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#### Employee News and Updates

- New Hires/Lateral Position Changes
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## 6th Annual Snowplow Contest

The contest runs through Friday, Dec. 12, 2025. Over the past five winters, SDDOT has engaged thousands of South Dakotans in naming snowplows across the State.

Find the Snowplow Naming Contest graphic on the SDDOT home page at <https://dot.sd.gov>. This graphic links to the contest page and online entry form. Once the contest closes in mid-December, our SDDOT staff will vote for their favorites.



### SDDOT Winter Weather Hub:

The SDDOT offers a "one-stop" web page for all winter-related information at <https://dot.sd.gov/winter-weather-hub>.





## The Secretary's Corner

### Office Closure Reminders/New Resource:

As we prepare for winter weather, I want to share reminders about our SDDOT office closure procedures and expectations. I also want to introduce a new internal communication tool for staff.

**SDDOT Office Closure Communication Text Option:** We've added a text-in option for SDDOT employees to receive office closure information. To subscribe, text **SDDOTOfficeClosure** to 605-836-8836. This is a FREE service, and subscribers can unsubscribe at any time. This is an INTERNAL text option that will ONLY communicate information about SDDOT office closures.

**How Office Closure Decisions Are Made:** When severe weather is anticipated, the Governor will consult with the Chief of Staff, DOT, DPS, and BHRA to assess conditions.

### Statewide/County Closure:

If the Governor decides to close State offices in one or more counties, that decision will be announced through a Governor's Office press release. SDDOT leadership will also send closure information to managers and supervisors that will be communicated to employees.

### Localized Office Closure (When No Statewide/County Closure Is Issued):

If conditions exist locally and a statewide or county closure has not been made, each agency, through the Cabinet Secretary, may decide to close an office or offices.

### Expectations When an Office Is Closed (Full or Partial Day):

- **Essential On-Site Employees:**

- Employees whose duties require in-person presence must report to work as scheduled.
- Employees Able to Work Remotely:
- Remote-capable employees are expected to work remotely during closures and should plan accordingly throughout the winter months.
  - Hourly Employees – Utility Outages: If unable to complete the full shift due to loss of power/internet and cannot make up the hours during the same workweek, administrative leave will apply.
  - Hourly Employees – Family Care Needs: If unable to work a full shift due to childcare or school closures and hours cannot be made up, sick leave may be used.
  - Lack of Preparation: If remote work is not possible due to not having necessary equipment or materials, vacation leave or leave without pay must be used for hours not worked.

- **Employees in Non-Remote Roles:**

- Employees whose duties cannot be performed remotely will receive administrative leave for the hours the office is closed.

### When Offices Are Open, but an Individual Cannot Travel Safely:

- Remote work should be used if possible.
- If remote work is not an option and hours cannot be made up in the pay period, employees should request vacation leave.

## Remaining employee meeting dates for 2025 . . .

**Tuesday, Dec. 16, 2025: 10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. in Pierre**  
Aberdeen & Mitchell Region Engineering Field Offices

**Wednesday, Dec. 17, 2025: 1-2:30 p.m. in Pierre**  
Rapid City & Pierre Region Engineering Field Offices

## Central Office Employee Meetings/Celebrate Success (Nov. 2025)



## Email Distribution Lists

By: Wayne Kayser, BIT

**What's new:** Email Distribution Lists are now searchable and selectable on the Email/Distribution List form and the New Employee Onboarding form.

**When:** The forms were updated on Nov. 12, 2025, to include the lists.

We are enhancing the Email Address Request and New Employee Onboarding forms by adding each Agency's email distribution lists in a searchable and selectable list. You will also be able to add multiple email distribution groups from the list.

The new functionality should provide a better customer experience by making it easier for folks to find and select the appropriate email distribution list and reduce adding employees to incorrect email groups.

### Here is a review of the changes:

- The name of the **Email Address Request form** will be updated to the **Email/Distribution List Request form**.
- The Email/Distribution List Request form and the New Employee Onboarding form will have selectable lists.
- Each Agency's email distribution lists can be searched and selected on the form – see the picture.
- If you do not find the distribution list you desire, you check a box for Other and tell us what you are looking for. See the pictures below.

Email/Distribution List Request

Email/Distribution List Request

Please complete this form to request a new, change, or removal of a Distribution list, Public Folder, or Shared Mailbox. If your name is changing, please use the [Name Change Form](#). If this is for a New Employee, please use the [New Employee Onboarding Form](#).

\* Requested For  
Wayne Kayser

\* Request Type  
-- None --

Alternate Email Address  
-- None --

Distribution Lists to Add  
Please enter the name of the distribution list as it shows in the Outlook Global Address List

\*Development  
BIT-DEVELOPMENT API  
BIT-DEVELOPMENT ARCHITECTURE  
BIT-DEVELOPMENT DB REVIEW TEAM  
BIT-DEVELOPMENT INTERNAL BIT GIS  
BIT-DEVELOPMENT LEAN GROUP  
BIT-DEVELOPMENT SECURITY ASSESSMENT  
BIT-STURGIS VIDEO

Additional Email Access Required  
Please list any additional email access needed. Ex: Additional calendars

Add attachments

You can scroll down the list to find the email distribution list and use \* to search. You can add multiple selections.

Email/Distribution List Request

Email/Distribution List Request

Please complete this form to request a new, change, or removal of a Distribution list, Public Folder, or Shared Mailbox. If your name is changing, please use the [Name Change Form](#). If this is for a New Employee, please use the [New Employee Onboarding Form](#).

