



Quality On Tap!

April 2026 | Volume 21, Issue 4

**SOUTH DAKOTA'S
GROWING PFAS
RESPONSE**

**SIMPLE WAYS
CONSUMERS CAN
KEEP WATER COSTS
DOWN**

**PICK-SLOAN AT 80:
A SOUTH DAKOTA
PERSPECTIVE ON
PROMISES, PURPOSES,
AND BALANCE**

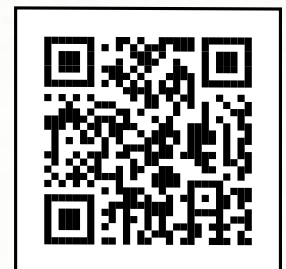
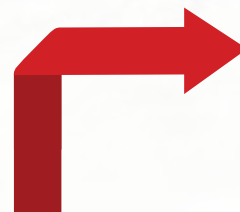
RURAL WATER
EXPO
2026

APRIL 21-22, 2026

**BEST WESTERN RAMKOTA
HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTER
RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA**

***This 1½ day event includes
presentations and features
exhibit displays***

**CONTACT HOURS • DOOR PRIZES
LUNCH PROVIDED ON DAY ONE**



REGISTER ONLINE!

sdarws.com/EXPO



ASSOCIATION UPDATES

Rural Water EXPO - April 21-22, 2026

Make plans to attend the 2026 EXPO at the Best Western Ramkota Hotel & Convention Center in Rapid City, SD. Registration is available at sdarws.com/EXPO

The EXPO is open to all water and wastewater utility staff, board/council members, engineers, State and Federal employees. The training will consist of 14 presentations, 45 minutes each, thus allocating ten contact hours for those individuals who are licensed operations specialists. Along with the training sessions, the EXPO will showcase many of our industry's manufacturer and supplier leaders. These professional companies will be set up in the main EXPO training center for attendee easy access and to provide answers to those pressing questions. Many will be displaying the recent advances in technology our industry has witnessed over the past several years.

This year's EXPO will kick off at 8:00 am Tuesday and conclude at noon on Wednesday, with lunch provided on the first day. Registration is \$140, and SDARWS is able to bill for this fee after the conference. **Please pre-register by visiting our website at: sdarws.com/EXPO. More information can be found on page 14.**



RURAL WATER FISHING TOURNAMENT

May 1-2, 2026

Outpost Lodge on Cow Creek Bay

REGISTRATION: \$150 for a 3-person Team. Includes a meal following the tournament. \$1,000 Payout for 1st Place!

For more information, contact Mike Moeller, SDARWS Tournament Chair at 605-270-4989 or email mmoeller@sdarws.com



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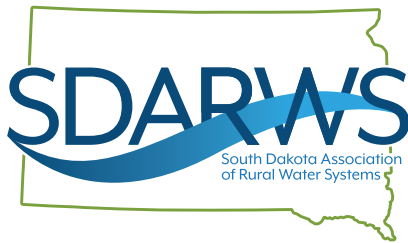
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OPERATOR CERTIFICATION TRAINING AND EXAMS



Register for training classes online at: web.sdarws.com/events

Classes start at 8:00 AM Tuesday through Thursday. Classes end at approximately 4:30 PM on Tuesday and Wednesday, and noon on Thursday. One-day Workshops start at 8:00 AM and end at 4:30 PM.

Wastewater Collection	Sioux Falls - Maguire	March 24-26, 2026
OpCert Exam	Sioux Falls-Maguire @ 1:00	March 26 @ 1:00
Stabilization Pond Workshop	Mitchell - Highland Conf. Center	April 9, 2026
Basic Wastewater Treatment	Watertown - Events Center	April 14-16, 2026
OpCert Exam	Watertown Events Center @ 1:00	April 16 @ 1:00
Water Distribution	Sioux Falls - Ramkota	May 5-7, 2026
OpCert Exam	Sioux Falls - Ramkota @ 1:00	May 7 @ 1:00
Advanced Wastewater Treatment	Rapid City - Ramkota	May 19-21, 2026
OpCert Exam	Rapid City - Ramkota @ 1:00	May 21 @ 1:00
Basic Water Treatment	Aberdeen - Dakota Events Center	June 23-25, 2026
OpCert Exam	Aberdeen - DEC @ 1:00	June 25 @ 1:00
Wastewater Collection	Aberdeen - Dakota Events Center	September 1-3, 2026
OpCert Exam	Aberdeen - DEC @ 1:00	September 3 @ 1:00
Small Water Treatment	Rapid City - GFP Outdoor Campus	September 10, 2026
Basic Wastewater Treatment	Rapid City - Ramkota	September 22-24, 2026
OpCert Exam	Rapid City - Ramkota @ 1:00	September 24 @ 1:00
Stabilization Pond Workshop	Yankton - Kelly Inn	October 1, 2026
Intermediate Water Treatment	Sioux Falls - Ramkota	October 6-9, 2026
OpCert Exam	Sioux Falls - Ramkota @ 1:00	October 9 @ 1:00
Water Distribution	Rapid City - Ramkota	October 20-22, 2026
OpCert Exam	Rapid City - Ramkota @ 1:00	October 22 @ 1:00
Basic Water Treatment	Sioux Falls - Ramkota	November 3-5, 2026
OpCert Exam	Sioux Falls - Ramkota @ 1:00	November 5 @ 1:00
Wastewater Collection	Rapid City - Ramkota	November 17-19, 2026
OpCert Exam	Rapid City - Ramkota @ 1:00	November 19 @ 1:00
Water Distribution	Aberdeen - Dakota Events Center	December 8-10, 2026
OpCert Exam	Aberdeen - DEC @ 1:00	December 10 @ 1:00

EXAM INFORMATION

All exams cost \$60.00 and must be taken “in-person.”

