

# progress

MAGAZINE

2021 | JANUARY - FEBRUARY

aberdeen-chamber.com

# **PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS...**

## **PLEASE WEAR A PROPER FACE COVERING THAT COVERS YOUR NOSE AND MOUTH.**

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**DO IT FOR OUR  
HEALTHCARE HEROES...  
AND TO KEEP OUR  
BUSINESSES OPEN.  
LET'S STOP THE  
SPREAD TOGETHER!**

**aberdeen**  
CHANGING THE GAME

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The Official Magazine of the Aberdeen Area Chamber of Commerce

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# Safety Checklist



Wear a mask or face shield that covers your nose & mouth when outside your house.



Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing. Use tissue or your flexed elbow.



If your hands are not visibly dirty, clean them frequently with alcohol-based hand sanitizer.



Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or more.



Seek medical care early if you have a cough, fever, or are experiencing difficulty breathing.



Practice social distancing by keeping a 6ft distance from others.

We are committed to your health and safety.  
Let's stop the spread together!



# 2021 Program of Work



**Gail Ochs**  
President, IOM,  
Aberdeen Area  
Chamber of  
Commerce

For 137 years, the Aberdeen Area Chamber of Commerce has been leading the way to a better Aberdeen region. We do this by convening innovative leaders, collaborating with like-minded organizations, advocating for positive change, and helping small businesses grow. We will focus our efforts in four key areas: Membership Service, Community Collaboration, Regional Advocacy, and Organizational Strength. The Chamber Board of Directors and staff have further defined these principles through the 2021 Program of Work:

## Membership Service

The Chamber will deliver programs and provide activities that increase and retain Chamber membership and add measurable value to Chamber membership investments.

- Coordinate seminars and/or webinars that help members adapt post-covid and to improve overall business performance
- Offer meetings and events in person and through online platforms to allow for greater participation
- Expand the number of EDGE events to assist members with employee retention
- Enhance communication of Chamber benefits, programs, meetings and events through social media platforms for maximum reach and effectiveness
- Conduct and continually improve events, programs and communications to maximize member benefits and increase attendance

## Community Collaboration

We will champion our community's successes and support issues and opportunities that will improve our community's quality of life while enhancing the growth and development of our region.

- Assist in the development of a strategic plan that encompasses efforts of the Chamber and other community organizations in order to better serve the Aberdeen area
- Develop new aberdeensd.com website and further implement new Aberdeen branding
- Expand shop local and #LIVELOCAL57401 marketing strategies and efforts
- Work with area human resource professionals on recruitment, relocation and engagement of new workforce
- Work with regional educators to develop and retain a workforce that contributes to the local and regional economy

- Implement events and awareness to promote our manufacturing base during October 2021
- Continue support of programs and initiatives that result in improving the health of area citizens and that instill community pride
- Assist in programs and efforts aimed at addressing racial and diversity tension within the community
- Continue support of regional opportunities including 1 Million Cups, the Malchow Plaza, Big Idea Competition, Leadership South Dakota, etc.

## Regional Advocacy

As a significant voice for business, we support local and legislative policies and practices conducive for a thriving business community and local economy and oppose those that are not.

- Keep membership educated and informed on issues, particularly during South Dakota's legislative session via Progress articles, email announcements, Legislative Cracker Barrels and calls or meetings with legislative and national delegation
- Work with the Advisory Committee to monitor issues and activities at the local, state and federal government levels
- Actively support issues and initiatives that advance the most pro-business environment possible

## Organizational Strength

We continuously work to evaluate our organization and its events, efforts, programs, and committees to meet the needs of our membership and the community.

- Execute a comprehensive retention program that improves existing efforts and increases one-on-one engagement with members
- Redesign Chamber website to make it more user friendly and easier to navigate
- Work to remodel current office space to allow for better workflow and a virtual boardroom that can be used by the community
- Continue evaluation of the dues structure and membership benefits
- Implement quarterly membership surveys on advocacy committee issues, membership benefits, etc.

If you have any questions on these priorities or have ideas you would like to share, please contact me at the Chamber.

# Together We Rally!



## Chamber Leadership

### Executive Board

Robert Goscicki, Chair	Area Federal Credit Union
Kellie Ecker, Chair-Elect	SD Mfg & Tech Solutions
Katie Washnok, Vice Chair	Blackout Industries
Todd Forkel, Treasurer	Avera St. Luke's
Dr. Sandra Welling, Secretary	Presentation College
Jack Hollinsworth, Past Chair	JDH Construction

### Staff

Gail Ochs	President
Lisa Anderson	Marketing & Collaboration
Bea Smith	Membership & Engagement
Stacie Wiedebush	Finance & Administration

[www.aberdeen-chamber.com](http://www.aberdeen-chamber.com) • 605.225.2860

### Full Board

Brett Deibert	Farm Credit Services of America
Dr. Tim Downs	Northern State University
Justin Feickert	Quality Quick Print
Liesl Hovel	Lutheran Social Services
Brodie Mueller	Dakota Territory Brewing/Market on the Plaza
David Novstrup	Allevity Entertainment/Wylie Thunder Road
Matt Prehn	Midstates Group
Andy Rehder	3M Company
Cam Schock	Climate Control
Mike Sommers, ADC Board Liaison	Double D Body Shop
Spencer Sommers, ADA Board Liaison	CO-OP Architecture
Guy Trenhaile, CVB Board Liaison	Healthcare Plus FCU
Mike Bockorny, Ex-Officio	Aberdeen Development Corp.
Casey Weismantel, Ex-Officio	Aberdeen Area CVB
Shelley Westra-Heier, Ex-Officio	Aberdeen Downtown Assoc.



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COVER: Stop the Spread, Aberdeen

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Aberdeen, SD 57401



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contact Jason Pelzl at 605.225.5287 or  
1.800.456.2431

## 2021 - Back to Work

It is a great honor to serve as your Chairman of the Board for 2021. Being the President/CEO of Area Federal Credit Union, who celebrated our 85th anniversary of servicing Aberdeen and adjacent areas, has ingrained in me the beliefs of community service. When I joined the Board in 2016 I shared my thoughts that now seem more relevant than ever:

"The desire to serve the community through leadership initiatives, community involvement and volunteerism are the factors that enticed me to be involved at the Board level for the Aberdeen Area Chamber of Commerce. Working together to develop partnerships within the community will create a stronger future for all of us. It's important for me to involve all Chamber members and add value to the membership experience."

As we put away our 2020 calendar, many of us have decided to make the New Year 2021 better, more productive, and more fulfilling. For some people that results in resolutions and for others it takes the form of goals. But we all believe that it is time to "Get Back to Work".

Your Aberdeen Area Chamber of Commerce has a Program of Work, designed to guide the Chamber Board in its activities for 2021. Please read Chamber President Gail Och's article in this edition for the details.

We have been acting as the voice for Aberdeen businesses for 137 years. I invite all to join us at one of our events this year. If you have questions, ideas, concerns or would like to participate we welcome your involvement!

On behalf of the Board, I want to thank those members who are leaving the Aberdeen Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors. We owe them a debt of gratitude for their commitment. I also want to recognize our out-going Chair Jack Hollinsworth who has laid a strong foundation for all of us. We will also be welcoming 5 new board members: Liesl Hovel, Brodie Mueller, Cam Schock, Spencer Sommers and Guy Trenhaile. We have our plans and we are ready to "Get Back to Work".



**Robert Goscicki**  
2021 Chamber  
Board Chair, Area  
Federal Credit  
Union



# APS 2020-21 A+ Educator Appreciation Campaign



Honor an A+ Educator today!

The Aberdeen Public Schools Foundation has launched a brand new A+ Educator Appreciation Campaign for 2020-21! The campaign will be dedicated to our teachers, staff and administrators who are working tirelessly to provide quality in-person, online and remote learning to our students during this global health crisis. Your gift will provide critical support and bolster the work of the APS Foundation's mission of enhancing and enriching public education during this difficult time. Please support this exceptional educational community. Donate today to recognize and honor an educator! Visit our website at [www.AberdeenPublicSchoolsFoundation.org](http://www.AberdeenPublicSchoolsFoundation.org) to fill out the A+ Educator form to honor an educator.

