



DEPARTMENT OF  
TRANSPORTATION



# 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

BETTER LIVES THROUGH  
BETTER TRANSPORTATION

<https://dot.sd.gov> | <https://sd511.org> 



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## BETTER LIVES THROUGH BETTER TRANSPORTATION

SECRETARY'S MESSAGE	1
---------------------	---

SDDOT'S MISSION, VISION, AND STRATEGIC PLAN OVERVIEW	2
--	---

INVESTING IN OUR TRANSPORTATION FUTURE-TODAY	3
--	---

PROGRESS ON STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	3-4
----------------------------------	-----

FUNDING	5
---------	---

2025 - SDDOT - FEATURE STORIES	6
--------------------------------	---

RAISE GRANT BOLSTERS WEST RIVER RAIL SERVICES	6
---	---

THAW PATROL EARN INAUGURAL BATTLE OF THE BLADES TITLE	7
---	---

HISTORIC BRIDGE PROJECT CELEBRATES RIBBON CUTTING	8
---	---

VARIABLE SPEED LIMITS IMPLEMENTED ON INTERSTATE 29 NEAR BROOKINGS	9
---	---

DIVERGING DIAMOND INTERCHANGES SHOW MAJOR CRASH REDUCTIONS	10-11
--	-------

STIP VIRTUAL ROOM WINS NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS AWARD	12
--	----

2024 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY YIELDS OUTSTANDING RESULTS	13-14
--	-------

DDI AT INTERSTATE 90 EXIT 406 (BRANDON) NEARING COMPLETION	15
--	----

PEN RESULTS DRIVE SDDOT IMPROVEMENT	16
-------------------------------------	----

PROGRESS ACROSS THE STATE	17
---------------------------	----

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE REGIONS	17
-----------------------------	----

ABERDEEN REGION	18
-----------------	----

MITCHELL REGION	19
-----------------	----

PIERRE REGION	20
---------------	----

RAPID CITY REGION	21
-------------------	----

All photos and data courtesy of the South Dakota Department of Transportation unless otherwise noted. 750 copies of this document were printed at a cost of \$1.79 per copy by the South Dakota Department of Transportation.

The South Dakota Department of Transportation gives public notice of its policy to uphold and assure full compliance with the non-discrimination requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related Non-discrimination authorities. Title VI and related Non-discrimination authorities stipulate that no person in the United States of America shall on the grounds of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, income level or Limited English Proficiency be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. Any person who has questions concerning this policy or wishes to file a discrimination complaint should contact the Department's Civil Rights Office at 605-773-3540.

# SECRETARY'S MESSAGE

Each year brings new challenges and opportunities for the South Dakota Department of Transportation (SDDOT) as we continue our mission to efficiently provide a safe, accessible, and high-quality transportation system for the people of our State. This past year has been one of progress, innovation, and steadfast commitment to meeting the needs of South Dakota's traveling public.



Secretary Joel Jundt

Our top priority remains safety. From highway reconstruction projects to bridge repairs and innovative traffic management technologies, every initiative we undertake is grounded in the goal of saving lives and improving mobility. The Department continues to strengthen partnerships with local governments, tribal nations, fellow state organizations, and federal agencies to enhance roadway safety through strategic investments and public education. We are grateful for the many stakeholders who work side by side with us to advance our mission.

Innovation and efficiency guide our organization. The Department is implementing new tools and data-driven approaches to better prioritize projects, manage construction timelines, and improve communication. These efforts help ensure we remain good stewards of taxpayer dollars while delivering the best possible transportation outcomes for all users.

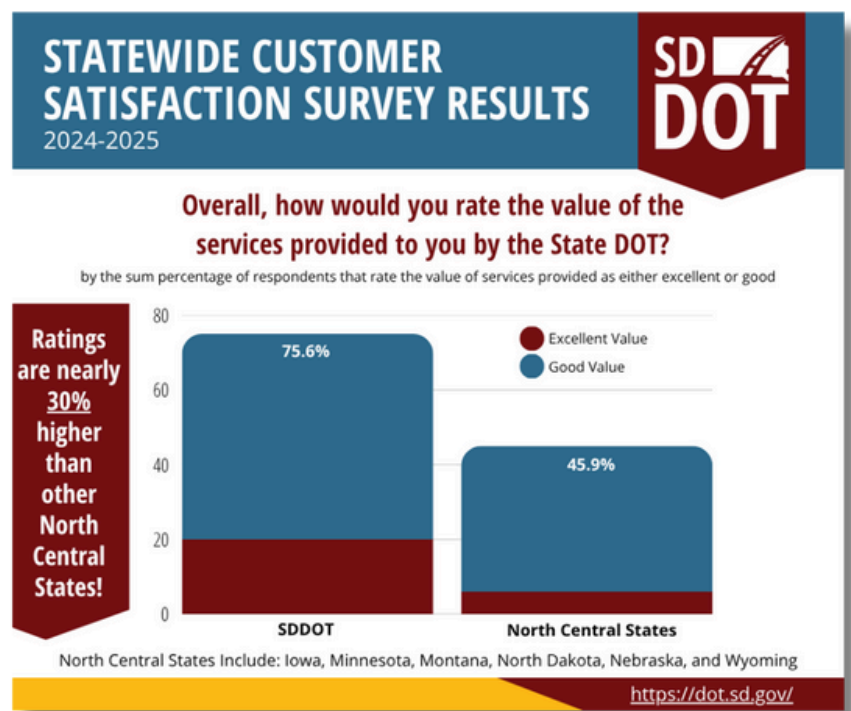
Approximately every three years, the SDDOT research team commissions a statewide customer satisfaction survey to gather data from residents and persons who impact transportation decisions in the State of South Dakota. The statewide survey results are used by SDDOT to objectively assess how well the Department is meeting the State's transportation needs and to identify how we can improve the quality of our services. Survey results like the ones in the graphic below, show how the SDDOT compares to the other North Central States of Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, Nebraska, and Wyoming.

Looking ahead, SDDOT remains focused on meeting the evolving needs of our growing State. Whether it's improving freight movement, supporting economic development, or enhancing traveler information systems, we are committed to building and maintaining a transportation system that keeps South Dakota moving—safely and efficiently.

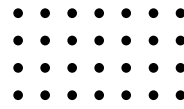
On behalf of the dedicated men and women of the SDDOT, thank you for your continued trust and support. Together, we're building a strong foundation for South Dakota's future—mile by mile.

Sincerely,

Joel Jundt, Secretary  
South Dakota Department of Transportation



# ABOUT US



## MISSION

We provide a safe and efficient public transportation system

## VISION

Better lives through better transportation

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Where we must focus our strengths and resources to overcome our challenges



SAFETY

### EVERYONE HOME SAFE EVERY DAY

SDDOT aims to improve safety by decreasing highway crashes and reducing workplace accidents and employee injuries.



WORKFORCE

### GROW AND RETAIN A HIGH PERFORMING WORKFORCE

SDDOT is a service organization: engaging, training, developing, and retaining our workforce provides the greatest opportunity to be a top employer.



SERVICE

### PROVIDE EXCELLENT SERVICES

SDDOT recognizes the importance of listening to customer and stakeholder concerns and responding to their needs.

## FOLLOW US

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/southdakotadot>

X: <https://x.com/SouthDakotaDOT>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/southdakotadot>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/southdakotadot>



# INVESTING IN OUR TRANSPORTATION FUTURE TODAY

## PROGRESS ON STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Over the past year, the SDDOT continued our efforts toward our strategic objectives and carrying out core duties. The figures and statistics on the following pages highlight this progress and identify areas for continued improvement.