Any exam can be taken at an exam session. You can take more than one exam at an exam session; however, the exam session remains at three hours long.

All exam applications are due no later than two weeks prior to the exam date to DANR. Questions regarding exams can be directed to Tammie Hill with DANR at 605-773-3577.

DANR OPERATOR CERTIFICATION WEBSITE

danr.sd.gov/OfficeOfWater/OperatorCert/default.aspx

STUDY MATERIALS

DANR has water exam study material to lend to operators. These include manuals from California State:

- *Water Distribution System Operation and Maintenance*
- *Small Water System Operation and Maintenance*

TRAINING CLASSES

Certification Training Classes are conducted by the South Dakota Association of Rural Water Systems. **These classes are presented at no charge.** Certified Operators can obtain contact hours for attending all of the above classes.

For more information on certification training classes, please contact SDARWS at 605-556-7219.

WATER ENGINEERS: The People Who Help Water Help Us



In some parts of the world, fresh water is hard to find. Water engineers help solve this problem by turning salty ocean water into fresh drinking water through a process called desalination. This helps communities that live near the sea but do not have many freshwater sources.

Water engineers also protect nature. They work to keep pollution out of rivers, lakes, and oceans and help clean up messes like oil spills. By doing this, they protect fish, plants, and animals that depend on clean water to survive.

Many engineers design and build the tools that make water systems work. Pumps, pipes, filters, and valves all need to be carefully planned and maintained. Some engineers even invent new water-saving devices, like low-flow toilets or taps that turn off automatically, to help conserve water every day.

One important job water engineers do is finding leaks. A tiny leak can waste a lot of water over time. Using special equipment, engineers track down hidden leaks underground and fix them so water is not lost.

Water engineers help keep communities safe, healthy, and prepared for the future. Without them, clean water would be much harder to find and protect. If you enjoy science, building things, or helping the planet, becoming a water engineer might be a great job for you one day!

Every time you turn on the tap, take a shower, or flush a toilet, water engineers are working behind the scenes to make it all possible. Water engineers are problem-solvers who figure out how to move, clean, protect, and save water so people and nature can stay healthy.

Some water engineers focus on how water moves through the world. Rain does not always fall where people need it, and sometimes too much water can cause floods. These engineers study rivers, pipes, and underground water to help guide water safely to homes and communities while also protecting people from flooding.

Other water engineers work on cleaning water. Water from rivers, lakes, and wells often needs to be treated before it is safe to drink. Engineers design special systems that remove dirt, germs, and harmful chemicals so the water coming out of your faucet is clean and safe. They also help clean used water so it can safely return to the environment.

Water Word Search

S	E	W	E	R	E	W	L	M	H	S	L	T	C
L	I	F	E	E	A	T	F	E	R	E	S	N	L
E	I	D	L	I	F	P	E	F	M	P	I	R	E
H	Y	D	R	A	N	T	E	U	N	U	R	H	A
H	A	T	P	I	A	D	W	T	A	M	I	T	N
W	N	L	I	P	N	M	H	S	P	P	V	H	F
F	A	U	C	E	T	K	A	L	D	S	E	D	E
S	T	R	E	A	M	V	A	E	A	F	R	W	W
M	A	V	H	T	L	A	E	H	T	N	E	A	T
A	R	M	E	T	E	R	E	U	T	L	E	T	C
E	E	A	R	E	T	L	I	F	L	A	Y	H	L
I	E	I	S	R	W	R	P	S	F	A	P	T	D
T	C	T	F	A	F	H	E	S	L	A	K	E	A
E	W	A	T	E	R	S	P	I	P	E	S	P	I

Did You Know?

- ◆ Water engineers help clean water so it can be used again and again.
- ◆ Water travels through miles of pipes before it reaches your home.
- ◆ Engineers use computers, science, and math to solve water problems every day.
- ◆ Water engineering jobs help protect rivers, lakes, and oceans.

RIVER	FAUCET	METER	SEWER	CLEAN
DRINK	HEALTH	LIFE	WATER	WELLS
TAP	LAKE	PIPES	STREAM	PUMPS
HYDRANT				FILTER



Simple Ways Consumers Can Keep Water Costs Down

Water is essential to everyday life, but that doesn't mean it has to strain your household budget. With a few smart habits and small upgrades, consumers can reduce water use, lower utility bills, and still enjoy reliable service.

