



# Quality On Tap!

July 2026 | Volume 22, Issue 1

**WATER  
DISTRIBUTION:  
THEN AND NOW**

**WORKING  
TOGETHER FOR  
CLEAN WATER**

**FIRST WATER  
APPRENTICEHIP  
COHORT**

**NOMINATIONS  
NOW OPEN  
SOUTH DAKOTA  
RURAL WATER  
HALL OF FAME**



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



# ASSOCIATION UPDATES

## Nominations Now Open for the South Dakota Rural Water Hall of Fame

Nominations are now open for the South Dakota Rural Water Hall of Fame – an honor reserved for those who have made lasting contributions to the rural water industry in our state. The Hall of Fame was established to recognize visionary leaders and dedicated individuals whose service, leadership, and commitment have significantly advanced access to safe, reliable water in rural communities. Submissions are due by October 1, 2026, and the next induction will take place during the 2026 Leadership Seminar on the evening of November 18, 2026, in Pierre, SD.



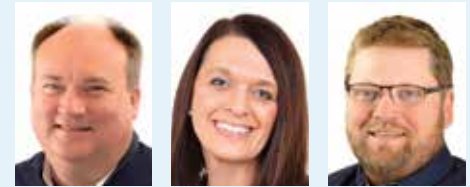
To make a Hall of Fame nomination, please visit [sdarws.com/hof](https://sdarws.com/hof)



## CONGRATULATIONS HANNAH!



Congratulations to SDARWS Technical Assistance Training Specialist Hannah on her marriage to Carl Maude on April 11! We wish her and her husband a lifetime filled with happiness, love, and many wonderful adventures together.



**JEREMIAH CORBIN**  
Executive Director

**ROBYN BROTHERS**  
Business Manager

**PAUL DORWART**  
Field Supervisor



**JENNIFER BAME**  
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**KEVIN CHRISTENSON**  
Source Water



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Training Specialist

**MIKE MOELLER**  
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**GAVIN GRAVERSON**  
Training Specialist



**JIM VAVRA**  
Training Specialist

**HANNAH KAST**  
Training Specialist

**TIM DONOVAN**  
Training Specialist



**ALLEN KOCMICH**  
Circuit Rider

**DAVE DUBA**  
Circuit Rider

**WYATT HIX**  
Circuit Rider



**DANNY AYERS**  
Wastewater Tech.

**KINDRA WIESE**  
Apprenticeship

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### SDARWS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**South Lincoln Rural Water System**  
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**Sioux Rural Water System**  
Jim Thyen, Vice President

**Big Sioux Community Water System**  
Jodi Johanson, Secretary

**Mid-Dakota Rural Water System**  
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**Aurora-Brule Rural Water System**  
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### SDARWS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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**Class B West River**  
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**Class C**  
Jay Gilbertson



# OPERATOR CERTIFICATION TRAINING AND EXAMS



**Register for training classes online at: [web.sdarws.com/events](http://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 Workshop	Winner - Fire Dept @ 9:00 AM	June 2 @ 9:00 AM
Wastewater Workshop	Colman - Community Center @ 9:00 AM	June 3 @ 9:00 AM
Wastewater Workshop	Aberdeen - Location TBD @ 9:00 AM	June 4 @ 9:00 AM
Wastewater Workshop	Lake Norden - Community Center @ 8:00 AM	June 17, 2026
Basic Water Treatment	Aberdeen - Dakota Events Center	June 23-25, 2026
OpCert Exam	Aberdeen - DEC @ 1:00 PM	June 25 @ 1:00 PM
Wastewater Workshop	Winner - Fire Hall @ 8:00 AM	July 22, 2026
Wastewater Collection	Aberdeen - Dakota Events Center	September 1-3, 2026
OpCert Exam	Aberdeen - DEC @ 1:00 PM	September 3 @ 1:00 PM
Small Water Treatment	Rapid City - GFP Outdoor Campus	September 10, 2026
Wastewater Workshop	Custer - Library - @ 8:00 AM	September 9, 2026
Basic Wastewater Treatment	Rapid City - Ramkota	September 22-24, 2026
OpCert Exam	Rapid City - Ramkota @ 1:00 PM	September 24 @ 1:00 PM
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 PM	October 9 @ 1:00 PM
Wastewater Workshop	Grand River Casino - @ 8:00 AM	October 14, 2026
Water Distribution	Rapid City - Ramkota	October 20-22, 2026
OpCert Exam	Rapid City - Ramkota @ 1:00 PM	October 22 @ 1:00 PM
Basic Water Treatment	Sioux Falls - Ramkota	November 3-5, 2026
OpCert Exam	Sioux Falls - Ramkota @ 1:00 PM	November 5 @ 1:00 PM
Wastewater Workshop	Rosebud Rural Water - @ 8:00 AM	November 10, 2026
Wastewater Collection	Rapid City - Ramkota	November 17-19, 2026
OpCert Exam	Rapid City - Ramkota @ 1:00 PM	November 19 @ 1:00 PM
Water Distribution	Aberdeen - Dakota Events Center	December 8-10, 2026
OpCert Exam	Aberdeen - DEC @ 1:00 PM	December 10 @ 1:00 PM