\* Requested For  
Wayne Kayser

\* Request Type  
Add

Alternate Email Address  
-- None --

Distribution Lists to Add  
Please enter the name of the distribution list as it shows in the Outlook Global Address List

BIT-DEVELOPMENT DB REVIEW TEAM

Check this box if you do not find what you need and enter the distribution lists

\* Other Distribution Lists  
Agency XYZ Monthly Letters

Additional Email Access Required  
Please list any additional email access needed. Ex: Additional calendars, etc.

If you do not find the desired distribution list, you can check the box and type in your needs.

## Voting Now Open for Picture the SDDOT

Voting is now open for the SDDOT photo contest through Wednesday, Nov. 26, 2025.

Vote at <https://forms.office.com/g/QgEQZejFwt> or via the QR code. On the voting site, you will see all submitted photos. You will be able to vote for up to 12 of your favorites.

Winning photos will be announced in early December. The “top” voted photo will be used for the 2025 Annual Report!

The final photo chosen by staff as the “**2025 SDDOT Photo of the Year**” will be featured as the cover of the **2025 SDDOT Annual Report** and used in annual national competitions.

Picture the SDDOT Photo Contest -  
Pick Your Favorites!



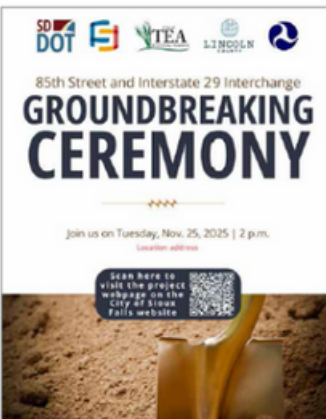
## Fall Groundbreaking and Ribbon Cutting Events

The SDDOT, in conjunction with our local, state, and federal partners, hosted two milestone construction project events on Nov. 25, 2025.

Thank you to all staff who play a vital role in the planning, development, and construction for projects of all sizes across the State.



This project will deliver a modern diverging diamond Interchange to enhance access and mobility for all travelers. This connection will strengthen the growing development opportunities in the region.





### INTERSTATE 90 (EXIT 406) AT BRANDON

#### DIVERGING DIAMOND INTERCHANGE (DDI)

#### ABOUT THE PROJECT

This project included the reconstruction of exit 406 (Brandon) into a DDI with added lighting, signals, and mainline Interstate work. This project also included three structure replacements.

#### YEAR ONE PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- Reconstruction of I-90 westbound lanes;
- Reconstruction of westbound railroad bridge; and
- Realignment of Express Avenue.

#### YEAR TWO PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- Reconstruction of I-90 eastbound lanes;
- Reconstruction of eastbound railroad bridge; and
- Completion of DDI.

#### DDI CRASH REDUCTION BENEFITS

- ✓ **54% REDUCTION IN CRASHES AT LACROSSE STREET DDI IN RAPID CITY SINCE COMPLETION IN JULY 2023.**
- ✓ **75% REDUCTION IN CRASHES AT 41ST STREET DDI IN SIOUX FALLS SINCE COMPLETION IN JULY 2024.**

“By eliminating conflicting movements DDIs see a significant reduction in crashes while simultaneously improving capacity.”

*Mike Behm*  
Director of Planning & Engineering

#### MORE INFORMATION :

- 📞 605-367-5680
- 🌐 [HTTPS://DOT.SD.GOV/I90-BRANDON](https://dot.sd.gov/i90-brandon)
- 📍 5316 W 60TH ST N # A, SIOUX FALLS, SD 57107

#### SCAN HERE TO VISIT THE PROJECT WEB PAGE!





## Mentoring Minute

### Fighting the Good Fight at Work (Even When It Feels Like a Construction Zone)

By: Brad Norris & Wyatt Reis

Let's be honest—some days at work feel like trying to patch a pothole with bubble gum. Your computer crashes, your coffee spills, and your “to-do” list is longer than a South Dakota winter. But even on those days, it's important to fight the good fight—which means doing your best, even when it's hard.

That's where perseverance comes in. It's a big word, but it simply means not giving up. Think of it like trying to get a snowplow unstuck in a blizzard. You don't just throw your hands up and walk away. You dig in, call for backup, and keep trying until you're back on the road. That's perseverance in action.

And here's the thing—everyone has tough days. Even the folks who seem like they've got it all figured out have probably had moments where they accidentally sent the wrong file to the whole team or spilled coffee on their only copy of a report. What matters isn't being perfect—it's showing up, doing your best, and not giving up when things get messy.

Let's say your supervisor hands you a task that feels impossible—like organizing 1,000 project reports. Your first thought might be, “I'd rather shovel gravel with a spoon.” But instead of panicking or hiding under your desk (tempting, right?), you take a deep breath, break it into smaller steps, and start one report at a time. Maybe you throw on some music or reward yourself with a snack after every 100. Before you know it, you're done—and maybe even a little proud of yourself.

Now, here's a secret weapon that can make those tough days easier: **Mentors**. A mentor is someone who's been through the tough stuff before and can help guide you. They're like a GPS for your career—they've seen the detours, the roadblocks, and the shortcuts. **The Training Connection** says mentors help you grow by asking good questions, helping you set goals, and sharing their own stories. They don't just tell you what to do—they help you figure it out for yourself.