Fix Leaks Promptly

Even small leaks can waste thousands of gallons of water each year. A dripping faucet, running toilet, or leaking outdoor spigot adds up quickly. Regularly check toilets for silent leaks and repair them as soon as possible.

Use Water-Efficient Fixtures

Installing high-efficiency toilets, low-flow showerheads, and water-saving faucet aerators can significantly reduce indoor water use without sacrificing performance. Many of these upgrades are inexpensive and pay for themselves over time.

Be Smart with Outdoor Watering

Outdoor use is often the largest source of water consumption. Water lawns early in the morning or late in the evening to reduce evaporation. Use sprinklers efficiently, avoid watering pavement, and consider drought-tolerant landscaping that requires less water overall.

Run Appliances Efficiently

Dishwashers and washing machines use the most water

when they're running. Wait until you have full loads before starting them, and use eco- or water-saving cycles when available. High-efficiency appliances can also reduce water and energy costs.

Practice Everyday Conservation

Simple habits make a difference. Turn off the tap while brushing your teeth, take shorter showers, and only use running water when necessary. These small actions add up over time and help keep utility bills manageable.

Know Your Water Bill

Review your water bill regularly to understand how much water you're using and when usage spikes occur. Catching unusual increases early can help identify leaks or inefficient habits before they become costly.

Protect Your Plumbing

Cold weather and aging pipes can lead to costly breaks and water loss. Insulate pipes, disconnect hoses before winter, and maintain plumbing to avoid unexpected repair expenses and wasted water.

By staying aware and making thoughtful choices, consumers can control water use, reduce monthly costs, and help ensure a sustainable water supply for their community – all without major lifestyle changes.

South Dakota's Growing PFAS Response

Protecting Water from Source to Tap

Across South Dakota's rivers, wetlands, aquifers, and rural landscapes, water connects communities in visible and invisible ways. From headwater streams and riparian corridors to municipal wells and rural water towers, protecting water quality requires attention at both upstream and downstream points. Today, one of the most significant emerging challenges to that protection effort is PFAS.

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, often called "forever chemicals," are synthetic compounds that have been used for decades in firefighting foams, nonstick products, water-resistant fabrics, and industrial processes. Their durability made them valuable in manufacturing, but that same durability allows them to persist in soil, groundwater, and surface water long after their use.

With the finalization of national drinking water standards in 2024, PFAS monitoring has moved from research and voluntary testing into a new era of regulatory implementation. The U.S.

Environmental Protection Agency established enforceable limits of 4.0 parts per trillion for PFOA and PFOS, along with a hazard index approach for several additional PFAS compounds. These levels are measured in parts per trillion — concentrations so small that they require extraordinary sensitivity to protect public health.

The new rule establishes a clear timeline. Public water

systems have three years from the rule's effective date to complete their initial PFAS monitoring, with the first round of compliance sampling beginning in 2027. If initial monitoring results show concentrations above Maximum Contaminant Levels, systems then have up to five years from promulgation to achieve full compliance, including installing treatment if necessary. This means communities must meet the new standards by 2029. The

phased approach allows time for data collection, engineering design, funding coordination, and construction, while maintaining continued oversight and public transparency.

In South Dakota, the response is unfolding through coordinated effort rather than isolated action. The South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources serves as the state's drinking water primacy agency and is leading implementation of the new standards. The Department is organizing monitoring schedules for public water systems statewide, guiding communities through compliance timelines, and administering funding to support potential treatment or alternative water sources.

Under the federal rule, monitoring extends to all regulated community and non-transient noncommunity Public Water Systems across the state. Every

system must complete initial PFAS sampling within the established timeline to create a consistent statewide baseline. This comprehensive approach ensures that both large municipalities and small rural systems contribute to a clearer understanding of PFAS occurrence across South Dakota's diverse water sources.

While regulation sets the framework, implementation

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happens locally. The South Dakota Association of Rural Water Systems provides hands-on technical assistance to rural and small-town systems that may not have dedicated laboratory staff or environmental compliance departments. PFAS sampling requires careful handling, strict contamination controls, and precise documentation. SDARWS staff assist with coordinating sample events, ensuring proper procedures are followed, and helping operators interpret results. For many communities, that support bridges the gap between regulation and practical field work.

Laboratory capacity within the state is also expanding. The South Dakota Public Health Laboratory continues strengthening its environmental testing capabilities as demand grows. Historically, many PFAS samples were shipped out of state for drinking water analysis, increasing turnaround time and costs, but soon the South Dakota Public Health Laboratory will be able to run PFAS analysis on-site. Building in-state proficiency enhances responsiveness and reinforces local oversight of drinking water quality.

At South Dakota State University, researchers and laboratory scientists are working to expand certification for PFAS analysis while advancing research on the presence of these compounds in soils, biosolids, and other environmental media. Their efforts help bridge the gap between drinking water data and the broader landscape, examining how PFAS move through watersheds, interact with soils, and persist over time.

In addition, SDSU is developing a surface water method capable of analyzing up to 40 PFAS compounds using EPA Method 1633. This method is much more expansive than the compounds currently required for drinking water monitoring, providing a broader understanding of PFAS occurrence across environmental systems.