Any present or past exemplary educators may be honored including teachers, paraprofessionals, librarians, art/music/media specialists, coaches, guidance counselors, support staff, custodians, etc. throughout our district who have made a positive difference in the life of an Aberdeen School District student. Honored educators will be listed on the Aberdeen Public Schools Foundation website at [www.AberdeenPublicSchoolsFoundation.org](http://www.AberdeenPublicSchoolsFoundation.org).

Funds raised go directly to fund Innovation Partnership and District Collaboration Grants awarded every year that carry out our mission to promote excellence in education by forging partnerships

among our schools, community and alumni. Your financial support will facilitate greater learning opportunities for our students.

Choose a way to appreciate your favorite educator this school year:

1. \$30 Golden A+ Educator Certificate and Letter: The APS Foundation will send a personalized Golden Eagle certificate to the individual indicating a donation has been made in their name, as well as a letter with your message about how important they have been in your or your student's life. Please attach your message to the A+ Educator form about why you chose to honor this teacher. A copy will also be sent to the Aberdeen School District to communicate how important that educator is to our schools.

2. \$10 Eagle A+ Educator Notecard: The APS Foundation will send a Golden Eagle note card to the educator indicating your thanks for all their time, effort and caring.

Remember that no matter which level of support you choose – every dollar counts. All A+ Educator donations are earmarked to support Aberdeen Public Schools Foundation grants. Donations may be made throughout the school year. All donations are tax deductible and matching gifts are welcomed and appreciated. Visit our website at [www.AberdeenPublicSchoolsFoundation.org](http://www.AberdeenPublicSchoolsFoundation.org) to fill out a form to honor an educator.

## Isolated Seniors Blessed With Christmas Cards

As a Physical Therapist working in a nursing home, Assisted Living and Independent Living Facilities here in Aberdeen, I've seen the toll that COVID-19 has taken on the physical and mental health of our Seniors.

Sadly, due to Covid-19, residents of nursing homes and assisted living centers would not be able to spend the holidays with their loved ones visiting them this year. When my friend Becky Hawkins with Mary & Martha had the idea to get these beautiful cards sponsored for our seniors, I made it my mission to help get as many cards as I could sponsored and delivered to area seniors.

I am THANKFUL for all that helped in sponsoring cards for nursing home and assisted living center residents! Over 900 cards were delivered to:

- all Aberdeen facilities
- all Redfield facilities
- Ipswich Avantara
- Bowdle nursing home
- Groton Avantara & Rosewood Court
- Faulkton Senior Living



• Huron nursing home and senior living center... just to name a few in this area...

Many members of the community sponsored cards, wrote messages in cards, or delivered cards. We are GRATEFUL for all that helped make this such a success! I have received so many words of thanks and appreciation along with a few tears of pure joy from those seniors who received the cards.

Many residents have been BLESSED with a little bit of joy from the ornament attached to the card this holiday season thanks to many of you!!

*Submitted by: Jamie Forrest, Prairie Heights Health Care*



# 2021 Leadership Aberdeen Program Postponed to Spring

The 2021 Leadership Aberdeen program, which typically kicks off in January of each year, is being postponed due to COVID-19. The 2021 program is set to start on Thursday, April 8th and will wrap up with a graduation ceremony and dinner on June 15th. The schedule is being finalized now and will be available as soon as it is completed. The schedule, as well as a program application, will be available on the Chamber's website at [www.aberdeen-chamber.com](http://www.aberdeen-chamber.com). Applications are being accepted anytime through March 27th.

The Leadership Aberdeen program provides participants with the opportunity to sharpen their skills, share their experiences, and make life-long connections with fellow participants. The program teaches the "Positive Leadership" curriculum, in addition to offering tours of local businesses.

Participants also have the opportunity to learn from local CEO's and staff on company philosophies, goals, and success stories, in addition to facilitating a local project or event that will have a positive impact on the Aberdeen community.

A big part of the program's success is due to the partnerships we have with local businesses who help offset program costs. Special thanks to the 2021 Business Partners which include: 3M Company of Aberdeen, Avera St. Luke's, Dacotah Bank, Glacial Lakes Energy, Northern State University, Sanford Health, Agtegra, and Molded Fiber Glass. We couldn't do it without you!



## Who Will You Nominate to Be a Community Champion?

Do you know someone or a group who should be recognized for their achievement, vision, collaboration, generosity or spirit? We want to hear from you!

Beginning in 1974, the George Award has been given out annually to a deserving person, couple or group in our community. Since then, other awards have been added to the Community Champions Family:

- Woman of Spirit (formerly Athena) – 1988
- STAR (Students Taking Active Responsibility) – 2000
- Family Business of the Year – 2003
- Hometown Hero – 2005
- Emerging Leader – 2008
- Entrepreneur of the Year – 2007
- Spotlight – 2009
- ViTality – 2012
- Military & Veteran Awards – 2012

Nominations are now open for each of these awards, which will be presented to their respective recipients at the Community Champions Awards Luncheon on Tuesday, March 9, 2021. Descriptions for each can be found at [aberdeen-chamber.com/ccawards](http://aberdeen-chamber.com/ccawards). Please consider people you know who would be deserving of these honors and send their nominations to [info@aberdeen-chamber.com](mailto:info@aberdeen-chamber.com) or call 605-225-2860. Each nominee will be sent an application, which will be due February 5th.

Thank you to the Aberdeen Area Convention & Visitors Bureau for sponsoring the Hometown Hero & Spotlight Awards and Prairie Family Business

for sponsoring the Family Business of the Year. All other awards are sponsored by the Aberdeen Area Chamber of Commerce.

ONE CAN MAKE  
2021 A DIFFERENCE  
**COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS LUNCHEON**  
MARCH 9TH - 11AM  
BEST WESTERN RAMKOTA

SEEKING APPLICATIONS:

- WOMAN OF SPIRIT AWARD
- GEORGE AWARD
- STAR AWARD
- EMERGING LEADER AWARD
- ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR
- ABERDEEN AREA FAMILY BUSINESS OF THE YEAR
- HOMETOWN HERO AWARD
- SPOTLIGHT AWARD
- VITALITY AWARD
- MILITARY/VETERAN AWARDS

[WWW.ABERDEEN-CHAMBER.COM/143/AWARD-APPLICATIONS](http://WWW.ABERDEEN-CHAMBER.COM/143/AWARD-APPLICATIONS)

# Ambassador Visits



Relocation

## Aberdeen Massage

701 N 4th St, Ste 1 • 605-377-5930  
[aberdeen-massage.com](http://aberdeen-massage.com)



New Business

## Brain Intercept

405 8th Ave NW, Ste 203 • 605-725-8885  
[brainintercept.com](http://brainintercept.com)



New Business

## Canine Country Club

521 N Production St • 605-846-0091  
[caninecountryclubsd.com](http://caninecountryclubsd.com)



New Business

## CommTech Inc

1715 6th Ave SE, Ste C • 605-824-1400  
[commtechplus.com](http://commtechplus.com)



New Business

## Lone Star Snow & Mow LLC

505 N Lloyd St • 605-290-1529  
[facebook.com/lonestarsnow](https://facebook.com/lonestarsnow)



New Business

## New York Life Insurance Company – Brittney Currence

605-200-0868  
[newyorklife.com/agent/bcurrence](http://newyorklife.com/agent/bcurrence)





