



MID-DAKOTA RURAL WATER SYSTEM

Quality On Tap!

January 2021 | Volume 16, Issue 3

**FROM ETHANOL
TO HAND SANITIZER**

BUILDING CONNECTIONS
Soil Health Mentor Network

NRWA
Strengthening State Associations
& Rural Communities

FROM THE MANAGER

Scott Gross, General Manager
Mid-Dakota Rural Water System, Inc.



The first comment I hear around the coffee pot in the morning is; “where has the summer gone and I’m not ready for the cold white stuff.” I’m sure this statement is true at every coffee table. Mid-Dakota had a very busy and productive summer, despite all the COVID concerns. Mid-Dakota’s mainline project has all the pipe in the ground and working on final cleanup and final punch-list to finish this phase of the project, all in all it is my opinion that the contractors did a great job. LandMark continues to work on Mid-Dakota’s new watertower west of Highmore. It will be erected this year and wired and painted next year to be put into service fall 2021. The Ree Heights switch over to individual users was also completed this summer with that contractor also doing a great job. Deric Diede (Mid-Dakota’s newest hire and Hookup Specialist) had a busy year learning all the ins and outs of his position while installing almost 70 new hookups, I know the list continues to grow and he will continue to install as weather permits. With the completion of the mainline improvements and continuing to install new hookups, Mid-Dakota will need to turn its attention to our Water Treatment Plant to make sure we will be able to produce clean potable water to fulfill our contracted customers. Mid-Dakota has approved a pilot study to help decide what direction will be the best solution to keep growing into the future. This process takes time and needs to be started sooner than later to stay ahead of water demand.

Mid-Dakota held its 27th Annual Meeting of the Membership on October 15, 2020. We again hosted the meeting using the “come & go” (open-house) format. 121 members and guests visited our offices, which is down a little from previous years. But considering everything that is happening and how busy everyone is, it was a good turnout. Each year following the meeting, Mid-Dakota staff compiles an “after-action” report. We try to look at what went right, what went wrong, what can we do differently etc. The end goal is that we want to conduct an annual meeting that entices a lot of people to attend, which is fun and valuable to the people who do attend.

This year, Mid-Dakota offered an Early Retirement Incentive Plan to qualified employees. Two employees will take advantage of this plan. Susan Hargens (26 years of service) and Al Thomas (16.5 years of service) will be retiring and their last official day of employment will be March 15, 2021. At this time, I personally would like to give a big heart felt thank you of my appreciation to their dedication and years of service to Mid-Dakota. If you see either of these two in passing please let them know your appreciation of their service also.

Quality On Tap!

Published by:

Mid-Dakota Rural Water System, Inc.
608 W. 14th St., P.O. Box 318
Miller, South Dakota 57362-0318

Office: 605-853-3159 • Fax: 605-853-3245

Office Hours: 8 a.m.-5 p.m., M-F

Email: office@mdrws.com

Website: www.mdrws.com

Rural Directors

Steve Robbenolt District 1
Leslie Brown District 2
Scott Oligmueller District 3
Lennis Fagerhaug District 4
Rick Benson District 5

Municipal Directors

Dwight Gutzmer At Large
Jim McGillvrey At Large
Jeff McGirr Huron
Darrell Raschke Huron

Office Staff - Miller, SD

Scott Gross General Manager
Connie Aymar Financial Manager
Jamie Brueggeman Office Administrator
Sandy Holt Customer Accounts Specialist
Tammy Oligmueller Customer Accounts Specialist
Kristen Arthur Customer Accounts Specialist

Member Services Staff - Miller, SD

Susan Hargens Member Services Manager
DeAnn Hargens Customer & Legal Records Specialist

Operations Staff / Water Treatment - Pierre, SD

Bill Sarringar Water Treatment Plant Manager
Mike Polak Water Treatment Plant Specialist
Steve Laird Water Treatment Plant Specialist

Water Transmission & Distribution - Miller, SD

Lorin Johnson Operations Manager
Terrek Butterfield Operations Administrator
Calvin Kindle Water Distribution Specialist
Scott Manning Water Distribution Specialist
Michael Nicholson Main Transmission Pipeline Specialist
Wayne Ruhnke O & M Specialist
Mike McCready Small Systems Specialist
Deric Diede Hookup Specialist

Pierre, SD

Shane Bothwell Water Distribution Specialist
Ron Ramsey Water Distribution Specialist
Al Thomas Water Distribution Specialist
Randy Bauer Electrical Specialist

Gettysburg, SD

Gary Tobin Water Distribution Specialist

Wessington Springs, SD

Mark Gran Water Distribution Specialist

Huron, SD

Troy Dorris Water Distribution Specialist
Scott Perry Water Distribution Specialist

Consultants

Bartlett & West Engineers
May, Adam, Gerdes & Thompson – Law Office
Endorf, Lurken, Olson & Co. – CPA

 **STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION:** In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA’s TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Two Mid-Dakota Employees Taking Retirement

Greek Philosopher Heraclitus of Ephesus (c.500 BC) has been quoted as saying “change is the only constant in life.” Mid-Dakota is no exception to this observation with changes constantly being made to improve the system and employees coming and going. An early retirement plan was offered and two employees who qualified accepted the offer. Alan “Al” Thomas and Susan Hargens will be retiring from Mid-Dakota on the 15th of March in 2021.

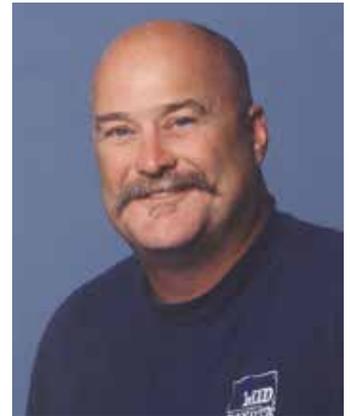
Al has been an employee with the company since July of 2004. He was hired as a Water Distribution (80%)/Water Treatment (20%) Operator for several years until his job turned to a fulltime Water Distribution position later on. Al had worked for the City of Pierre Water Department several years before coming to Mid-Dakota. He was awarded the SD Water & Wastewater Price Rees award in 2010 and the Siger Bies award in 2015. Both are longevity awards taking into account his employment at both Pierre and Mid-Dakota. Al will be taking a lot of water and wastewater experience with him with certifications for a Class 4 Water Distribution, a Class 3 in Water Treatment, and a Class 2 in Wastewater.