Further west, the South Dakota School of Mines & Technology focuses on characterization and understanding how PFAS behave in groundwater and surface water while exploring innovative treatment approaches. Because these compounds resist natural breakdown, research into filtration technologies and emerging destruction methods is critical for communities that may one day need removal systems.

Private laboratories such as Mid-Continent Testing Laboratories in Rapid City continue to provide essential support for routine water quality monitoring across the state. Even as specialized PFAS analysis expands, local laboratory services remain foundational to maintaining strong water quality data from source to distribution system.

What emerges is a layered response that mirrors the structure of a watershed itself. Federal standards establish protective benchmarks and timelines. State agencies coordinate oversight and assist with funding avenues. Technical assistance providers work alongside operators in the field. Universities advance scientific understanding. Private laboratories maintain day-to-day analytical support. Each layer strengthens the whole.

PFAS regulation represents a new chapter in drinking water protection, but it is also part of a larger story — one that recognizes the connection between land, water, infrastructure, and community health. As monitoring moves toward the 2027 sampling milestone and communities prepare for the 2029 compliance deadline, South Dakota's collaborative approach reflects a commitment not only to meeting federal standards but to protecting water at every point along its journey.

From riparian corridors to rural wells, stewardship and water quality remain the common thread.



Pick-Sloan at 80: A South Dakota Perspective on Promises, Purposes, and Balance

Few river systems in the United States are as complex or consequential as the Missouri River. For South Dakota, the river is not merely a navigation channel or a line on a hydrologic map. It is a federally managed system that reshaped our geography, redefined regional economies, and required profound sacrifice from our citizens, tribal nations, and communities.

The Missouri River Mainstem System, operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, exists because of the 1944 Flood Control Act, commonly known as the Pick-Sloan Act. More than 80 years later, that law still governs how the river is managed. Its authorized purposes and federal obligations remain in force. Time has passed, but the commitments have not expired.

This article presents a South Dakota perspective, firm and fair, recognizing that every basin state depends on the river and that long-term success requires balance, clarity, and mutual respect.

A System Built on Upper Basin Land and Sacrifice

South Dakota is home to four of the six major Missouri River mainstem dams authorized under Pick-Sloan: Oahe, Big Bend, Fort Randall, and Gavins Point. Together with Fort Peck in Montana and Garrison in North Dakota, these dams created large reservoirs designed to regulate flows, reduce flooding, generate power, and support multiple beneficial uses.

The construction of these dams came at extraordinary cost, a cost borne almost entirely by the Upper Basin states of Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

Approximately 1.7 million acres of land were inundated in these three states. Prime farmland, ranchland, transportation corridors, entire communities, and tribal lands were permanently flooded. The economic base of numerous counties was fundamentally altered. Tribal nations experienced disproportionate impacts through the loss of ancestral lands, cultural sites, and economic opportunity.

These were not temporary disruptions. They were permanent geographic changes undertaken so the entire basin could benefit from a stabilized and federally managed river system.

The Pick-Sloan Framework, Coequal Purposes

Pick-Sloan emerged during World War II as a compromise between competing federal visions for managing the Missouri River. Congress authorized the river, along with its facilities and structures, to serve multiple coequal purposes, including flood control, navigation, hydroelectric power generation, irrigation, municipal and industrial water supply, recreation, water quality, and fish and wildlife.

These purposes were not ranked in order of superiority. They were intended to be balanced.

The Act further states that navigation shall not conflict with beneficial consumptive uses in other basin states. That language remains part of federal law and reflects Congress's intent that no single use dominate the system at the expense of others.

Realized Benefits and Unfulfilled Promises

South Dakota acknowledges that many benefits of Pick-Sloan have been realized.

Flood control has reduced catastrophic damage in both upper and lower basin communities. Hydropower generation has exceeded early expectations, producing more than 2,600 megawatts of capacity across the system. Reservoir-based recreation has become one of South Dakota's leading industries, ranking just behind agriculture in statewide economic impact.

Major drinking water systems, including WEB, Mid-Dakota, Mni Wiconi, and Lewis and Clark, have delivered reliable municipal and rural water to hundreds of thousands of people.

Yet from a South Dakota perspective, some cornerstone promises remain largely unfulfilled.

Irrigation development was central to the Pick-Sloan bargain. South Dakota was promised irrigation potential approaching one million acres. Today, only a small fraction of that acreage has been developed. Similar shortfalls occurred in Montana and North Dakota. The large-scale irrigation development envisioned in 1944 did not materialize as planned, and the anticipated economic benefits were never fully realized.

Hydropower presents another question of proportional

benefit. The dams producing that power are located in the Upper Basin, primarily in South Dakota, yet substantial portions of that energy are exported outside the basin. States that bore the land losses do not always see benefits commensurate with the infrastructure they host.

These realities do not negate the system's successes. However, they shape how many South Dakotans view the federal government's ongoing obligations and the pace at which unresolved commitments have been addressed.

Flow Contributions and Fair Use

Recent opinion pieces in Missouri have suggested that Upper Basin water use threatens downstream users and navigation interests. A clear understanding of the facts is important.