**Subway – Walmart**  
1923 6th Ave SE • 605-725-8808  
aberdeensubway.com



**The Bee Hive**  
317 1st Ave SE • 605-225-1340  
thebeehiveaberdeen.com

# Business Milestones



**Animal Care Clinic – 5 Years**  
Dr. Robin O'Neill, Owner • 704 S Melgaard Rd • 605-229-1691  
animalcareclinicsd.com



**CJ's Patisserie – 5 Years**  
Peri & Alex Malsom, Owners • 224 1st Ave SE, Ste 5 • 605-622-0607  
cjspatisserie.com



**Demkota Ranch Beef – 5 Years**  
13 135th St SW • 605-262-2333  
demkotaranchbeef.com



**My Place Hotel, Aberdeen Location – 5 Years**  
Jennifer Ohare, General Manager • 410 S Harvard St • 605-262-4600  
myplacehotels.com



# Business Milestones



## Dakota Event Center – 10 Years

Mike Russell, Regional Manager • 720 S Lamont St • 605-725-2641  
dakotaeventcenter.com



## Climate Control – 20 Years

Cam Schock, Owner • 1910 130th St NW • 605-225-9822  
climatecontrolprofessionals.com



## Homes are Possible Inc – 20 Years

Jeff Mitchell, Executive Director • 320 S Main St • 605-225-4274  
homesarepossible.org



## BAE Systems – 35 Years

Sarah Mann, Plant Manager • 3317 8th Ave NE • 605-226-2704  
baesystems.com



## Aberdeen Community Theatre – 40 Years

James Walker, Artistic/Managing Director • 417 S Main St • 605-225-2228  
aberdeencommunitytheatre.com



## Aberdeen Gun Club Inc – 40 Years

Jerry Brick, President • 38574 139th St • 605-228-2449  
aberdeengunclub.com

# Business Milestones



## Bremer Photography – 45 Years

Don & Dawn Bremer, Owners • 120 N Main St • 605-229-0363  
bremerphotography.com



## House of Glass – 60 Years

Stanley Albrecht, Owner • 2 N State St • 605-225-2010  
house-of-glass.com



## Aberdeen Development Corporation – 65 Years

Michael Bockorny, Chief Executive Officer • 416 N Production St  
605-229-5335 • adcsd.com



## Dacotah Bank – 65 Years

Kip Hansen, Market President • 308 S Main St • 605-225-5611  
dacotahbank.com



## Wright & Sudlow – 65 Years

Jeff Sudlow, Owner • 321 12th Ave SW • 605-225-2975  
wrightandsudlow.com



## Jensen Rock & Sand – 70 Years

Kenny Jensen, Owner • 601 9th Ave SW • 605-225-8081  
jensenrockandsand.com

# Business Milestones



**Area Federal Credit Union – 85 Years**

Robert Goscicki, President/CEO • 2324 8th Ave NE • 605-225-2488  
areafcu.org



**Dakotaland Federal Credit Union – 85 Years**

Alex Vogel, Branch Manager • 1601 8th Ave NE • 605-225-7711  
dakotalandfcu.com



**SD School for the Blind & Visually Impaired – 120 Years**

Dan Trefz, Superintendent • 605 14th Ave SE • 605-626-2580  
sdsbvi.sdbor.edu



**Aberdeen American News – 135 Years**

Scott Waltman, Editor • 124 S 2nd St • 605-225-4100  
aberdeennews.com



**Brown County/Brown County Offices – 140 Years**

25 Market St  
brown.sd.us

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# Technology and Innovation Drive Safety for SD Department of Transportation



If you've ever been caught unprepared on icy roads during a winter storm or encountered unanticipated road construction, you understand the frustration and even potential danger involved for you and your family. Knowing what road conditions to expect is vitally important for South Dakota travelers. To help motorists plan for safe travel, the South Dakota Department of Transportation offers free, up-to-date information on road and weather conditions, road closures, work zones, and traffic



incidents by phone, web page, and mobile apps.

Reducing fatal and serious injuries on public roadways is a top priority for the SDDOT. In a state often battered by harsh winters, and where nearly 96 percent of roadways cross rural terrain, the SDDOT continually implements innovative measures to get all South Dakotans home safe and healthy every day.

"Safety on our roadways is our number one priority," says Interim Transportation Secretary Joel Jundt. "Whether people are traveling during a winter snow event or the heart of road construction season, access to real-time road conditions is crucial."

SDDOT officially rolled-out the innovative SD511.org traveler information system in early December in advance of busy holiday travel and harsh winter driving conditions.

"One of the most significant new features of the phone-based 511 system is voice recognition," notes Jundt. "This feature allows users to request travel information by voice, not just phone keypad; which is a great advancement toward promoting roadway safety."

Many South Dakotans bookmark South Dakota's

safetravelusa site on electronic devices to guide work and recreational travel plans. With the new SD511 roll-out, website users will automatically be redirected from [www.safetravelusa.com/sd](http://www.safetravelusa.com/sd) to [www.sd511.org](http://www.sd511.org). The Mobile App will continue to utilize SDDOT511.

## **SD511.org Displays and Information Services:**

- Road conditions, as reported by SDDOT maintenance staff, updated at least 3 times daily during winter months
- Highway camera images of road conditions, most with reported temperature and wind conditions
- Road closures due to weather, incidents
- Road construction projects, as reported by SDDOT construction staff
- Commercial vehicle size, weight, and movement restrictions
- Current traffic levels
- Route directions
- Emergency messages

## **Advanced Features:**

- New map appearance
- System compatible with newer web browsers (Edge, Chrome, Firefox, Safari) for PCs and tablets

## **New Mobile App Features:**

- SDDOT511 for iOS or Android phones
- Displays same information as SD511.org website
- Provides information ahead of travelers
- Automatically configures to mobile device screen size
- Much better performance on mobile phones
- Apps will remember preferences of users (favorite locations, routes, etc.)

The mission of the South Dakota Department of Transportation is to efficiently provide a safe and effective public transportation system.

Read more about the innovative work of the SDDOT on our website at [dot.sd.gov](http://dot.sd.gov).



**Joel Jundt**  
Interim Deputy  
Secretary, SD  
Department of  
Transportation



## 2021 Legislative Cracker Barrels

The Chamber hosts four legislative cracker barrels each legislative session. South Dakota Legislators from Districts 1, 2 and 3 representing Brown County are invited to attend.

Ensuring that laws and legislation remain conducive to Aberdeen's healthy and vibrant business climate is a top priority for the Aberdeen Area Chamber. Providing this type of structure for business leaders to communicate effectively with government is just one of the opportunities we provide our members and the Aberdeen community.

Cracker Barrel sessions are open to the public and offer an excellent opportunity for legislators and their constituents to publicly discuss issues of

importance and stay up to date on top business, civic, and social priorities.

The 2021 Cracker Barrels will be held on the following Saturday mornings in the Jewett Theatre within the Johnson Fine Arts Center on the campus of Northern State University from 10:00 am - 12:00 pm.

- January 30, 2021
- February 6, 2021
- February 13, 2021
- March 6, 2021

Masks will be required and there will be plenty of room for social distancing. No food or drinks will be allowed in the theatre.



# January is National Thyroid Awareness Month



**Peter Lin**  
Sanford Aberdeen  
Medical Center  
on behalf of the  
Health & Wellness  
Committee

Thyroid hormone is one of the hormones that controls the body's basic metabolism, including heart rate, bone growth, sugar & fat metabolism and catecholamine (fight and flight). The thyroid gland is located in front of the windpipe (trachea) and just below the larynx (Adam's apple in the neck). It should be small, symmetrical & soft - not hard. It should not be swollen or painful. Please have your primary care physician do a thorough physical exam on your thyroid if you are not sure.

The most common hyperthyroid (high level of thyroid) disease in the US is called Grave's disease and the most common hypothyroid (low level of thyroid) disease in the US is called Hashimoto's disease. They are both autoimmune conditions and genetic factors play a big role. People are at a higher risk of developing a thyroid disease if there is any family history of thyroid disorder, diabetes, lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, seniors or any history of any autoimmune conditions. Thyroid disease is about six times more common in women.