Al and his wife, Yvette, plan to spend more time with family and do some traveling. He is looking forward to continuing work on his 24-year remodeling project and finding new adventures.

Retirement from a job of 26 years is going to be bittersweet for Susan as she will be starting a new phase of her life. She testified at hearings on the need for a rural water system and signed the Articles of Incorporation for Mid-Dakota Rural Water System, Inc. in 1987. She served on the board as Chairman until she was hired to work as a Field Representative in 1995. Mid-Dakota has meant a great deal to her over the years and it has been fulfilling to see how the corporation has progressed over time. Susan commented, “I love the rural water community and regard the people involved as a second family. I will really miss



Susan Hargens



Al Thomas

being actively engaged in the day-to-day happenings at Mid-Dakota. I wish everyone at Mid-Dakota the best as I leave to enjoy my retirement.” In 1998 she received the Upper Missouri Water Association’s Award in recognition of distinguished service in the field of water development; in 2004 she received the SD Association of Rural Water Systems Office Person of the Year award, and in 2006 she was awarded the SD Business & Professional Women Employee of the Year award. While an employee of Mid-Dakota, she served as SD State President of Business and Professional Women, she served on the Miller City Council and was SD Water & Wastewater President in 2003-2004.

She will still have plenty to do since she and her husband, Dale, have a farming operation, rental properties and the racetrack in Miller. She is looking forward to spending time with their eleven grandchildren, traveling, doing crafts and quilting and just relaxing with family and friends.

Mid-Dakota wishes both Al and Susan the very best for their retirements.



Mid-Dakota Operators Recognized

Every year the SD Water and Wastewater Association recognizes operators for their years of service. The Price-Rees Award recognizes the operators for 20 years of service in the water industry. This year the award was given to Water Distribution Specialist Scott Manning and Distribution Operations Manager Lorin Johnson (pictured to the left).

The Siger-Bies Award recognizes operators for 30 years of service in the water industry. This year the award was given to Water Distribution Specialist Ron Ramsey and Water Treatment Plant Manager Bill Sarringar.

The William Aisenbrey Award for Distribution Specialist of the year was given to Scott Manning (pictured to the right) for his efforts with Ree Heights and the Mainline Projects. Scott was responsible for obtaining easements and contacting landowners throughout construction.

Mid-Dakota would like to congratulate them on their accomplishments, thank them for their service and wish them continued success. We are very fortunate to have them on our staff.



How many snowflakes ❄️ can you find in this picture?

SNOW MUCH FUN!

Did you know that Snowflakes are essentially ice covered specks of dirt?! In many snowflakes, the water vapor crystallizes on a particle in the air - such as dust - when the water vapor in the air drops below the freezing point and the vapor loses an amount of energy. This process is called “the heat of crystallization.” A similar process forms ice, except that the water is a solid, not a vapor. (Snow can also be compressed into ice as happens in glaciers and avalanches). It is probably true that no two snowflakes are exactly alike given that it can take up to 100,000 water vapor droplets to make each snowflake. It is highly improbable that all 100,000 droplets of one snowflake could arrange themselves exactly the same way as another.

FIND THE DIFFERENCES!



Hint: there are 7 differences

Q: What do snowmen eat for lunch?

A: Icebergers!



How can You capture Your own Snowflakes?

If you want to capture snowflakes of your own to observe, you need the following:

- ❄️ a snowy day
- ❄️ a black piece of foam board or paper
- ❄️ a magnifying glass



Place the black paper or foam board outside, but out of the snow, for 15 – 20 minutes, or until snowflakes can land on it and not melt immediately. When the paper is cold enough place the paper on a level surface or hold it carefully where snowflakes can fall on it. Observe the collected snowflakes with the magnifying glass quickly before they disappear.

FROM ETHANOL TO HAND SANITIZER

POET Switches Production During COVID-19 Battle

By Randy Dockendorf

Reprinted with permission from the Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan

Sioux Falls-based POET – the world’s largest producer of biofuels – has produced an allnatural, ethanol-based sanitizer to tackle the severe local shortage.

For POET, the production switch to hand sanitizer came at a good time for the Scotland and Chancellor plants. Fuel consumption, including ethanol, had fallen because of social distancing during the pandemic. More people were remaining at home or taking fewer, shorter trips.

MAKING A DECISION

POET founder and CEO Jeff Broin said he knew his company could ease challenges created by the hand sanitizer shortages, according to a company press release.

“Frontline workers are facing risks every day to keep our communities safe from COVID-19, and we all need to do our part,” he said. “At POET, we saw an opportunity to help our community while living our mission – to be good stewards of the Earth by converting renewable resources to valuable goods – and created an all-natural ethanol-based sanitizer product.”

POET engineers created an additional distillation process for corn, which results in pharmaceutical-grade ethanol. The higher-grade product is then blended into a sanitizer product.

“The effort required the company to adjust its manufacturing processes at biorefineries, work around the clock and lean into its strengths in engineering and operations,” according to the press release.

“The resulting product is pharmaceutical grade, meets FDA (Food and Drug Administration) guidelines and has been verified by toxicologists as safe for human health. In fact, purified ethanol has been used in hand sanitizers and disinfectants for years before the COVID pandemic.”

Once the process fell into place, the company’s Scotland and Chancellor ethanol plants shifted gears to produce the hand sanitizer. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that sanitizer contain at least 60% alcohol. However, POET’s supply surpasses that standard as it contains 80% alcohol.

Once the product was finalized, POET partnered with Sioux Falls-based companies Senproco Inc. and Cimarron to package and label the sanitizer for consumer use.

Another major player came in with the sanitizer’s bottles and labels: Groomer’s Choice, a Sioux Falls-based national leader in wholesale pet grooming supplies. Thanks to this new partnership, the team at Groomer’s Choice can produce upwards of 10,000 16-ounce bottles each day.

MAKING CONTRIBUTIONS

Once production was up and running, POET began distributing

sanitizer to front-line workers. The company donated 220 gallons of hand sanitizer to help tackle the severe local shortage. The initial donations of about 10,000 bottles went to a wide variety of front-line workers.

