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Congratulations Secretary Jundt!

During the 2025 AASHTO Spring Meeting, Secretary Jundt was named as Chairman of the AASHTO Standing Committee of Highways and Streets.

Celebrating 2025 Graduates



Congrats to all SDDOT families celebrating 2025 graduates. Please view our annual slideshow [here](#) or by clicking on the graphic. Graduate photos and details are also available on pages 5-10 in this newsletter.

SDDOT Online Store for Spring/Summer Personal Branded Apparel NOW OPEN



Three Ways to Access the SDDOT Online Store . . .

https://stores.inksoft.com/sddot_summer_25/shop/home

https://intranetdot.sd.gov/SDDOT_Branding.aspx

Use the QR code



Find additional information on page 4 in this newsletter!

The Secretary's Corner



Transportation Commission:

The nine members of the Transportation Commission (TC) are appointed by the Governor. The Commission advises the Department on overall transportation needs. They work closely with the SDDOT to determine priorities and plan for future State transportation needs. The public is always welcome to listen to the meeting live at <https://www.sd.net/bhbf/>. The public may also participate in person or via phone by calling the conference number 866-705-2554, using code 153277.



Chris Frick
Yankton



Lynn Jensen
Lake Preston



Jafar Karim
Rapid City



Larry Nelson
Canton



Chair, Donald Roby
Watertown



Ronald Rosenboom
Sturgis



Austin Simons
Mobridge



Rick Vallery
Pierre



Mike Vehle
Mitchell

SDDOT recently submitted our **2025 application to the Performance Excellence Network (PEN)**, the regional Baldrige-based program that serves South Dakota, North Dakota, and Minnesota. The PEN application examines processes in leadership, strategic planning, customer-related procedures, workforce, and operations. PEN evaluates and recognizes organizations that are systematically improving measurable and quantifiable results.

In 2020, our most recent application, PEN recognized SDDOT with the **Achievement Award**, the second highest recognition level, demonstrating a commitment to implementation of quality management principles. **A key strength noted was the commitment of SDDOT employees to the our mission.** Our work toward continuous improvement has not stopped with the honor of being recognized at the Achievement Award level. We are focused on the need to continually implement and evaluate systematic processes across our Department.

I want to thank **Craig Smith, Director of Operations**, for guiding the PEN application process once again. I also want to thank all SDDOT staff who contributed to this data-driven application. View the 2025 application (as well as 2020 summary documents) at [SDDOT Intranet - PEN Application](#). We anticipate a site visit by the PEN evaluation team this summer or fall with final results provided yet in 2025.

Cybersecurity Training

BIT has partnered with BHRA to utilize the statewide **Learning Management System (LMS)** for annual cybersecurity training. This provides continuity for employees to go to one place for all training needs.

SDDOT employees were assigned the cybersecurity training on Tuesday, May 6, 2025. Each employee should have received an enrollment notification from SDLearn@csod.com via email. **Employees have 30 days to complete the training.** If any employee did not receive the training notification email, the training may be found at [SD Learn](#). To receive credit for training, the employee must click "Complete Lesson" at the end of the module. **For TKS, please use 77E6 for the BIT Security Training.**

Edit DOT Coding							
Equip Nbr	Code	Org	Cntl	AFE	Func	Accom	B
	0	1000		77E6	1174		
Comment:							
Function Description: ATTEND TRAINING							
AFE Description: BIT SECURITY AWARENESS TRAINING							

Hall of Honor Nominations Close Friday, May 23, 2025



The purpose of the Transportation Hall of Honor is to recognize individuals who have made a lasting, valuable, and/or unique contribution to South Dakota's air, highway, public transit, or rail transportation system.

Click on the graphic to access the Hall of Nomination form.

Find the complete list of [Hall of Honor Inductees](#) located on the SDDOT website at <https://dot.sd.gov> under Featured Resources.

Nomination forms are also available by contacting **Kari Kroll** at 605-773-5105 or kari.kroll@state.sd.us.

Community Transit of Watertown/Sisseton, Inc. is committed to providing safe, reliable and courteous public transportation to the many counties in Northeast South Dakota. Public transportation promotes quality of life, livability, self-sufficiency and freedom through mobility. In May, **Community Transit staff members Jennifer Boehm and Vereena Farhnrich** attended the **"Unreasonable Hospitality"** workshop held in Watertown sponsored through "Visit Watertown" as part of Tourism Month! The workshop was led by **Julie Stevenson, Strategic Communications Coordinator.**



SDDOT Online Store for Branded Personal Apparel

Now Open through Friday, June 6, 2025

Three Ways to Access the SDDOT Online Store . . .