About 20 million Americans have some forms of thyroid disease. Undiagnosed thyroid disease may put people at risk for cardiovascular disease such as hyperlipidemia, metabolic syndrome, sleep apnea, osteoporosis, diabetes, heart palpitation and unmasking many psychiatric conditions such as anxiety and depression. Sometimes psychosis and dementia as well.

The United States Preventative Services Task Force (USPSTF) does not recommend routine screening of thyroid function. However, if you do feel anxious, depressed, any unexplained weight gain or weight loss, night sweat, have trouble sleeping at night, hot or cold intolerance, hair is brittle or thin, tired & fatigue, irritability, forgetfulness or confusion, you might want to have your thyroid hormone checked by your primary care physician. A simple lab test, known as TSH, can make a big difference in terms of making the correct diagnosis and early treatment.

## Winter Fun Goes on in 2021



The Aberdeen Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department has been busy making plans for a wide variety of winter activities. The Winter/Spring brochure was distributed in the Aberdeen American News on Saturday, January 2 and is also posted online at [www.aberdeen.sd.us/parksandrec](http://www.aberdeen.sd.us/parksandrec). Many of the classes will still be offered, but due to COVID 19 concerns, changes have occurred and may still occur. Some programs and special events have been cancelled.

The Department offers many programs for youth of all ages. The Aberdeen Recreation and Cultural Center (ARCC) offers an extensive listing of youth classes like Pottery Pals, Plush Toy Making, and Tie-Dye, just to name a few. In addition, the ARCC Dance Program offers classes for all ages. Other youth offerings include skating lessons and recreational skating at our outdoor rinks and the Odde Indoor Ice Arena.

The ARCC Music Program is for youth through adults and offers private instrument lessons for most band instruments, an extensive strings program, beginning guitar, as well as voice lessons.

There are many opportunities for adults and teens! The ARCC offers an extensive variety of classes in the areas of pottery, paint, paper & pen, fiber & textile arts, glasswork, writing & special interest classes including dog obedience, computers & technology and wellness. Don't forget Senior Line Dance, Country Two Step, and Tai Chi. If you have thought about doing something new, now is the time!

Take a Class at the ARCC! You can also sign up for cross country skiing lessons.

Aberdeen Area Senior Center has a wide range of weekly activities, such as Pool, Bingo, Scrabble, Line Dancing and Mexican Train, just to name a few. On top of all this, there is a nice exercise room. If you are 50 and over this is the place to become involved!!

The YAPatorium provides a great place for teens to enjoy. We encourage youth ages 11 through 17 to come check out all the activities happening there. This includes Homework Help, Art Crew, Table Games, and Movie Night. Join the E-Sports and Pool Leagues and other special events. The ARCC offer most of the adult classes also to teens. Don't forget the rec skating and skating lessons!

Special Events planned for the Winter includes Free Skate Day on January 15, Knights of Columbus Free Throw Contest, the Winter Fun Day, and Optimist Club Family Free Throw Contest.

Go skating at our two outdoor ice rinks and enjoy a cup of hot chocolate. Rental skates are available if you can't find your own. Cross country skis can be rented at the Manor Park Rink and trails are groomed in Manor Park and Lee Park. In addition, the Odde Indoor Ice Arena is a great place to skate. Don't forget the Baird Park Sledding Hill! Check out the Winter/Spring brochure and sign up for one of the many programs. Winter fun begins with the Aberdeen Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department.

*Submitted by: Gene Morsching, Recreation Superintendent*

# Youth Entrepreneurs Recognized at BIG Idea Competition

The 2020 BIG Idea Competition was a BIG success with 245 entries involving 339 students from 29 schools. While the initial phase of the competition has always been online, the Committee made a decision this summer to make the final event virtual as well. That virtual event wrapped up Wednesday, December 9th, on the campus of Northern State University (NSU) and the broadcast of the Awards Ceremony can be seen at the BIGIdeaSD facebook page. The winners were determined from among the eight final entries with over \$30,000 in cash and scholarships awarded. While being virtual had its challenges, it also allowed one finalist who is out of state to be able to compete. The BIG Idea Competition aims to promote entrepreneurship, spur creative thinking and encourage students to start a business.

Matea Gordon of Sturgis Brown High School took first place with Goats-2-Go: Delivering a Goat Load of Fun. Her idea is to provide pet therapy and entertainment by renting out goats with a handler to birthdays, senior living centers or other events. Second place went to Cameron Waste Removal, Inc., by Cameron Gilmore of Blacksburg High School (VA), which is a trash and recycling curb-side pick-up service for rural neighborhoods. Third place went to Busy Bees, by Megan Nash of Northwestern High School, which is a bee rental and honey extraction business. Megan took home second place at the 2019 competition with a different business idea.

The 5 remaining finalists include Essential Errands by Alexis Ninneman from Milbank High School, SimplyCook by Jordan Schock and Rachel Schallenkamp from McCook Central High School, Build A Bouquet by Kara Weiss and Sydney Tedrow from Pierre T.F. Riggs High School, Bee's Boats by Emily Efraimson and Nathan Bellikka from Aberdeen Central High School, and LWC Welding and Repair by Ian Lehman from Pierre T.F. Riggs High School.

The BIG Idea Competition also features 3



specialty awards. The Marketing Design competition is an option for students create an ad for their business idea. Sponsored by McQuillen Creative Group, the winner was also Busy Bees by Megan Nash.

In the Wellness Category, sponsored by Sanford Health, the winner was SimplyCook by Jordan Schock and Rachel Schallenkamp from McCook Central High School. Their idea was an app to help people cook at home.

The Agriculture Innovation is sponsored by the South Dakota Agriculture Foundation. The winner this year was Erdmann Precision Field Analysis by Tessa Erdmann from Groton High School. Her idea was a nutrient sampling business.

All finalists and category winners receive a variety of cash awards and scholarships from NSU, Presentation College, and South Dakota School of Mines & Technology totaling over \$30,000.

For more information about the competition, 2020 participating schools, and event sponsors, visit [www.BIGIdeaSD.com](http://www.BIGIdeaSD.com).

*Kelly Weaver is the Regional Director of the Small Business Development Center in Aberdeen which offers free, confidential business consulting to start up and existing businesses. She can be reached at (605) 626-2565 or [kelly@growsd.org](mailto:kelly@growsd.org). The Center is hosted by GROW South Dakota.*

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**How are you spending your time?**  
*We have a wonderful staff. They keep us busy with activities like devotions, walking, crafts, etc. I love our activities.*

**How do you stay mentally/physically healthy?**  
*I feel content here. I have wonderful friends to be with. We have awesome food. I have felt so much better since I moved there. They help us get to appointments.*

**How are you staying in touch with family?**  
*I don't have lot of the new gadgets. I have a GrandPad tablet with which we keep in touch. Also my telephone, as I don't have a cell phone. I visit with family most everyday.*

**What advice do you have for others?**  
*My advice is if you want a wonderful place to live, move here. You are welcomed with open arms by wonderful staff, and awesome food and activities!*



**Darlene H.**  
Primrose Resident

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# 2020 ABBY Award Winners

In typical 2020 fashion, the Chamber's annual ABBY Awards celebration took on a much different look this year. Initially, the event was postponed and combined with December's Christmas with the Chamber. As that date drew nearer, the realization set in that an in-person event was not going to happen. So we pivoted and moved on to Plan C. Thanks to Brodie Mueller, Megan Rosendahl and other community members who pulled together to create a virtual event, the ABBYs went on! In place of

a one-evening celebration, a week-long recognition of Aberdeen's finest businesses took place online.

All awards, except People's Choice, are voted on by employees of Chambers of Commerce from around the country. People's Choice was voted on locally in an online survey, where just under 2,000 votes were cast. Congratulations to all the nominees and the 10 businesses listed below who were chosen as recipients this year. We're grateful for all of you as you make our economic engine hum in the Hub City.



