SD DOT
OCTOBER 2026

Connecting the DOTs

Platte–Winner Bridge Groundbreaking Celebrated

State, federal, and local leaders joined Governor Larry Rhoden and Secretary Joel Jundt on Oct. 22, 2026, for the groundbreaking of the Platte–Winner Bridge replacement. As one of South Dakota's longest and most vital river crossings, the new structure will strengthen safety and connectivity for communities across the region.

The event also featured a send-off for student-athletes from Platte-Geddes and Winner Area High Schools as they traveled to statewide competitions. Construction on the new bridge began on Oct. 3, 2026. The existing bridge will remain open throughout construction and will not be demolished until the new bridge is complete.









Pictures from the historic event are available on the internet here!

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The Secretary's Corner



Building to Serve South Dakotans for the Next 100 Years

On Oct. 22, 2026, we gathered at the Missouri River bank between Platte and Winner to mark a historic moment for southeast South Dakota. We broke ground on the Platte-Winner Bridge.

The Platte-Winner Bridge has served South Dakotans for 60 years, carrying families, agriculture, freight and travelers across the Missouri River. The new bridge will continue that legacy with a 100-year design life and a wider, safer structure that increases the current 28-foot width to 36 feet. This project is the largest bridge investment in SDDOT history, with an estimated cost of $290 million.

I extend heartfelt thanks to Governor Rhoden, Senators Thune and Rounds, Congressman Johnson, FHWA officials including Administrator Sean McMaster, the South Dakota Legislature and the Transportation Commission, our local leaders, our engineering and construction teams, and the many SDDOT employees whose diligence brought us to this moment. Our shared work shows that when we keep solving problems and believe in our state, we can deliver infrastructure that serves not just today but for generations.

A project of this scale only happens through strong partnerships. Federal funding played a key role, including a $65 million Competitive Highway Bridge Program grant and $25 million in Congressional Directed Spending. Local leaders, engineering and construction teams, and many SDDOT employees contributed expertise and persistence throughout planning and design.

During the ceremony, it was clear how important this bridge is to the region. The Platte-Geddes and Winner school bands performed, carrying forward a tradition from the original 1966 dedication, and community members gathered to celebrate the beginning of a new chapter in connectivity and economic strength for the area.

Construction will continue in phases over the coming years, with the existing bridge remaining open until the new structure is complete in 2031. As work progresses, we will keep South Dakotans updated and informed.

This project reflects what we strive for at SDDOT: long-term planning, thoughtful investment and collaboration that ensures safe, reliable transportation for generations. I'm grateful to everyone involved in bringing this project to life and excited to see the future it will support.

The Platte-Winner Bridge has connected South Dakotans for 60 years. The new bridge will serve them for the next century, and that's something worth celebrating. Find more details about the groundbreaking and active construction project here: https://dot.sd.gov/plattewinnerbridge

2026 STATE ROADEO FINALS

On Oct. 6, 2026, the SDDOT crowned the winners of the **2026 State Roadeo Finals** held in Pierre. Congratulations to all operators who earned a "top 20" spot in the State Final competition. This hands-on competition challenges our snowplow operators to demonstrate the precision, skill, and confidence needed to navigate South Dakota's highways during some tough winter conditions.

The "top 20" finalists are pictured below.



After a tie for first place, the final rankings were determined by course completion time. Congratulations to **Kevin Swartos, Brookings**, for earning 1st Place.

The 2026 top three Roadeo finishers, pictured left to right are . . . **John Hunt, Kadoka (3rd Place); Kevin Swartos, Brookings (1st Place); and Tyler Small, Junction City (2nd Place).**



All ROADEO photos are available on the Intranet at https://intranetdot.sd.gov/roadeo.aspx.

As South Dakota winter weather approaches, operations team members are working hard to prepare. Our operators work long hours in challenging conditions to help South Dakotans reach their destinations safely. Let's do our part to protect them, our fellow travelers, and ourselves. **Winter driving safety is a shared responsibility . . . use SD511 to make informed travel decisions, slow down, give snowplows room to operate, and please Buckle Up/Phone Down (BUPD)!**

2026 Employee Meetings

Upcoming Employee Meetings

Wednesday, Nov. 4, 2026 - Central Office Staff - Community Bible Church in Pierre

9 - 10:30 a.m. (CT)
Group #1: Secretary, Training, Legal, ITS, Project Development, Planning Administration, Local Government, Environmental, Materials & Surfacing, Internal Services, Internal Audits, Finance, Aviation Services, and Air, Rail & Transit

11 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. (CT) Celebrate Success Event/Lunch

2 - 3:30 p.m. (CT)
Group #2: Road Design, Right-of-Way, Transportation Inventory Management, Research, Bridge Design, Operations Administration and Operations Support

Tuesday, Dec. 15, 2026 - In Pierre
10 - 11:30 a.m. (CT) – Mitchell and Aberdeen Region Field Engineering

Wednesday, Dec. 16, 2026 - In Pierre
12 (Noon) -1:30 p.m. (CT) – Pierre and Rapid City Region Field Engineering

2026-2027 Winter Resources and Events



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 SDDOT Winter Weather Hub provides press releases, text-in subscription information for Interstate closures, links (and directions) to use SD511 services, real-time photos and videos of snowplow maintenance operations, the WHMP, downloadable safety posters, and additional travel resources available through our social media accounts.