All basin states contribute water to the system. The Upper Basin states, Wyoming, Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota, consistently contribute at least half of the total flow.

Current and planned Upper Basin water uses represent a very small fraction of total system flows. Even at full build out, North Dakota's Red River Valley Water Supply project would utilize approximately 165 cubic feet per second. By comparison, average flow near the Missouri River's confluence with the Mississippi exceeds 94,000 cubic feet per second. That diversion represents less than two tenths of one percent of downstream flow.

Earlier projects involving approximately 20 cubic feet per second were challenged and dismissed in court. While North Dakota has drawn particular attention because some projects cross a continental divide within the state, those uses remain small in scale and subject to regulation.

From a South Dakota standpoint, small, regulated, in-state and in-basin uses do not meaningfully impair downstream access. They fall within reasonable state water development consistent with federal authorization.

It is also important to recognize that all authorized purposes except navigation are enjoyed by every basin state. Navigation benefits primarily accrue to downstream states. That does not diminish their value, but it reinforces the coequal structure Congress established.

A Shared Concern, Export Outside the Basin

A concern that can unite Upper and Lower Basin states is the potential for large-scale export of Missouri River water outside the basin states entirely.

South Dakota's position is that water contributed by basin states, and infrastructure hosted by Upper Basin states, should first serve reasonable in-basin uses. Proposals to move significant volumes of water permanently outside the basin warrant careful review and coordination among all basin states.

In basin cooperation strengthens every state's ability to advocate for balanced federal management.

Operations in a Changing Climate

Extended drought, cumulative reservoir deficits, evaporation, and aging infrastructure affect every basin

state. Winter release reductions can impact downstream power plant cooling. Low-flow navigation seasons affect agricultural transport. Reservoir recovery after prolonged deficits can take years.

These pressures are driven primarily by hydrologic variability and long-term system design, not by minimal upstream municipal uses.

The Missouri River system was engineered for mid twentieth century conditions. It now operates in a twenty-first century climate and economic environment. That reality underscores the need for flexible, balanced management and continued collaboration among basin states.

Eighty Years Later, Obligations Remain

More than eight decades have passed since Pick-Sloan became law. Institutional memory may fade, but statutory obligations remain binding.

Upper Basin states sacrificed land, tax base, communities, and cultural resources so the entire basin could benefit from flood control, hydropower, recreation, water supply, and navigation stability.

South Dakota's position is grounded in mutual recognition and respect. Each basin state should pursue reasonable development within its borders, so long as such use does not interfere with prior rights of others and acknowledges the foundational sacrifices that made the system possible.

Balance does not mean subordination. It means honoring all authorized purposes, addressing unfinished commitments where feasible, and ensuring federal management reflects both historical sacrifice and contemporary needs.

A Shared Future

The Missouri River remains one of the nation's most significant water systems. The six mainstem reservoirs located in the Upper Basin hold approximately 73.4-million-acre feet of storage capacity. Their flows support agriculture, municipal systems, industry, wildlife, recreation, and transportation.

For South Dakota, the path forward is clear:

- Recognize that the Upper Basin contributed both the water and the land that built the system.
- Manage the river according to its coequal authorized purposes.
- Respect reasonable in-basin and in-state water development.
- Remain vigilant regarding large-scale export outside the basin.
- Pursue collaboration rather than division among basin states, agencies, and stakeholders.

The Pick-Sloan Act reshaped the Missouri River Basin in 1944. Its promises were made in exchange for real and lasting sacrifices.

Eighty years later, those promises still matter!

KINGBROOK RURAL WATER SYSTEM

In 1974, a group of local leaders began exploring the idea of creating a rural water system to serve residents in portions of Brookings, Kingsbury, Lake, and Miner Counties. After a preliminary engineering study confirmed the project's feasibility, the proposal was submitted for federal funding consideration. With strong community support and more than 1,500 water users signed on, Kingbrook Rural Water System was officially formed, launching a project that would reshape access to safe drinking water in eastern South Dakota.

One of the earliest and most forward-thinking decisions made by Kingbrook's Board of Directors was to partner with Brookings-Deuel Rural Water System to construct a shared water treatment plant. Built just north of Bruce in the late 1970s, the facility continues to serve both systems today. As demand grew, two additional treatment plants were constructed near DeSmet and Chester, creating a strong foundation for future expansion.

By the time original construction was completed in 1981, Kingbrook had grown into a large, interconnected system of pipelines, wells, treatment plants, storage reservoirs, and meters. The project ultimately served nearly 2,200 connections at a total cost of \$12.4 million — a remarkable achievement for a young rural water system.

Meeting Growing Demand

Throughout the 1990s and beyond, demand for clean, reliable drinking water continued to increase. Many rural residents were seeking alternatives to private wells affected by nitrates and other contaminants, and small communities began looking to Kingbrook as a dependable water source.

In response, the system invested in major upgrades, including improvements at all three treatment plants, additional supply wells, expanded storage capacity, and system extensions to serve new areas. These efforts allowed Kingbrook to grow from its original four-county footprint to the eleven counties it serves today.