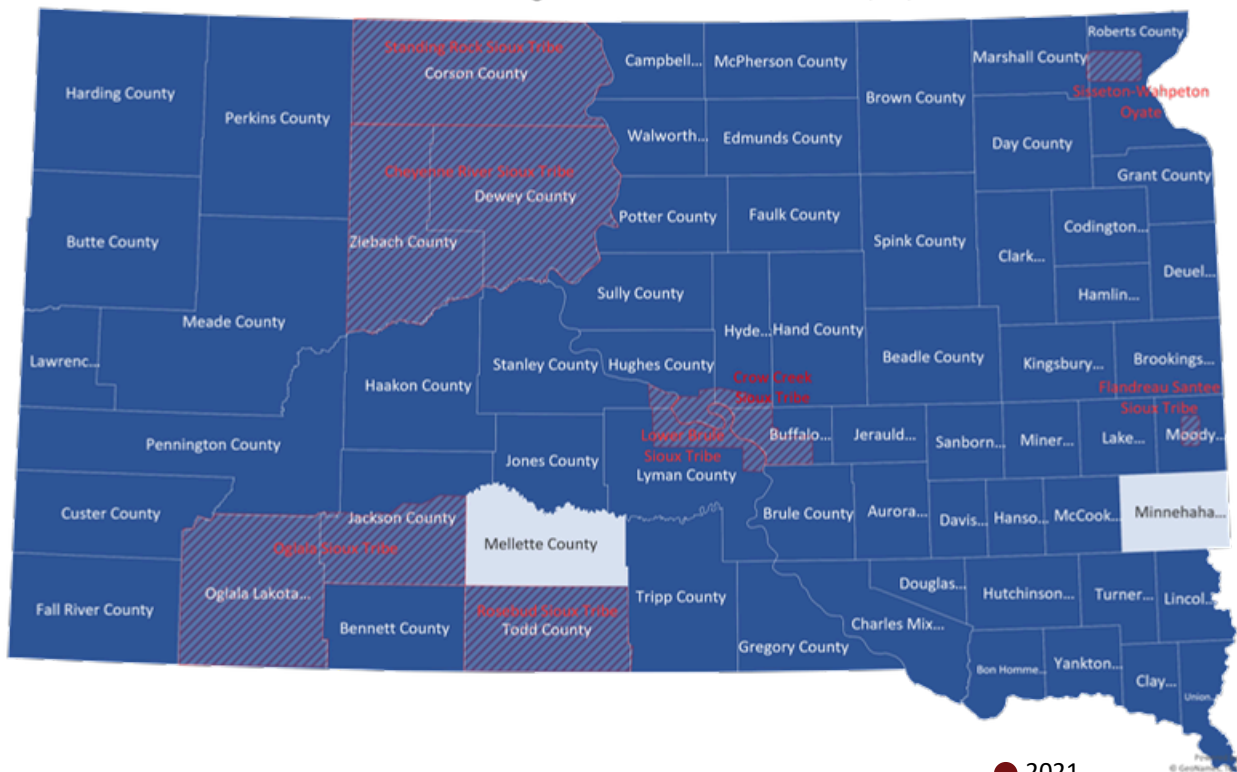
### COMMUNICATION

“We continue to focus on ways to improve and enhance the information we provide travelers, particularly during the harsh winter months. Recent customer feedback indicates high levels of satisfaction with information services being provided. In an effort to continue to improve on the information available, nearly every county and tribe is providing traveler information in SD511 for winter road restrictions and closures.”

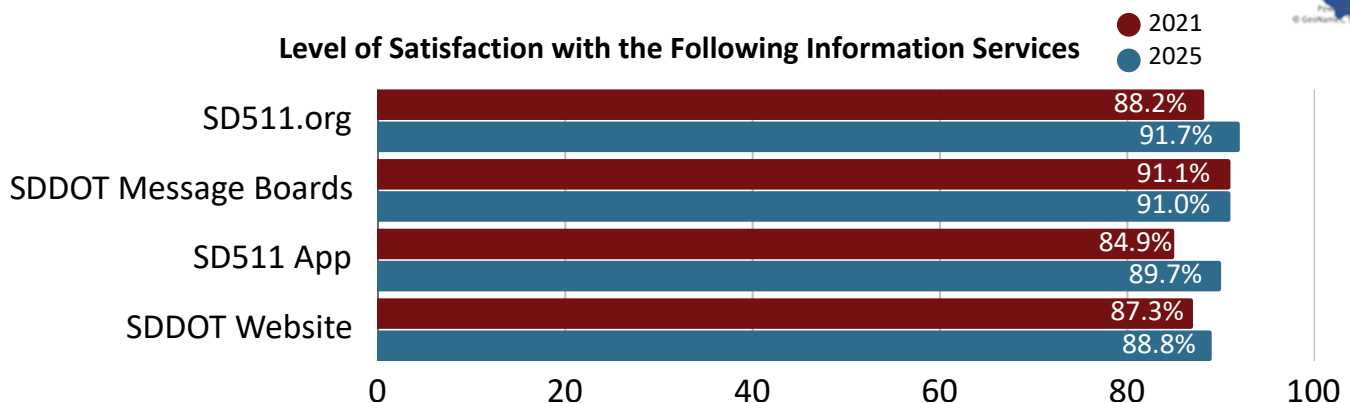


**Craig Smith, Director of Operations**

Counties and Tribes Registered to Use SD511 as of 10/07/2025



Level of Satisfaction with the Following Information Services



<https://www.dot.sd.gov>



## INVESTING TODAY FOR THE FUTURE

Transportation infrastructure improvement projects can last from decades to nearly a century, through timely investments we can ensure the next generations of South Dakotans are in a position to build upon the foundation SDDOT has created today.



Pierre-Fort Pierre Bridge



Platte-Winner Bridge



Forest City Bridge



U.S. Highway 12 Bridge



Singing Bridge



I-90 Bridge at Chamberlain

“Safety, condition, and capacity drive every investment in our State. We’ve committed to leveraging those investments for the next generation of South Dakotans through projects such as the 41<sup>st</sup> Street Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI), Interstate 90 reconstruction, and the Lt. Commander Waldron Memorial Bridge connecting Pierre and Fort Pierre. As we look to the future, we must remain diligent on ensuring that tomorrows investments positively impact our future. With five major Missouri River Bridges planned in the next 10 to 15 years, our focus must remain sharp.”



Mike Behm, Director of Planning and Engineering



## CONTINUALLY IMPROVE

“Preserving and maintaining our State’s infrastructure is the cornerstone of our work. South Dakota’s vast highway network supports our economy, connects our rural and urban communities, and ensures that residents and visitors alike can travel safely and efficiently. Through careful planning, smart investments, and efficient use of both State and federal funds, SDDOT has continued to deliver projects that improve reliability and extend the life of our transportation assets.”