Name a Snowplow Contest

The 7th Annual SDDOT Snowplow Naming Contest will open to the public in mid-November. Over the past six winters, SDDOT has engaged thousands of South Dakotans in naming snowplows across the State to help build awareness about our work and resources.

2026 Hall of Honor Banquet - Kari Karst Inducted

The Transportation Hall of Honor was pleased to recognize **Kari Karst, President/CEO of BX Civil & Construction**, on her induction into the South Dakota Transportation Hall of Honor on Oct. 1, 2026. Karst becomes the 101st inductee to receive this distinguished recognition.

Kari was honored for her leadership, long-standing advocacy for women in the construction industry, and her commitment to expanding opportunities within the AGC and the broader transportation community. Her impact has strengthened the industry and inspired current and future generations of leaders.

SDDOT Secretary Joel Jundt, who serves as the Hall of Honor Committee Chair, presented Kari with her plaque at her banquet held in Dell Rapids, celebrating her contributions to South Dakota's transportation industry and AGC of South Dakota. Kari was nominated by retired SDDOT staff member Tammy Williams, who highlighted Kari's dedication and meaningful contributions to South Dakota's transportation network and workforce.

Please join us in congratulating Kari on this well-earned achievement!







Pictured: Joel Jundt (Department Secretary, Pierre), Kari Karst (President/CEO BX Civil & Construction), and Kari's family



SDDOT Communications Team Update

With recent staffing changes, please direct all communications-related requests to dot.communications@state.sd.us to help streamline requests and ensure they are directed to the appropriate team member. This includes website updates, press releases, social media, construction project updates, and other communications needs.

2026 South Dakota Tribal Transportation Safety Summit

Transportation safety partners from across South Dakota will gather on Oct. 28 – 29, 2026, for two days of conversation, collaboration, and learning at the 2026 South Dakota Tribal Transportation Safety Summit. The Summit is being held at the Rosebud Casino & Conference Center, south of Mission. Our SDDOT planning and operations staff will join tribal, state, federal, and local partners to explore transportation safety challenges, share best practices, and work toward safer roads and communities across South Dakota. Thank you to **June Hansen, Civil Rights Compliance Officer (Pierre)**, for leading the planning and development of the Tribal Transportation Safety Summit.

Highlights from the event, including photos and additional details, will be featured in the November newsletter.





Pictured presenting at the Safety Summit are (left) **June Hansen, Civil Rights Compliance Officer (Pierre), Christina Bennett, Operations Support Program Manager (Pierre)**, and **Mike Behm, Director of Planning and Engineering (Pierre)**.

Don't Let Safety Get Spooky This Holiday Season!

By: Chuck Layton, Safety Manager

With Halloween just around the corner, ghosts, goblins, and things that go bump in the night aren't the only things to watch out for! Trick-or-treaters crossing streets, dark costumes, poorly lit walkways, and distracted drivers can create some real scares. If you're behind the wheel, slow down and keep an extra eye out for little ghosts and goblins. At home, keep walkways clear, use battery-operated candles in pumpkins, and make sure decorations don't create tripping hazards. **A good Halloween scare should come from a haunted house, not an unexpected trip to the emergency room.**

As Halloween passes and the holiday season approaches, our attention turns to family gatherings, decorating, shopping, and travel. Here in South Dakota, that also means preparing for snow, ice, freezing temperatures, and unpredictable road conditions. Before traveling, check SD511, allow extra time, and make sure your vehicle is winter-ready. Around the house, inspect holiday lights, avoid overloading electrical outlets, use ladders safely, and keep walkways free of snow and ice. With all the hustle and bustle, remember that rushing and taking shortcuts can quickly turn holiday cheer into an unwanted emergency.

Here's something worth remembering: The holidays aren't about how much we get done, but about the people we get to spend them with. Whether you're enjoying Halloween with the kids, gathering around the Thanksgiving table, or celebrating Christmas with family and friends, take a little extra time to recognize hazards, make safe decisions, and look out for one another. At SDDOT, our commitment to safety doesn't end when we leave work. It follows us home to the people who matter most. **After all, the best present you can give your family is your presence.**

South Dakota Day of Giving: ROOTED in Rural Campaign
By: Stacy Strickler, Transit Assistant Director

ROOTED in Rural is our agency-wide initiative to secure a gift from every county we serve, strengthening transportation, nutrition, housing, and community support programs throughout rural South Dakota.