An initial donation went to Pioneer Memorial Hospital and Health Services in Viborg. The facility provides health services to many of the POET team members who work at the Chancellor plant.

POET donated 220 gallons of sanitizer, produced at its Chancellor plant, to the City of Sioux Falls. In addition, POET donated 780 bottles, each 16 ounces, to the South Dakota Health Care Coalition. These groups then distributed the sanitizer to nursing homes, assisted living facilities, firefighters, emergency medical services (EMS) and other frontline workers.

The additional supply of sanitizer has helped South Dakota as it reaches its anticipated peak of the coronavirus, said Lynn DeYoung, executive director of the South Dakota Health Care Coalition.

“This is another reminder of the great partnerships that we have in South Dakota,” DeYoung said. “POET saw a need and became innovative to protect health care workers, EMS, fire, law and critical infrastructure personnel.”

Donations were also shared with frontline workers and healthcare systems across the state seeking more hand sanitizer for their use. Hospitals have worked to contain the virus, including their work with COVID-19 patients. Nursing homes and assisted living facilities have been hit hard by the virus, which has proven fatal for the elderly and those with medical conditions or compromised immune systems.

FUTURE DEMAND

POET released figures reflecting the dramatic increase in demand for hand sanitizers. Adobe Analytics, an agency that monitors E-commerce transactions for the top 80 online retailers, reported the December-January demand for hand sanitizer jumped more than 1,000%. Nielsen, a company that collects sales data from point of sale scanners, reported hand sanitizer sales in the United States were up 73% in February alone.

POET Vice President Rod Pierson said the company wanted to create superior product.

“Our frontline workers deserve nothing but the best,” he said. “We’re proud of what we’ve been able to create and the impact it will have in protecting the public.”

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, the nation is likely to see continued demand for sanitizer products. Broin has indicated his company looks to remain in the sanitizer market.

The commitment to the hand sanitizer product isn’t just a business decision, Pierson said.

“It is crucial that we prevent shortages of PPE (personal protective equipment) as we saw when this pandemic began,” he said.





Building Connections

Soil Health Mentor Network

By Janelle Atyeo for South Dakota Natural Resources Conservation Service

When your doctor prescribes a new daily regimen or a major surgery to improve your health, it's common practice to turn to an expert and seek a second opinion. When setting out to improve the health of your crop, range and pastureland, there's a resource for finding advice from other producers who've made the same journey.

A directory of agriculture and local foods producers throughout the state has been assembled with South Dakota people who are ready and willing to talk with other farmers and ranchers as they navigate through the process of building soil health and using regenerative practices. We work closely with the SD Soil Health Coalition, SD Grassland Coalition and South Dakota's Conservation Districts with the Mentor Network. As people are learning and asking questions, NRCS and our partners help connect people with others who have the experience to address the question.

"Building Connections" is a 40-page directory that lists volunteer mentors by county, giving their contact information along with a synopsis of their soil health-building experience. Some have tried diverse crop rotations or full season cover crops. Others are experts in rotational grazing, multi-species livestock, or managing native grasses.

Unique to South Dakota, there are more than 160 mentors in all, with at least one in every county with expertise ranging from large operations to average size acreages to small local foods

producers and gardeners. The Natural Resources Conservation Service spans South Dakota and started organizing the group through the USDA's Earth Team network in 2013. Several gardeners, Master Gardeners, and small acreage folks have joined the network.

Doug Sieck is one of three producers under the Walworth County listing, ready to share his experience with cover crop

rotations and grazing, no-till, soil biology and more. More experienced producers helped him out when he was first trying some unconventional management styles. "Being part of the mentor network is a way to give back," he said.

Sieck remembers when he was first planting some of his crop land back to grass and alfalfa. He made the mistake of putting hungry cows in the alfalfa, and he lost one cow and others got sick.

The experience could very well have soured him on the practice and made him abandon his grazing plans altogether, but instead, he reached out to others who had been grazing alfalfa/grass combinations. They warned him against letting hungry cows loose on the mix and told him how the practice was a success for them. It gave him the confidence to keep going.

Now he's counseled others – most recently about grazing in standing corn. It's something he lauds as a great way to adapt to less-than-ideal conditions. When wind blows down a field of corn and makes it impossible to harvest, producers might fear it's a total loss, but the crop can become fodder for grazing herds.

"When we get curve balls, it's nice to have a reference from



people who can help us adapt,” Sieck said.

He hopes the mentor network will give producers the reassurance they need to try new things.

“It’s experiences shared farmer-to-farmer and rancher-to-rancher,” said Colette Kessler, public affairs officer for NRCS South Dakota. “The peer network is really the best place for a real-life example of how things really work. They’re living it on a daily basis.”

Kessler and her team got the idea for the “Building Connections” directory after working with producers across the state, helping them share their conservation success stories. They spoke highly of how their soil practices were working, and Kessler saw the value of making that information available to others interested in doing similar things. “The network is an important sounding board for how to adapt these principles to your operation,” she said. “Changes are not always easy or quick, such as transitioning fields from tillage to a no-till system, so finding good coaches certainly helps. Sometimes, conversations about smaller tweaks such as modifying equipment can be very timely,” she commented.

The mentor network was built with the help of several organizations whose experts provide technical advice for resource management. Along with NRCS, the South Dakota Grassland Coalition, the South Dakota No-Till Association, the South Dakota Soil Health Coalition, the South Dakota State University Extension and South Dakota’s Conservation Districts are involved. Producers interested in joining the mentor network can contact any of the partnering organizations.