If you've got a mentor, lean on them. Ask questions, share your struggles, and let them help you find your way. And if you don't have one, maybe it's time to be one for someone else. You don't need to have all the answers—just being there to listen and encourage someone else can make a huge difference.

The Training Connection also reminds us that mentoring isn't just a one-time thing—it's a journey. Good mentoring includes planning, regular check-ins, and celebrating progress. It's not about being perfect—it's about growing together, one mile at a time.

So, the next time your workday feels like a detour through a construction zone, remember you've got tools, teammates, and maybe even a mentor to help you through it. Take a breath, take a break, and take it one step at a time. You've got this—and if all else fails, there's always coffee. Just try not to spill it.

### Mentoring Upcoming Events:

**Extra Mile Mentoring Book Club – Jan. 29, 2026 11a.m. – 2 p.m. (CT)**

Microsoft TEAMS or SDDOT Large Training Room (B-17)

**7 Commitments of a Great Team** by Jon Gordon with Discussion Leader – Phil Clements

**Make Time for Mentoring!**



## Mentoring End of Program Celebration

Thank you to the hard work and dedication of the Mentoring Committee!



This year, we honored **milestones for mentors:**

- 5 Programs
    - Craig Smith
    - Jason Baker
    - Karla Engle
    - Tim Wicks
  - 10 Programs
    - Doug Sherman
  - 12 Programs
    - Mike Carlson
- **Mike has been in every program since 2007!**



Craig Smith, Director of Operations (Pierre)  
Joel Jundt, Department Secretary (Pierre)



Jason Baker, Highway Construction Project Engineer (Rapid City)  
Joel Jundt, Department Secretary (Pierre)



Karla Engle, Chief Legal Counsel (Pierre)  
Joel Jundt, Department Secretary (Pierre)



Tim Wicks, Project Engineer Supervisor (Custer)  
Joel Jundt, Department Secretary (Pierre)



Doug Sherman, Area Engineer (Winner)  
Joel Jundt, Department Secretary (Pierre)



Mike Carlson, Area Engineer (Rapid City)  
Joel Jundt, Department Secretary (Pierre)

### Lunch with Secretary Jundt

Six participants in the mentoring program won a door prize to have lunch with Secretary Jundt. The prize is donated by committee members.



Pictured Left to Right:

**Joel Jundt** (Department Secretary, Pierre), **Curt Thiesen** (Lead Highway Maintenance Worker, Sioux Falls), **Jared Denke** (Highway Maintenance Worker, Wall), **Peyton Weyer** (Project Technician, Custer), **Quentin Berger** (Lead Highway Maintenance Worker - Bridge, Aberdeen), **Brian Burke** (Highway Maintenance Worker, Watertown) & **Darla Brandlee** (Senior Secretary, Watertown)

## Finance Corner

### ACCOUNTS PAYABLE: INVALID COMPANY, ACCOUNT, CENTER COMBINATIONS



MSA coding may need to be added to the accounting system at times when processing payments. In Batch Load, an error code will appear, **“Invalid Company-Account-Center combination”** with the MSA coding highlighted in pink (see examples below).

- Email Tracy Boom a snip-it of the error message, requesting the combination to be added. If Tracy is out of the office, Patty Thompson is the 2<sup>nd</sup> point of contact.
- Once the combination has been verified for accuracy and added to the accounting system, the originator will receive an email stating the combination has been added but will have to wait until the next business day to enter the payment as all new combinations require an overnight validation.

Action

Key Required Fields: Invoice Number: Z115P8004510, Invoice Date: 11/12/2024, Pay Entry: EMPLE

Vendor: Vendor Number: [REDACTED], Gp: [REDACTED], Short Name: [REDACTED]

Voucher Details: Gross Amt: 77.46, Contract #: [REDACTED], Pmt Due Date: 11/13/2024, Bank Payment: [REDACTED], Voucher: [REDACTED]

Balanced: 0006 - Invalid Company-Account-Center combination

Remit Message: Code: [REDACTED], Description: SDOOT TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT 10/29/2024 TO 11/12/2024

Buttons: Validate, Travel Import, Save, Save and New, Close

| Line | Comp | Account  | Center     | DOT Coding      | Line Desc | Subref | Bill Gp | 1099 | Qty | Amt   | K | Accrual | Agree | Order |
|------|------|----------|------------|-----------------|-----------|--------|---------|------|-----|-------|---|---------|-------|-------|
| 0001 | 3040 | 52031400 | 111221     | CHP534427 3629P | N/O MEALS |        |         |      | 0   | 2.80  |   |         |       |       |
| 0002 | 2033 | 52031400 | 1112210286 | CHP534427 3629P | N/O MEALS |        |         |      | 0   | 11.20 |   |         |       |       |
| 0003 | 3040 | 52031500 | 111221     | CHP534427 3629P | O/N MEALS |        |         |      | 0   | 10.80 |   |         |       |       |
| 0004 | 2033 | 52031500 | 1112210286 | CHP534427 3629P | O/N MEALS |        |         |      | 0   | 43.20 |   |         |       |       |
| 0005 | 3040 | 52063500 | 111221     | CHP534427 3629P | Postage   |        |         |      | 0   | 1.89  |   |         |       |       |
| 0006 | 2033 | 52063500 | 1112210286 | CHP534427 3629P | Postage   |        |         |      | 0   | 7.57  |   |         |       |       |