Our staff have been actively involved by displaying ROOTED posters, sharing campaign materials with local businesses and community groups, encouraging matching gifts, and helping spread the word through social media and community conversations. We've also launched a ROOTED Blackout Bingo challenge to make participation fun and engaging. Staff are reaching out to businesses, sharing ROCS success stories, and helping us build new community connections—all of which support our fundraising goals and help put more counties on the map.

We appreciate the continued partnership and guidance from SD DOT as we work to strengthen rural transit and community services across the state.

As a reminder, the **South Dakota Day of Giving** takes place on **December 1, 2026**. This statewide event brings nonprofits together for a 24-hour celebration of generosity—raising funds, building awareness, and having a little fun along the way. Whether this is your first time participating or you've been involved for years, the Day of Giving offers meaningful opportunities to connect with supporters and highlight the impact of your work.

Leading up to the event, organizations engage in weeks of preparation, outreach, and direct communication with businesses and community members to share the value of the services they provide. Resources are available at southdakotagives.org, and we encourage everyone to explore ROCS' ROOTED in Rural campaign as inspiration or scan the QR code to give directly to the campaign.

Monthly IR Pillar Report from BIT

eConstruction continues to be on track to begin training later this fall and will start working with live projects with the start of the 2027 construction season.

Construction Season Timeline (2027-2028)

- February 2027 train-the-trainer.
- Pilot projects in 2027 construction season.
- Expanded usage in 2028 season.

The Monthly IR Pillar Report can be found on the Intranet or using the link below.
2026-09 DOT-BIT IR Pillar Report.pdf

October Mentoring Minute:

Reenergizing Your Mentoring Journey: What to Expect at Midpoint

By: Joe Sestak & Scott Eisenbeisz

As a participant in the SDDOT Mentoring Program, you can expect the Midpoint Energizer to serve as a valuable check-in and momentum-building event. The Midpoint Energizer is scheduled for Thursday, Nov. 5, 2026, at 1 p.m. During this session, you and your mentoring partner will have the opportunity to reflect on your progress, discuss what is working well in the partnership, and identify areas of possible improvement. The event is designed to refresh your focus and re-energize your commitment to achieving the goals you set at the beginning of the program.

You can expect guided discussions that help you and your mentor or mentee explore what aspects of your work together give you energy and what aspects may be draining. This reflection helps both partners better understand one another's needs and working styles, strengthening the partnership as you head into the second half of the program.

The session also gives you time to review progress made so far, celebrate successes, and talk through potential adjustments to ensure continued growth and impact. These conversations help you realign on goals and make intentional plans to improve your experience moving forward. If you have been knocked off track by a busy summer this is a great time to get back on track.

In addition to one-on-one discussion, you will also have opportunities to connect with other mentoring pairs. This allows you to exchange ideas, learn from the experiences of others, and gather new strategies to bring back to your own partnership. The chance to network and crowdsource best practices adds perspective and renewed motivation.

Overall, you can expect the Midpoint Energizer to provide clarity, renewed energy, supportive dialogue, and practical next steps—setting you and your partner up for a successful, engaging, and productive second half of the mentoring program.

In addition to this there is a valuable session that is being presented prior to the Midpoint Energizer, and the topic is Unreasonable Hospitality. The session is all about communication with both internal and external customers and directly translates to better lives through better transportation. This is a great opportunity to attend the session either as a mentoring pair or on your own. This session begins at 10 a.m. so sign up now!

Make time for Mentoring!

Upcoming events:
Unreasonable Hospitality Bonus Event - Nov. 5, 2026, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. (CT)
Facilitated by **Julie Stevenson, Toward Zero Deaths Coordinator.**
Mentoring Midpoint Energizer - Nov. 5, 2026, 1 p.m. – 4 p.m. (CT)

Finance Corner

NEW TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT RATES EFFECTIVE OCT. 1, 2026

As outlined in HB 1060 during the 2024 Legislative Session, the mileage rate and the in-state lodging reimbursement rate will be updated to align with the rates set by the federal government. Listed below are the new rates:

Travel Reimbursement Rates

Effective October 1, 2026

Mileage Reimbursement

SDCL 3-9

Type	Rate	Comments
High Mileage	$0.76/mile	Personal vehicle is used AND state motor pool vehicle is not available.
Low Mileage	$0.35/mile	Personal vehicle is used AND state motor pool vehicle is available.
Special Needs Mileage	$0.99/mile	Large personal vehicle is used (ex. van, truck, SUV).
Special Needs Mileage	$0.76/mile	Personal vehicle is used.