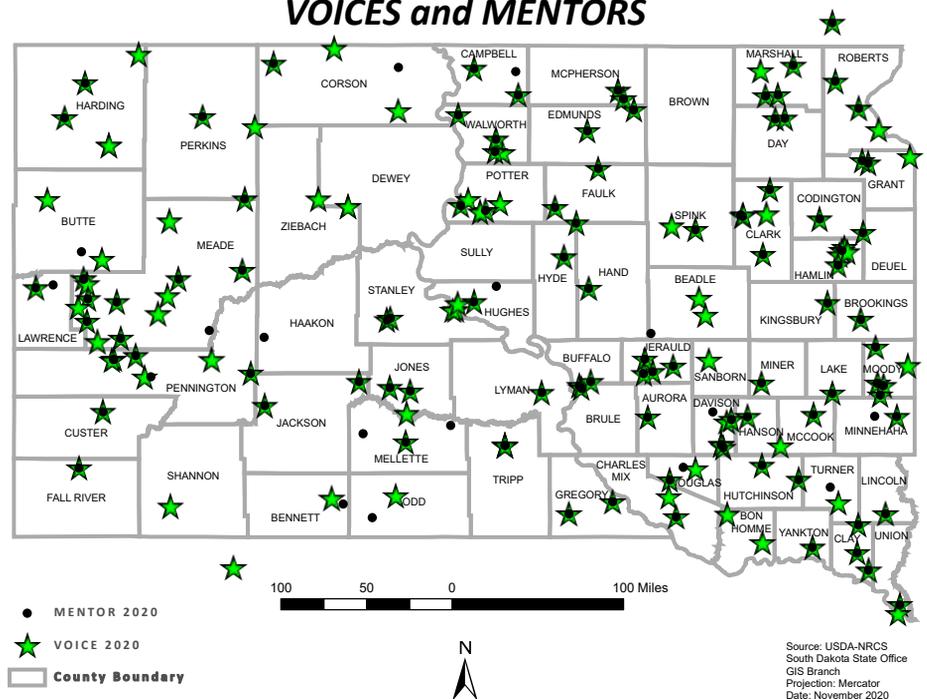
The network is free. There is no charge to contact or get involved with the mentors in the directory. Anyone can receive the directory by sending an email to colette.kessler@usda.gov or call (605) 352-1200 to receive the publication in the mail. Directories are available in every county at local USDA Service Centers with the NRCS or conservation district.

“The farmers and ranchers are all volunteers who simply want to help their peers with questions,” Kessler said.

Soil health experts, agronomists and range specialist have a great understanding of soil health principles and the microbiology that makes healthy soil function like it should. But it’s the producers with boots on the ground who have an intimate understanding of how it works in practice.

“They’ve made mistakes. They’ve learned through doing it rather than just in theory,” said Bryan Jorgensen, a member of the mentor network who has long been incorporating no-till and cover crops on his family’s ranch near Ideal in southern South Dakota.

SOUTH DAKOTA VOICES and MENTORS



He doesn’t discount the expert advice and the researchers or university extension, NRCS and other groups are doing. It’s the partnerships between researchers and producers that give them the ammunition to help other people, he emphasized.

Jorgensen also doesn’t discount the value of making mistakes. They’re part of the learning process and serve as useful examples for others. Jorgensen encourages anyone with success stories in regenerative agriculture to become part of the mentor network.

“We feel it’s important to spread the good word about soil health. We’re passionate about soil health, and we want people to improve the soil,” he said.

As a statewide service, NRCS South Dakota has organized the network of mentors who are willing to talk other producers through adopting regenerative practices such as transitioning away from tillage, use of cover crops or rotational grazing. Producers can directly contact a mentor and their conversations are private.

The Mentor Network is a free service available to anyone by contacting your local Natural Resources Conservation Service, Conservation District, the South Dakota Grassland Coalition or the South Dakota Soil Health Coalition. A newly updated version of the "Building Connections" Mentor Network publication is now available. Request your free copy of the booklet today!



The National Rural Water Association

STRENGTHENING STATE ASSOCIATIONS & RURAL COMMUNITIES

The National Rural Water Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to training, supporting, and promoting the water and wastewater professionals that serve small and rural communities across the country.

NRWA provides training and technical assistance through 49 affiliated State Rural Water Associations that currently have over 31,000 utility system members. Rural Water training and technical assistance covers every aspect of operating, managing and financing water and wastewater utilities through multiple federally funded programs. NRWA programs generally focus on assisting small and rural communities that serve less than 10,000 people. However, State Associations work in different ways with all sized systems, with many large cities demonstrating their support for Rural Water as members.

The NRWA Circuit Rider Program is made up of 49 State Rural Water Associations (CT/RI are combined as one) and Puerto Rico, totaling 147 Circuit Riders in the U.S. These Circuit Riders provide hands-on training and technical assistance to small, rural water systems on an everyday basis, 24/7. Personal, professional assistance is at the heart of the Circuit Rider program. On-site help is delivered when and where a rural community needs it.

“Circuit Riders have provided technical assistance more than 700,000 times to help rural systems and communities since 2009,” said Rita Clary, NRWA Circuit Rider Program Manager.

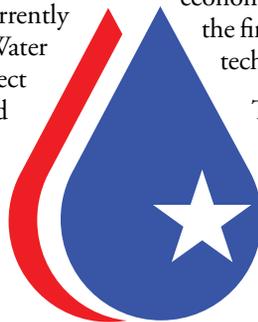
The purpose of the Wastewater Program is to protect the nation’s multi-billion-dollar investment in rural and small municipal water/wastewater systems by providing on-site technical assistance,

which ensures cost-effective operations and adequate income for both operations and debt service within each state. There are 65 dedicated and talented Wastewater Technicians throughout the country working through their State Rural Water Association. The primary goal of these technicians is to assist small, rural and economically challenged communities to enhance and maintain the financial sustainability of their wastewater systems through technical assistance and/or training.

The Apprenticeship Program provides standards and guidelines to State Associations so they can build their own program to hire and train apprentices in their state. Through these programs, apprentices can earn while they learn and emerge with a secure career as a water or wastewater operations specialist. With a declining workforce, this program has proved essential to provide future water and wastewater operators.

The NRWA Source Water Protection Program is built around small water utilities, local businesses, agriculture, government, and other groups working together to develop and implement strategies to protect their drinking water sources. This cooperative program has made significant progress in reducing point source pollution from industrial, agricultural, municipal, and even household sources. The program has also made progress in the challenging area of nonpoint source pollution.

NRWA’s Energy Efficiency Technical Assistance Program is designed to promote energy efficient practices in small water and wastewater systems. Funded through a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Utilities Service, the program performs energy assessments, recommends energy efficient



NRWA™

practices and technologies, and provides support following recommendations. Technical support includes assisting with presentations to governing boards, accessing financing, training, and developing documentation.