- https://stores.inksoft.com/sddot_summer_25/shop/home
- https://intranetdot.sd.gov/SDDOT_Branding.aspx
- Use the QR Code



There are great spring wear options! **Please note this is an optional opportunity to order personal branded apparel and is paid by each employee via a personal credit card.** Work-related safety apparel (purchased by SDDOT) is completed through area offices.

Shopping experience:

1. There are various colors (and sizes) available for each clothing option. As shown, the logo is being printed in white to offset the clothing colors per our branding standards.
2. The online store shows the cost of each item without tax. (Tax is applied at check out).
3. Clothing items 2X and larger do have an additional charge per item, to be added at check out.
4. No additional fees are charged to an order for embroidery, credit card fees, or shipping/handling.
5. The logo is screen print on the short and long-sleeve t-shirts; and is embroidered on all other items.

Placing an order:

1. Once an employee decides what items (color and sizing) to order within the cart, he/she will be prompted to provide name/address/credit card information to complete the process.
2. Each employee will need to complete the address information which is tied to the personal credit card being used. (You do NOT need to "sign in" or "log in" to place an order.)
3. When the order is submitted, the employee's credit card will be charged.
4. The employee will receive a confirmation receipt from geffdogdesignandapparel@myorder.design. If you DO NOT receive a confirmation email for your purchase; please email info@geffdog.com.

Distribution:

1. All orders will be produced once the store closes on Friday, June 6, 2025.
2. Distribution will be done via each region/area and through central office. Orders WILL NOT be sent directly to home addresses.
3. All items that the employee purchased will be pre-packaged together in a clear bag with a sheet inside showing the employee name, order summary, etc.
4. Since this is a personal apparel order, please note that exchanges will not be available. Sizing guidelines are provided for each apparel item.
5. For order questions; please contact our Geffdog sales representative at info@geffdog.com or Julie Stevenson at julie.stevenson@state.sd.us.

Find more information about branded apparel on the Intranet at https://intranetdot.sd.gov/SDDOT_Branding.aspx if you would like other product options or to use a local vendor.

2025 High School and College Graduates

Ellie Olson - Graduated from Spearfish High School

She plans to attend South Dakota State University to study sports medicine with the goal of becoming an athletic trainer at either the high school or college level. She is considering playing drums in the Dakota Pride.

Ellie is the daughter of **Chris and Heidi Olson, BHRA Human Resources Manager.**



Brennen Boyle - Graduated from T.F. Riggs High School (in Pierre)

He will be attending Northern State University (Aberdeen) to major in Criminal Justice.

Brennen is the son of **Terri Geigle, Transportation Specialist I**, and grandson of **Susan Geigle, Senior Secretary**, both in the Central Office in Pierre.



Matthew Suomala - Graduated from Rapid City Christian School

He will be attending South Dakota School of Mines & Technology (Rapid City) for Civil Engineering.

Matthew is the son of **Jon Suomala, Operations Traffic Engineer at the Rapid City Region Office.**



Isabelle Weller - Graduated from T.F. Riggs High School (in Pierre)

She will be attending South Dakota State University (Brookings) to major in Animal Science and eventually go on to attend veterinary school.

Isabelle is the granddaughter of **Bob Hofer, Advanced Professional Work for Air, Rail, & Transit, Central Office in Pierre.**



Graduates Continued . . .

Mason Berg - Graduated from T.F. Riggs High School (in Pierre)

She plans to attend South Dakota State University (Brookings) to major in Psychology.

Mason is the daughter of **Nikki Berg, Chief Cartographer, Central Office in Pierre.**



Keira Briggs - Graduated from Stanley County High School (Ft. Pierre)

She plans to attend South Dakota State University (Brookings) to major in Pharmacy.