In-State Travel Reimbursement

In-State Lodging

SDCL 3-9-2

Primary Destination	County	Maximum Lodging Rate + Taxes and Mandatory Fees
Standard Rate	Applies for all locations without specified rate	$113
Deadwood/Spearfish	Lawrence	October – May: $113; June – September: $168
Hot Springs	Fall River/Custer	October – May: $113; June – September: $161
Rapid City	Pennington	October – May: $113; June – August: $173; September: $113

In-State Meals

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Meal	Amount	Leave Before	Arrive After
Breakfast	$6	5:31 AM	7:59 AM
Lunch	$14	11:31 AM	12:59 PM
Dinner	$20	5:31 PM	7:59 PM
Daily Maximum	**$40**		

Out-of-State Travel Reimbursement

ARSD 05:01:02:11

Lodging	$175 + tax	Additional $100 available with excess lodging approval.

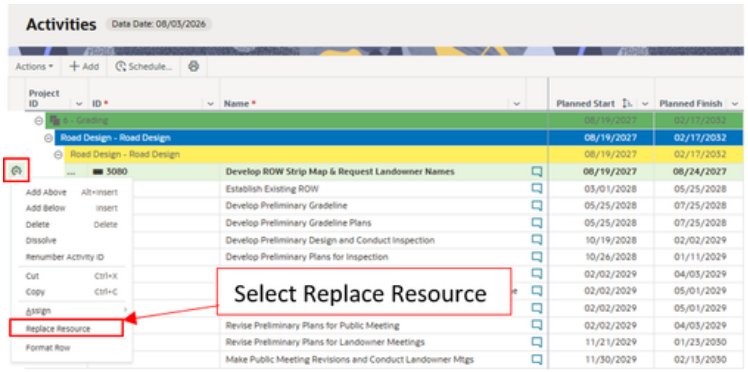
Meal	Amount	Leave Before	Arrive After
Breakfast	$10	5:31 AM	7:59 AM
Lunch	$18	11:31 AM	12:59 PM
Dinner	$28	5:31 PM	7:59 PM
Daily Maximum	**$56**		

You can find this information and additional helpful resources on our Travel page on the intranet. It is a great one-stop location for staff to access travel guidance, forms, and reimbursement information https://intranetdot.sd.gov/travel.aspx

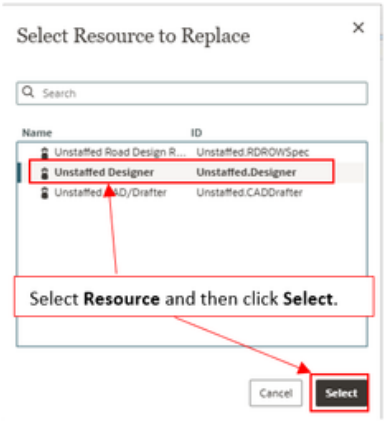
Primavera Tips/Tricks - Replacing Resources

SDDOT utilizes Primavera Cloud, which is a cloud-based scheduling software for the design phase of a project. Additionally, Primavera Cloud is utilized for various aspects of project management to help with managing resource workloads (current & future) and to assist in the delivery of projects in a timely matter.

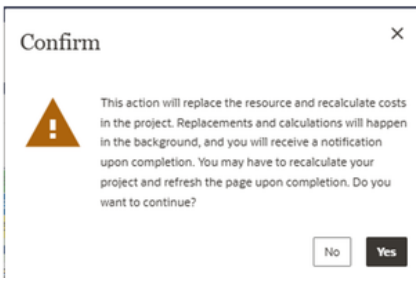
This tip demonstrates how to **Replace Resources.**



1. How to Replace Resources
   a. Go to the **Project** where you want to **Replace Resources.**
      i. Go to the **Activities Page** and select the **Activity (or Multiple Activities)** you want to replace the resource.
      ii. **Right-Click** or select the **Cog Wheel.**
      iii. Then select **Replace Resource**.
   b. This opens the **Select Resource to Replace** pop-up.
      i. Select the **Resource** you want to replace and then click **Select.**
   c. This opens the **Replace Resource - Unstaffed Resource** pop-up, which lists possible replacement resources.
      i. Change **View By** to **All Resources.**
      ii. Change **Filter By** to **Workspace**.
      iii. Search for the **Resource, Highlight Resource** and then select **Assign.**
   d. The following pop-up will be displayed, click **Yes** to accept and continue.
   e. **Resource Replacement** occurs as a background process. You will be notified when it's completed. You must **Refresh (F5)** your view to see the change.