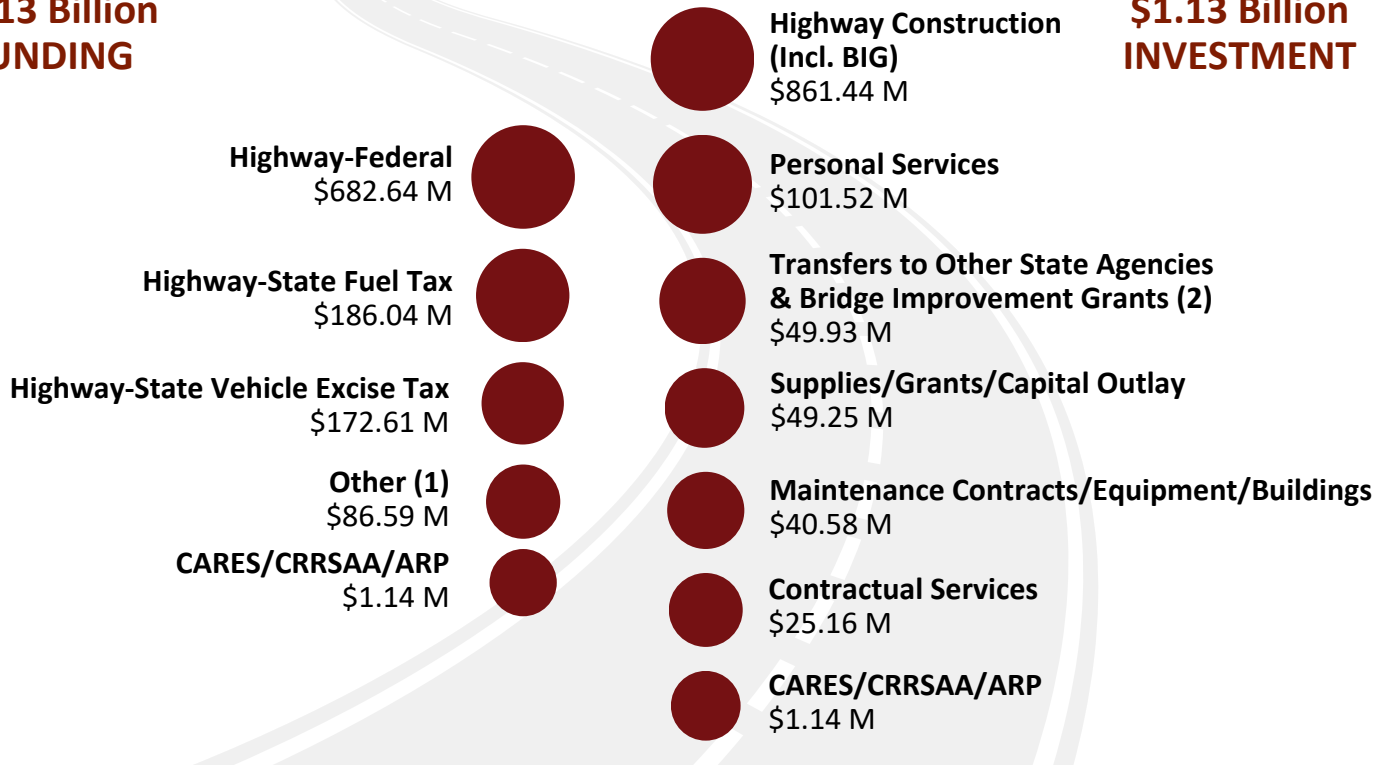
Kellie Beck, Director of Finance and Management

# FINANCE OVERVIEW

As a public agency, SDDOT relies on various funding sources to support its work each year. SDDOT is committed to making responsible investments that achieve the greatest benefit for all residents and visitors. The figures below show our Fiscal Year 2025 revenues and expenditures in the areas of highway, transit, and aeronautics.

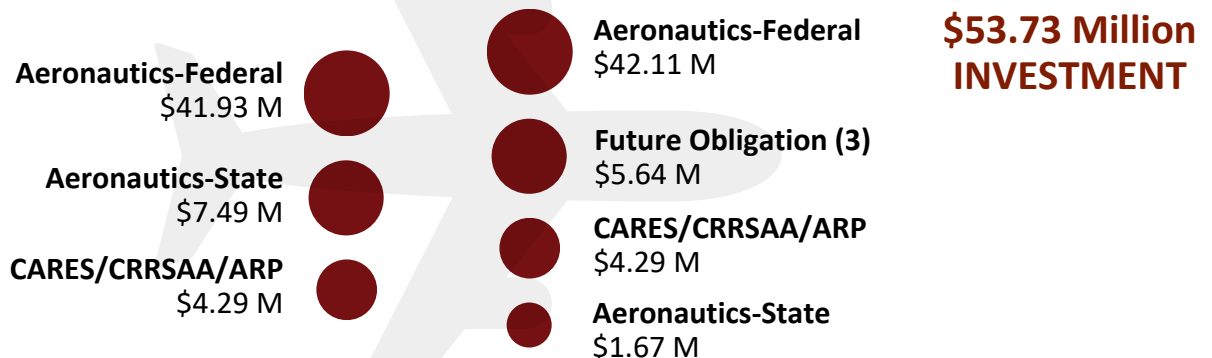
## FISCAL YEAR 2025 HIGHWAY & TRANSIT

**\$1.13 Billion  
FUNDING**



## FISCAL YEAR 2025 AERONAUTICS

**\$53.73 Million  
FUNDING**



1. Other funding includes licenses, permits, and fees; interest, dividends, and rent; charges for sales and services; administered program revenues; non-operating funding including transfers from other state agencies for SDDOT to administer; surplus property sales, Bridge Improvement Grants (State Funded Program).

2. Transfers to other state agencies refers to funds that SDDOT transfers to other agencies to administer highway patrol, radio communications, and other programs that keep roads safe.

3. Future obligation - funding to be spent on construction projects that have not been obligated to date.



## FEATURED STORY

# RAISE GRANT BOLSTERS WEST RIVER RAIL SERVICES

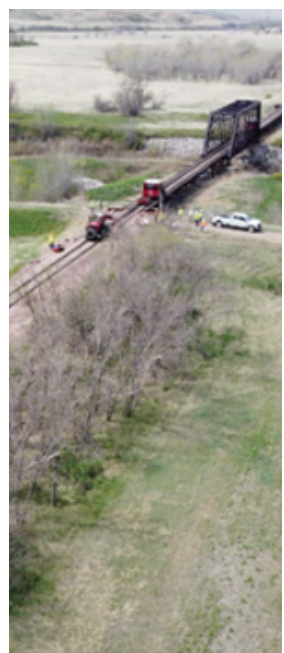
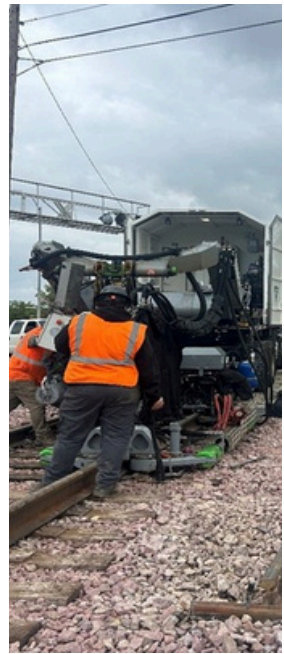
In 2021, the SDDOT was awarded a Rebuilding America Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant through the U.S. Department of Transportation. The RAISE Grant is designated for the Freight Capacity Expansion Project with Rapid City, Pierre & Eastern Railroad (RCP&E) through Pennington, Haakon, and Stanley counties. Work on this project is scheduled to be completed in 2026.

State and federal grants helped the railroad increase its capacity and upgrade the line for the betterment of South Dakota. Recognizing the importance to the public and the economy of finishing this effort in a prompt fashion, a South Dakota Senate Bill (SB 93) was introduced and passed the legislature by overwhelming margins calling for \$20 million in state funds to be available to RCP&E to use as matching funds for a federal grant to upgrade the line.

“South Dakota is focused on critical infrastructure to drive future growth and economic development, and this project will do that for all of western South Dakota,” said **Former Governor Kristi Noem**. “Together with the \$20 million appropriated by the state to this project, this funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation will support a project that will benefit South Dakota for generations.”