The USDA loan and grant program helps very small, financially distressed rural communities extend and improve water and waste treatment facilities that serve local households and businesses. This assistance supports infrastructure improvements, business development, housing, community services such as schools, public safety and health care, and high-speed internet access in rural areas. It can be used to finance drinking water, stormwater drainage and waste disposal systems for rural communities with 10,000 or fewer residents.

The Safe Drinking Water Act Compliance Assistance Program is designed to strengthen the technical capacity in small water systems, ultimately resulting in the reduction of the number of systems out of compliance with health-based standards. The Training Specialists provide technical assistance in compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act to small public water system personnel by working directly with them on-site at their system.

Training Specialists use NRWA's nationwide pool of expertise to provide diagnostic and troubleshooting assistance for operational and compliance-related problems.

The National Rural Water Association also creates multiple public relations and outreach campaigns to promote a positive image of the water and wastewater industry to the public. Americans often take for granted that they have the highest quality, most affordable water, piped directly to their homes and businesses. This level of quality is accomplished because of dedicated professionals that take pride in their hard work, education, and service to the community. We also provide resources and information on current issues in the industry to our State Associations like the COVID-19 pandemic, PFAS, and Disaster Response during natural disasters.

Clean drinking water and safe wastewater treatment are vital to the health and safety of Americans. With the support of our State Associations, NRWA strives to protect the quality of life in America, while supporting the grassroots efforts required to help rural communities thrive. For more information, please visit www.nrwa.org.



BDM RURAL WATER SYSTEM

In 1976, the need became apparent for a rural water system in southwestern Marshall County and later in adjoining townships in Day and Brown counties. The Marshall County Extension Agent was instrumental in holding informational meetings and designing the BDM information sheet questionnaire. It was completed at the collection of the \$30 good intention fee by the Steering Committee over the next two years. A letter stated, “The BDM Rural Water Steering Committee was organized in spring 1977. Since that time, it has sought every available means to bring the project to pass. The total project cost was projected to be \$5,300,000, which increased to \$5,900,000 due to some of the proposed new users being in fringe areas outside the original proposed boundaries, necessitating more miles of pipeline and thus more expense.” The initial steering committee consisted of seven very dedicated and forward-thinking members. By December of 1981, the steering committee had grown to 27 committed, resilient, devoted, and persistent members. As I read through files of notes and letters of correspondence, it was evident that many disappointing events occurred to justify the committee to throw in the towel on this endeavor. However, they continued to work through every challenge and obstacle they were confronted with, to look for that next ray of hope to bring good quality water to the rural farms and towns in Northeast South Dakota. For this, we are forever grateful for those who went before us with determination and foresight to build BDM Rural Water into what it is currently. We today, in the farms and rural towns of South Dakota, are the beneficiaries of the seeds of rural water systems that were planted decades ago by our parents and grandparents.

The Preliminary Engineering Facility Study for the BDM Rural Water System was dated April 25, 1979. The report stated it “consists of a summary of the study made to determine the feasibility of constructing and operating a rural water system for Brown County, Day County, and Marshall County South Dakota. The study comprised of individuals located in an area including eight townships in the eastern part of Brown County, four townships in the northwestern part of Day County, and 12 townships in Marshall County. The area lies mostly in the James Basin, bounded on the west by the James River and east by the Coteau Des Prairies’ numerous lakes. The area is approximately 25 miles wide and 40 miles long along an axis running northeast to southwest. There are 526 members (who have paid a \$30 good intention fee) constituting more than 3,500 persons. Of the total membership, 518 are farm or rural residences, three are residences in a small community, and 5 are towns. Those towns include Bath, Groton, Pierpont, Langford, and Claremont, which have central distribution systems and are interested in purchasing water on a bulk basis.”

A letter dated June 16, 1980, explained the situation to the South Dakota national congressional delegation. “BDM was organized in 1977 (steering committee), and 520 potential users paid good intention fees. They were projected for funding in 1981, but due to current and proposed reduction in funds, that date is very unlikely to be met, if at all.

The area is not densely populated, and therefore, any system has a relatively high cost per user. However, due to the lack of quantity and quality of water, it is of considerable significance to the area. Also, wells are not cheap! Most wells are artesian and cost from \$8,000 to \$12,000. That is for water that is too high in dissolved solids to meet public health water quality standards. This causes continuing problems with diarrhea. Some of the shallower wells have problems with nitrates to such a degree that it can be deadly for infants and small animals to drink the water.

Many people haul water to drink and for household use. The livestock has a reduced rate of gain, causing economic loss. Plumbing corrodes, water heaters last about five years, and in some cases, clothes can’t be washed with the water because of stains and rust, so they have to be washed in town.”

On November 5, 1981, it was decided that the Brown Day Marshall Rural Water System, Inc. should be formed as a non-profit corporation. On December 3, 1981, the newly formed corporation’s directors approved the Articles of Incorporation. The Articles of Incorporation for BDM Rural Water System, Inc. were filed on December 22, 1981.

The first ray of hope was on December 3, 1982, where the South Dakota Dept of Water & Natural Resources approved a grant for \$650,000. On April 11, 1983, FmHA approved a loan for \$2,880,000 at 7.125%, and BDM was becoming a reality.

The original system was designed for 406 customers in Brown, Day, and Marshall County. This was to be completed in three sections. Bids for these three sections were advertised for bid opening on April 25, 1984. Section I was for 2,041,800 linear feet of 1.5 inch to 8-inch PVC water main and 8,339 linear feet of railroad and highway crossings with 406 water service meter assemblies. Section II was for a 100,000-gallon reservoir, pump house, filtration plant, and two 40,000-gallon reservoirs with pumps and controls. Section III was for two water supply wells and equipment. The three sections were awarded on May 14, 1984, and April 18, 1985, for \$3,215,148, which came from a combination of loans and grants. Interest increased as construction started in the summer of 1984 and took two years to complete, with the final project clean up in 1986. Almost 600 users were added in the initial phase.



BDM RURAL WATER SYSTEM

In 1996 BDM added a small expansion project, which added 45 users to the system. This project was a warmup to the project that was to take place in the next few years.