Note – The **Replace Resource only work at the **Project Level** and cannot be used in **Programs**.*

If you have questions about the Primavera Cloud software, please reach out to the Project Delivery Team.
Earl Berg (earl.berg@state.sd.us or 773-7191)
Kathryn Faubel (Kathryn.Faubel@state.sd.us or 773-3567)

Training & Development Opportunities

Learn ~ Engage ~ Improve



Upcoming in-person courses:

- **NHI 130092 Load & Resistance Factor Rating of Highway Bridges**
  - Dec. 1-4, 2026 |Pierre
- **Working in Indian Country**
  - Dec. 2-3, 2026 | Pierre

****Check the Training Calendar for BHRA Leadership Courses!****

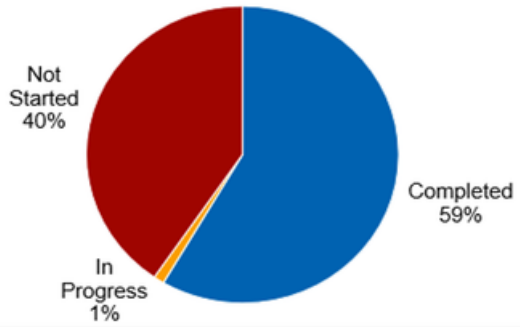
Upcoming Webinars

- **Courageous Leadership - Living a Life of Influence**
  - Oct. 28 |9:30 a.m. CT/8:30 a.m. MT | Zoom
- **An End-to-End Deep Learning System for Pavement Distress Detection, Severity Estimation, and Condition Reporting (CTIPS-051)**
  - Oct. 29 | 9:30 a.m. CT | Zoom
- **How to Deal with Toxic Co-workers**
  - Nov. 10 |9:30 a.m. CT | Zoom
- **Understanding Value Engineering; The Benefits of a Value Program**
  - Nov. 10 | 12 p.m. CT | Zoom
- **What are the Latest Trends in Winter**
- **Road Maintenance?**
  - Nov. 23 | 9:30 a.m. CT | Zoom

Simplified coding is available for ALL training courses! Use function 1175; no AFE needed!

2027 PE Exam Review Course
Dec. 15 | Submissions due to dotlms@state.sd.us

Safety Culture Courses



Safety Courses due Nov. 22, 2026!
Get yours done today!
It takes less than an hour to complete all four courses!

MANAGERS: Check team status at Reports > Dashboards > Where is My Team in Training? > Use the arrow to Refresh.

ON DEMAND COURSES
Flagger Certification *UPDATED
Flagger Instructor Certification *UPDATED

Spotter Safety in the Work Zone
5 Defensive Driving Strategies
How to pass a CDL Backing
The Golden Rule of Truck Backing That Prevents Accidents

SDLearn Learning Management System

Click on the SDLearn graphic or use this link to sign in: **SDLearn**

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

2026 South Dakota Fallen Heroes Bridge Dedications

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs, in partnership with the South Dakota Department of Transportation (SDDOT), gathered in Sisseton to honor four veterans who made the ultimate sacrifice while serving their nation.

As part of the statewide Fallen Heroes Bridge Dedication initiative, four bridges were dedicated in their honor:

- SP4 Gerald L. Aadland Bridge — S.D. Highway 10 over an unnamed creek in Sisseton
- S2C Laverne A. Nigg Bridge — S.D. Highway 10 over the Little Minnesota River east of Sisseton
- SFC Ronald L. Reil Bridge — U.S. Highway 81 over Interstate 29 at exit 180 north of Watertown
- SP4 Arden K. Renville Bridge — S.D. Highway 10 over I-29 at exit 232 east of Sisseton









Pictured installing the signs at the top is **Josh Harr (Sign and Striping Crew, Aberdeen)** and **John Weigel (Sign and Striping Crew, Aberdeen).**



Pictured on the left (from left to right) are **Mark Peterson (Aberdeen Region Engineer); Joe Dufrane (Highway Maintenance Worker, Milbank); and Frank Hoss (Highway Maintenance Worker, Sisseton).**

Find a list of all 2026 bridge dedication ceremonies at: vetaffairs.sd.gov

SDDOT ONLINE STORE FOR PERSONAL BRANDED APPAREL

Please note this is an optional opportunity to order personal branded apparel and is paid by each employee via a personal credit card. Work-related safety apparel (as purchased by SDDOT) is completed through area offices.

SDDOT staff favorites are still available in the store, along with new winter options. There are over 50 items available in a range of styles and price points.