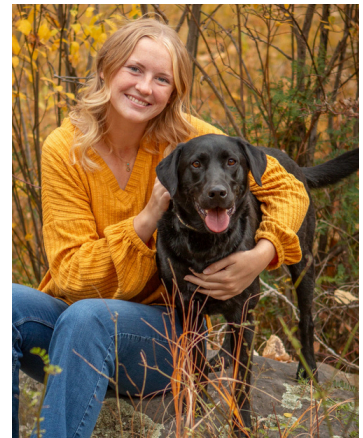
Keira is the daughter of **Levi Briggs, STIP Coordinator, Central Office in Pierre.**



Katie Palmer - High School Graduation (Homeschool)

She plans to earn her Associate Degree in Applied Health Sciences at Black Hills State University (Spearfish), and enroll in the South Dakota State University Nursing Program in Rapid City.

Katie is the daughter of **Steve Palmer, Rapid City Area Engineering Supervisor.**



Keegan Kitts - Graduated from T.F. Riggs High School (Pierre)

He plans to attend South Dakota State University (Brookings) to major in Agronomy.

Keegan is the son of **Jordon Kitts, Federal Funding Specialist, Central Office in Pierre.**

Graduates Continued . . .

Kyanne Beck - Graduated from the Dental Assisting Program at Lake Area Technical College (Watertown)

She is working at Maher Dental Clinic in Pierre.

Kyanne is the daughter of **Kellie Beck, Director of Finance & Management, Central Office in Pierre.**



Katelyn Lauritsen - Graduated from Edgemont High School

She plans to attend South Dakota State University (Brookings) and major in Criminology.

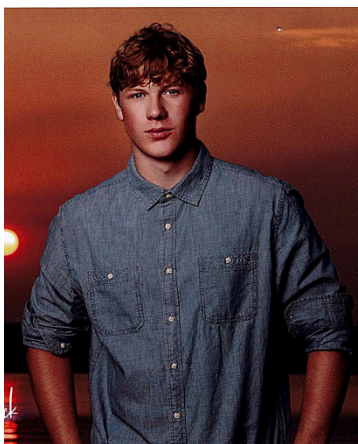
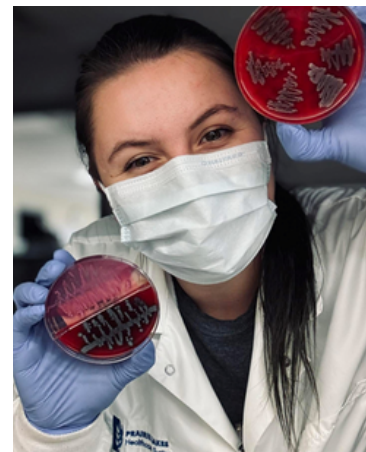
Katelyn is the daughter of **Pam and Ron Lauritsen, Custer Project Technician.**



Madison Kramer - Graduated from Lake Area Technical College (Watertown)

She graduated in December and is currently working at the Department of Health Laboratory in Pierre.

Madison is the sister of **Andrea Bierle, Environmental Engineer II at Central Office in Pierre.**



Colter Babcock - Graduated from T.F. Riggs High School (Pierre)

He plans to attend South Dakota State University (Brookings) to pursue a degree in Pharmacy.

Colter is the son of **Chad Babcock, Environmental Engineer at Central Office in Pierre.**

Graduates Continued . . .

Hannah Olson - Graduated from the University of Mary (North Dakota) with a Doctorate of Physical Therapy

She plans to join the workforce after receiving her Doctorate of Physical Therapy.

Hannah is the daughter of **Karrie and Eric Stroeder, Engineering Supervisor in Mobridge.**



Kimber Fees - Graduated from Faith High School

She plans to attend Chadron State College (Nebraska) and major in Psychological Science.

Kimber is the niece of **Kallie Poss, Pierre Region Accounting Assistant.**



Kodi (Fees) Pharris - Graduated from Chadron State College (Nebraska) with a Bachelor of Science degree in Education for Secondary Family and Consumer Science

She will be teaching Home Economics this fall in Dupree.

Kodi is the niece of **Kallie Poss, Pierre Region Accounting Assistant.**



Jonas Henrichen - Graduated from Sturgis Brown High School

After graduation, he plans to join the workforce.

Jonas is the son of **Jessica and Darrel Henrichsen, Rapid City Project Technician.**



Graduates Continued . . .

Andy Gordon - Graduated from South Dakota State University (Brookings) with a degree in Civil Engineering

He will be working full-time as a project engineer in the Pierre Area.