## 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](http://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.**

# SOUTH DAKOTA'S BEST BEACHES FOR SUMMER FUN



South Dakota may be landlocked, but it still offers some incredible beaches and swimming spots perfect for cooling off during the summer. From scenic Black Hills lakes to large Missouri River reservoirs, the state is filled with sandy shorelines, clear water, and family-friendly recreation areas. Whether you enjoy boating, swimming, paddleboarding, fishing, or simply relaxing in the sun, there are plenty of great destinations to explore.

## SYLVAN LAKE

One of the most popular beach destinations in the state is Sylvan Lake in Custer State Park. Often considered one of the most beautiful lakes in South Dakota, Sylvan Lake is surrounded by towering granite formations and pine-covered hills. The lake features a small swimming beach along with opportunities for kayaking, hiking, and picnicking. Its scenic setting makes it a favorite stop for both tourists and locals visiting the Black Hills.

## LEWIS & CLARK RECREATION AREA

Another top destination is the Lewis & Clark Recreation Area near Yankton. Located along Lewis & Clark Lake on the Missouri River, this area offers sandy beaches, warm water, campgrounds, marinas, and excellent boating opportunities. Families often spend entire weekends here enjoying the water and outdoor recreation. The large reservoir provides plenty of space for swimming, fishing, and water sports.

## SHERIDAN LAKE

Sheridan Lake, located west of Rapid City in the Black Hills, is another excellent summer getaway. The lake features one of the largest swimming beaches in the region and

offers calm water ideal for families. Campgrounds and picnic areas nearby make it easy to spend a full day — or even an entire vacation — at the lake.

## ANGOSTURA RECREATION AREA

For those visiting southwest South Dakota, Angostura Recreation Area near Hot Springs is a must-see. Known for its clear water and sandy shoreline, Angostura Reservoir is popular for boating, jet skiing, swimming, and camping. The warmer water temperatures make it especially appealing during the hottest months of summer.

## LAKE VERMILLION

Eastern South Dakota also has great beach options, including Lake Vermillion Recreation Area near Canistota. Located just a short drive from Sioux Falls, the area features a swimming beach, campgrounds, hiking trails, and picnic shelters. It has become a convenient summer destination for families looking for a quick getaway close to home.

## CASCADE FALLS

For a more unique swimming experience, many visitors head to Cascade Falls near Hot Springs. Unlike traditional lakes or reservoirs, Cascade Falls is a natural spring-fed swimming hole with crystal-clear water that stays around 67 degrees year-round. The flowing water and natural rock surroundings make it one of the Black Hills' hidden gems.

**These are just a few of the many great places to cool off and enjoy the outdoors across South Dakota. To discover even more parks, beaches, and recreation areas, visit [gfp.sd.gov/parks](http://gfp.sd.gov/parks).**

# WATER DISTRIBUTION: Then and Now

**W**ater has always been essential to human life. From the earliest civilizations to modern communities, people have relied on systems to collect, transport, and protect clean water. The story of water distribution is closely tied to the development of human civilization itself.

Historians believe the first major advancements in water systems began nearly 10,000 years ago as people shifted from hunting and gathering to farming and permanent settlements. Early civilizations in regions such as present-day Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Persia, Greece, and Rome developed creative ways to move water from distant sources to growing communities. Ancient Persians constructed underground tunnels called qanats to transport water from mountain aquifers to dry plains for irrigation and domestic use. These systems were lined with stone and waterproofed materials to improve durability and reduce water loss.

The Greeks and Romans later expanded on these ideas, introducing more advanced piping and aqueduct systems. The Romans, in particular, became known for their engineering skill. Their aqueducts carried water over long distances using gravity, supplying cities, baths, and public fountains with dependable water service. Roman engineers standardized the use of lead and clay pipes and built impressive systems that remained functional for centuries. Many remnants of these aqueducts still stand today as symbols of early innovation in public water infrastructure.

During the medieval period, water systems in Europe became simpler and more localized. Communities relied on wells, springs, cisterns, and wooden pipes to provide drinking water. By the 17th century, improvements in pumping technology allowed water companies to move water into reservoirs and eventually pipe it directly into homes. The development of cast-iron pipe in the 1800s marked another major advancement, creating stronger and longer-lasting water mains for growing cities.