Action

Key Required Fields: Invoice Number: 23984, Invoice Date: 11/01/2024, Pay Entry: 1100

Vendor: Vendor Number: 12029124, Gp: [REDACTED], Short Name: STATEBAROFSOUTH

Voucher Details: Gross Amt: 550.00, Contract #: [REDACTED], Pmt Due Date: 11/07/2024, Bank Payment: [REDACTED], Voucher: [REDACTED]

Balanced: 0001 - Invalid Company-Account-Center combination

Remit Message: Code: [REDACTED], Description: SDOOT YEARLY BAR DUES INVR 23984

Buttons: Excel Import, Validate, Travel Import, Save, Save and New, Close

| Line | Comp | Account   | Center | DOT Coding   | Line Desc            | Subref | Bill Gp | 1099 | Qty | Amt    | K | Accrual | Agree | Order |
|------|------|-----------|--------|--------------|----------------------|--------|---------|------|-----|--------|---|---------|-------|-------|
| 0001 | 3040 | 520402000 | 11102  | 01000 11800U | Karla Engle Bar dues |        |         |      | 0   | 550.00 |   |         |       |       |

Action

Key Required Fields: Invoice Number: 18500, Invoice Date: 10/05/2023, Pay Entry: 1100

Vendor: Vendor Number: 12051316, Gp: [REDACTED], Short Name: CIVILDESIGNINC

Voucher Details: Gross Amt: 20956.91, Contract #: 410866, Pmt Due Date: 11/08/2023, Bank Payment: [REDACTED], Voucher: [REDACTED]

Balanced: 0001 - Invalid Company-Account-Center combination

Remit Message: Code: [REDACTED], Description: SD DOT PCN04N7 W08B-59-23

Buttons: Excel Import, Validate, Travel Import, Save, Save and New, Close

DOT Contract payments must be sent to Central Office Finance, atn Negotiated Contracts.

| Line | Comp | Account | Center     | DOT Coding    | Line Desc     | Subref | Bill Gp | 1099 | Qty | Amt      | K | Accrual | Agree | Order |
|------|------|---------|------------|---------------|---------------|--------|---------|------|-----|----------|---|---------|-------|-------|
| 0001 | 3044 | 5204130 | 1111440681 | CXC0102 3700N | XC0102 410866 |        |         |      | 0   | 20956.91 |   |         |       |       |

## A Small Gesture, A Powerful Impact: Reuniting a Family With a Roadside Memorial

By: Peyton Weyer, Custer Area Project Technician

On Oct. 2, 2025, while inspecting a large cut-and-fill operation near Pactola Dam, a routine workday took an unexpected and meaningful turn. After parking near the apex of a curve on S.D. Highway 385, I walked roughly 200 feet back along the roadway to photograph the ongoing construction. As I made my way back to the pickup, something unusual caught my eye—black lettering against red stone, partially hidden along the shoulder.

Drawing closer, I realized it was a roadside monument shaped like a cross. One of the arms had broken off and had been carefully set back on top. The memorial was worn, fragile, and directly in the path of construction activity. It was clear that if left where it was, the monument—and the memory it represented—would soon be lost.

Wanting to protect it, I decided to try and locate the family. I searched the last name etched into the stone online and found an obituary matching the name. A quick search on Facebook led me to a surviving family member, Josh Cronholm. I reached out to ask if he would allow me to remove the monument from the ditch to keep it safe before construction progressed. Josh responded with appreciation and gave his permission.

With the help of co-worker **Connie Ziemet (Custer Area Senior Secretary)**, we carefully recovered, packaged, and shipped the monument to Josh in Colorado so it could be reunited with the family.

Afterward, I took some time to learn more about the man the memorial honored: Jeff Cronholm. Jeff was just 31 when he died on Aug. 27, 2010, in Rapid City. He was born May 17, 1979, in Northglenn, Colorado, and served proudly in the United States Marine Corps. He went on to graduate with a Civil Engineering degree from Colorado State University and co-owned Max Retaining Walls. Jeff loved fishing and had recently taken up photography. His obituary described him as strong, generous, loving, fun, and forgiving.

Reading his story made the experience even more impactful—especially knowing the reconstruction on S. D. 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.

What could have been just another day on the job became something much more meaningful. A small gesture ensured a family was reunited with a memorial they likely thought was lost forever. Josh and his family later sent a photo of the monument back in their care, along with a picture of Jeff.

In highway construction, progress often means change, and sometimes loss. But this was a moment where kindness carried forward a legacy. 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.

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On behalf of all of us, **thank you Peyton and Connie** for representing the SDDOT with such graciousness. Your kind gesture ensured a family was reunited with a memorial they likely thought was lost forever.



## Employee Winter Seasonal Snowplow Operator Referral Incentive Program

- This incentive applies to recruitment of seasonal and reserve operators.
- Total incentive \$500.
  - \$250 at the time of referred operator hire
    - The referral incentive will be paid after the new employee completes the required training and the Highway Maintenance Supervisor submits the completed DOT 320 form to BHRA. Returning seasonals and reserves must complete training as shown on the DOT 320 form.
  - \$250 if referred operator stays in the program until the end of March
    - Reserve operators must have a reasonable response rate to qualify for the end of season incentive.
- To be eligible for the incentive payments, the referred operator:
  - Must be hired by Dec 31, 2025.
  - If the referred operator does not have at least a Class B CDL, and the hiring manager hires the referred operator contingent on obtaining a CDL, the referred operator must obtain at least a Class B CDL by Dec 31, 2025.
- Managers within the chain of command of the hire are not eligible for incentives.
- Winter seasonal and reserve employees are eligible for the referral incentive.
- Incentive payments only apply to new seasonal employees to the Department. Referral incentive will not be paid for returning winter seasonal employees.
- The referral incentive payments will be made through payroll. The first incentive payment will be included in the first payroll following receipt of the referred employee's completed DOT 320 form. The end of season incentive will be paid in the first payroll in April contingent on the referred employee's successful completion of the requirements outlined above. All payments are subject to standard payroll deductions.