Andy is the son of **Rick Gordon, Construction Engineer Manager at Central Office in Pierre**. Andy is pictured with his Grandfather, **Bill Gordon**, who retired from the **SDDOT Road Design Office in 2006**.



Callie Gordon - Graduated from T.F. Riggs High School (Pierre)

She plans to attend Lake Area Technical College (Watertown) to major in Dental Hygiene.

Callie is the daughter of **Rick Gordon, Construction Engineer Manager at Central Office in Pierre**.



Adeline (Adee) Abernathy - Graduated from the South Dakota School of Mines & Technology (Rapid City) with a degree in Chemical Engineering

She plans to join the workforce as a chemical engineer. She also enjoyed working as an intern for the SDDOT for two summers in project development and materials.

Adee is the daughter of **Julia Harkins, Senior Secretary for Road Design in Pierre**, and **Loren Abernathy, Surfacing Plans Project Engineer for Materials in Pierre**.



Brady Clocksin - Graduated from T.F. Riggs High School (Pierre)

He plans to attend South Dakota State University (Brookings) and double major in Business Administration and English/Writing.

Brady is the son of **Bernie Clocksin, retired Standards Engineer**, and **Noël Clocksin, LGA Programming & Funding Engineer, Central Office, Pierre**.



Fayth Martin - Graduated from Philip High School

She plans to attend Mitchell Technical College to pursue a degree in healthcare.

Fayth is the daughter of **Vance Martin, Region Design Engineer for the Pierre Region**.



Graduates

Lexus Vermundson - Graduated from South Dakota School of Mines & Technology (Rapid City) with a Bachelor of Science in Geological Engineering

She has accepted a Geotechnical Engineering position with Terracon Consultants Inc. in Cedar Falls, Iowa.

Lexus is the daughter of **Krystl Vermundson, Senior Secretary for Rapid City Region and Area.**



Aiden Coate - Graduated from Douglas High School

He plans to enlist in the United States Marine Corps. He leaves for boot camp on July 21, 2025.

Aiden is the son of **Alora Coate, Internal Services Transportation Analyst in Rapid City.**

Jacob Larson - Graduated from South Dakota State University (Brookings) with a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering

He will be joining the SDDOT as a project engineer in the Pierre Area Office.

Jacob is pictured with his dad, Mike, and mom, **Shelley Larson, Senior Region Design Manager at Central Office in Pierre.**



McKenna Letcher - Graduated from South Dakota State University (Brookings) with a Master's Degree in Developmental Sciences

She will continue to offer support to families and children in education and development.

McKenna is the daughter of **Brad Letcher, Huron Area Engineer.**

Reagan Wenisch - Graduated from Yankton High School

He will be attending Southeast Technical College (Sioux Falls) to pursue a degree in Surgical Technology.

Reagan is the son of **Brian Wenisch, Transportation Project Manager II in Yankton.**





Mentoring Minute Midpoint Energizer Event

By: Jason Baker and Kellie Beck

The SDDOT midpoint energizer event was held at Casey Tibbs Rodeo Center in Ft. Pierre on May 7, 2025. A midpoint energizer is a strategic activity placed at the halfway mark of a mentoring program to reinvigorate participants, assess progress, and realign goals.

Its benefits are both practical and psychological, enhancing engagement, motivation, and program outcomes. The midpoint energizer serves as a morale booster. By the midpoint, participants may experience fatigue or diminished enthusiasm. A well-designed energizer, such as a workshop, peer-sharing session, or fun team-building activity, can rekindle excitement, foster deeper connections, and remind participants of the program's value. This renewed energy helps mentors and mentees re-engage with greater commitment in the latter half of the program.

This energizer also provides a critical opportunity for reflection and feedback. Participants can evaluate what's working, discuss challenges, and adjust their goals. This reflection strengthens the mentoring relationship by promoting open communication and clarifying expectations. Mentors can recalibrate their guidance, while mentees can refine their development plans with fresh clarity. Additionally, energizers help reinforce a sense of community.

Group activities or shared discussions during the energizer allow individuals to learn from others' experiences and gain new perspectives. This not only deepens learning but also reduces isolation, especially in remote or hybrid programs.

In summary, the midpoint energizer was an opportunity to enhance engagement, encourage reflection, strengthen relationships, and boost program momentum. It is a vital tool for maintaining focus, motivation, and cohesion in a mentoring program, ultimately contributing to more impactful and lasting developmental outcomes.