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**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT - NON PROFIT**  
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**PEOPLE'S CHOICE**  
Jordyn Photography



**PROFESSIONAL SERVICES**  
Schwan Financial Group LLC


**BUSINESS BRIEFS**
**PRESENTATION COLLEGE SELECTS NEW DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT**

Presentation College is pleased to announce the arrival of Barbara Norland, MSL as the institution's new Director of Development.

Norland joins the Advancement team with over 28 years of experience, working within the sectors of philanthropy, sales, and marketing. Her previous work experience includes Director of Development and Communications at the YWCA of Greater Miami-Dade, Inc. in Miami, Florida and President of BKVN Consulting, Inc.



Barbara's primary responsibilities at Presentation College will be to steward and build relationships with alumni, corporations, foundations, and other local, statewide, and national stakeholders. As well as to form new philanthropic alliances through the identification, cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship of major corporate, individual donations and foundation grants to support the mission and vision of Presentation College.

Barbara completed a Master of Science in leadership and management from Nova Southeastern University's H. Wayne Huizenga School of Business in Davie, FL., a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology and sociology from Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, and most recently received certification from the Sanford Institute of Philanthropy's Fundraising Academy at Nova Southeastern University.

**DACOTAH BANK MAKES BEST BANKS LIST**

Dacotah Bank has been named one of the Best Banks to Work For by American Banker

for the third consecutive year. In 2020 Dacotah Bank climbed the rankings, claiming the 28th place, up two from 2019. Dacotah Bank was ranked 49th in 2018.

American Banker cited Dacotah Bank's use of virtual communication and learning options, their ongoing conversations with employees throughout the pandemic, and the use of the online learning system to share resources pertaining to remote work and burnout. The bank also adjusted the work environment for those who continued to report to the office. Dress codes were loosened, lunch was brought in for departments that were short staffed or busy with PPP loans and outdoor meetings were occasionally held to allow employees to see one another safely.

The Best Banks to Work For program, which was initiated in 2013 by American Banker and Best Companies Group, identifies, recognizes and honors U.S. banks for outstanding employee satisfaction. Full results of this year's program are available at American Banker and in the November issue of American Banker Magazine.

Determining the Best Banks to Work For involves a two-step process. The first step is an evaluation of participating companies' workplace policies,



practices, and demographics. In the second step, employee surveys are conducted to directly assess the experiences and attitudes of individual employees with respect to their workplace. The combined scores determine the top banks and the final ranking.

Best Companies Group managed the overall registration and survey process and also analyzed the data and used their expertise to determine the final ranking. A complete list can be found at [www.americanbanker.com/list/best-banks-to-work-for](http://www.americanbanker.com/list/best-banks-to-work-for). The program is open to commercial banks, thrifts, savings banks and other chartered retail financial institutions with at least 50 employees in the United States.

**MIDSTATES ANNOUNCES CAPITAL INVESTMENT**

Midstates Group is very excited to announce it is investing \$5,000,000 in equipment that will expand our capabilities, create new automations, and help open doors for more opportunities.



These investments include a new web press, perfect binder, saddle-stitching, spiral-binding, digital printing and various other ancillary pieces of equipment.

Midstates Group believes these important investments will continue to help improve on an already high level of service for its customers and continue to provide the best value in the industry.

"We know the time is right to make these upgrades to our production capabilities to enable us to remain a leader in the industry and ensure that we are the best value for our customers. This investment will position us well for the future," said Matt Feickert, CEO.

For career opportunities and to learn more visit [www.midstatesgrou.com](http://www.midstatesgrou.com) or call 800-456-2431.

**CHS ANNOUNCES RECOGNITIONS**

- John Vogel – CHS Girls Tennis Coach - State Girls Tennis Coach of the Year for 2019 and Winter Tennis Coach of the Year by the South Dakota High School Coaches Association

- Dawn Seiler – CHS Girls Basketball Coach - Inducted into the 2020 SD Coaches Association Hall of Fame

- Jeanette Drapeaux – 3rd grade teacher at CC Lee Elementary named VFW SD Elementary Teacher of the Year

- Aberdeen Central High School was named 2019-20 Forte International School of the Year


**WEIN GALLERY DISPLAY**

The Wein Gallery at Presentation College has "PC Nursing Through the Years" on display through January. It is a history of the PC Nursing program showcasing nurses capes, books, instruments, photos, and more.



## NORTHEAST SOUTH DAKOTA HEAD START RECEIVES GRANT FROM ASCENDIUM EDUCATION GROUP

2020 was an extraordinary year that brought big challenges for the nation, and the Aberdeen community was no exception. Unfortunately, during times of crisis, nonprofits will often see a decreased level of donations as individual and businesses experience financial difficulties. This is why Ascendium Education Group stepped up corporate giving for its adopted Aberdeen organization, the Northeast South Dakota Head Start.

This year, Ascendium has increased its local community giving in every community in which their employees live and work, recognizing the importance of flexibility and responsiveness in times of crisis and community need. This donation is part of Ascendium's annual giving program, which includes both employee and corporate giving. Ascendium upped its annual giving with a 3-to-1 corporate match for every employee donation, resulting in a gift of over \$14,000 to the Northeast South Dakota Head Start. Northeast South Dakota Head Start's mission is to provide assistance through education, training support to enable Head Start children and families to identify and remove obstacles that keep them from attaining their fullest potential.



This dovetails with Ascendium's mission to champion opportunity in education to help everyone reach their full potential.

Ascendium is a nonprofit organization headquartered in Madison, Wis. with staff in Aberdeen and around the nation. The company's philanthropy division focuses on helping people reach the education and career goals that matter to them by breaking down barriers that stand in the way of student success and supporting upward mobility through education, a philosophy that is echoed in the organization's local giving as well. Along with Ascendium corporate giving, Ascendium-Aberdeen employees are using their volunteer time off program to help in classrooms with children, read with the children, join in field trips to the fire station and help with playground duties.

**BUSINESS BRIEFS**



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W-2019554 08/18

# PEOPLE'S CHOICE ABBY AWARD WINNER

The People's Choice Award is presented to a business or organization that demonstrates exceptional performance in its support of the community and increases community pride through their efforts.



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# CorTrust Bank Lights Up the Aberdeen Skyline



Congratulations to CorTrust Bank for earning the most public votes in the 2020 Business Holiday Lighting Contest! Backed by a strong social media campaign, they easily walked away with top honors.



Their prize package consists of a \$300 Aberdeen Gift Card (courtesy of JDH Construction), \$150 lighting allowance, half page ad space in a 2021 Progress magazine and the coveted traveling trophy, which will assure them bragging rights throughout next year.

The Enhance Aberdeen Committee thanks all businesses who put in the time and effort to decorate this year, when the lights shined especially bright in the COVID darkness. We look forward to seeing what your holiday decorating game looks like in 2021!

# Ambassador Hat & Mitten Drive Benefits Local Children

The 8th annual Ambassador Hat and Mitten drive was a huge success thanks to donations from individuals and businesses from Aberdeen to Arizona. Notable contributions came from Midco (with a very large donation of hats) and Barbara Palen from The Grand Canyon State who knitted and mailed over 50 sets of matching hats & mittens. The warm gifts were distributed to Aberdeen Public, Aberdeen Catholic and Aberdeen Christian schools where they will be given to children who need them. The Ambassadors thank the following businesses that served as collection points: 6th Avenue Pit Stop, Aberdeen Pit Stop, Aspire, Berkshire Plaza, all C-Express locations, Ken's SuperFair Foods, NVC, Primrose Retirement Community, QQP, Runnings and South C Store.