Below are winter seasonal openings as of Oct. 20, 2025. If you know people in these locations who may be seeking winter employment opportunities, please share the referral incentive information!

| Job # | Job Title                            | Location                | Closing Date |
|-------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| 32506 | Snow Plow Operator (Winter Seasonal) | Sioux Falls             | 3/31/2026    |
| 32584 | Snow Plow Operator (Winter Seasonal) | Herreid, Selby          | 3/31/2026    |
| 32585 | Snow Plow Operator (Winter Seasonal) | McIntosh, Eagle Butte   | 3/31/2026    |
| 32742 | Snow Plow Operator (Winter Seasonal) | Woonsocket, Chamberlain | 3/31/2026    |
| 33322 | Snow Plow Operator (Winter Seasonal) | Flandreau               | 3/31/2026    |

## SDDOT Vehicle Procedures

### DOT Vehicle Procedures for Central Office Staff

At recent Central Office Employee meetings, several questions came up about DOT vehicles. Here's a quick overview to help clarify how vehicle assignments, reservations, and maintenance work.

### Vehicle Assignments and Pools

Central Office employees either have a vehicle assigned to them or check out a vehicle from one of several DOT pools.

- A small number of employees who travel frequently have individually assigned vehicles.
- Most staff will check out a pool vehicle when traveling for work.

Pool vehicles are available for staff at:

- Becker-Hansen Building (Pierre)
- Sioux Falls Area Complex
- One Stop Complex (Rapid City)

### Reserving a Pool Vehicle

- Pierre and Sioux Falls: Reserve by sending a calendar invite in Outlook to the vehicle for your travel time. Include the departure and return times—don't just mark "all day." You will receive an acceptance of the invite if the vehicle is available – please wait to receive this, if denied it means the vehicle is not available for your travel times.
  - Rapid City: Reservations are handled through Microsoft Teams. Contact Steve Kamarainen for details.
-  NEVER take a vehicle without reserving it first. Always return the keys and binder to their proper location as soon as you return—even if after hours. Someone else may have that vehicle booked early the next morning.

### Vehicle Maintenance and Repairs

The Equipment Management Specialist, Brian Wacholz, runs a monthly Preventive Maintenance (PM) report for all Central Office vehicles, whether assigned or in a pool. Vehicles due for oil changes or other service are identified, and notifications are sent to the appropriate Program Manager or assigned user.

This report depends on the vehicle mileage recorded in TKS. The mileage you enter on your timesheet is what keeps our maintenance tracking accurate. Entering mileage correctly ensures that vehicles receive timely service and that maintenance costs are properly captured. Likewise, opening a work order whenever service or repairs are performed helps confirm that maintenance was completed and keeps PM reporting accurate.

Staff should contact the applicable personnel for their office/location for required PMs, minor issues, repairs, warning lights, or service:

- Central Office Pool vehicles:
  - From Pierre: Niki Miller, Internal Services ([nikoles.miller@state.sd.us](mailto:nikoles.miller@state.sd.us))
  - From Sioux Falls: Doug Amundson or Cameron Sprecher in the Partsroom
  - From Rapid City: AJ Hatch, Rapid City Region Equipment Shop Foreman
- Assigned vehicles in Pierre: Tim Blow, Pierre Equipment Shop Foreman
- Assigned vehicles outside Pierre: that Region's Equipment Shop Foreman

Before any service or repairs are conducted, work orders need to be opened.

All A-C class vehicle repair payments are processed by Nicole Brooks, Operations Support Senior Secretary ([nicolem.brooks@state.sd.us](mailto:nicolem.brooks@state.sd.us)). Be sure to include the work order number with any invoices for service.

### Keeping Vehicles Clean

Please treat DOT vehicles with respect and care.

- Remove all trash, wipe up spills, and clean windshields before returning.
- If you have an assigned vehicle, keep it tidy and well-maintained.

Lately, several pool vehicles have been returned in poor condition—with food crumbs, spills, and debris left behind. Please do your part to keep vehicles clean for the next user.

### Questions and More Information

If you have questions about DOT vehicles or equipment, contact your Region Equipment Shop Foreman, the Equipment Management Specialist, or the Operations Support Program Manager.

You can also find detailed guidance in the SDDOT Fleet Management Manual, available on the DOT Intranet under Forms/Manuals/Reports: <https://intranetdot.sd.gov/docs/SDDOTFleetManagement.pdf>

## Halloween Fun



The **Pierre Region office** dressed up as different "Jasos" for Halloween at their October safety meeting, which covered Identity Theft.



DOT Staff showed off their Halloween costumes around the office!



## Senior Secretary Spotlight

Senior Secretaries from across the State met in Pierre in October for their annual training day with BHRA.