In 1999 construction began on the East Marshall project, which would add over 1,000 users in Marshall and Roberts counties. This project added several wells, reservoir capacity, and expanded the treatment plant. The project was completed in four phases, with completion in 2006.

In 2008-09 the Hecla expansion project started, which added 29 rural users and the community of Hecla.

The last two wells were added in 2012, which brought the total number of wells to eight, which provides the source water for the system today. BDM's source water is from the Middle-James aquifer. Water is stored and distributed from the water treatment plant and 14 reservoir sites with a total capacity of 2,860,000 gallons of storage. Stand-alone generators provide back-up power in case of electrical failures at the treatment plant and five reservoirs, with several mobile generators.

Today BDM serves 2,279 users with annual growth in users realized every year for the past five years. In addition to individual users, we currently provide bulk water to Amherst, Claremont, Langford, Pierpont, Britton, Veblen, Lake City, New Effington, Peever, and Hecla. The Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate is also provided bulk water at several of their housing sites and over 200 individual homes throughout the area. The system provides between 400,000,000 to 420,000,000 gallons of high-quality water to its' customers annually. The system has 1575 miles of PVC pipe varying from 1.5" to 14." This is equivalent to a pipeline running from New York City to Dallas, Texas. The system is 78% converted to an AMR reading system that provides valuable customer and BDM usage data in 5-minute increments. The system has a hydraulic model on 100% of the system that is updated annually. The SCADA system is in the final stages of being 100% replaced. For the past several years, the system has covered 100% of depreciation expense, with approximately \$5,000,000 invested in capital replacement over the past three years, of which \$2,000,000 is financed over ten years.

The system is directed by a seven-member board and a system attorney. The day to day staff includes a general manager, operations manager, office manager, and four operations specialists.



DIRECTORS:

- Torre Raap** – Chairman, State Association Director
- Kevin Deutsch** – Vice-Chairman
- Hal Treeby** – Secretary/Treasurer
- Don Ogren** – Director
- Terry Leonhardt** – Director
- Marc O'Brien** – Director
- Alex Suther** – Director

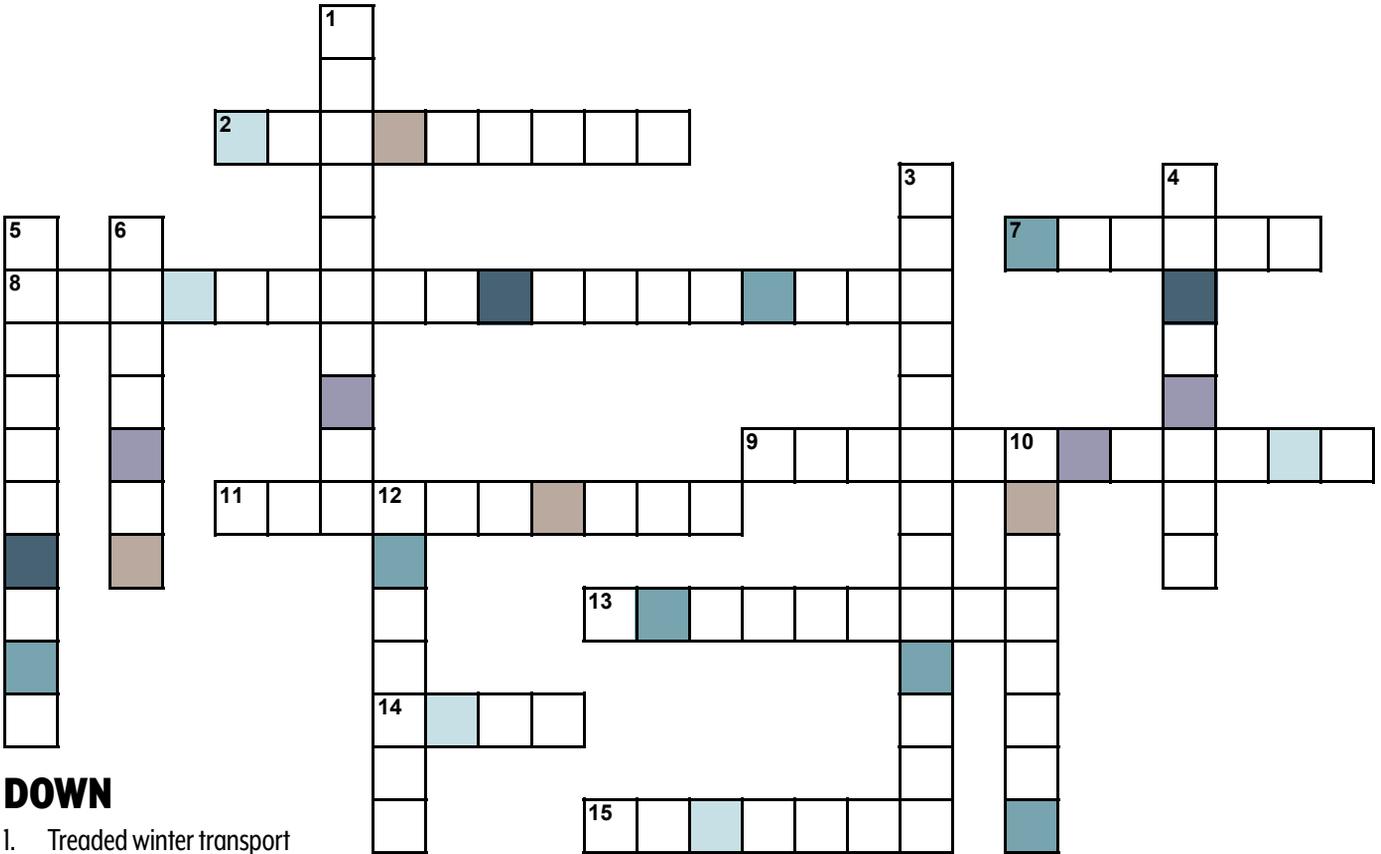
STAFF:

- Rodney Kappes** – General Manager
- Mark Hagen** – Operations Manager
- Darin Roehr** – Senior Operations Specialist
- Jim Hagen** – Operations Specialist
- Ryan Vrchota** – Operations Specialist
- Jared Marzolf** – Operations Specialist
- Shannon Wegleitner** – Office Manager