Kingbrook also adapted to meet the needs of a diverse customer base, including agricultural operations such as cattle feedlots, hog confinements, and dairies, while continuing to provide high-quality drinking water to homes and communities.

Today's System

From its original 2,200 customers, Kingbrook Rural Water System has grown to serve more than 5,758 individual service connections. The system now provides bulk water service to eight municipalities and individual service to fourteen small communities. With more than 3,100 miles of pipeline, 7.3 million gallons of storage capacity, and annual water sales exceeding 900 million gallons, Kingbrook is one of the largest rural water systems in South Dakota.

Protecting its water sources has remained a top priority. Kingbrook draws water from wells near its three treatment plants and has implemented extensive wellhead protection measures, including purchasing land surrounding well fields to safeguard water quality for generations to come.

Investing in the Future

As water demand continued to rise, Kingbrook submitted a major funding application in late 2021 to address facilities operating beyond their firm capacity and to plan for future needs. In 2022, the system received \$37,722,298.00 in funding support through a combination of low-interest loans and grant assistance, allowing Kingbrook to move forward with a multi-phase improvement project.

The project includes nine planned improvement components, several of which are already complete or nearing completion. While inflation and high regional construction demand have increased costs, the investment is proving essential to ensuring long-term reliability and affordability.

A Commitment to Safe Drinking Water

Headquartered in Arlington, Kingbrook Rural Water System now serves approximately 2000 square miles, stretching east to west from Brookings to Iroquois and north to south from Hayti to Montrose. For more than 50 years, the system has remained committed to one mission: providing safe, reliable, and affordable drinking water to the rural communities it serves.

Through careful planning, strategic partnerships, and continued investment in infrastructure, Kingbrook is well-positioned to meet today's challenges — and tomorrow's needs — while continuing to protect the health and quality of life of its members.

KINGBROOK RURAL WATER SYSTEM



Kingbrook was named Rural Water System of the Year by the South Dakota Association of Rural Water Systems in 2025.



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- Doyle Renaas**
District 5, Nunda, SD
- Damon Stormo**
District 1, Lake Norden, SD

STAFF:

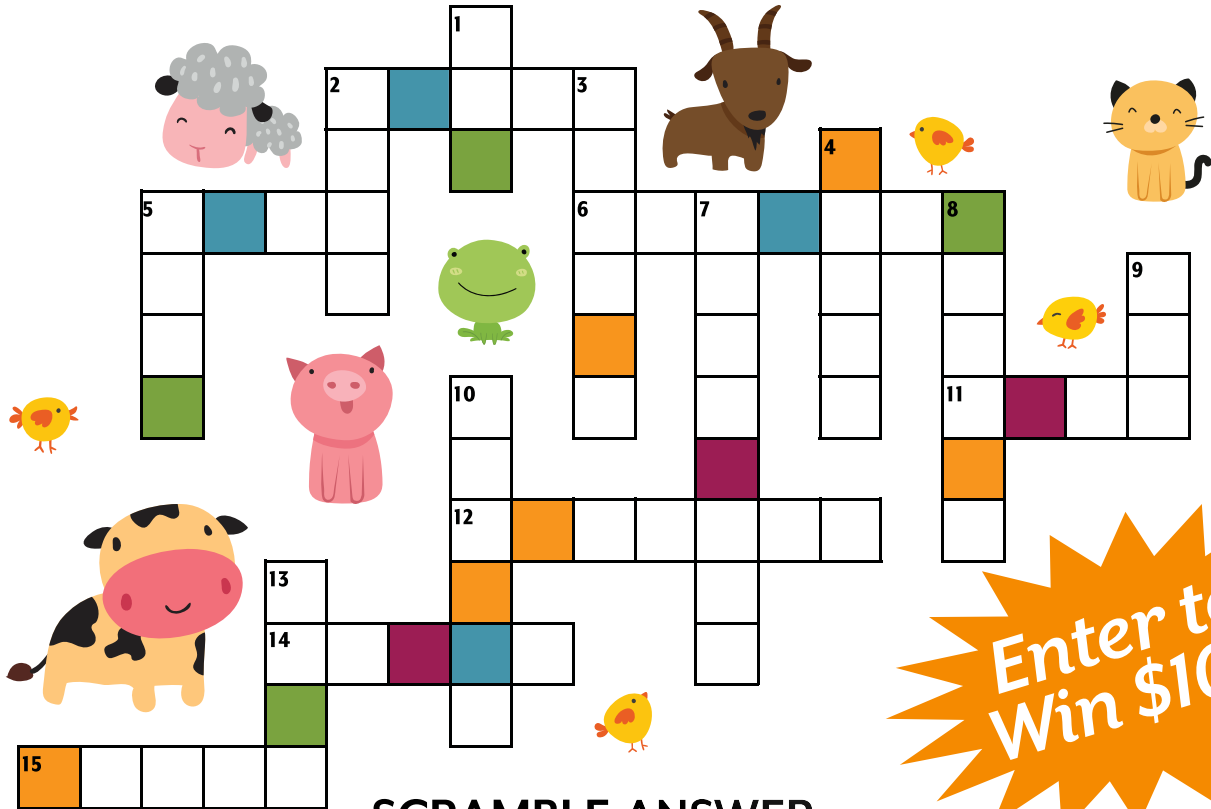
- Heath Thompson**, General Manager
Brian Callies, Operations Manager
Jon Ekern, Treatment Plant Manager
Jerrud Kruse, Senior Operations Specialist
Bill Osterberg, Treatment Plant Specialist
Logan Calmus, Treatment Plant Specialist
Chad Bjerke, Operations Specialist
Mike Warner, Operations Specialist
Corey Clelland, Operations Specialist
Alan Brown, Operations Specialist
Nick Kramer, Operations Specialist
Aaron Jeffrey, Operations Specialist
Caleb Clark, Operations Specialist
Reid Cummings, Operations Specialist
Benjamin Jones, Operations Specialist
Tabitha Duffy, Office Manager
Danielle Zeck, Bookkeeping & Accounting Specialist
Teresa Mohr, Accounts Receivable Specialist