# Chamber Big Dates

## Ag Committee

Thursday, January 21, Noon, TBD

Thursday, February 18, Noon, TBD

## Ambassador Committee

Tuesday, January 12, Noon, TBD

Tuesday, February 9, Noon, TBD

## Chamber Executive Board

Thursday, January 14, 8 am, Chamber & via Zoom

Thursday, February 11, 8 am, Chamber & via Zoom

## Chamber Full Board

Wednesday, January 20, 8 am, via Zoom

Wednesday, February 17, 8 am, via Zoom

## Diplomat Committee

Thursday, January 14, 3 pm, Chamber

Thursday, February 11, 3 pm, Chamber

## Enhance Aberdeen Committee

Friday, January 8, 9 am, The Workshop

Friday, March 5, 9 am, The Workshop

## Health & Wellness Committee

Wednesday, January 6, 8 am, Via Zoom

Wednesday, February 3, 8 am, Via Zoom

## Military & Veterans Committee

Tuesday, February 2, 12 Noon, TBD

## Transportation Committee

Tuesday, February 23, 3:30 pm, Chamber

## Workforce & Education Committee

Wednesday, January 20, 3:30 pm, TBD

Wednesday, February 17, 3:30 pm, TBD

The Chamber office will be closed the following days:

Monday, January 18

Monday, February 15

# Holding Big Tech Accountable



**John Thune**  
US Senator (R-SD)

Last October, I was part of a Senate panel that held several of the nation's top big tech leaders accountable for the content moderation practices at each of their respective companies. The American people deserve to know how their information is being used, censored, and potentially exploited online. These companies have an obligation to explain it.

I questioned Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg, Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey, and Google CEO Sundar Pichai about the perceived political bias that exists within the big tech community and how that might affect their companies' actions when it comes to suppressing or amplifying certain online content. I pressed them on whether or not they believed they were legitimate referees when it comes to political speech on social media platforms. In my opinion, it's not up to them to make those kinds of decisions, especially when it can have an effect on our democracy.

If you were an early adopter of social media, you've seen online platforms come, go, and evolve over the years. At their outset, platforms were comprised of a simple, sequential stream of user-generated content – pictures of your lunch or dinner, a status update on your weekend plans, or an article about a hot new restaurant opening downtown. In many cases, a dial-up internet connection and desktop computer were an integral part of logging on, scrolling, and posting.

Fast forward to today. Things have changed a bit, to say the least. Now you can access social media from nearly every corner of the planet (even from outer space) and from nearly any device with an internet connection: phones, tablets, watches, TVs, computers, and so on. And with the advancement of 5G wireless broadband technology, something I've fought hard for in Congress, you can access information faster than ever before.

Access and availability aren't the only things that have changed. Big tech leaders like Zuckerberg, Dorsey, and Pichai are now some of the most powerful people in the world because they, in many ways, shape and control the content that social media users see and consume online. They've developed high-powered, opaque algorithms – contained within

a black box of sorts – that learn online behavior and deliver customized results based on what we search, see, and share online. How they do it is largely unknown, which is one of the reasons why they recently testified before Congress.

Some platforms have gone a step further – beyond delivering customized results and content – and have appeared to act as the arbiters of truth by moderating and censoring user-generated political content – political speech, essentially. Whether or not these companies believe they're acting as a referee, suppression of people's political speech is occurring. This kind of behavior is not what Congress envisioned when it crafted certain laws during the infancy of the internet, like when it created a liability shield that helped these companies grow. So, as social media platforms continue to evolve, so too must the laws that govern them.

As the former chairman of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and the current chairman of the Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, Innovation, and the Internet, this issue is very important to me. I've held multiple hearings on this topic over the years and have introduced several bipartisan pieces of legislation that would help strengthen online transparency and accountability.

In June of last year, I introduced the bipartisan Platform Accountability and Consumer Transparency Act, or PACT Act. It would require internet platforms like Facebook and Twitter to make quarterly reports to the public outlining material they've removed from their sites or chosen to deemphasize. Sites would also be required to provide an easily digestible disclosure of their content moderation practices for users. And, importantly, they would be required to explain their decisions to remove material to consumers. They would need to create an appeals process for users, too.

There's a growing bipartisan consensus that it's time to shed greater light on these secretive processes. I will continue to be a tireless advocate for the American people who, again, deserve to know how their information is being treated by big tech. This hearing is not the last you've heard from Congress on this issue. In many ways, we're just getting started.

## New Partnership Between Northern State University, Dacotah Bank



A new partnership between Northern State University and Dacotah Bank will guarantee a personal interview for graduates of the NSU Banking and Financial Services program.

Starting this winter, all

students graduating from Northern's Banking and Financial Services program – undergraduate or graduate, online or on campus – will be guaranteed an interview at one of Dacotah Bank's locations.

NSU President Dr. Tim Downs said this collaboration is a win-win for both parties.

"Dacotah Bank has always been a strong

# NSU to Offer M.S.Ed. in Special Education Starting Fall 2021

A new master's degree program approved for Northern State University will help fill a critical workforce need for special education teachers, especially those who educate students with visual impairments.

Northern's new Master of Science in Education (M.S.Ed.) in Special Education, approved this week by the South Dakota Board of Regents, will be offered both online and on campus starting in fall 2021.

The program also includes a specialization for teaching students with visual impairments, which will expand Northern's longtime partnership with the South Dakota School for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

"This is an exciting time for the university," said NSU College of Professional Studies Dean Dr. Doug Ohmer. "This program will be unique in the nation, and as it grows, will become a hallmark program for the Millicent Atkins School of Education and the College of Professional Studies."

## Critical Teacher Shortage

A critical shortage of special education teachers has created a workforce need nationwide, and specifically in South Dakota. For over a decade, the U.S. Department of Education has identified special education as an area of teacher shortage in South Dakota, Ohmer said. The shortage of educators who specialize in teaching students with visual impairments is even more critical.

NSU Associate Professor of Special Education Dr. Cheryl Wold said special education faculty members field calls most semesters from school administrators in South Dakota and North Dakota desperately seeking special education teachers.

"Launching this master's degree in special education will provide administrators with another option to help fill those positions," said Wold, who also serves as NSU Faculty Senate president. "Because the program will be offered online, administrators can grow their own special education teachers by finding a certified teacher in their own community, who would like to become a special education teacher and is ready to go back to school."

Northern's new master's degree also provides an

option for undergraduate students, Wold said. An accelerated option will allow undergraduate special education majors to take 12 credits at the graduate level in their last year. By staying at NSU an additional year to complete the rest of the graduate level courses, she said, the students will have completed their master's degree in special education as well.

## History of Collaboration

The program will build on the longtime partnership between Northern and SDSBVI. Wold said the two have a long history of over 40 years of collaboration. That has included SDSBVI staff being guest speakers in NSU classes; NSU professors taking students on field trips to SDSBVI; NSU visual impairment courses being held at SDSBVI; and NSU special education majors completing student teaching or other practicum experiences there.

"Having the opportunity to specialize in teaching students with visual impairments through the new master's degree will draw graduate students from across the country to benefit from this longstanding partnership," she said.

Ohmer said the type of relationship NSU and SDSBVI have is unique. Nationwide, 36 universities are listed as having programs to prepare teachers to teach students with visual impairments. Northern is one of three that includes a practicum in a school for the blind and visually impaired – and the only university in the nation with a school of the blind and visually impaired within the bounds of its campus location.

"As time progresses," he said, "we will form a partnership team with the leadership and faculty of the SDSBVI to deepen the relationship and find additional ways to collaborate in areas such as science and the fine arts."

To learn more about studying special education in Northern's Millicent Atkins School of Education, visit the NSU Special Education Department online.



**NORTHERN**  
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SD School for the Blind  
and Visually Impaired

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## NSU/Dacotah Bank Partnership continued from page 22

community partner for Northern," Downs said. "I'm thrilled that we've found a way to strengthen that relationship while benefitting our students and enhancing the regional workforce."

Dacotah Bank President Robert Fouberg agrees. "I echo Dr. Downs's assessment of the relationship between Dacotah Bank and Northern

State University. Our partnership has yielded dozens of great employees for the bank, including several of our most senior managers, and I look forward to the opportunity to hire many more."

For more information about NSU Banking and Financial Services, contact Northern's College of Professional Studies at 605-626-2400.