In North America, early settlers initially depended on rivers, lakes, springs, and shallow wells for water. The first public waterworks in the United States was established in Boston in 1652 for firefighting and domestic use. Early systems often used hollowed-out wooden logs as water mains. These wooden pipes were joined together and sealed with tar to transport water through communities.

Philadelphia became a leader in water system innovation during the early 1800s. In 1801, the city introduced large steam engines for municipal water conveyance, and in 1804 it became the first city in the world to widely adopt cast-iron

pipe for water mains. Other cities quickly followed, replacing aging wooden systems with more durable iron infrastructure. Over time, improvements in pipe joints, steel pipe manufacturing, and eventually ductile iron pipe dramatically improved reliability and flexibility within distribution systems.

Today's water distribution systems use a wide range of materials, including ductile iron, steel, concrete, copper, and various plastics. Modern technology has also transformed how systems are operated and maintained. Leak detection equipment, automated controls, GPS mapping, pressure monitoring, and advanced treatment processes help utilities deliver safe and reliable drinking water more efficiently than ever before.

Although materials and technologies have changed over thousands of years, the mission remains the same — providing communities with safe, dependable water. From ancient stone channels to today's sophisticated distribution networks, the evolution of water systems reflects humanity's ongoing commitment to protecting one of our most valuable resources.



# WORKING TOGETHER FOR CLEAN WATER

Protecting water resources has always been important in South Dakota, but today it is becoming increasingly clear that protecting water also means building strong partnerships. Across the state, a growing volunteer water-quality sampling effort is doing exactly that by bringing together state agencies, community organizations, educators, and local volunteers around one common goal: protecting the lakes, rivers, streams, and groundwater resources that South Dakotans depend on every day.

Led by the South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources (SD DANR), the volunteer water quality sampling program continues to grow through partnerships with the South Dakota Association of Rural Water Systems (SDARWS), the Pierre Rotary Club, the Madison Rotary Club, the South Dakota Discovery Center, along with several lake associations and local community groups throughout the state. While each organization brings a different perspective to the effort, together they are creating a program built around science, education, and community involvement.

South Dakota's water resources are incredibly diverse. Rural water systems, municipal supplies, prairie lakes, rivers, reservoirs, and groundwater aquifers all play an essential role in supporting communities, agriculture, recreation, and economic growth. Monitoring those resources across such a large state is no small task, which is why the volunteer component has become such a valuable part of the program.

Through the leadership of SD DANR, volunteers are trained to collect water samples using standardized procedures that ensure consistency and accuracy. Sampling locations

may include lakes, rivers, reservoirs, or other designated sites where long-term monitoring can help track changes in water conditions. The collected samples are then analyzed for indicators such as nutrient levels, bacteria, and turbidity, as well as other measurements that help paint a clearer picture of watershed health throughout the state.

While public water systems already conduct routine compliance testing, the volunteer program adds another layer of monitoring and creates something equally important: public awareness and community ownership. Instead of water quality monitoring happening quietly behind the scenes, local citizens become directly involved in understanding and protecting the water around them.

That community connection is where organizations like SDARWS and the Rotary Clubs play such an important role. SDARWS helps coordinate training, communication, and statewide support efforts while connecting water professionals and local volunteers. With longstanding relationships across South Dakota communities, the organization helps bridge the gap between technical water management and community engagement.

The Pierre Rotary Club and Madison Rotary Club have embraced the effort as an extension of their commitment to service. Rotary members participate in sampling events, help promote awareness locally, and encourage community involvement in protecting nearby water resources. Their participation brings energy and visibility to the program while reinforcing the idea that water protection is not solely the responsibility of agencies or utilities – it is something entire communities can take part in.





The South Dakota Discovery Center adds another important piece through educational outreach and funding support. By making water science more accessible and engaging, the Discovery Center connects students, families, and communities to the broader importance of watershed protection. Their involvement helps ensure the program reaches beyond data collection and becomes an opportunity for learning and long-term stewardship.

Lake associations and local volunteer groups have also become valuable partners in the effort. Many of these groups have a deep personal connection to the lakes and watersheds they help monitor. Their local knowledge, observations, and commitment to protecting the places they live and recreate provide an important grassroots perspective that strengthens the overall program.

One of the most rewarding parts of the project has been watching volunteers gain a deeper appreciation for water quality and watershed health. Many participants begin with little technical background, but quickly develop an understanding of how water is monitored, why trends matter, and how small changes in a watershed can affect entire communities downstream. That knowledge naturally spreads beyond the sampling events themselves as volunteers share what they have learned with neighbors, schools, and community organizations.