This monumental RCP&E Freight Capacity Expansion Project replaces approximately 87.7 miles of aging rail with new 136-pound continuous welded rail, upgrades 121 bridge structures, installs 80,000 main line cross ties, replaces 11 main line turnouts, upgrades 122 grade crossings, and installs safety improvements on the line. The estimated \$84 million total project cost will include \$42 million provided by RCP&E, \$20 million from the state of South Dakota, and \$22 million provided through the RAISE Grant. The project will improve safety of rail operations, dramatically increase train operating speed on the line, and allow for handling of modern fully loaded freight cars.

“The project directly restores a critical transportation asset to conditions that allow for industry standard fully loaded 286,000-pound rail cars at speeds up to 25 miles-per-hour,” states **Joel Jundt, Secretary of Transportation**. “This improvement will result in reduced maintenance costs and increase the productivity of the rail line, benefiting the railroad and the variety of commodity shippers who use it. The project will reduce the risk of derailments and bridge failure, increasing safety. The project is also expected to result in reductions in emissions due to more efficient operation and the possibility of attracting more freight to travel by rail, improving environmental sustainability.”





# THAW PATROL EARNS INAUGURAL BATTLE OF THE BLADES TITLE

The sixth annual Snowplow Naming Contest hosted by the SDDOT took place from Nov. 3 through Dec. 12, 2025. Over the past five winters, SDDOT has engaged thousands of South Dakotans in naming snowplows across the State. On average, the SDDOT contest annually draws 700 submissions from individuals, classrooms, and businesses.

A few years ago, SDDOT added the Blizzard Bracket competition during the March Madness season. The Blizzard Bracket provides additional opportunities to engage with the public and promote winter safety messaging during the often snow-filled spring months. The Blizzard Bracket includes all previously named plows.

In 2025, SDDOT partnered with the North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT) to co-host the Dakota Battle of the Blades, featuring top snowplow names from each state. The bracket allowed each State to conduct voting and promote messaging. This allowed each agency to conduct their own voting and promote their individual messages. After a champion of each state was crowned, the top two named met in the Battle of the Blades Championship.



After the three-week contest was complete, “Thaw Patrol,” named by Winner Elementary’s first grade class was crowned the champion! The SDDOT, in conjunction with Winner Elementary, hosted a celebration ceremony for the winning plow that involved all 409 elementary aged students and South Dakota Governor, Larry Rhoden. The entire school was able to meet the Governor and all three previously named plows in the Winner Area made an appearance. SDDOT maintenance crew members and leadership (including SDDOT Transportation Secretary Joel Jundt) were on hand to discuss safety with the students, read books, eat ice cream, sign autographs, pass out safety bracelets, and answer questions about the plows.



## FEATURED STORY

# HISTORIC BRIDGE PROJECT CELEBRATES RIBBON CUTTING

On March 17, 2025, the original John C. Waldron Memorial Bridge, that connects the cities of Pierre and Fort Pierre over the Missouri River, which stood since 1962, was demolished. The demolition process began just after 9 a.m. CT and involved placing explosive charges along the steel supports of the structure. As the public watched from designated safe viewing areas, the bridge was dropped into the Missouri River and debris was later retrieved from the bottom.

Just eight days later on March 25, 2025, Governor Larry Rhoden and SDDOT Secretary Joel Jundt were joined by federal, state, and local leaders to celebrate the ribbon cutting for the new Lieutenant Commander John C. Waldron Memorial Bridge

In 2016 the SDDOT performed a bridge replacement study, with intentions of gathering more information to justify a structure replacement at this location. After years of studying and planning, it was decided that this historic bridge project over the Missouri River would proceed with construction of a new structure. Work began in November 2020, and the project was completed in Fall 2025.

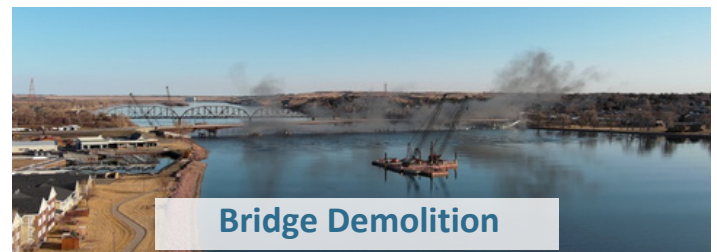
On average, 17,000 vehicles cross the bridge between Fort Pierre and Pierre each day. The life expectancy for the new, nearly \$50 million structure is 100 years. The new bridge has updated features for functionality, user enjoyment, and aesthetics such as a 12-foot-wide shared-use path for pedestrians and cyclists, scenic overlooks (belvederes), plazas on both the Pierre and Fort Pierre sides, decorative lighting, and a star motif between the intermediate and top rails of the pedestrian fence railing. This project was a great example of partnership between the State of South Dakota, the City of Fort Pierre, and the City of Pierre.

“Not only does the Waldron Memorial Bridge connect the communities of Fort Pierre and Pierre, but it also connects the traditional ways of life on either side of the State.”

**Larry Rhoden**  
Governor of South Dakota



Governor Rhoden at Ribbon Cutting



Bridge Demolition



Ceremonial Ribbon Cutting



# VARIABLE SPEED LIMITS IMPLEMENTED ON INTERSTATE 29 NEAR BROOKINGS

The SDDOT has deployed a Variable Speed Limit (VSL) system along Interstate 29 from S.D. Highway 32 (Flandreau) to Brookings. This VSL system is the first of its kind in South Dakota and is currently functioning for its first winter season in 2025-2026. The VSL system allows SDDOT to adjust posted speed limits in response to changing weather, roadway, and traffic conditions.

The VSL system works by using sensors to detect temperature, pavement conditions, traffic counts, and other relevant information that is used by SDDOT staff to establish an appropriate speed limit. As applicable, speed limits will be reduced during winter weather events and then be reset as conditions allow.

By providing speed limits that better reflect real-time conditions, the system is intended to enhance safety, promote consistent driver behavior, and improve overall traffic operations during adverse weather events.

The location on I-29 between Flandreau and Brookings was selected as the first VSL installation in the State due to higher than average winter crash volumes. These elevated crash volumes directly correlate to increased adverse weather

severity in comparison to similar surrounding areas. This area tends to see more wind, snow, and ice due to its location at the southern tip of the Coteau des Prairies, a plateau approximately 200 miles in length and 100 miles in width, rising from the prairie flatlands in eastern South Dakota.

Interstate 90 from Sturgis to Tilford is scheduled to be the next VSL system installed in South Dakota. Additional locations are being evaluated for future VSL system use.

“By strategically placing our VSL system in areas that experience higher winter crash rates, the Department can be proactive in keeping all motorists safe in adverse weather conditions.”

**Craig Smith**  
Director of Operations



## FEATURED STORY

# DIVERGING DIAMOND INTERCHANGE POST-CONSTRUCTION DATA DEMONSTRATES SIGNIFICANT CRASH REDUCTIONS

The SDDOT has completed four diverging diamond interchanges (DDI) in the last three years. The most recent is the Interstate 90 and S.D. Highway 11 DDI at Brandon which celebrated its official opening on Nov. 25, 2025, with an event hosted by SDDOT Secretary Joel Jundt and several federal, State, and local leaders. The Sioux Falls area is home to two other DDIs located at Interstate 229 and Benson Road and I-29 and 41st Street. The first DDI in South Dakota sits at I-90 and LaCrosse Street in Rapid City.

A DDI configuration increases capacity and safety, reduces congestion, and minimizes the cost of new infrastructure. Some other advantages to DDIs are improved safety by reducing the number of vehicle conflict points and increased capacity by eliminating the left turn signal and allowing traffic to flow more efficiently through the interchange.