STATISTICS:

- Hookups:** 5,695
- Miles of Pipeline:** 3,000
- Water Source:** Wells
- Counties Served:** Portions of Beadle, Brookings, Clark, Kingsbury, Lake, McCook, Minnehaha, Miner, Moody, Hamlin, and Sanborn
- Towns Served Individual:** Carthage, Erwin, Fedora, Franklin, Hetland, Junius, Manchester, Nunda, Oldham, Osceola, Roswell, Sinai, Unityville, Vilas, Winfred
- Towns Served Bulk:** Arlington, Bancroft, Badger, Howard, Iroquois, Lake Preston, Montrose, Oldham, Ramona

RURAL WATER CROSSWORD & WORD SCRAMBLE CONTEST

BABY ANIMALS



SCRAMBLE ANSWER



Across

2. Newly hatched bird
5. Young horse still on unsteady legs
6. Gilled amphibian before growing legs
11. Woolly youngster of the pasture
12. Downy waterfowl learning to swim
14. Nocturnal bird still dependent on parents
15. Young canine learning its first tricks



Down

1. Young goat known for playful jumps
2. Young bovine or juvenile whale
3. Playful feline in its earliest stage
4. Young bird raised for Thanksgiving
5. Spotted woodland youngster
7. Fluffy pond swimmer
8. Young raptor in the nest
9. Young predator raised in a den
10. Small squealing farmyard youngster
13. Pouch-dwelling marsupial youngster

RULES: Use the colored squares in the puzzle to solve the word scramble above. Call your Rural Water System (See page 2 for contact information) or **enter online at www.sdarws.com/crossword.html** with the correct phrase by May 15, 2026 to be entered into the \$100 drawing.

Only one entry allowed per address/household. You must be a member of a participating rural water system to be eligible for the prize. Your information will only be used to notify the winner, and will not be shared or sold.

Congratulations to Judy Wallman from Mid-Dakota Rural Water who had the correct phrase of "Leadership: ideas over ego" for January 2025.



TOWN OF COLOME TIES FOR SECOND PLACE AT GREAT AMERICAN WATER TASTE TEST

The Town of Colome, South Dakota, tied for second place at the 27th Annual Great American Water Taste Test, held on February 4, 2026, during the 2026 Rural Water Rally in Washington, D.C. The competition featured 41 drinking water samples from across the United States.

Results of the national competition were as follows: First: City of Clinton, North Carolina. Second: City of Colome, South Dakota, and Grand Targhee Resort, Wyoming. Third: Boothbay Region Water District, Maine, and Harmony Farms, Utah.

Colome is a small town in Tripp County, south-central South Dakota. The municipal water system serves fewer than 300 customers and produces an average of 22,000 gallons per day. The town's drinking water is sourced from groundwater produced from local wells and is managed by Utility Manager Casey Harter.

The Great American Water Taste Test is held annually in conjunction with the National Rural Water Association's Rural Water Rally and highlights excellence in drinking water from rural and small community systems across the country.

The water samples were evaluated by a panel of judges that included Nick Seelinger, Professional Staff Member for the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies; Josh Stull, Professional Staff Member for the House Committee on Agriculture; and Michael Pape, Chief of Staff for the Rural Utilities Service.



Phillip Combs, NRWA President presents the award to SDARWS Executive Director Jeremiah Corbin and SDARWS Communications & Marketing Coordinator Jennifer Bame at the Great American Water Taste Test Contest in Washington, DC on February 4th, 2026.



Colome Utilities Manager Casey Harter is pictured here with his first place win at the South Dakota Rural Water Taste Test contest in January 2025. Colome's water went on to tie for second at the Great American Water Taste Test Contest in Washington, DC on February 4th, 2026.

YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS THIS EVENT!

RURAL WATER

EXPO

2026



APRIL 21-22, 2026

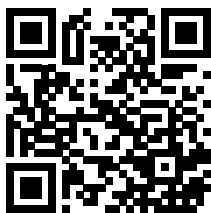
BEST WESTERN RAMKOTA HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTER – RAPID CITY, SD

Join us for the **2026 Rural Water EXPO**—a dynamic 1½-day event featuring cutting-edge training, interactive exhibits, and opportunities to connect with water leaders from across South Dakota.