The program also helps strengthen relationships between agencies and the public. By involving citizens directly in the process, transparency increases and trust grows. Communities gain a better understanding of the work being done to protect local water resources, while agencies

benefit from stronger local engagement and support.

At the same time, the data collected through the program serves a meaningful purpose. Tracking water quality trends over time helps support watershed planning, resource management, and long-term protection efforts across South Dakota. Identifying concerns early can help communities and agencies respond proactively before larger issues develop.

As participation continues to expand, organizers hope to grow the program into even more communities across the state. Additional sampling locations, expanded educational outreach, and increased volunteer involvement all remain part of the long-term vision. More importantly, the partnerships being built today are helping create a stronger culture of water stewardship for the future.

What makes the program unique is not simply the science behind it, but the people involved in making it happen. State agencies provide technical expertise and oversight. Organizations like SDARWS help coordinate efforts statewide. Educational partners expand outreach opportunities. Rotary Clubs, lake associations, and local volunteers contribute the community pride and energy that keep the program moving forward.

Together, they are building more than a water sampling network. They are building a shared understanding that protecting South Dakota's water resources is everyone's role. Through collaboration, education, and volunteer involvement, communities across the state are helping ensure that clean, reliable water remains one of South Dakota's greatest strengths for generations to come.



# SDARWS LAUNCHES FIRST APPRENTICESHIP COHORT

The first Apprenticeship Cohort for the South Dakota Association of Rural Water Systems (SDARWS) officially began on February 1, 2026. Six apprentices are making history as they begin their careers in the water industry, learning alongside experienced mentors from water systems across South Dakota.

During the program, apprentices will complete a minimum of 288 hours of Related Technical Instruction (RTI) along with 4,000 hours of On-the-Job Training (OJT). Mentors play a critical role by sharing their expertise, guiding apprentices through daily operations, and evaluating their progress throughout the program.

This partnership provides new employees with valuable firsthand knowledge about the water industry – learning both best practices and lessons from experience. Ultimately, the program helps ensure that safe, reliable, and high-quality water continues to be delivered to communities

across the state.

Apprentice John Halverson shared his experience so far:

“Through the apprenticeship program, I have learned the importance of having a good mentor. My mentor and I have created a great working relationship. Scott has taught me valuable information ranging from simple task etiquette to how to properly perform tasks and manage our water treatment facility. I’m really looking forward to how this apprenticeship program will continue to teach me valuable skills for my career.”

## KNOW SOMEONE WHO'D LIKE TO BE AN APPRENTICE?

SDARWS is currently recruiting apprentices, employers, and mentors for the Fall 2026 Apprenticeship Cohort, which is scheduled to begin October 1, 2026.

**For more information or to get involved, contact Kindra at [kindra@sdarws.com](mailto:kindra@sdarws.com) or 605-501-9208.**



# MEET THE FIRST GROUP OF APPRENTICES



**City of Woonsocket**  
*Colten Trabing, Apprentice*  
*Rich Jensen, Mentor*

My contribution to my community would be the best thing so far (about the apprenticeship program). I have learned so much so far in the water field. My biggest thing I've been learning on the job is finding curb stops and having that image in my mind. Physically doing stuff and learning as I go is the best training for me.



**South Lincoln RWS**  
*John Halverson, Apprentice*  
*Scott Cameron, Mentor*

My mentor has taught me to take value in the work that I do and to provide the best customer service I possible can.



**TM Rural Water District**  
*Anthony Hanisch, Apprentice*  
*Jason Krumbach, Mentor*

I like how it is self-paced. You can watch the lessons whenever you have time.



**Tripp County WUD**  
*Joey Cole, Apprentice*  
*Bud Jacobsen, Mentor*

I've really learned a lot from my mentor. The thing that I feel has and will help the most is trying to locate water lines and finding external resources to help locate them. The training I find the most helpful is when Tim comes down to Winner because you can have actual conversations with knowledgeable people – helps aid the learning process.



**City of Baltic**  
*Paul Osthus, Apprentice*  
*Ryan Fods, Mentor*

I think the best part is the understanding of how important it is to make sure our water is safe and what actually goes into making that a reality. One thing I have learned from my mentor is how to test our water once a month and make sure all the proper documentation is filled out. The hands on training is definitely the best part.



**TM Rural Water District**  
*Jack Even, Apprentice*  
*Greg Simmermon, Mentor*



## RANDALL COMMUNITY WATER DISTRICT

On January 17, 1972, an organizational meeting of the twenty-one member Steering Committee was held in Lake Andes. Randall Community Water District (RCWD) became the new water district for Charles Mix County. Initial funds were given in the form of a loan from the State Planning Agency.

