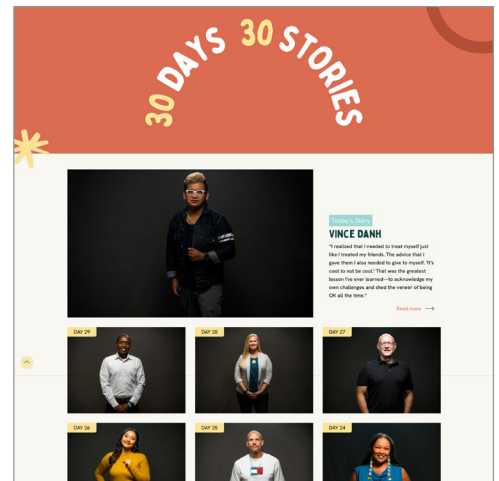


dakotafire.net

I designed this site from a template.

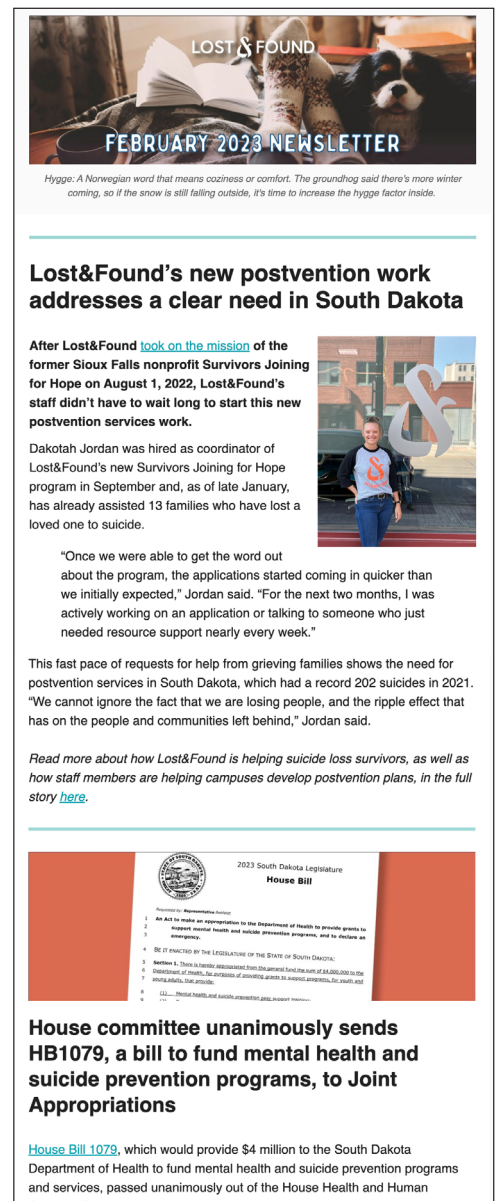
Lost&Found email newsletter

I put together this newsletter regularly in 2023.

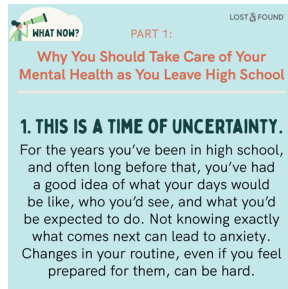


30stories.org (archived; new version is now stories.resilienttoday.org)

Another designer put together this site, and I added all the content to it.



SOCIAL MEDIA & VIDEOS



Here are a few items I designed for social media.



I designed this content in Instagram-carousel format.



Videos are a new area of design for me. I have been putting together the videos that you can find in this series. I did the interviews and edited them down to work for our Stories of Resilience project.

Stories of Resilience playlist



HEIDI MARTTILA-LOSURE

39038 105th St. • Frederick, SD 57441 • 605-290-3335 • heidi@dakotafire.net