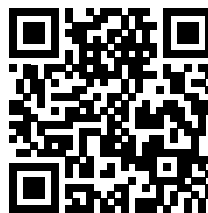
Earn 10 Contact Hours, enjoy great door prizes, and fuel up with lunch provided on Day One as you explore new solutions that strengthen your system and your community.



LEARN MORE: sdarws.com/EXPO



**MAY 1-2, 2026
OUTPOST LODGE
PIERRE, SD**



**JULY 21, 2026
ELMWOOD GOLF COURSE
SIOUX FALLS, SD**



**AUGUST 21, 2026
CROOKS GUN CLUB
SIOUX FALLS, SD**



FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – JEREMIAH CORBIN

A SHARED COMMITMENT TO SAFE, RELIABLE WATER

Clean, reliable drinking water is something most of us depend on without giving it much thought. We turn on the tap and expect safe water to be there, for our families, our farms, our schools, and our businesses. That confidence is built on careful planning, ongoing investment, and the dedication of professionals working behind the scenes every day.

Across South Dakota, water providers continually monitor, test, and improve their systems to meet evolving standards and protect public health. As new regulations, including emerging contaminants like PFAS, move into implementation, communities are taking thoughtful steps to ensure compliance while maintaining affordability and transparency. Protecting water quality is not a one-time effort, it is an ongoing commitment that requires science, coordination, and steady leadership.

Water systems must also balance safety with cost responsibility. Infrastructure, treatment facilities, storage, and miles of pipeline require maintenance and long-term planning. At the same time, small daily habits — both at the system level and at home — help stretch resources further. Efficient water use, leak prevention, and smart upgrades protect not only household budgets but also the long-term sustainability of local systems.

South Dakota's water story is shaped by history as well. Major investments made generations ago continue to support communities today. The responsibility we carry now is to manage those resources wisely, ensure fair and balanced use, and prepare for the challenges of the future — from changing weather patterns to growing communities and evolving regulations.

Behind every gallon delivered are skilled operators,



engineers, board members, and laboratory professionals committed to doing the job right. Many of these individuals live in the communities they serve. They take pride in providing safe water because they drink it too.

Water is foundational to public health, economic opportunity, and quality of life. Protecting it requires vigilance, collaboration, and continued investment. The good news is that South Dakota's water community remains strong, coordinated, and focused on delivering dependable service for generations to come.

When you turn on the tap, you can do so with confidence.



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WATER MATTERS

WATERSHEDS



WHAT IS A WATERSHED?

A watershed is the area of land where all of the water that is under it or drains off of it goes into the same place. A drop of rain that falls anywhere inside a watershed should eventually end up at the outlet.

HOW BIG ARE WATERSHEDS?

Watershed size depends on the water body that your are interested in. A puddle in a field may have a watershed of only a hundred square feet or less. By contrast, the watershed of the Mississippi River encompasses roughly 1,200,000 square miles!

WHY ARE WATERSHEDS IMPORTANT?

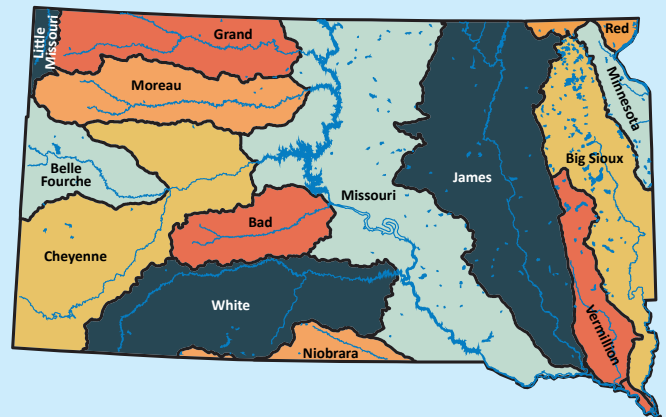
First, all the water in a watershed eventually ends up at the same place. As such, anything that might move with the water (like pollution) will travel with it. Second, everybody lives in a watershed, and almost everybody lives downstream from somebody else. So, what we do on our land will have an impact on our neighbors.

John Wesley Powell, a 19th-century geographer, put it best when he said that a watershed is:

“that area of land, a bounded hydrologic system, within which all living things are inextricably linked by their common water course and where, as humans settled, simple logic demanded that they become part of a community.”

SOUTH DAKOTA WATERSHEDS

To best manage and protect the waters of the State, the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources has divided South Dakota into fourteen (14) watersheds. All but one are part of the Missouri River/Mississippi River system, which outlets into



the Gulf of Mexico. The Red River in the far northeast flows north into Hudson Bay.

To learn more about watersheds and efforts underway to protect them, check out the following websites, or call the East Dakota Water Development District at the number listed below.



usgs.gov/water-science-school/science/watersheds-and-drainage-basins



danr.sd.gov/Conservation/WatershedProtection/default.aspx



www.epa.gov/hwp

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eastdakota.org