Make Time for Mentoring!

Finance Corner

FY25 Year-end Deadlines

Recap on payments:

- **All vouchers (direct, contract, and purchase order payments)** must be entered **by 4 p.m. (CT) on Tuesday, June 17, 2025**, and must be received by the State Auditor's office **by 12 (noon) (CT) on Monday, June 23, 2025**.
 - The June 17, 2025, deadline will allow time for the approval process and/or corrections before the June 23, 2025, deadline.
 - If you have any rush or emergency payments, please send them to the Central Finance Office - ATTN: **Brandy Hansen**.
- **All Employee Reimbursements** must be entered **by 4 p.m. (CT) on Thursday, June 12, 2025, by 4 p.m. (CT)** and must be received by the State Auditor's office **by 12 (noon) (CT) on Wednesday, June 18, 2025**.
- The travel voucher deadline allows enough time for the approval process and/or corrections prior to reimbursement runs.
- After the deadline, the travel import portion of the batch load will be shut down, but you will still be able to fill out employee templates (to begin processing on June 30, 2025).
 - If you create your travel templates before June 30, you will have to manually enter the accrual codes.
- For questions pertaining to travel, please contact **Brandy Hansen** at 605-773-5615 or **Patricia Devitt** at 605-773-5102 or via email.
- All **CMP (PAY ESTIMATES)** need to be approved by area engineers and supervisors **by Friday, June 13, 2025**.

Questions?

- Contact **Blaine Humann** at 605-773-2897 or **Carson McClelland** at 605-773-4754 or via email.



**For more BISON updates,
please visit the BISON
website at**
<https://www.sd.gov/bison>

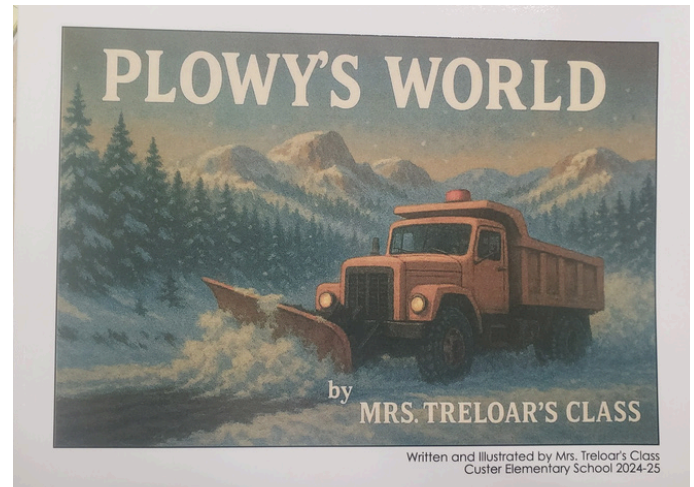
Project BISON is happy to share this month's update with you all. In this month's KDSR you will gain an understanding on where we are at in the CRP2 process. The BISON team will continue to keep you informed and knowledgeable about the project.

Please take a moment to review and share the [May KDSR](#).

Custer Elementary Class Writes SDDOT Snowplow Based Book: Plowy's World

Mrs. Treloar's first grade class at Custer Elementary just finished writing and illustrating their first book called *Plowy's World*.

The book is based on South Dakota Department of Transportation snowplows. **Carol Evans, Safety Coordinator at Central Office**, was told about the book by her sister, who works at the elementary school in Custer.



Woonsocket Work Zone Awareness Fair

On Wednesday, April 23, 2025, the SDDOT **Woonsocket Maintenance crew members (Mike Kogel, Cody Farmer, Jason Hoffman, and Jason Potrament)** held a mini "Work Zone Fair" for the Woonsocket School.

A special thanks to Woonsocket Superintendent, Rod Weber, for collaborating on this great event and transporting all the students to the SDDOT shop in Woonsocket. Thank you to the Sanborn County Highway Department for partnering with us to provide a great experience for the students.

The classes went through different stations where SDDOT staff explained the equipment and answered questions.

Pictured are the freshman, sophomore, and junior classes at the SDDOT Work Zone Fair.



Providing Excellent Service:

One December evening this past winter, the Highway Patrol called **Cody Herrboldt, nighttime Lead Highway Maintenance Worker for the Sioux Falls Area**. HP provided a phone number to Cody and asked that he reach out to an individual who lost a pair of expensive skis while traveling through on the Interstate system in Sioux Falls.