# Drug Addiction and Disability Discrimination



**Kim Dorsett**  
Partner,  
Richardson,  
Wyly, Wise,  
Sauck & Hieb

How many employers in the Aberdeen area exclude candidates from jobs based upon the results of drug tests? What about excluding candidates who are on medications to assist with a drug addiction? If you are an employer who automatically excludes candidates based upon certain drug test results without any further consideration, be wary. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (“EEOC”) has been pursuing charges of disability discrimination against employers who do this very thing.

A transportation company from Indiana, with operations throughout the United States, is alleged to have engaged in disability discrimination by refusing to hire a job applicant because of her opioid addiction. According to the EEOC’s lawsuit, a woman under Suboxone treatment for her opioid addiction applied for a driver’s position with the company. After making a conditional offer, the company told the applicant that she had to pass a pre-employment drug test. In advance of her drug test, the applicant informed the company that she was receiving Suboxone treatment but that her medication did not affect her driving ability. In response, the company’s Human Resources representative looked up public information on possible safety-related side effects of Suboxone. Based on the that research, and without considering whether the applicant actually

experienced any side effects from Suboxone, the company withdrew its job offer. The applicant maintains she did not experience side effects from Suboxone and that the company’s decision to reject her based upon her prescribed medical treatment was illegal employment discrimination.

The EEOC agrees with her, maintaining the Company violated the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”) by disqualifying a disabled worker from a job because the worker was receiving medical treatment for a disability, when such treatment did not create a significant risk of substantial harm to the health or safety of the worker or others. The clear takeaway on pre-employment drug testing is that any decision to withdraw a conditional offer of employment due to safety risks arising from a prescribed medication must be based upon actual facts, and not upon assumptions about a drug’s presumed side effects or presumed safety risks. It is best to consult with an attorney before making any hiring decisions based upon drug testing results.

*\*This article is intended for informational purposes only and should not be construed as legal advice.*

# Small Businesses Make Huge Impact Across South Dakota



**Jamie Wood**  
SBA  
South Dakota  
District Director

As we kick off a new year, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) celebrates the 30 million small businesses that ignite our local economies. We continue to support small businesses in startup and growth as well as those negatively impacted economically by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since April 2020, the SBA provided a combined \$2.3 Billion in disaster assistance to South Dakotans, through the Paycheck Protection Program and Economic Injury Disaster Loan programs to urban and rural small businesses and non-profit organizations. The SBA also consistently connects small businesses to free business counseling and training through our vast network of resource partners – Small Business Development Centers, Women’s Business Centers, Veteran Business Outreach Centers, and SCORE - as well as to SBA guaranteed lending, government supply chain contracting, and international export opportunities.

Today, half of America’s workers are employed by a small business – this includes owners self-employed through their own small business. Nationally, two out of three new jobs are created

by small business. The same holds true for South Dakota, home to over 88,000 small businesses. According to the most recent South Dakota Small Business Profile, our small businesses provide jobs for over 58% of all employees across the state.

When South Dakota consumers choose to shop at local small businesses, the positive impact resounds throughout a community. We collectively have a unique opportunity to strengthen our local economies, enrich our communities, and enjoy access to products and services offered by small businesses. 2021 is a brand-new year full of possibility and recharged goals – make it your personal commitment to shop small businesses throughout the entire year. If you are a small business owner, include it on your new year checklist to connect with the SBA to get your business going and growing.

Connect with SBA South Dakota on Twitter: @SBA\_SouthDakota; subscribe to our e-newsletter at [www.sba.gov/updates](http://www.sba.gov/updates); check us out online at [www.sba.gov/sd](http://www.sba.gov/sd); or, contact us at 605-330-4243.



# January is National Mentoring Month

For the last couple of months, we have given thanks and celebrated the many blessings and gifts afforded us, and we have done so among our families and friends. For some, these things were done with people of a different connection, albeit an equally important and just as intimate one – their mentor. Mentors make the contribution of their time and empathy to encourage, and to share their expertise and experiences; but most of all, to foster a relationship. A lot of the time it seems that we think of mentors in a professional and formal setting. However, there are so many situations where these types of relationships are developed in organic ways – among peers, with the kids in the neighborhood, through civic organizations, etc.

As someone who sees the negative impact that unhealthy relationships have on youth on a frequent basis, I view mentoring in a different light. The power of listening and seeking to understand someone in a positive manner gets taken for granted. I've been humbled to see the need for these relationships in



the youth of today, and also overjoyed to see the number of people that step into this role. Every day, I see employees and members of the Aberdeen community support youth in a way that a lot of them have never seen from peers or adults. The passion and effort put into making a difference in a youth's life is incredibly evident. It is amazing to see the difference in a child's demeanor following a few months of connection with people who truly

support them with their goals and in building their future.

Mentoring can be hard and sometimes heartbreaking, and it's not a relationship where you will see short-term gains. It takes patience, perseverance, humility, and grace. The rewards to both people involved are immense, though. I encourage you to find the opportunity to engage in a mentorship, whether it is with a friend, a peer, or a child. For those that have already fostered those relationships, thank you! I hope you realize the impact that you have on that person, and also on the world collectively. Happy National Mentoring Month!



**Courtney Dosch**

*Program Director,  
New Beginnings  
Center, and Member  
of the Health &  
Wellness Committee*

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# Now is the Time to Donate!

Dear Family and Friends of Aspire:  
2020 has been a challenging year for all.... the Aspire Foundation hopes you and your loved ones are doing well.

This past year Aspire has been tasked with the challenge of keeping some of our communities most vulnerable citizens healthy and safe during the pandemic. The healthcare heroes of Aspire have stepped it up, they have been working long hours during these difficult times. We believe the supports we provide are important now, more than ever. With your generous donations, Aspire can continue to provide these services.

We are asking for your support to help us meet our fundraising goal of \$31,000. We have secured Matching Fund partners who are challenging our community to join them in supporting the Aspire mission. THANK YOU C-Express for donating \$10,000; parents of participants Larry & Sue Olson (donating \$3,000) and Larry & Letitia Krause (donating \$2,500) toward this campaign.

Every dollar you give will be matched (up to \$15,500). Today is a great day to make your charitable contribution! Can we count on you?

On behalf of everyone at Aspire, THANK YOU for remembering us this holiday season!

Janae Hamilton, Development Director



**Each contribution truly does make a difference in someone's life!!**

Aspire Foundation Board Members:

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# Why I'll Be Getting the COVID-19 Vaccine

The COVID-19 pandemic has rocked our planet and nothing has been the same since it began. We all want the world to go back to normal and with the emergence of successful COVID-19 vaccinations, we are one step closer to that becoming a reality. I'm not suggesting that government needs to mandate this vaccine. Whether you take it or not will be up to you - it comes down to personal responsibility.

Here's my decision: I will be getting the COVID-19 vaccine when it becomes available.

As many of you know, my wife Jean has been battling a cancer called sarcoma since 2019. If she were to get COVID-19, it would be difficult for her weakened immune system to fight off this disease. Keeping this virus away from her has been my priority. This vaccine will help keep Jean safe.

I have no concerns that the COVID-19 vaccine will be safe and effective. Tests show the Moderna vaccine is 94 percent effective and the Pfizer vaccine is 95 percent effective. These vaccines have gone through the same rigorous trials the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) uses to test all vaccines. Tens of thousands of people have received these vaccines while successfully participating in trials. By the time a vaccine reaches you, you can trust that it will have been put through numerous phases of clinical trials

## Future of Ag

I think there's broad consensus – 2020 is the year we all want to forget. As we begin 2021, with a COVID-19 vaccine making headway, the agriculture industry can expect some shifts.

For starters, it may seem like we just passed the 2018 Farm Bill, but the process for the next one is right around the corner. The House Agriculture Committee is getting new leadership with both the Chairman and Ranking Member positions left vacant last year. I'm hopeful we can build a strong coalition of members to advocate for market-based solutions for rural America. As Farm Bill efforts start to ramp up, I'll be pushing for cattle market reform outlined in my PRICE Act.