A motion was passed at the December 19, 1972 meeting to begin the Randall Community Water District project. The district boundaries were to include all of Charles Mix County, a portion of Douglas County south of Highway 44, and parts of Aurora, Bon Homme, Brule and Hutchinson Counties as needed upon sign-up. The engineering firms of Bartlett & West, and Foster Van Gundy and Associates were hired to complete the design of the Randall Community Water District project.

A resolution was passed on April 4, 1974, with the purpose of forming a rural water district to provide and distribute water

to rural homes, pastures, and cities in Charles Mix and surrounding counties. The project was divided into three phases. Water for the first phase was purchased from the city of Lake Andes. Once operational, Phase I of the project served 148 rural customers.

The government site of the former radar station near Pickstown was obtained to build storage with adequate elevation to ensure proper water pressure, and a site near the city of Pickstown was secured for a pumping facility for Phase II of the RCWD project. Phase II would supply water to the southern portion of Charles Mix County and portions of surrounding counties.

June 1975 brought approval to negotiate for the purchase of land south of Platte as the location of the Phase III Treatment plant. This plant would serve Platte and the surrounding areas in northern Charles Mix, Douglas, Aurora and Brule Counties. The total original cost of RCWD was \$9,350,000.

# RANDALL COMMUNITY WATER DISTRICT

A resolution was signed in October to obtain water from Lake Francis Case and enter into an agreement with the US Department of the Army Corps of Engineers to purchase water for the purpose of treatment and distribution to its customers.

Over the years Randall has grown from 148 to approximately 3,100 rural customers, including 15 bulk users. The water system now has two intake structures, two water treatment plants, and fifteen storage facilities (tanks). Water sales for 2025 totaled 1 billion gallons.

As the need for potable water has expanded, so has the district. In an effort to maintain its service to all customers, lines have been extended to the north and east to serve Davison Rural Water System, Aurora-Brule Rural Water System, and the City of Mitchell. Three new transmission tanks have been constructed and both treatment plants have been upgraded; the most current upgrade was completed on the Platte Treatment Plant which now utilizes a state-of-the-art membrane filtering system.

Providing quality, affordable drinking water to rural customers and communities remains the goal of the Board of Directors and staff of Randall Community Water District.



Quality On Tap!

## DIRECTORS:

Dave Meyerink – President  
Chris Slaba – Vice President  
Vance Qualm – Secretary  
John Carda – Treasurer  
Mike Kuhlman – Director  
Tom Travis – Director  
Joel Lau – Director  
Randy Kott – Director  
Trent Beltman – Director

## STAFF:

Scott Pick – General Manager  
Ricky Bergin – Chief Operations Officer  
Megan Bergin – Chief Financial Officer  
Mollie Petrik – Billing Clerk  
Rebecca Qualm – Inventory  
Jason Kafka – Easement/Sensus  
Terry Koupal – Plant Operator/Electrician  
Gavin Westendorf – Plant Operator  
Jason Wright – Plant Operator  
Jordan Kocer – Plant Operator/Electrician  
Corbin Dean – Plant Operator/Electrician  
Daniel Hjelm – Plant Operator/IT/GPS  
Mason Wright – Operator Distribution  
Corey DeBey – Operator Distribution  
Grant Petrik – Operator Distribution/Electrician  
Tyler Swanson – Operator Distribution  
Cody Svatos – Operator Distribution  
Heath Hahlbeck – Operator Distribution  
Dawson Lensing – Operator Distribution  
Jared Swanson – Operator Distribution/Electrician  
Aaron Swanson – Operator Distribution  
John Ziegler – Line Locate  
Jacob Wenzlaff – Operator Distribution