Cody reached out to the individual (Elliot) and gathered the information regarding where he thought the skis were lost. This call occurred at 10 p.m., and unfortunately, Cody was unable to locate the skis after driving the route several times. Cody called Elliott back and told him he was sorry, but he had been unsuccessful. Cody told Elliot that if the skis were found later, he would let him know.



The month of April was spent picking up litter around the loop in Sioux Falls. When the crew got near the Interstate 229 and Interstate 29 interchange, **Dustin Bergerson, Sioux Falls Area Highway Maintenance Worker**, found the pair of skis. Cody commented that he knew exactly to whom they belonged. Cody looked back through his phone and found the number he called in December, and Elliott answered. Elliott couldn't believe the SDDOT had found his skis after all this time, and even sent Cody a picture to double-check that it was the correct pair!

Elliott is in the process of moving from Montana to the east coast. He traveled to the Sioux Falls Area shop on Wednesday, May 14, 2025, to pick up his \$1,200 skis. He was very thankful and appreciative to Cody, Dustin, and the SDDOT for going above and beyond to return them!

Thank you Cody. Your actions truly demonstrate that providing excellent service (no matter the time of day or time of year) is always the top priority for SDDOT employees!

Pictured are Cody Herrboldt, Elliot from Montana, and the lost and now found skis.

Administrative Professionals Day

The Aberdeen and Mitchell region senior secretaries attended the **Administrative Professionals Day** workshop together on Wednesday, April 30, 2025, in Sioux Falls.

Pictured left to right: **Tammy Miller** (Mitchell Region) **Stephanie Stacie** (Mitchell Area), **JoAnn Kayser** (Aberdeen Area), **Bonnie Palmer** (Huron Area), **Erin Mullen** (Aberdeen Region), **Darla Brandlee** (Watertown Area), **Tanya Liska** (Yankton Area), and **Lisa Mauseth** (Sioux Falls Area).



Tanya Liska and Lisa Mauseth



TRAINING UPDATE -

Learn ~ Engage ~ Improve
May 2025 (Upcoming Trainings)

PLANNING & DESIGN

SDDOT Project Development Series

Project Management Basics
Scope Management
Cost Management
Quality Management

Bentley OpenRoads SignCAD Fundamentals

Online Courses in SDLearn

NHI 135048 Countermeasure Design for Bridge Scour & Stream Instability

Sept. 10 - 12 | 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. | Pierre (tentative)

SAFETY

Safety and You Awareness

SDLearn Online Class

Heat Stress Safety

SDLearn Online Class

COMMUNICATION and TECHNOLOGY

DOT New Supervisor Playlist

- New Supervisor Fundamentals
- Managers Toolkit - SD BHRA

- What is the Difference between Management and Leadership?
- Common Misconceptions of New Managers
- Be a Leader as You Manage
- and more (click the link to see all courses)

It Pays to Train (IPT)

- Quick sessions to improve our employee culture
- Information on SDDOT's values, expectations, and processes
- Upcoming training announcements
- Questions and answers on all training topics

So, if today is the day you get paid, check out the Training session on SDLearn at 11 a.m.

Join the Microsoft Teams Meeting

It Pays to Train (IPT)

May 30 | 11 - 11:45 a.m. CT | Teamwork with Mike Behm
June 16 | 11 - 11:45 a.m. CT | Personal Productivity Hacks
July 1 | 11 - 11:45 a.m. CT | Improvement
July 16 | 11 - 11:45 a.m. CT | Workplace Circle of Influence

Miss the latest IPT session? They are all recorded and put on SDLearn. Click "Follow" on the [SDDOT It Pays to Train](#) playlist to be notified whenever there is a new recording added.