Back Row (L to R): **Kim Smith** (Human Resources Generalist, Pierre), **Bonnie Palmer** (Sr. Secretary, Huron), **Barbara Spelbring** (Sr. Secretary, Pierre), **Julia Harkins** (Sr. Secretary, ROW Pierre), **Kasey Gastonguay** (Sr. Secretary, Winner), **Darla Brandlee** (Sr. Secretary, Watertown), **Erin Mullen** (Sr. Secretary, Aberdeen), **Heidi Olson** (Human Resources Manager, Spearfish)

Front Row (L to R): **Wanda Fuhrer** (Sr. Secretary, Mobridge), **JoAnn Kayser** (Sr. Secretary, Aberdeen), **Tanya Liska** (Sr. Secretary, Yankton), **Brenda Butler** (Sr. Secretary, Belle Fourche), **Krystl Vermundson** (Sr. Secretary, Rapid City)



## Voucher Return Rate

By Kellie Beck, Director of Finance and Management

I am pleased to share some excellent news from the first quarter returned voucher report for FY26 from the Auditor's office.

**Our Department has achieved a notably low voucher return rate.** (The SDDOT rate was .96% compared to the State average of 3.65%).

This accomplishment is a direct result of your attention to detail, dedication, and commitment to process improvement.

Your hard work ensures our financial operations run smoothly and efficiently, and it's clear that your efforts are making a positive impact. Thank you for your diligence in submitting accurate vouchers.

Let's continue to build on this success and strive for even greater efficiency in the quarters ahead. I have provided a snippet of the returns and reasons for returns in the first quarter.

Congratulations, and thank you for your outstanding work!

| DOT                                  |     |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| Vouchers Entered onto MSAS* ≈ 12,850 |     |
| Returned Vouchers = 123              |     |
| Percentage of Returns** ≈ 0.96%      |     |
| DOT                                  | 123 |
| Incorrect Totals                     | 35  |
| Missing Signature                    | 23  |
| ***More Documentation Needed         | 22  |
| Vendor Mismatch                      | 12  |
| Duplicate                            | 9   |
| Taxes                                | 8   |
| Justification Needed                 | 6   |
| Approval Form Needed                 | 4   |
| Original Receipt Needed              | 3   |
| Discrepancy on Invoice               | 1   |

## Business Degree Opportunity in Pierre

Information provided by Mackenzie Decker, Chief of Staff  
Office of Governor Larry Rhoden

I wanted to highlight a program at Dakota Wesleyan University that is offering a 16-month Business Degree right here in Pierre at the Capital City Campus.

This is wonderful for our community and so I want to be sure they can enroll the number they need to keep offering the program. I hired an intern from this program a few years ago when I was still at DLR and it was a great experience!! <https://www.dwu.edu/Business-Degree-Pierre-Campus>.

This is perfect for students who need to be in Pierre and are interested in getting their degree. As a main employer in the area, it is important we engage with the incoming workforce any way that we can in order to build a strong pipeline for state government into the future. The program would also be great for current employees you have that want to get their degree (and stay working for you).

### Here's what you need to know:

- Classes start in January 2026
- If you have a student in mind, or current employee who is interested, please have them apply for free at <https://www2.dwu.edu/webforms/BusinessDegreeApplication> and then DWU will contact them to fill in all the details.

## Adopt a Highway

The Adopt-A-Highway Program invites individuals, families, and organizations to help keep state highways clean. Participants adopt at least two miles of non-Interstate or four miles of Interstate highway, committing to litter cleanup at least twice a year for a minimum of one year. Cleanups must take place during daylight hours and not on holidays or holiday weekends. Youth may participate on non-Interstate highways with adult supervision. In recognition, SDDOT installs signage at each adopted section. Permits can be canceled by the group or revoked by SDDOT for noncompliance.

We are grateful for the individuals and groups (like the Sioux Falls Corevette Club) who volunteer to keep our highways clean!



"Shout out to Shane and the crew at the Canton DOT shop. I always text the shop to let them know when we will be in our ditches and that we take our trash with us. I don't know if this information prioritized mowing of our ditches but in the days ahead of our cleanup all four miles of our ditches got their shoulder's mowed. This made for a safer, more pleasurable, and more productive cleanup. Thank you."

-Dusty Miller (Sioux Falls Corvette Club)



## National Bosses Day

The offices of **Air, Rail, & Transit** and **Accounting** in Pierre celebrated National Bosses Day with lasagna! Thank you to **Rayleen Rageth, Brock Antijunti, Becky Hedman, Jessica Gilbert, and Jon Becker** for making lunch!



## SDDOT 101

### SDDOT 101: Held Oct. 28-29, 2025

The New Employee Orientation (NEO) course was recently rebranded as SDDOT 101. This change reflects our commitment to providing a comprehensive and engaging introduction to our organization.

#### Key Details:

- **Eligibility:** Employees should attend SDDOT 101 after being in their role for at least 3 months and no longer than 9 months.
- **Lab Tour:** The Lab Tour will continue to be offered on the afternoon of the second day. This tour is optional, but supervisors and employees should ensure they sign up if it is relevant to their job duties or if otherwise interested.
- **Facilitation:** The course has been transitioned to Jaynie Spier, Employee Development Coordinator, who will now oversee facilitation.
- **Continuity:** Many of the great attributes of the previous NEO will remain the same, ensuring a smooth transition and familiar experience for new employees.