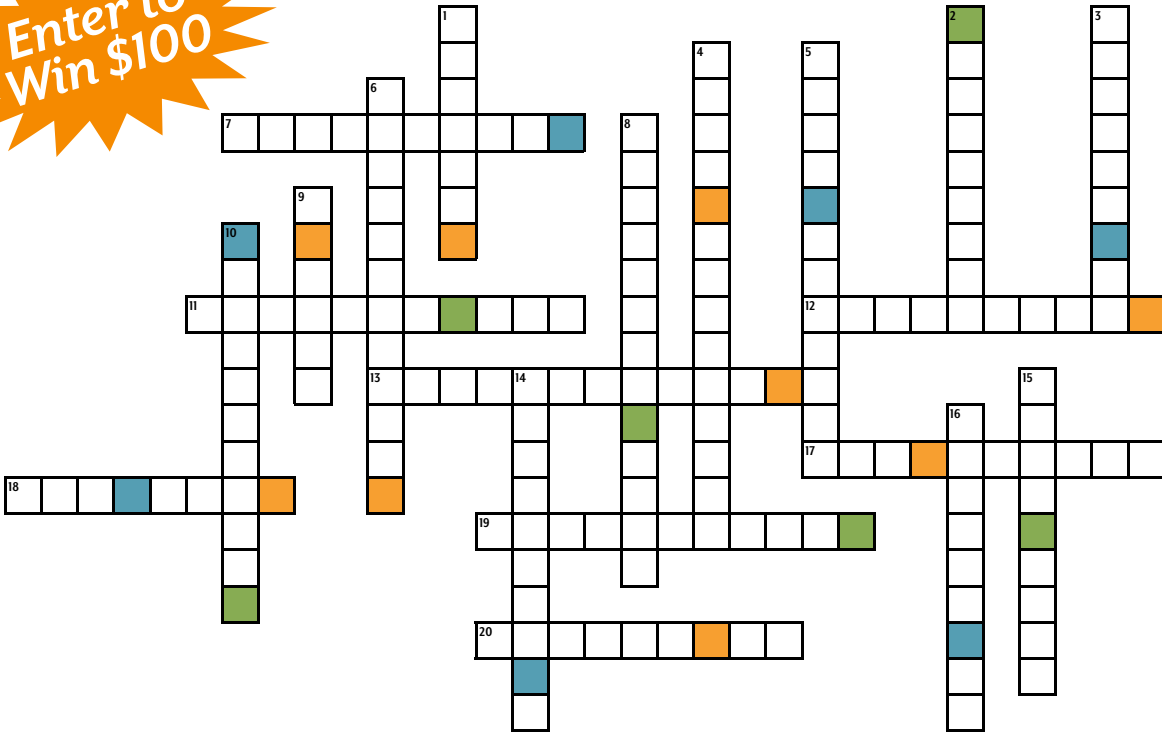
## STATISTICS:

Hookups – 3,167  
Miles of Pipeline – 1,860  
Water Source – Missouri River  
Counties Served – Charles Mix and portions of Aurora, Bon Homme, Brule, Douglas, Hutchinson  
Towns Served Individual – Dante, Harrison, New Holland, Ravinia  
Towns Served Bulk – Armour, Aurora-Brule RWS, Corsica, Davison RWS, Delmont, Fort Randall Casino, Geddes, Greenwood, Lake Andes, Marty, North Wagner Housing, Pickstown, Platte, Wagner, YST Truck Plaza

# RURAL WATER CROSSWORD & WORD SCRAMBLE CONTEST

## SOUTH DAKOTA STATE PARKS

Enter to  
Win \$100



- ANGOSTURA
- BEAR BUTTE
- CUSTER
- FARM ISLAND
- GOOD EARTH
- HARTFORD BEACH
- LAKE HERMAN
- LAKE VERMILLION
- LEWIS AND CLARK
- NEWTON HILLS
- OAKWOOD LAKES
- PALISADES
- PELICAN LAKE
- RICHMOND LAKE
- ROY LAKE
- SHADEHILL
- SHEPS CANYON
- SICA HOLLOW
- SNAKE CREEK
- WEST BEND

### SCRAMBLE ANSWER



#### ACROSS

7. Popular Pierre-area camping and boating destination
11. Heavily wooded park with excellent hiking and horseback riding trails near Canton
12. Popular camping and fishing destination near Madison - home of Herman Luce.
13. Missouri River destination named after famous explorers
17. Mysterious wooded ravine known for Native American legends
18. Missouri River recreation spot near Fort Pierre

19. Quiet northeastern park known for fishing and birdwatching near Watertown
20. Sacred mountain site located near Sturgis

#### DOWN

1. Northeastern South Dakota park popular with anglers and campers near Lake City
2. Park preserving one of the oldest known Native American village sites in the region
3. Reservoir park near Hot Springs popular for water sports
4. Southeastern South Dakota park popular for boating and swimming, named for the river it borders
5. Park known for fishing lakes and rolling

6. prairie scenery near Brookings
6. Aberdeen-area park with hiking trails and water activities
8. Lakeside park located on Big Stone Lake near Minnesota border
9. Famous for its free-roaming buffalo herd and scenic Needles Highway
10. Rugged canyon area offering scenic hiking and wildlife viewing near Hot Springs
14. Lakeside campground on Lake Francis Case near Platte
15. Known for its dramatic pink quartzite cliffs along Split Rock Creek
16. Reservoir destination in western South Dakota known for boating and fishing



**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), **scan the QR code**, or **submit online at [www.sdarws.com/crossword](http://www.sdarws.com/crossword)** with the correct phrase by July 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 Laura Tolzin from Kingbrook Rural Water who had the correct phrase of "all people need hope" for April 2026.