IT PAYS TO TRAIN

May 30: Core Value - Teamwork with Mike Behm

June 16: Personal Productivity Hacks

July 1: Core Value - Improvement

July 16: Workplace Circle of Influence

*1st & 16th of each month | 11 - 11:45 a.m. (CT)

MAINTENANCE

Temporary Traffic Control & Safety in Short-Term Work Zones

Online in SDLearn

Message Board Playlist

- Street Smart: Arrow Board Checklist
- Street Smart: Towable Attenuator Checklist & Walkthrough
- and more (click the link to see all courses)

CDL EDLT Class A & B Theory

June 23-25 | 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. | Pierre
July 28-30 | 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. | Rapid City
Aug. 4-6 | 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. | Sioux Falls

CDL EDLT Train the Trainer

June 26 | 12:30 - 5 p.m. | Pierre
July 31 | 12:30 - 5 p.m. | Rapid City
Aug. 7 | 12:30 - 5 p.m. | Sioux Falls

Lead HMW 2 HCP

Spotter Safety in the Workplace

Online in SDLearn

CDL Supplemental Training Playlist

- CDL General Knowledge
- CDL Pre-Trip Inspection
- Class A CDL Pre-Trip Inspection
- CDL Air Brakes
- CDL Air Brakes Practice Exam
- and more (click the link to see all courses)

CDL Learners Permit

June 26 | 8 a.m. - 12 p.m. | Pierre
June 31 | 8 a.m. - 12 p.m. | Rapid City
Aug. 7 | 8 a.m. - 12 p.m. | Sioux Falls

AGC Hazardous Materials Endorsement

June 27 | 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. | Pierre
July 31 | 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. | Rapid City
Aug. 8 | 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. | Sioux Falls

Lead HMW 2 HCP

Transit News:

TSA - Region 4 Security Enhancement Through Assessments (SETA) Completed by U.S. Department of Homeland Security

From May 6-8, 2025, Inspectors conducted a full Security Enhancement Through Assessments (SETA) to include First Observer Plus training event with **Prairie Hills Transit** in Spearfish, SD.

From its origination in 1989 as Spearfish Senior Transportation, West River Transit Authority, Inc., **Prairie Hills Transit** has grown from serving strictly senior citizens in Spearfish to providing transportation to students, elderly, individuals with disabilities, and the general public – in a service area of a dozen communities in six different counties. Starting out, the fleet consisted of a single 1979 van (with no lift equipment) that transported seniors for a few hours a day in Spearfish. The program has since become a fully coordinated public transportation system covering an area more than seven times the size of Rhode Island.

“Great teamwork between Federal Agencies and Stakeholders should be celebrated. This shows the positive impact of our working partnership,” said **Carlos Feigelmuller, Transportation Security Inspector for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security**.



Pictured: Prairie Hills Transit



Pictured: Rapid Transit System

From May 7-9, 2025, Inspectors conducted a full SETA, a First Observer Plus, and a full comprehensive BASE with **Rapid Transit System (RTS)** in Rapid City, SD.

RTS has been providing local residents and visitors with a safe and reliable public transportation service in Rapid City for more than 30 years.



From Left to Right (Prairie Hills Transit):
TSI Dale Wursten, Deputy Director Lisa Johnson,
TSI Keith Turner, Executive Director Barbara
Cline, TSI Carlos Feigelmuller



From Left to Right (Rapid Transit System):
Rapid City PD Officer Joe Reiter, TSI Keith Turner,
TSI Dale Wursten, RTS Division Director Megan
Gould-Stabile, TSI Carlos Feigelmuller, RTS Safety
& Training Supervisor Cater Lopez, and a Rapid
City PD Officer.

SDDOT Safety News

By: Jon Johanson, Safety Manager



SDDOT SAFETY NEWS

Tick Awareness and Safety



Preventing Tick Bites

The best approach to dealing with ticks during the summer is to prevent them from biting! If you are spending any time outdoors, it is important to regularly check yourself for ticks. Be especially careful in places where ticks are abundant such as in tall grass, wooded areas, and near lakes and water ways.

To help ward off ticks, you should wear clothing that covers as much skin surface area as possible (i.e., long sleeves, long pants, shoes and socks). Tucking pants into long socks (preferably white) can make crawling ticks more visible so that they can be removed. Permethrin spray applied to clothes and shoes can also be helpful by repelling ticks through multiple outings. Make sure to read and follow all label directions when treating clothing or applying personal repellent.

Areas to evaluate during tick checks are:

- Scalp
- Ears
- Underarms
- Belly button
- Waist
- Back
- Legs
- Pelvic area

If an unembedded tick is detected, it should be immediately removed and disposed of. If the tick is embedded, it should be removed using a pair of pointy tweezers (i.e., not common household tweezers). It is very important to remove ticks by the mouthparts to avoid squeezing their bodies. Squeezing can expel the contents of the tick into the wound, which greatly increases the chances of contracting tick-borne diseases.