Three Ways to access the SDDOT Online Store

- https://stores.inksoft.com/sddot_apparel_store/shop/home
- https://intranetdot.sd.gov/SDDOT_Branding.aspx

Use the QR code







Distribution:

- All orders will be produced once the **store closes at midnight on Sunday, Nov. 15, 2026**.
- Distribution will be done via each region/area and through Central Office. Orders WILL NOT be sent directly to home addresses.
- All items that the employee purchased will be pre-packaged together in a clear bag with a sheet inside showing the employee name, order summary, etc.
- Since this is a personal apparel order, please note that sizing exchanges will not be available.
- For order questions (sizing questions); please feel free to contact a Geffdog sales representative at info@geffdog.com.

Other Options:

Please note the SDDOT logo files are on the Intranet in the SDDOT Branding tab at https://intranetdot.sd.gov/SDDOT_Branding.aspx if you would like to use your own local vendor.

SOUTH DAKOTA BISON

The monthly **KDSR (Know, Do, Share, Report Back)** is your go-to resource for staying informed about BISON and accessing key information. Review it, share it with your teams, and post it around the office.

October 2026 KDSR
KDSR SharePoint Page

Questions or feedback, the BISON team is always here to help, reach out at BISON@state.sd.us.

Adopt-A-Highway



The Adopt-A-Highway Program is a long-standing partnership between the South Dakota Department of Transportation (SDDOT) and community volunteers who dedicate time to keeping our state's roads cleaner and more attractive. By adopting a segment of highway, participants help minimize litter, enhance roadside appearance, and contribute to safer travel statewide.

Volunteers maintain their adopted highway sections through routine litter cleanup, supported by SDDOT-provided safety equipment and guidelines to ensure safe and effective work.

Special thanks to the **Sioux Falls Corvette Club** (pictured) who recently completed cleanup on their adopted section of highway. Together, we can keep South Dakota's highways looking their best!

GIS Day is Almost Here!

We celebrate GIS Day on the third Wednesday of every November, right in the middle of Geography Awareness Week. This year's theme, "GIS: Powering Purpose and Innovation," is all about celebrating how spatial data and location intelligence help organizations, communities, and innovators advance sustainability, improve public services, and connect data, people, and places.



At its heart, GIS (Geographic Information Systems) is a powerful technology used to create, manage, analyze, and map all kinds of data. Ultimately, it helps us spot patterns, understand relationships, and see the big picture which leads to better communication, smoother operations, and smarter decisions.

The history of GIS goes back to 1854, when a cholera map in London revealed just how powerful spatial data could be. Jump ahead to 1963, when Roger Tomlinson in Canada coined the term GIS while mapping the country's forests. Then in 1972, the Landsat program launched and began capturing continuous images of Earth from space. (Fun fact: The USGS EROS Data Center, just north of Sioux Falls, still operates Landsat 8 and 9 missions today!)

Things really took off in 1990 when the U.S. Census Bureau introduced TIGER, the first digital map to cover roads, boundaries, and waterways nationwide. The first official GIS Day kicked off on Nov. 19, 1999, inspired by activist Ralph Nader's idea to boost geographic literacy, and brought to life by industry leader Jack Dangermond, Esri president, to showcase the societal impact of spatial technology.
Today, GIS has become more than a fancy digital map; it's an essential tool. At SDDOT, we use GIS and web-based tools every day to access and work with data. This technology helps us move from reacting to problems to anticipating them, supporting our mission of "Better Lives Through Better Transportation."

National Walk, Bike, & Roll to School Day

Several DOT Staff members across the state participated at local schools for the National Walk, Bike, and Roll to School Day on Wednesday, Oct. 7, 2026.





Nicole Brooks' children (Research Senior Secretary, Pierre), Thea and Dylan; and Rayleen Rathbun's daughters (Air, Rail, & Transit Senior Secretary, Pierre), Addison and Lilith are pictured at the **Stanley County School**.

Earl Berg (Region Design Engineer); Brian Rogness (Transportation Planning Engineer); Chris Ott (Internal Services Program Manager); Steve Gramm (Planning Squad Engineering Manager); Levi Briggs (STIP Coordinator); Derek Ferwerda (Traffic Monitoring and Pavement Condition Engineer Manager); Sarah Wellner (Internal Control Officer); Derris Buus (Jefferson Elementary Principal); and Patrick Wellner (Bridge Design Engineer) volunteered at **Jefferson Elementary** in Pierre.





Members of the Yankton crew, **Darrik Delozier (Highway Maintenance Worker); Erik Lewandowski (Highway Maintenance Worker); and Tanya Liska (Senior Secretary)**, volunteered at **Gayville-Volin Elementary School**

Andy Kessler (Lead Highway Maintenance Worker, Tyndall); Dave Fischer (Lead Highway Maintenance Worker, Menno); and Tanya Liska (Senior Secretary, Yankton) volunteered at **Tripp-Delmont Elementary School**.