If you have questions about SDDOT 101, reach out to Jaynie Spier at [Jaynie.spier@state.sd.us](mailto:Jaynie.spier@state.sd.us) or 605-291-5418.

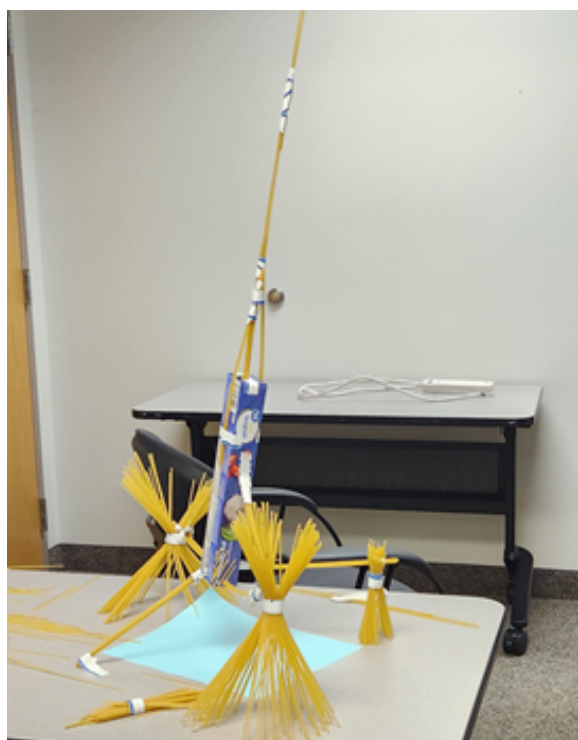


## DOTNET

The newest group of SDDOT engineers just kicked off their year-long **DOTNET (New Engineers in Training)** program, where they'll meet quarterly to learn about everything a career at SDDOT has to offer and build connections along the way.

For their first session, they teamed up to build the tallest bridge they could—using only spaghetti and address labels. The winning design is pictured!

The 2025-2026 DOTNET participants are **Grant Brewer, Anna Buse, Joe Cremer, Andy Gordon, Blaise Hansen, Kirby Hurlbert, Arielle Kiepke, Eric Larsen, Jacob Larson, Carsten McNeil, Vinay Nukala, Dylan Osborn, Naren Pamarthi, Angie Protexter, and Sam Schlabach.**



## SDDOT in the Community

**Larry Dean, Planning Data Manager (Pierre), and Brenda Sharkey, Transportation Specialist (Pierre),** delivered a Traverse full of food and cash to support the Governor Grocery Program and Buff's Closet. Thank you Larry and Brenda for representing **Central Office**.



## Capitol Lake Now Open for Fishing

Dozens of families, including **Tom Strubel (Assitant Bridge Construction Engineer, Pierre) and his children**, surrounded Capitol Lake on Oct. 30, 2025, to fish for the first time at Capitol Lake in Pierre. South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks staffers provided a limited number of poles for youth anglers and supplied worms, corn and marshmallows for bait.

Link to Article: [KCCR Radio](#)



## BHRA Watercooler:

In this month's video: Virtual Benefits Fair, Check Your HSA/WEX accounts, Fleet & Travel reminders, the new Turkey Trot Challenge, and Marquee Health Coaching.

Click to the graphic below to view this month's video.



### Additional Information:

[Virtual Benefits Fair](#)  
[Turkey Trot Challenge](#)  
[WEX](#)  
[Fleet Commander](#)  
[Benefits Email](#)



## TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Learn ~ Engage ~ Improve



Click on the SDLearn graphic or use this link to sign in: [SDLearn](#)

Search by the **complete course name** listed.

**December 2025**

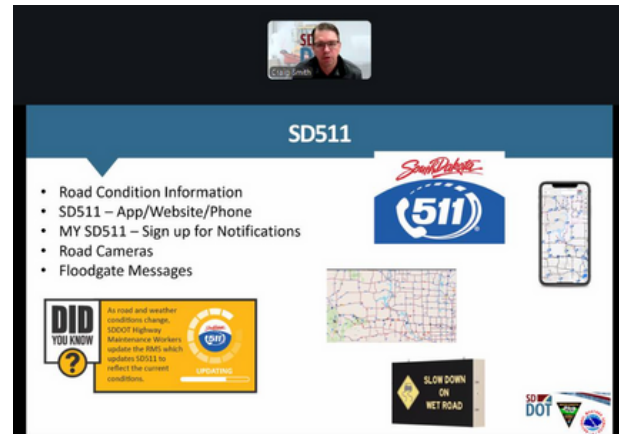
|  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|--|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | <b>ADA 101</b><br><b>Wednesday, Dec. 3, 2025   8:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. CT   Sioux Falls</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|  | <b>Accommodating Pedestrians in Work Zones</b><br><b>Wednesday, Dec. 3, 2025   1 – 3 p.m. CT   Sioux Falls</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|  | <p><u><a href="#">It Pays to Train sessions highlight SDDOT's core values while diving into timely, relevant topics.</a></u></p> <p>With guest speakers now joining the mix, we're bringing fresh insights and real-world experiences to the table. These sessions are all about sparking connections, sharing knowledge, and making every minute count—across every region. Don't miss out!</p> <p>Ask <a href="mailto:DOTLMS@state.sd.us">DOTLMS@state.sd.us</a> for a meeting invite so we are on your calendar each month!</p> |
|  | <b>TLN: Interstate Interchanges: What's what?</b><br><b>Wednesday, Dec. 3, 2025   9:30 – 11 a.m. CT   Zoom</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|  | <b>First Aid/CPR/AED</b><br><b>Thursday, Dec. 4, 2025   9 a.m. – 3 p.m. CT   Pierre</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|  | <b>TLN: AI &amp; Machine Learning: Automation Advances</b><br><b>Wednesday, Dec. 10, 2025   9:30 – 10:30 a.m. CT   Zoom</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|  | <b>TLN: Beyond the Basics: SWPPP Implementation &amp; Best Practices</b><br><b>Thursday, Dec. 11, 2025   9:30 – 11:30 a.m. CT   Zoom</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