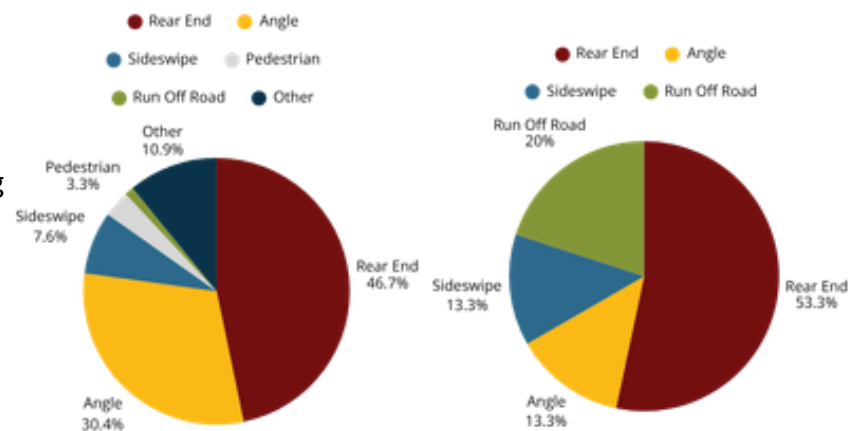
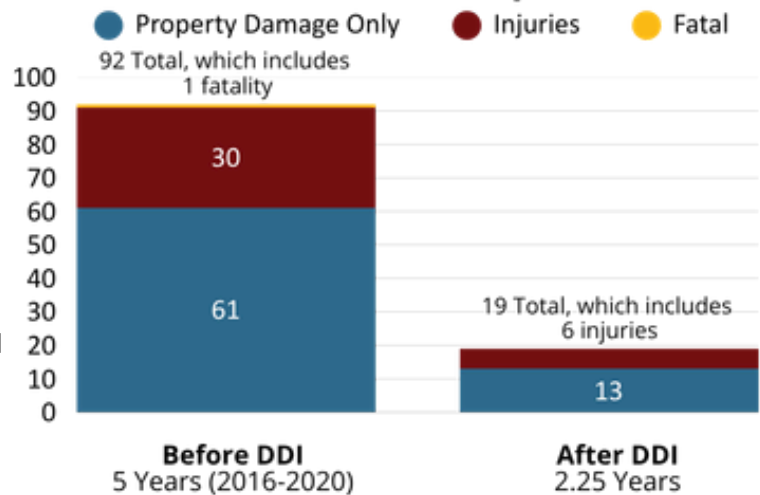
### LaCrosse Street DDI Crash Data Analysis

The LaCrosse Street interchange averaged over 18 crashes per year prior to construction. With two full years since opening, crashes have reduced to less than 8.4 per year. This indicates a reduction in crashes of over 54%, while simultaneously improving the operations of the interchange. In 2024, the LaCrosse Street DDI project earned an America's Transportation Award for Best Use of Technology and Innovation.

### 41<sup>st</sup> Street DDI Crash Data Analysis

The 41st Street DDI was the first DDI on the eastern half of the State.

### Lacrosse Street DDI Crash Data Comparison



“

The advantage of the DDI, is eliminating left turns in a traditional interchange situation. By eliminating that conflict movement DDIs see a significant reduction in crashes while simultaneously improving capacity.

**Mike Behm**

Director of Planning & Engineering

”



## FEATURED STORY

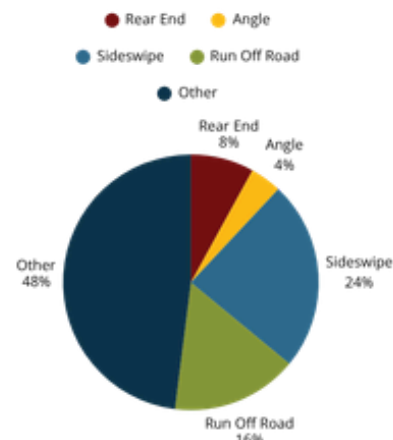
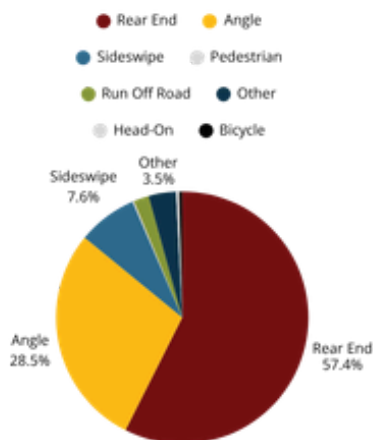
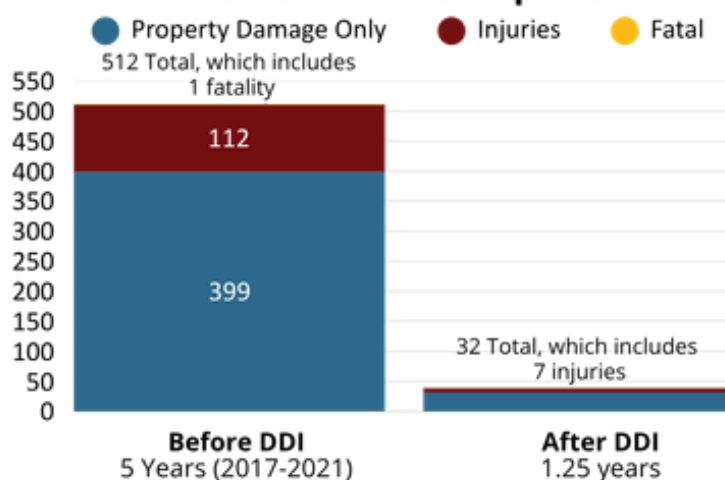
# DIVERGING DIAMOND INTERCHANGE POST-CONSTRUCTION DATA DEMONSTRATES SIGNIFICANT CRASH REDUCTIONS CONT.

It has been operational for over one year. The 41st Street interchange was averaging over 102 crashes each year prior to construction. At the one-year mark of opening, the DDI is on pace for 25.6 crashes per year which is a 75% reduction in crashes. This crash reduction is even more significant during the first year, which in theory, includes potential driver uncertainty about navigating a DDI intersection.

The Sioux Falls area is one of the fastest growing population centers in America, and accommodating the transportation needs of the surrounding communities to prepare for the growth is paramount.

In addition to the three completed DDIs, two more are planned or under construction. The other DDI project locations are: 85th Street and I-29 (Sioux Falls/Tea/Lincoln County) and I-90 and Pennington County Highway 1416 (Box Elder).

### 41st Street DDI Crash Data Comparison



“

The Lacrosse Street DDI project successfully increased vehicle capacity and reduced congestion and traffic delays particularly during the peak tourism season. Moreover, it ensured compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act regulations, improved pedestrian access between shops and hotels on both sides of I-90 which further bolstered the economy of South Dakota's second-largest city and tourism destination.

**Joel Jundt**

Secretary of Transportation

## FEATURED STORY

# STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (STIP) VIRTUAL ROOM WINS NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS AWARD

The SDDOT won a top national communication award during the recent annual meeting of TransComm, the communications committee for the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). AASHTO is a national nonprofit group that represents and supports state departments of transportation.

“We’re honored that the communication efforts by the SDDOT have been recognized nationally,” said **Joel Jundt, Secretary of Transportation**. “This award highlights our steadfast commitment to keeping South Dakotans informed and engaged in our mission to provide a safe and efficient public transportation system.”

SDDOT won the award for innovative virtual outreach. The SDDOT offers virtual and in-person public engagement options for the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) development process each year. Over the past two years, all STIP information was also provided through an innovative, highly interactive, virtual meeting room on the SDDOT website.