Steps to Safely Remove a Tick

Step 1: Grasp the tick with the pointy tweezers as close to the skin as possible. Step 2: Pull the tick straight out with slow, steady force. Step 3: Once the tick is removed, disinfect the bite area with rubbing alcohol or soap and water. Step 4: Dispose of the tick by flushing it down the toilet. If you would like to have the tick identified, bring it to your healthcare provider in rubbing alcohol or in a sealed container.

Below is a list of ticks that are commonly found in South Dakota:

American Dog Tick. Transmits: Tularemia and Rocky Mountain spotted fever. Found throughout South Dakota.

Blacklegged Tick/Deer Tick. Transmits: Lyme disease, Babesiosis, human granulocytic anaplasmosis (HGA), and deer tick virus. Commonly found in the eastern third of the state.

Lonestar Tick. Transmits: Human ehrlichiosis, Tularemia, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, Southern tick associated rash illness, Heartland virus, and Bourbon virus. Isolated observations of the tick in the southeast corner of the state.

Rocky Mountain Wood Tick. Transmits: Colorado tick fever virus, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, and Tularemia. Found in the western edge of South Dakota. Common in Rocky Mountain states.

For more on tick safety, click [here](#).



SDDOT Employee News and Updates

May New Hires:

Melissa Hunter, Parts Room Technician - Aberdeen

Eric Larsen, Engineering Manager II - Huron

Joseph Cremer, Surfacing Plans Project Engineer - Pierre

Russell Langenbau, Highway Maintenance Worker - Winner

Payton Meyer, Journey Transportation Technician - Sioux Falls

Ian Rendon, Highway Maintenance Worker - Presho

Cody Worrell, Regional Materials Technician - Aberdeen

May Promotions and Lateral Position Changes:

Greg Pollreisz, Proposal and Estimating Specialist - Pierre

Ronald Bren, Aberdeen Region Bridge Engineering Supervisor - Aberdeen

Thomas Kallemeyn, Highway Project Engineering Manager - Pierre

May Longevity:

Becky Hoffman, Bid Letting Engineer - 20 years (Central Office – Project Development)

Brenda Thomas, Training & Development Specialist – 25 years (Central Office – Training)

Mark Peterson, Region Engineer – 25 years (Aberdeen Region)

Brian Wenisch, Transportation Project Manager II – 25 years (Yankton Area)

Joel Finney, Equipment Technician – 25 years (Rapid City Region)

Clarence Bowman, Highway Maintenance Supervisor – 25 years (Custer Area)

Ed Koopman, Project Technician – 40 years (Sioux Falls Area)



May and June Retirements:

Congratulations to **Monica Ortbahn, Business Manager Pierre Region**, who retired in May.

Congratulations to **Melvin Malsom, Aberdeen Area Highway Maintenance Supervisor**, who will retire in June with 32 years of service to the State of South Dakota.



Mark Peterson, Aberdeen Region Engineer, received his 25-year pin from **Craig Smith, Director of Operations**.

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Joe Finney, Rapid City Equipment Technician, received his 25-year pin from **AJ Hatch, Rapid City Equipment Shop Foreman.**



Becky Hoffman, Central Office Bid Letting Engineer, received her 20-year pin from **Mark Leiferman, Project Development Program Manager at Central Office.**

Lance White, Watertown Area Equipment Technician, received his 10-year pin from **Matt Brey, Watertown Area Engineer.**



Rippentrop Signs Letter of Intent to Play Baseball:

Three Hot Springs Bison high school senior student-athletes signed letters of intent to take their talents to the next level at college.

One of the student athletes was McCoy Rippentrop (left), son of **Matt "Rip" Rippentrop, Custer Area Highway Construction Project Engineer.** Also pictured is McCoy's little brother Cole (right).

McCoy, who won a state championship with Rapid City's American Legion Post 22 last year, signed with the Dodge City Community College Conquistadors. After his two years are completed in Dodge City, Rippentrop expects to have a Business Associates degree and then transfer to a four year college to continue playing baseball while pursuing a Business Finance degree.

Read the full Herald Star article [here](#).

SDDOT Employee News and Updates - New Employee Orientation and Tour (May 2025)