National Walk, Bike, & Roll to School Day



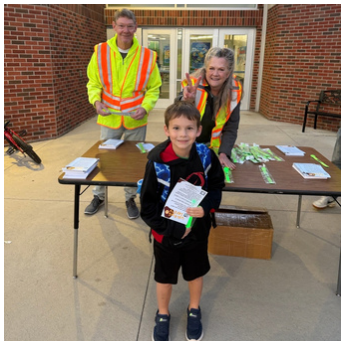
Phil Clements (Pavement Management Engineer); Dale Healey (Highway Safety Planning Engineer); Sheila Jandt (Bridge Cost Analyst); and Joanne Hight (Engineering Manager) volunteered at **Kennedy Elementary** in Pierre.



Leah DeMers, Kathryn Faubel (Project Delivery Coordinator), Julia Harkins (Senior Secretary), and Loren Abernathy (Surfacing Plans Project Engineer) volunteered at **St. Joseph's Elementary** in Pierre.







Scott Fuerst (Program Assistant); Jonathan Egge (Aberdeen Region Design Engineer); Jordon Kitts (Federal Funding Grants Specialist); Katrina Smith, Katrina Burchard (Transportation Planning Engineer); Margo McDowell (Transportation Research Engineer); Larry Dean (Planning Data Manager); and Doug Kinniburgh (Local Government Engineering Supervisor) all volunteered at **Buchannen Elementary** in Pierre.

Also pictured are **Doug Kinniburg with his grandkids: Myles, Townes, Lincoln, and Sturgill,** and **Terri Geigle's son, Grayden**.



Jerry Leonard (Lead Highway Maintenance Worker, Armour) and Travis Sparks (Highway Maintenance Supervisor, Armour) volunteered at **Wagner Elementary School** and posed with **Samantha Boehmer's 1st Grade Class.**



DOT in the Community

Touch-A-Truck

Mark Burger (Highway Maintenance Worker, Sioux Falls) and Ethan Huls (Highway Maintenance Worker, Sioux Falls, pictured) volunteered to work the **Sioux Falls Touch-a-Truck** event on Sept. 25, 2026, where roughly 400 people attended!

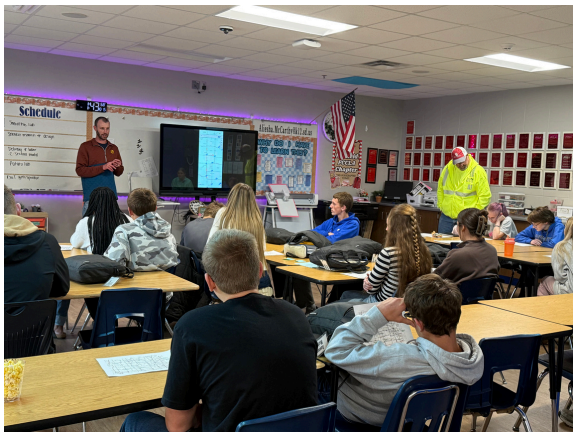
AGC Construction Camp





Mark Fox (Survey Crew Chief, Watertown) and Jeff Brink (Engineering Supervisor, Watertown) volunteered to show students at **Lake Area Tech** in Watertown how to properly mix concrete at the AGC Construction Camp held on Oct. 7, 2026.

Redfield High School Career Readiness Classroom Visit





Matt Dorfschmidt, Region Traffic Engineer Supervisor (Aberdeen), and Rodney Schweitzer, Highway Maintenance Supervisor (Redfield), visited a Career Readiness class in Redfield on Oct. 15, 2026, to talk with students about future opportunities in transportation.

As part of our ongoing STEM outreach, the team introduced students to careers in engineering, construction, planning, and more — all while answering great questions about how South Dakota's transportation system works.

Snap. Submit. Vote.

Picture the SDDOT photo contest runs through **Friday, Nov. 13, 2026.**



Show us your best shot of life at the SDDOT!

Send in your favorite SDDOT-themed photo. All photos are submitted and voted on by staff, so you're part of the whole process.

Examples could include a picturesque sunset with equipment in the foreground or an overhead view of a construction zone.

Submit your entry **here** or scan the QR code in the graphic.

Full details are available on the Intranet under "**Picture the SDDOT**."

Department Impact Award Program

What are Impact Awards?
Impact Awards recognize any SDDOT employee or team who make a positive difference through their teamwork, innovation, leadership, or exceptional service.

Anyone can submit a nomination for a full-time or part-time coworker or team who makes a noticeable impact at the SDDOT.

Learn More:
Full details and nomination tips are available here: **Impact Award Informational Flyer**

All nominations must be submitted by December to be considered. Click on the graphic to access the nomination form.



Kudos Board



Make someone's day and give thanks to a coworker by posting a "shout out" on the **Kudos Board** on the Intranet.