STATISTICS:

- Hookups:** 2,268
- Miles of Pipeline:** 1,600
- Water Source:** Middle James Aquifer
- Counties Served:** Brown, Day, Marshall, Roberts, Sargent (ND)
- Towns Served Individual:** Claire City, Houghton, Putney
- Towns Served Bulk:** Amherst, Pierpont, Langford, Claremont, Britton, Lake City, Veblen, New Effington, Peever, Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate, Hecla

Winter Sports



DOWN

1. Treaded winter transport
3. Graceful event scored on jumps, spins, and lifts (2 words)
4. Plummeting head-first down a steep and treacherous ice track on a tiny sled; considered the world's first sliding sport.
5. Arctic angling (2 words)
6. Racing toboggan
10. Best done with a tube, saucer, or flexible flyer
12. Iditarod racer

ACROSS

2. Rink game minus skates
7. Goal-oriented winter sport
8. A recreational sport in which people tour through wooded trails at a leisurely pace (3 words)
9. Racing on blades (2 words)
11. Pair skating's relative (2 words)
13. A board resembling a short, broad ski
14. Racing toboggan
15. Stone sliding

Enter to Win \$100

SCRAMBLE ANSWER



RULES: Use the colored squares in the puzzle to solve the word scramble above. Call your Rural Water System (See page 2 for contact information) or **enter online at www.sdarws.com/crossword.html** with the correct phrase by January 10, 2021 to be entered into the \$100 drawing.

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

Congratulations to Bonnie Rusche who had the correct phrase of "ATTITUDE DETERMINES DIRECTION" for October 2020.

2020 DRIVE-BY ANNUAL MEETING RECAP

Mid-Dakota Rural Water System, Inc. held its 28th Annual Meeting using a “Drive By” Format on the 15th day of October in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Members were invited to visit any one of the following offices between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. to attend the meeting: Miller Operations and Maintenance Center, Oahe Water Treatment Plant, Gettysburg Field Office, Huron Field Office and Wessington Springs Field Office. There was an attendance of approximately 121 members and guests.

Members were given a form which registered them to vote; confirmed they were given the annual report and the current year’s budget; approved the minutes from last year; and approved the reports of the chairperson and manager.

A total of 83 Members filled out forms to vote at the annual meeting. This does not include persons accompanying the Members to the meeting. Mid-Dakota’s by-laws no longer require a quorum to conduct an annual meeting; however, quorum requirement prior to 1999 was that a minimum of 25 Members had to be present.

Those attending the meeting were given a registration gift of a choice of a barbecue tong or spatula, a Mid-Dakota calendar, a copy of the annual report and Fiscal Year 2021 budget summary. In lieu of a meal, members were also given three \$5.00 Beef Bucks each which can be used in the grocery store or a restaurant. Members attending were given an opportunity to register for a cooler filled with South Dakota made products with a value of \$150.00 at the location where they attended the meeting. A Grand Prize which was a Cooler set with Beverage containers and \$100.00 Beef Bucks (\$500.00 value) was purchased and all who attended the meeting were given a chance to win. Winners of cooler and SD made products were: Andy Roeber, Tulare

(Miller office); Robert Verhelst, Huron (Huron office); Terry Scheel, Alpena (Wessington Springs office); Daniel Thomas, Gettysburg (Gettysburg office); and Joan Podhradsky, Pierre (Water Treatment Plant, Pierre). The winner of the cooler set and \$100.00 Beef Bucks was Karen Moeller, Wessington.

There wasn’t a contest for the expired director position in Rural Director District 2, so Leslie Brown retained her seat; no contest for the expired director position in Rural Director District 5, so Rick Benson retained his seat; the City of Huron re-appointed Darrell Raschke so he retained his seat.

The directors for the Mid-Dakota Rural Water System, Inc. board are as follows: Rural Director District #1 – Mr. Steve Robbennolt; Rural Director District #2 – Ms. Leslie Brown; Rural Director District #3 – Mr. Scott Oligmueller; Rural Director District #4 – Mr. Lennis Fagerhaug; Rural

Director District #5 – Mr. Rick Benson; Municipal Directors at Large – Mr. Dwight Gutzmer and Mr. Jim McGillvrey; Huron Directors – Mr. Jeff McGirr and Mr. Darrell Raschke.



THE NUMBER OF MEMBERS WHO FILLED OUT A VOTING FORM:

OFFICES	MEMBERS
Miller Operations & Maintenance Center	29
Oahe Water Treatment Plant	11
Gettysburg Field Office	5
Huron Field Office	34
Wessington Springs Field Office	4
Total Members Filling out a Voting Form	83



Daniel Thomas



Andy Roeber



Karen Moeller

Catching Leaks is a Team Effort

Leaks are costly and waste precious resources. When there are leaks on the system, the leak places a larger burden on the water treatment plant and pumps throughout the system. Chemicals used to treat the water are wasted causing higher costs and pumps run more using more electricity. Fortunately, when the Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) system was added to Mid-Dakota to aid in the gathering in of readings for the billing system, there was an added benefit for leak detection to both the customer and Mid-Dakota. Customers can sign up on the website www.mdrws.com to pull readings up from their accounts.

Readings are placed on “MegaNet” daily as long as readings are coming in on a daily basis and parameters can be set so the customer receives an alarm if more water has been used than they planned. To participate go to the website, hover over “Services” tab, “My Water Use” and click “Sign Up.” This will take the customer to the “MegaNet” site which has a form that must be completed and submitted.

This tool is a great asset to the customer, but there is still no better way to avoid water loss from a leak than to physically inspect your water facilities on a regular basis. Sometimes there are glitches in the system and we cannot guarantee that you will

be notified by MegaNet every time there is a large water use. Anything that is beyond the meter pit is your responsibility.



Staff monitors the AMR during weekdays and receives Continuous Flow Alerts and Critical Consumption Alerts, but that leak may have been running for several days before it even shows up. Only large water uses are acted upon by staff since there are so many accounts to monitor. It would take one or two additional staff to monitor, call and follow up on every alert that comes across the system. Some leaks flow 1-2 gallons per hour and may not even show up where the leak is

located for weeks until the water finally comes to the surface. The problem could be a leaky toilet in a seldom used bathroom. There are so many scenarios so it is best to check those water facilities to try to catch any water that may be going down the drain.