“Our virtual STIP meeting room offers community members across South Dakota the chance to actively participate at their own convenience,” noted Jundt. “We appreciate active engagement and opportunities for dialogue with our customers to discuss transportation advancements.”

TransComm is comprised of public affairs professionals from the 50 states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia. It promotes excellence in communications through the exchange of ideas and educational programming, presents annual skills awards, and advises other committees on communications issues.

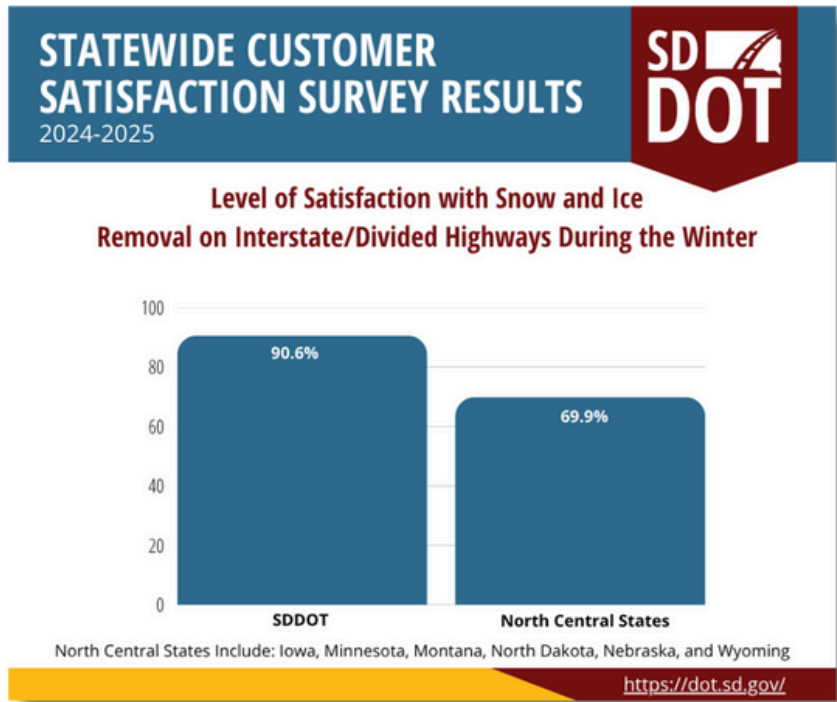
In addition to the award, the SDDOT was honored to collaborate with the North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT), Arkansas Department of Transportation, and Louisiana Department of Transportation on a presentation at the TransComm annual meeting. The SDDOT portion of the breakout session featured discussion about the Battle of the Blades public engagement snowplow contest which the SDDOT and NDDOT collaborated on during the winter of 2024-2025. Additional information on the Battle of the Blades can be found on page seven of the Annual Report.



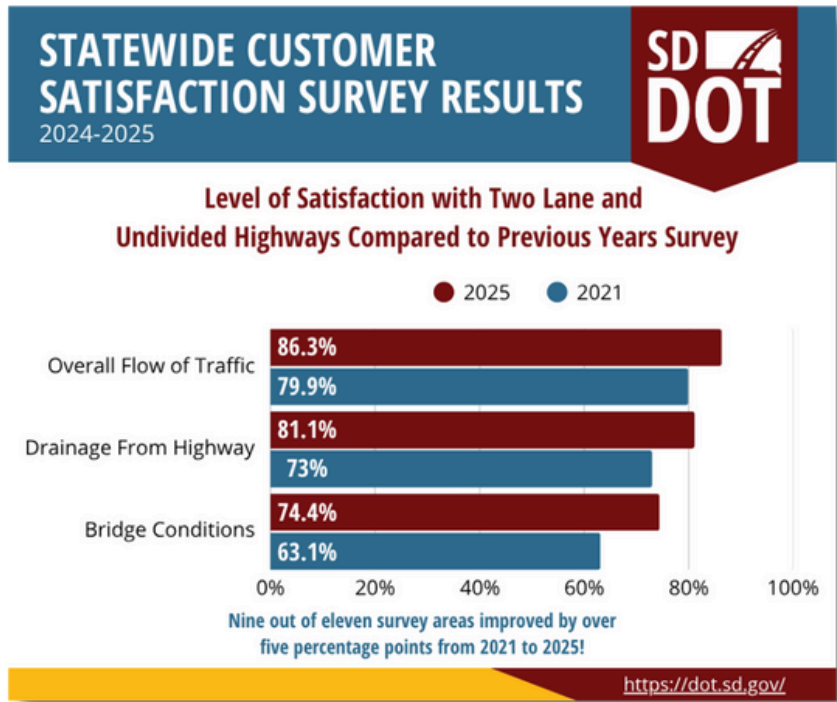
# 2024 STATEWIDE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY YIELDS OUTSTANDING RESULTS

Maintaining and improving a transportation system that is efficient and most of all safe, does not happen without the dedicated work from each employee at the SDDOT.

One of the SDDOT strategic objectives is to **Provide Excellent Services** to customers, stakeholders, and partners. SDDOT takes this objective very seriously and continually strives to make this a reality for all who use South Dakota’s highways, airports, railroads, and public transportation systems.



Every three years, the SDDOT commissions a statewide customer satisfaction survey to gather data from residents and persons who impact transportation decisions in the State of South Dakota. This process is key to identifying short and long-term transportation priorities. The results of the survey are used by the SDDOT to objectively assess how well the Department is meeting the State’s transportation needs and to identify how the SDDOT can improve the quality of its services.



The infographics also highlight customer survey results in South Dakota compared to fellow North Central States including Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, Nebraska, and Wyoming.

SDDOT is dedicated to continually provide a safe and efficient public transportation system to connect the great state of South Dakota with the nation. The public’s willingness to engage with the Department ensures the SDDOT can continually achieve transportation objectives.

## FEATURED STORY

# 2024 STATEWIDE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY YIELDS OUTSTANDING RESULTS CONT.

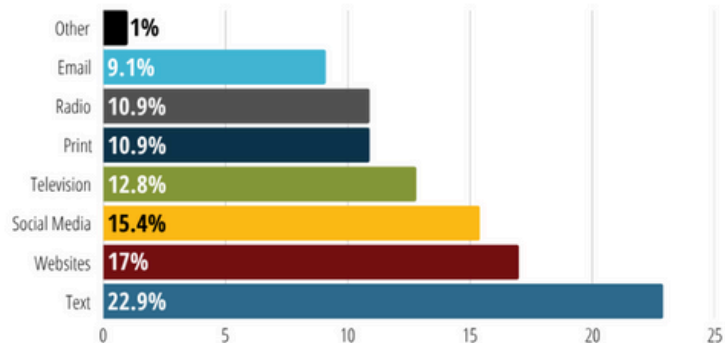
A key component of the 2024 Statewide Customer Satisfaction Survey is for the SDDOT to gain a better understanding of the wants and needs of the traveling public. This ensures SDDOT processes work to achieve goals that are meaningful for the users of our transportation system. This focus also extend into how the SDDOT communicates with project stakeholders. The graphic to the right provides key insights on how users prefer to receive information from the Department.

With 39.9% of respondents noting that they prefer have information shared with them via text or website, the SDDOT has made a conscious effort to make those methods of communication a priority. The SDDOT offers a text-in notification service for projects and Interstate winter weather closures as well as a robust website experience that allows users to have access to traveler information at their fingertips.

## STATEWIDE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS 2024-2025



What would be your preferred way for the SDDOT to share information with you?