## SDDOT Co-Hosts Pre-Winter Webinar

Thanks to all who attended the webinar held in conjunction with Highway Patrol and the National Weather Service!

The winter preparedness effort was covered by TV news stations, radio, and newspapers on both sides of the State!

Find the recording on our Winter Hub website page at <https://dot.sd.gov/travelers/travelers/winter-weather-hub/>



## Project BISON



BISON Bites is Live now on the SharePoint. BISON Bites video is designed to keep everyone informed, inspired, and aligned with the goals. We encourage you to take just a few minutes to watch it—and then share it with your teams

Whether it sparks conversation or reinforces key priorities, BISON Bites is a great opportunity to learn about Project BISON.

[https://stateofsouthdakota.sharepoint.com/sites/SD\\_ProjectBISON-ChangeChampions/SitePages/BISON-Bites.aspx](https://stateofsouthdakota.sharepoint.com/sites/SD_ProjectBISON-ChangeChampions/SitePages/BISON-Bites.aspx)

Thanks for helping us spread the word—and the knowledge. While you are there look around the SharePoint site and learn more about the project. SharePoint is you one stop for BISON Bites, Word Puzzles, KDSR's & More.



## Bridge Dedications

On Veterans Day (Nov. 11, 2025), a bridge dedication ceremony (honoring multiple Veterans) was held at the Alliance in Sioux Falls.

On Nov. 14, 2025, a bridge dedication ceremony was held for PFC Leland L. Nielson. A sign in his honor is now in place at the Vermillion River on S.D. Highway 19.

Thank you to **Bo Groethe (Highway Maintenance Worker, Junction City)** and **Gene Ericson (Lead Highway Maintenance Worker, Junction City)** for placing the dedication sign.



## SDDOT Employee News and Updates

### November New Hires:

Korder Cropsey, Assistant Region Bridge Engineer (Pierre)

Chuck DeBoer, Highway Maintenance Worker (Clear Lake)

David Pine, Highway Maintenance Worker (Sioux Falls)

Richard Weller, Equipment Technician (Pierre)

### November Promotions and Lateral Position Changes:

Matthew Grajczyk, Lead Highway Maintenance Worker (Webster)

Thomas Ascher, Highway Maintenance Worker (Rapid City)

Tim Byrd, Lead Highway Maintenance Worker (Murdo)

Kyle Willis, Lead Highway Maintenance Worker (Pierre)

Rocky Matson, Transportation Specialist I (Pierre)

### November Longevity:

Tucker Dummer, Highway Maintenance Worker - 25 years (Mitchell Area)



**Joanne Hight, Administration Program Manager (Pierre)**, celebrated 20 years of service with the SDDOT.

Joanne is pictured receiving her longevity pin from **Mike Behm, Planning and Engineering Division Director (Pierre)**.



**Noël Clocksin, LGA Programming and Funding Engineer (Pierre)**, celebrated 35 years of service with the SDDOT.

Noël is pictured receiving her longevity pin from **Joanne Hight, Administration Program Manager (Pierre)**.



**Lana Lambert, Environmental Analyst (Pierre)**, celebrated 35 years of service with the SDDOT.

Lana is pictured receiving her longevity pin from **Joanne Hight, Administration Program Manager (Pierre)**.

## SDDOT Employee News and Updates



**John Weeldreyer, Storm Water Engineer (Pierre)**, celebrated 25 years of service with the SDDOT.

John is pictured receiving his longevity pin from **Joanne Hight, Administration Program Manager (Pierre)**.



**Coleen Kusser, Work Order Specialist (Pierre)**, celebrated 15 years of service with the SDDOT. Coleen is pictured receiving her longevity pin from **Joanne Hight, Administration Program Manager (Pierre)**.



**Dustin DeBoer, Senior Trial Attorney (Sioux Falls)**, celebrated 10-years of service at the "Celebrate Success" event with **Karla Engle, Chief Legal Counsel (Pierre)**, **Paul Coppock, Senior Trial Attorney (Sioux Falls)**, and **Shane Pullman, Senior Trial Attorney (Rapid City)**.



**Matt Dorfschmidt, Region Traffic Engineer (Aberdeen)**, celebrated 10 years of service with the SDDOT.

Matt is pictured receiving his longevity pin from **Todd Hertel, Operations Engineer (Aberdeen)**.



## SDDOT Employee News and Updates (in Sympathy)



Sympathy is extended to **Ardell Rist (SDDOT Retiree)** on the passing of his wife, **Janet Irene Rist**.

Janet passed away peacefully on Oct. 20, 2025. Funeral services were held on Oct. 24, 2025 at the Hills of Rest Cemetery in Sioux Falls.

Link to Obituary: <https://www.georgeboom.com/obituary/janet-rist>