Mid-Dakota staff continues to do their part to try to help catch those leaks, but leak detection is a team effort. The customer is a very important part of the leak detection team. With everyone participating, expensive water leaks can be minimized and everyone can enjoy the benefits of a safe and dependable water supply.

*Merry Christmas &
Happy New Year*

From the Mid-Dakota Staff
and Board of Directors

No Mid-Dakota Rate Increases in 2021

The Mid-Dakota Rural Water System Board of Directors is pleased to inform the membership that there will be no water rate and minimum bill increases in 2021. Upon careful examination of the water sales and operational expenses, it was decided to leave the rates as they are for 2021 and reevaluate the rates again next year. Several factors helped the board to come to this decision.

There has been reduction in staff and higher salaried positions. The Data Acquisition Specialist position was not refilled when it was vacated. The Asset Manager position is no longer necessary and Terrek Butterfield is now the Operations Administrator. The directors and staff have been looking at different ways to make better use of the staff's time and energy.

2019 was an unusually wet year and it is believed that water sales were down because cattle had other places to go for water and lawn/garden watering was reduced due to timely rains. Because of this the board needed to increase the rate to compensate for the lower sales. This year has been drier and there has been an increase in water sales. This equates to more revenue so the board and staff feels the current rates should be sufficient for another year.

The final factor that came into play during rate evaluations was the financial strain the COVID-19 pandemic has placed on many of Mid-Dakota's customers and businesses. Since it is possible that the current rates should be sufficient for the next year, the board decided to stay with the same rates and give customers relief from rising costs. Next year, the income and expenses will be evaluated again to see if an adjustment needs to be implemented. The board realizes the hardships caused by the pandemic and feel that this is the right thing to do.



Rate Table Effective January 1, 2021

501 Residential 1-Unit	
\$43.00	per month minimum bill
\$5.00	per 1,000 gallons 1st 33,000
\$7.25	per 1,000 gallons over 33,000
502 Rural Household 2-Units	
\$53.00	per month minimum bill
\$5.00	per 1,000 gallons 1st 10,000
\$4.00	per 1,000 gallons next 56,000
\$7.25	Per 1,000 gallons over 66,000
504 Rural Household 4-Units	
\$71.00	per month minimum bill
\$5.00	per 1,000 gallons 1st 10,000
\$4.00	per 1,000 gallons next 122,000
\$7.25	per 1,000 gallons over 132,000
506 Rural Household 6-Units	
\$88.00	per month minimum bill
\$5.00	per 1,000 gallons 1st 10,000
\$4.00	per 1,000 gallons next 188,000
\$7.25	per 1,000 gallons over 198,000
511 Livestock	
\$31.00	per month minimum bill
\$4.00	per 1,000 gallons 1st 300,000 (per year)
\$5.00	per 1,000 gallons 301,000 to 700,000 (per year)
\$7.25	per 1,000 gallons over 700,000 (per year)
161, 162, 164, 165 Special Class I & II	
\$16.40	per GPM per month minimum bill
\$25.00	per GPM per month demand charge
\$0.55	per 1,000 gallons
163, 166 Special Class III	
\$4.69	per Pers (equiv) per month minimum bill
\$4.75	per Pers (equiv) per month demand charge
\$0.55	per 1,000 gallons up to contract amount
\$7.25	per 1,000 gallons over contract amount

1 Minimum & demand charges do not include any water.
 2 Livestock (511) water allocations are annual use, not monthly.
 3 "equivalent" population "person" = contract GPD ÷ 270

THANK YOU

Thank you very much for the cooler and SD products I won at your Annual Meeting. It was a really nice gift.

– Dan Thomas, Gettysburg

Mid-Dakota CALENDAR

The Mid-Dakota Rural Water System offices will be closed on the following dates:

December 24 – Christmas Eve (Closing at Noon)

December 25 – Christmas Day

January 1 – New Year's Day

February 15 – President's Day

In case of an emergency, please call the office
 Toll Free at 1-800-439-3079.

After Hours or Emergencies
 Call Mid-Dakota
 TOLL FREE at: 1-800-439-3079



For online bill paying:
www.mdrws.com





WATER MATTERS

Testing Your Well



Until fairly recently, most rural homes, farms and ranches in South Dakota depended on individual wells for water. In some cases, the quality and/or quantity of what came out of the well was not great, but it was at least better than the alternative - no water at all. The growth and expansion of regional water systems (insert your system name here!) has provided plentiful, high quality water for consumption by people and livestock, replacing the sometimes sketchy wells.

In some cases, the old well(s) were completely decommissioned and sealed (hopefully in full compliance with state law (see denr.sd.gov/des/wr/abandonedwell.aspx for details). In other cases, the wells were simply disconnected and abandoned. However, a large number of these otherwise functioning wells remain active, with use largely restricted to lawn and garden watering and other non-consumptive uses.

Why check the well water?

Just because you no longer use the old well all the time, it is important to check the quality of the water occasionally. On a hot day, it is tempting to take a quick drink of the cold water coming out of the garden hose. At the same time, running through the spray of lawn sprinklers is irresistible to small (and not so small) children. If the well is still functional, chances are it will be used.



What should I check for?

Bacteria and nitrate are the most common things to look for. Bacteria in the well suggests that the integrity of the well has been compromised. Most bacteria are harmless, but some can cause serious illness. Shallow wells are most susceptible to nitrate contamination where they leach into the ground water from excess nutrients and fertilizers. They can interfere with oxygen intake, particularly for very young children and those with compromised immune systems.

How do I check the water?

This is the easy part. The Public Health Laboratory at the South Dakota Department of Health has a program for just this situation. They provide sample bottles which include complete instructions for collecting and submitting water samples for testing. Fee information for the various tests is included. Bottles can be requested by calling (605) 773-3368, or by completing a form on-line at doh.sd.gov/lab/environmental/privatew.aspx. Sample bottles and instructions are also available from South Dakota State University Extension offices.



Back page content provided by:
East Dakota Water Development District
132B Airport Drive • Brookings, SD, 57006
(605) 688-6741 • <http://eastdakota.org>