# RURAL WATER

## ACROSS SOUTH DAKOTA



## BDM RURAL WATER NEARING FULL OPERATIONS AT NEW TREATMENT PLANT

**B**DM Rural Water has begun treating and delivering water from its new treatment plant seven miles NE of Britton SD. This plant, physically separated from the existing 1980's plant by two miles, provides both significant enhancement of the existing treatment capacity and a significant redundancy to disaster. Drawing from the same Middle James Aquifer that the existing plant draws from, water quality is excellent and consistent with the existing plant.

The plant, engineered by AE2S engineering staff of Fargo and constructed by Swanberg Construction of Valley City, ND, is a simple yet state-of-the-art two vessel sand/anthracite filtration system treating up to two million gallons of water a day. Treatment focuses on iron and manganese removal. Source water is excellent for softness, simplifying treatment significantly. Five new wells utilizing an innovative glass bead pack system to develop the wells have been constructed at the new location and came in producing significantly more water than was originally hoped for. Automated chemical feeds and an updated SCADA system provide a simpler, more accurate process



and new motors paired with new Variable Frequency Drives will help with energy savings and extend life of pipelines by leveling pressure curves.

Construction of this facility in conjunction with the developing WINS project in partnership with the City of Aberdeen and WEB Water place BDM Rural Water in an excellent position moving into the future. BDM has never had moratoriums in place for new memberships, but they have had issues with treatment capacity at certain times of the year. After securing an additional water right from the State of SD in 2025 that allows both plants to run at full capacity, BDM will be looking now to put that

capacity to work serving both existing and future members of the company. Redundancy, capacity, and resiliency are key words around BDM these days as they bring the plant to full completion and start to look to the next steps in the never-ending journey of providing the best water possible at the best possible cost to the 8000+ customers who get their water from BDM.



# Upcoming Conferences & Events



## Rural Water Open Golf Tourney | July 21, 2026

The Annual Rural Water Open is a popular golf tournament hosted by the South Dakota Association of Rural Water Systems (SDARWS) in Sioux Falls. Open to Utility Members, Associate Members, and Corporate Partners, this event draws over 260 golfers each year and typically sells out quickly. Participants enjoy a full day on the course, complete with a golf cart, lunch, and awards. The tournament offers a fantastic networking opportunity in a fun, relaxed atmosphere that brings together members from across the industry.

For more information, visit [sdarws.com/golf](https://sdarws.com/golf) or email [golf@sdarws.com](mailto:golf@sdarws.com)

**REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!**



## Rural Water Trap Shoot | August 21, 2026

The Third Annual South Dakota Rural Water Trap Shoot is set to take place at the Crooks Gun Club, bringing together Utility Members, Associate Members, and Corporate Partners of the South Dakota Association of Rural Water Systems (SDARWS) for a day of friendly competition and camaraderie. Registration includes shells and a dinner, making this event a great opportunity to connect with industry colleagues in a fun, relaxed setting.

For more information, visit [sdarws.com/trap](https://sdarws.com/trap) or email [ggraverson@sdarws.com](mailto:ggraverson@sdarws.com)

**REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!**



## Annual Technical Conference | January 12-14, 2027

The ATC is the annual conference of the South Dakota Association of Rural Water Systems, and is the largest water/wastewater conference in South Dakota. This event is designed to bring together water and wastewater utility systems – both large and small, municipal and rural – for sessions in operations, management, boardsmanship and governance. This conference is held every year during the first week of the South Dakota Legislative session in Pierre, SD and hosts over 500 attendees.

To learn more, visit [sdarws.com/ATC](https://sdarws.com/ATC) or email [atc@sdarws.com](mailto:atc@sdarws.com)

Pierre Ramkota Hotel & Convention Center  
920 W Sioux Ave. • Pierre, SD • 605-224-6877

**REGISTRATION OPENS SEPTEMBER 15**



## Water Operator EXPO | April 27-28, 2027

The 2027 Water Operator EXPO will be held at a new location – The Lodge at Deadwood. The EXPO is open to all water and wastewater utility staff, board and council members, engineers, and State and Federal employees. The event will feature 13 half-hour presentations, providing up to ten contact hours for licensed operators. In addition to the training sessions, attendees will have the opportunity to visit with industry manufacturers and suppliers showcasing the latest technology, equipment, and innovations shaping the water and wastewater industry.