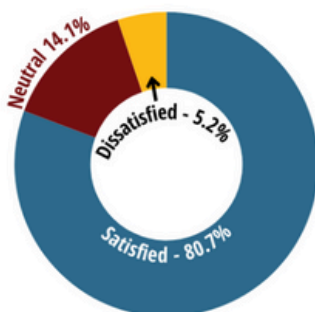
<https://dot.sd.gov/>

## STATEWIDE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS 2024-2025

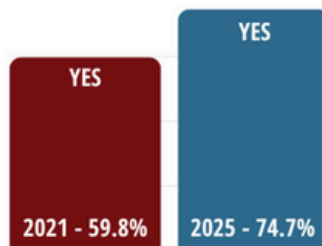


### Level of Satisfaction with Construction and Detours on South Dakota Roadways

Overall satisfaction with the way work zones are designed:



I think the SDDOT completes highway construction projects in a reasonable amount of time:



<https://dot.sd.gov/>

The survey also helps the SDDOT measure growth in various categories. The graphic on the left demonstrates the level of satisfaction with construction in South Dakota and year to year growth from the previous survey in 2021.

By gathering statistically valid data from residents and persons who impact transportation decisions in South Dakota, SDDOT is able to identify short-term and long-term transportation priorities and better serve citizens and visitors that use our transportation system.

Find the complete 2024 Statewide Customer Satisfaction Survey at: <https://dot.sd.gov/inside-sddot/forms-publications/reports>.



## FEATURED STORY

# DIVERGING DIAMOND INTERCHANGE AT INTERSTATE 90 EXIT 406 (BRANDON) NEARING COMPLETION



The Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI) at Interstate 90 exit 406 (Brandon) was substantially completed during the 2025 construction season.

The interchange is carrying traffic in the DDI configuration. Minor project clean-up is scheduled for spring 2026. This landmark project marks the fourth completed DDI in the State and the first not located in Rapid City or Sioux Falls. The DDI will accommodate the growing traffic capacity needs of the Brandon area and provide a safer interchange for motorists.

The interchange reconstruction project included several other improvements in addition to the new DDI. The eastbound and westbound lanes of I-90, including the railroad bridges, were reconstructed in 2024 and 2025. S.D. Highway 11 from the interchange to Redwood Boulevard was reconstructed and a shared-use path was built on the westside of the highway. A retaining wall was also installed on the eastside of Highway 11 north of Ash Street. Upgrades to highway lighting and traffic signals were also completed with the project.



“

With the City of Brandon’s tremendous growth and proximity to Sioux Falls, a unique engineering solution was required for this interchange. SDDOT is proud to partner with the community on this crucial infrastructure.

**Mike Behm**

Director of Planning & Engineering

”

The SDDOT has conducted research on the safety enhancements DDIs offer at locations in both Rapid City and Sioux Falls. The research found that crashes were reduced by 54% and 75% respectively. To learn more about DDI safety improvements, please refer to page 10 and page 11 of the Annual Report.



<https://www.dot.sd.gov>

# PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE NETWORK (PEN) RESULTS DRIVE SDDOT IMPROVEMENT

The Performance Excellence Network (PEN) is a nonprofit organization that helps businesses, communities, and other organizations in the Upper Midwest (South Dakota, North Dakota, and Minnesota) improve their performance through continuous improvement strategies. It provides organizational assessments to identify areas for improvement, offers a variety of learning events like workshops and conferences, and creates networking opportunities for leaders and professionals.

PEN helps organizations like the SDDOT identify notable strengths and opportunities for improvement. PEN also builds networks that provide resources and best practices to help prioritize opportunities, optimize resources, and improve outcomes.

In 2020, SDDOT's most recent application, PEN recognized SDDOT with the Achievement Award. Organizations recognized with the Achievement Award, the second highest recognition level, have demonstrated a commitment to implementation of quality management principles. A key strength noted was the commitment of SDDOT employees to the Department's mission. The award was based on the culmination of a rigorous evaluation of SDDOT management and performance systems.

SDDOT's work toward continuous improvement has not stopped with the honor of being recognized at the Achievement Award level. The SDDOT is focused on the need to continually implement and evaluate systematic processes across our Department.

As part of our ongoing commitment to excellence, SDDOT submitted its 2025 Performance Excellence Network (PEN) application in May. In early October, PEN evaluators conducted on-site visits across SDDOT facilities to assess organizational strengths and identify opportunities for improvement. SDDOT looks forward to receiving the final feedback report and beginning the next phase of enhancements.

Initial insights shared by the evaluation team highlighted several SDDOT key strengths, including a mission-driven workforce, effective communication systems, and strong integration of strategic planning. Evaluators also identified meaningful opportunities for growth, such as strengthening the SDDOT framework for systematic learning, improving the actionability of data and information, and further establishing institutionalized systems. These insights will help guide SDDOT's continuous improvement journey in the year ahead.

“

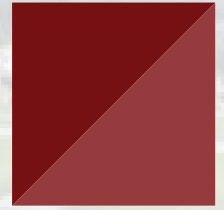
Continuous process improvement takes work. It takes commitment of time, resources, and energy. It also requires focus, persistence, and practice. Through the extensive evaluation process, PEN will help us identify notable strengths and opportunities for improvement.

**Craig Smith**

Director of Operations

”

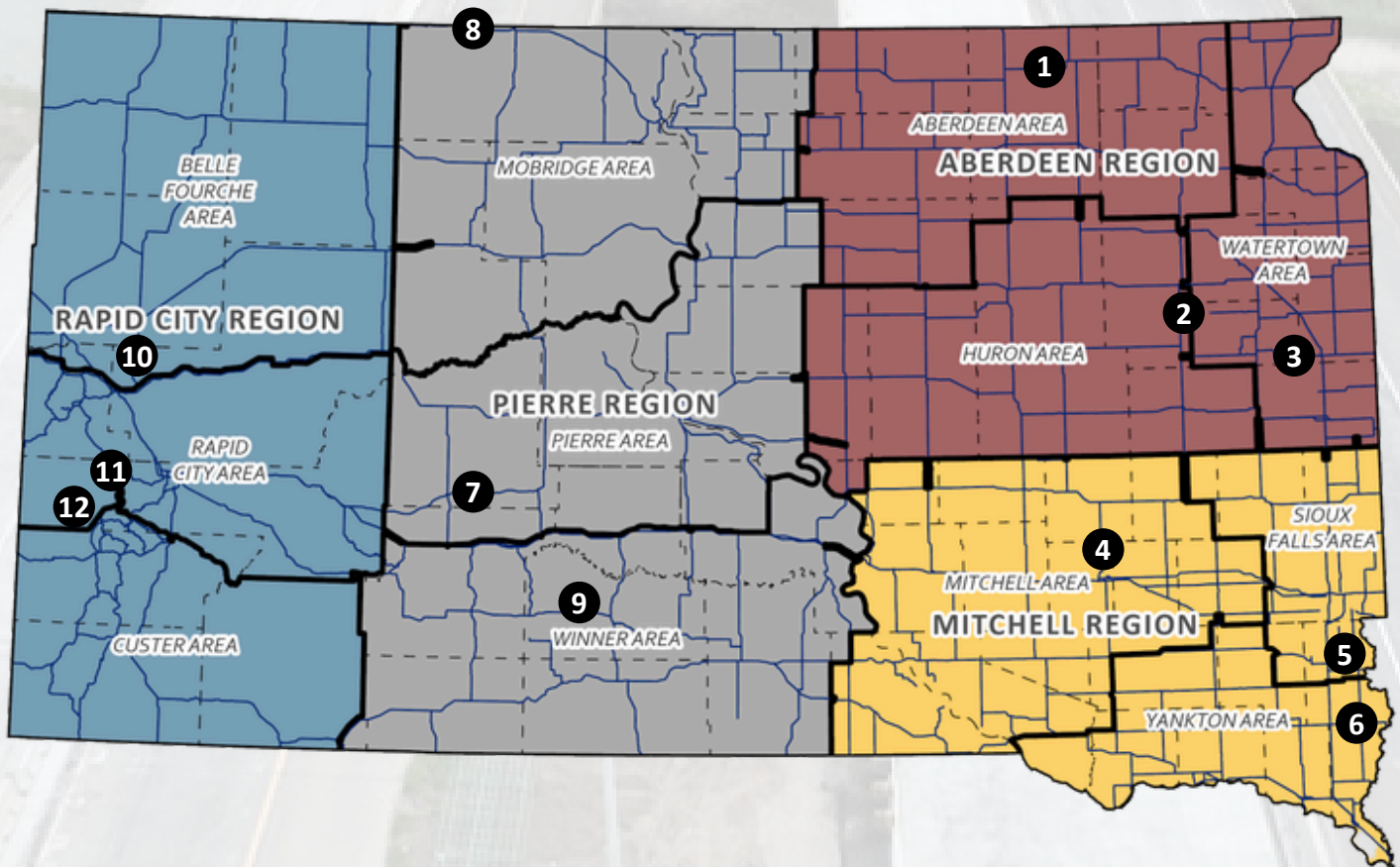
# HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE REGIONS