October New Hires:

John Beck, Transportation Specialist II, Pierre
Richard Hoops, Highway Maintenance Worker, Britton
Michael Wurtz, Highway Maintenance Worker, Highmore

October Promotions/Lateral Position Updates:

Dylan Ridgway, Highway Maintenance Worker, Deadwood
Kyle Rolf, Lead Highway Maintenance Worker, Rapid City
John Iverson, Engineering Manager I (Structural Team Lead Engineer), Sioux Falls
Todd Benzel, Lead Highway Maintenance Worker, Hot Springs
Chad Shull, Highway Maintenance Worker, Rapid City
Tyler Kennedy, Highway Maintenance Worker, Pierre
James Blaha, Lead Highway Maintenance Worker, Buffalo
Taylor Brusven, Strategic Communications Coordinator, Brookings

October Longevity:

Chris Kruger, Operations Review Specialist – 20 years (Central Office – Ops. Support)
Jon Suomala, Operations Traffic Engineer – 20 years (Central Office/Rapid City – Ops. Support)
Brandon Riss, Road Design Engineering Manager – 20 years (Central Office/Sioux Falls - Road Design)
Jordon Kitts, Federal Funding and Grants Specialist – 30 years (Central Office – Proj. Dev.)
Kyle Lewis, Highway Maintenance Worker – 35 years (Belle Fourche Area)
Brad Cox, Highway Maintenance Worker – 35 years (Sioux Falls Area)
Larry Dean, Planning Data Manager – 40 years (Central Office – Proj. Dev.)

Miles of Service Recognitions:

Jordon Kitts (Federal Funding and Grants Specialist) received his 30-year longevity pin and plaque. Pictured are **Mark Leiferman (Project Development Program Manager**); **Steve Gramm (Planning Squad Engineering Manager);** Jordon Kitts; and **Mike Behm (Director of Planning and Engineering**).



Miles of Service Recognitions:



Monte Waltman (Sr Construction Technician, Custer) received his 30-year longevity pin and plaque from **Tim Wicks (Project Engineering Supervisor, Custer)**.



Robert Woolridge (Lead Highway Maintenance Worker - Sign & Striping Crew, Aberdeen) received his 25-year longevity pin from **Matt Dorfschmidt (Region Traffic Engineer, Aberdeen).**



Mindy Hubert (ROW Appraiser, Rapid City) received her 20-year longevity pin from **Ken Brilz (ROW Appraisal Manager, Rapid City).**



Justice Jennings (Highway Maintenance Worker, Presho) received his 10-year longevity pin from **Jim Lolley (Highway Maintenance Supervisor, Murdo)** and **Trent Hanson (Lead Highway Maintenance Worker, Presho).**

Retirements:



Steve Rhoades (Equipment Shop Foreman, Mitchell) retired on Oct. 8, 2026, after over 37 years of service! Steve received his "Executive Proclamation for Steve Rhoades Day" from **Craig Smith (Division Director, Pierre), Steven Weisz (Region Operations Engineer, Mitchell), and Travis Dressen (Sioux Falls Region Engineer)**. Congratulations on your well-deserved retirement, Steve!

Merlin Bennett, Highway Maintenance Worker, retired on Oct. 23, 2026, after 12 years with the SDDOT. Congratulations, Merlin! Your dedication has truly made a difference - enjoy this new adventure.

New Family Members . . .



Alice Esther Iverson was born on Sept. 23, 2026, weighing 5 lbs 13 oz and 18.5 inches long.

Alice is the daughter of **Peter Iverson (Pierre Assistant Region Bridge Engineer) and his wife, Emma**.



John Reed Soukup was born on Oct. 9, 2026, to **Rebecca Soukup (Marketing & Communications Specialist, Yankton) and her husband, Andrew.** He was 8 lbs 5 oz and 21 inches in long.

In Sympathy . . .



Sympathy is extended to **Jared Fosheim (Highway Maintenance Supervisor, Phillip)** and his family for the passing of his mother, **Judy Fosheim**.

Judy passed away on Tuesday, Oct. 6, 2026, in the comforts of her home in Midland. Funeral services were held on Monday, Oct. 19, 2026, at the St. William Catholic Church in Midland. Link to Obituary.



Sympathy is extended to **Rick Gordon (Construction Engineer Manager, Pierre)** and his family for the passing of his father, **Bill Gordon.**

Bill passed away on Tuesday, Oct. 21, 2026. Visitation services will be held on Saturday, Nov. 14, 2026, at 1:30 p.m - 2:30 p.m. Funeral Services will be held on Saturday, Nov. 14, 2026, at 2:30 p.m. Both services will be held at Pierre First United Methodist Church.