To learn more, visit [sdarws.com/EXPO](https://sdarws.com/EXPO) or email [expo@sdarws.com](mailto:expo@sdarws.com)

The Lodge at Deadwood  
100 Pine Crest Drive • Deadwood, SD • 877-393-5634

**REGISTRATION OPENS FEBRUARY 22**



# FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

– JEREMIAH CORBIN

## WATER MATTERS – TODAY AND TOMORROW

Summer in South Dakota renews our appreciation for water. Whether for recreation, agriculture, business, or daily living, water is central to life in our state. This issue of *Quality on Tap!* highlights how rural water systems and local communities are working together to protect and strengthen this vital resource for future generations.

A key theme in this issue is partnership. Protecting water quality requires collaboration among local communities, state agencies, volunteers, educators, water professionals, and community organizations. The expanding volunteer water-quality sampling effort featured here demonstrates this teamwork. Through partnerships with the South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources, SDARWS, Rotary Clubs, the South Dakota Discovery Center, lake associations, and local volunteers, communities statewide are becoming more engaged in understanding and safeguarding their water resources.

This issue also highlights the water industry's commitment to workforce development and training. Earlier this year, SDARWS launched its first Water Apprenticeship Cohort, connecting apprentices and mentors from systems across South Dakota. Apprentices gain hands-on experience and learn directly from seasoned operators and utility professionals. Programs like this are essential to preparing the next generation of operators, technicians, and leaders who will ensure safe and reliable drinking water for our communities.

Water systems across South Dakota are also investing in

infrastructure and long-term reliability. The Randall Community Water District and BDM Rural Water exemplify how rural systems adapt to meet increasing demands while enhancing resiliency, treatment capacity, and operational efficiency. These projects are investments in public health, economic growth, emergency preparedness, and quality of life for the communities they serve.

This issue's article, "Water Distribution: Then and Now," offers a valuable historical perspective. While technology and materials have evolved, the mission of water professionals remains consistent: providing safe, dependable water to those who rely on it daily. Today's systems benefit from advanced technology and modern treatment processes, yet they are grounded in the same principles of service, reliability, and stewardship that have guided water systems for generations.

As you enjoy the summer, please take a moment to appreciate the vital role water plays in our daily lives. Whether you are visiting South Dakota's lakes, tending a garden, supporting your community, or simply turning on the tap, dependable water service connects us all.

Thank you to the operators, managers, board members, volunteers, and industry partners who work each day to protect South Dakota's water resources and strengthen our rural communities.

We hope you enjoy this summer issue of *Quality on Tap!* and have a safe and enjoyable summer season.





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# WATER MATTERS

## WATER QUALITY STANDARDS



**W**ater bodies can be used for purposes such as recreation (e.g. swimming and boating), scenic enjoyment and fishing, and are the home to many aquatic organisms. To protect human health and aquatic life in these waters, water quality standards (WQS) are established. WQS are provisions of state, tribal or federal law that describe the desired condition of a water body and the means by which that condition will be protected or achieved. Further, WQS form a legal basis for controlling pollutants entering these waters.

Standards are typically defined in terms of an acceptable concentration or level of a particular chemical, physical or biologic parameter. For example, in South Dakota, for waters designated as drinking water supplies, the concentration of nitrate (NO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup>) can not exceed 10 milligrams per liter (mg/L). Waters designated as cold-water fisheries (trout streams), water temperature can not exceed 65°(F). If swimming (Immersion Recreation in government speak) is the goal, levels of Escherichia coli (E. coli) bacteria in excess of 235 colonies per 100 milliliters of sample are considered problematic.

It is important to understand that while WQS have been established for most water bodies in the State, compliance with the WQS does not mean that the water is completely free of any possible contaminants. The established standards most often reflect the best scientific estimate of when the potential risk to human health, etc., is no longer statistically acceptable. Although the water might be considered 'safe' from a regulatory standpoint, contaminants may be, and most likely are, still present.

When presenting water quality information, the results of a particular water quality test are often expressed as either pass or fail. A nitrate reading of 9.0 mg/L would be considered 'acceptable,' as it is below the 10 mg/L WQS. However, background nitrate levels in South Dakota waters rarely exceed



1-2 mg/L, so the 9.0 reading is strongly suggestive of a problem that ought to be addressed, even if it technically meets the WQS.

There is nothing magical about WQS. That is, compliance does not translate to zero risk."Similarly, violation of WQS does not mean that interaction will result in certain harm. It is important to know not only what is in your water, but also what this really means.



**What are South Dakota's water quality standards? They can be found in Chapter 74:51:01 of the Administrative Rules of South Dakota. Scan the QR Code to learn more.**

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