Moving SDDOT's mission forward wouldn't be possible without the concerted efforts of the Aberdeen, Mitchell, Pierre, and Rapid City Regions across South Dakota. Each Region is geographically divided into 12 Area Offices to best meet the needs of local residents. Whether traveling through South Dakota's Black Hills and Badlands, rolling hills and prairies, or towns and cities, the SDDOT's regional workforce is ready to face any challenge confronting our state's transportation system.

## MAP OF HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION HIGHLIGHTS BY REGION

Numbers indicate projects that are described in the upcoming pages.



For additional project information, please visit:  
<https://dot.sd.gov/projects-studies/construction-info>



# ABERDEEN REGION



**U.S. Highway 12 (Mina) & S.D. Highway 10 (Sand Lake):** These two bridge replacement projects were completed congruently in the Aberdeen area. The structure over the James River improved water capacity through Sand Lake, while the project near Mina improved access to a key recreational and residential area west of Aberdeen.



**S.D. Highway 25 Resurfacing Near Willow Lake:** This six-mile asphalt concrete surfacing project was completed roughly two months ahead of schedule. This project improved driving conditions across various landscapes including wetlands, prairie grasslands, and agricultural lands.



**S.D. Highway 28 to S.D. Highway 15 East of Estelline:** This project replaced and upgraded all drainage structures on S.D. Highway 28 to improve drainage. The highway was fully reggraded to improve site distance for motorists. Shoulders were also widened to improve safety on this stretch of Highway 28.



# MITCHELL REGION



**S.D. Highway 37 North of Mitchell:** S.D. Highway 37 from Main Street to National Guard Road was regraded with new concrete and asphalt surfacing. The bridge over the Lake Mitchell Spillway was removed and reconstructed. As part of the project, a shared-use path was constructed to provide safe access to Lake Mitchell and Kibbee Park.



**U.S. Highway 18 Near Canton:** This eight-mile segment of U.S. Highway 18 was reconstructed from a two-lane undivided rural highway to a four-lane divided highway. This project accommodates the increased traffic volumes between Canton and Interstate 29. Additionally, the project replaced existing box culverts.



**S.D. Highway 46 Near Beresford:** All regrading work has been completed on this multi-year reconstruction project as work on the paving portion of the project is scheduled to begin in 2026. This fifteen-and-one-half mile-long project ran from Beresford to the Iowa state line.



# PIERRE REGION



**U.S. Highway 14 Near Philip:** This project on U.S. Highway 14 east of Philip replaced three structures, two box culverts, with one new bridge. In addition to the structure work, approach grading and pipe replacement was also included on the project.



**U.S. Highway 12 From Morristown to Watauga:** This nine and one-half mile project included the complete reconstruction of U.S. Highway 12 from Morristown to Watauga. This once narrow highway now has 12-foot driving lanes, six-foot shoulder, and a new grade line that provides a safer driving experience for motorists.



**S.D. Highway 44 from White River to Corn Creek:** This project, completed in Spring 2025, included full-depth reclamation with asphalt surfacing on S.D. Highway 44 from White River to Corn Creek. A modified intersection with S.D. Highway 63 with additional lighting was also included on the project.



# RAPID CITY REGION



**U.S. Highway 212 & S.D. Highway 79 Nisland to Newell:** This project reconstructed the intersection of U.S. Highway 212 and S.D. Highway 79 between Nisland and Newell. In addition to the updated intersection, Highway 212 received new asphalt surfacing, and a new sidewalk was installed through Newell.



**U.S. Highway 385 from Pactola Dam North:** Phase One of the multi-year U.S. Highway 385 reconstruction project through the Black Hills was completed this spring from Pactola Dam to the Pennington-Lawrence County line. Phase Two construction from Pactola Dam to Sheridan Lake will continue through 2026 with surfacing scheduled to be complete in 2027.



**Rochford Road Reconstruction:** SDDOT in conjunction with Pennington County and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) completed transportation improvements on approximately ten miles of South Rochford Road. The project improved year-round access to the Town of Rochford from the intersection of Deerfield Road.



# Better Lives Through Better Transportation Personified

On Oct. 2, 2025, while inspecting a large cut-and-fill operation near Pactola Dam, a routine workday took an unexpected and meaningful turn for **Peyton Weyer, Custer Area Project Technician**. After parking near the apex of a curve on S.D. Highway 385, he walked along the roadway to photograph the construction. Something partially hidden along the shoulder caught his eye. He realized it was a roadside monument shaped like a cross. The memorial was worn, fragile, and directly in the path of construction activity.

Wanting to protect the memorial, Peyton decided to locate the family if possible. He searched the last name etched into the stone online and found an obituary. A quick search on Facebook led him to a surviving family member, Josh Cronholm. Peyton asked if Josh would allow removal of the monument from the ditch before construction progressed. Josh responded with appreciation and his permission. With the help of **Connie Zeimet, Custer Area Senior Secretary**, Peyton carefully recovered, packaged, and shipped the monument to Josh in Colorado to be reunited with the family. Afterward, Peyton took some time to learn more about the man the memorial honored. Jeff Cronholm was just 31 when he died on Aug. 27, 2010. He was born in Colorado and served proudly in the United States Marine Corps. He graduated with a Civil Engineering degree from Colorado State University and co-owned Max Retaining Walls. His obituary described him as strong, generous, loving, fun, and forgiving.

“Reading Jeff’s story made the experience even more impactful—especially knowing the reconstruction on Highway 385 exists to improve safety on the same highway where Jeff lost his life. It served as a reminder of why this work matters and who it protects,” noted Peyton. “Even the smallest effort can brighten someone’s darkest moments—and remind us that behind every mile of roadway, there are real lives and stories attached.”

**BETTER LIVES THROUGH  
BETTER TRANSPORTATION**

 <https://dot.sd.gov> | <https://sd511.org>



**DEPARTMENT OF  
TRANSPORTATION**

**Becker-Hansen Building  
700 E. Broadway Ave.  
Pierre, SD 57501-2586**

“Thank you, Peyton. You're a good person. I hope God blesses you all your life. Jeff was my best friend long before he was my brother-in-law. This meant a lot to our family.”

- Dena Cronholm