Beyond our domestic food processing disruptions, we can't forget about our continued fight to rein in Small Refinery Exemptions (SRE) that undermine the integrity of the Renewable Fuel Standard. I'm concerned that this battle will continue, and Congress has a role in eliminating this loophole.

If I could make a prediction, I'd bet 2021 will be the year of trade. There are talks to be had with China regarding retaliatory tariffs and our on-again-off-again relationship. Both sides agree, China hasn't been our friend and exploits trade provisions when they can see a benefit – Congress needs to remain tough on them. Most recently, China and 14 other nations signed off on the world's largest trade deal – slashing tariffs and other restrictions for the foreseeable future. America doesn't have a seat at

and be safe for you to take.

Despite this success, concerns still continue to float around on social media about the safety and effectiveness of the vaccine, and in the weeks to come, I anticipate there will be plenty more disinformation floating around online. It's important when we are making decisions that we take into account the validity of the source and only trust information that comes from reliable sources. The Centers for Disease Control and the FDA say this vaccine will be safe and efficient. I trust that information. Your doctor would also be a good source of information if you have uncertainties.

I've said this before but it's worth repeating: while we wait for the vaccine, it's important to continue using common sense to fight this virus. Use hand sanitizer, wash your hands, keep your distance and wear your darn mask when it makes sense. But using common sense can only get us so far. Our lives will only get back to normal after a vaccine is widely distributed.

Here's the point – vaccines save lives. Vaccines eliminated smallpox worldwide. And they've eradicated polio and rubella from this country. Soon, we will be able to add COVID-19 to that list.

this trade table, and I expect our trade negotiators to take a look at this Comprehensive Economic Partnership.

There is some good news on the trade front. China has implemented at least 50 of the 57 technical commitments under the Phase One agreement. According to an interim report issued by the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR), before the Phase One Agreement, approximately 1,500 facilities in the U.S. could export agricultural goods to China. Today, that number has increased to more than 4,000 facilities. We should focus on these real, structural changes going forward.

Although COVID-19 disruption has held China back on its \$200B trade obligations, the progress is impressive, and the markets have responded. According to USTR, China's purchases of U.S. farm goods are at 71% of projected targets. Further, exports of U.S. beef products to China through August are up 118% compared to the same period in 2019 and are already triple the 2017 beef export totals.

This is all welcome news for South Dakota producers. But we have a long way to go towards market certainty. With COVID-19, flooding, SRE waivers, and trade disruption, we are dealing with a tough farm economy. My hope is that 2021 offers a chance to work to decrease these uncertainties and bring more predictability to the ag industry.



**Mike Rounds**  
US Senator  
(R-SD)



**Dusty Johnson**  
US Representative  
(R-SD)

# Chamber Welcomes New Board Members

Liesl Hovel, Brodie Mueller and Cam Schock were recently appointed to the Chamber's Board of Directors, replacing Dawn Williams, Jeff Poppen and Julie Fischbach. Additional new Board members include Guy Trenhaile, CVB Board Liaison and Spencer Sommers, ADA Board Liaison.

• **Liesl Hovel – Development Director, Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota**



Liesl has a Bachelor of Science with a minor in Psychology and a Masters in Guidance & Counseling. Over the years, her roles include Crisis Counselor, Correctional Officer, Federal Juvenile Program Director, Clinical Therapist and Program Director. Liesl has been volunteering at the Chamber since 2016 as part of several committees and is a graduate of Leadership Aberdeen, Class of 2017. In the community, she is active in Rotary Club, Aberdeen Area Diversity Coalition and Child Protection Team.

Liesl is married to husband Lynn (25 years) and their children are Keegan, Hannah & Bailey. They also have one fur baby, Loki.

"It's important to embrace change and determine how to make things better with each passing year. Especially during a time of a pandemic, we see how important it is to be creative to connect with people and determine how to maintain the strength of a

community." – Liesl Hovel

• **Brodie Mueller – Owner, Market on the Plaza & Dakota Territory Brewing Company**



Brodie earned his Bachelors in Communications in 2006 and Masters in Social Work in 2011. He has been self-employed for 4 years with Dakota Territory Brewing Company and recently began a new venture, Market on the Plaza. He has been a regular presence at Chamber of Commerce events and also donates time to other community causes such as Boys & Girls Club, Safe Harbor, Northern Night, BIOGirls and more. Hosting the weekly One Million Cups program is another way he gets involved when he sees a need to fill.

Brodie's family consists of wife Dr. Breanne Anderson-Mueller and their three children – Lily, Nora and Isaac.

"The Chamber of Commerce is at the heart of business in the Hub City and I want to help push it forward. I am young, hungry and ready to invest in my community. I also feel that it is time that the next generation steps up to continue the great work being done. The smoother that transition is, the better for the community." – Brodie Mueller

• **Cam Schock – Owner, Climate Control**



Cam studied Mechanical Engineering at the University of Wyoming and has worked in the HVAC industry his entire adult life. This year Climate Control celebrated their 20th anniversary with Cam at the helm, and they received an ABBY Award in 2019. He is active in school and community organizations such as Aspire and Safe Harbor, with his most notable contributions being at Aberdeen Christian School. Cam was also a 2015 Dakota Rising fellow.

Cam has been married to Amy for 21 years and they have two daughters, Alexis and Abigail.

"I believe we have an amazing Chamber and its success comes from both the talented and dedicated staff and the members. I have been able to enjoy the benefits of that success over the years and want to chip in for others to be able to enjoy the benefits of a successful Chamber moving forward. When our community is having success, all businesses have a better environment for success, that is as important for Climate Control as it is for anyone in our community." – Cam Schock

• **Guy Trenhaile – Healthcare Plus Federal Credit Union, Aberdeen Area Convention & Visitors Bureau Board Liaison**



• **Spencer Sommers – CO-OP Architecture, Aberdeen Downtown Association Board Liaison**



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# Christmas Shopping and New Year's Resolutions When You Are a City Manager

I have two confessions to make: 1) I am writing this article the first week of December, so it may seem a bit dated when you read it, and 2) While I don't dislike Christmas, I am no Clark Griswold. Please don't judge me too harshly. Since I travel to my native territory for Christmas, I don't usually put up a tree or do any decorating. And historically, I am a pretty good gift card giver. But there is something about my first Christmas after moving to a new city that adds some extra excitement to my end of the year travels. If there is ever a motivator for me to give unique gift, this is it. Like anyone who goes home for the first time everyone wants to know about my new city and what makes it unique. As a native of the "Show Me" State, I must have real evidence to back up my statements. Without giving away any secrets, I will travel back home with several items that are made in or near Aberdeen and products purchased in stores unique to the area that will show my friends and family part of why I am adjusting to life in Aberdeen, South Dakota just fine.

Something else I don't generally partake in is the setting of New Year's Resolutions. But I do feel that a reset button is hit on January 1st that is a little refreshing. Especially on a chilly morning in South Dakota. As the City's fiscal year starts in January, attention is turned to the capital projects that will happen in 2021. Like any business, we have capital equipment replacement challenges to keep up with. But really what I think is most important is the infrastructure improvements that residents, and visitors, can see. And like any City, we can't fix everything at once. Keeping up with all our streets and utility infrastructure is a constant challenge. But rest assured, our City Engineering and Public Works staff are always looking ahead at what projects can be done with allocated resources in any given year. I have worked in a number of cities and I can attest that we have a very proactive streets improvement program and you will see a variety of projects occur throughout the City in the coming year.

Due to the nature of my professional responsibilities, I often find that when I am planning for something that will occur this year, it will actually have an impact over many years. The largest planning effort that currently matches that description is water and wastewater capacity and system improvements. Some of the preliminary planning for water treatment occurred in 2019 and 2020. Throughout 2021 similar long-range planning will take place with the wastewater treatment system. These



facility plans will then shape the focus of capital improvements in water and wastewater for many years. And while these may not be the most exciting topics, they are very important to keeping up with the growth of our City. Our

current wastewater plant was designed for a smaller, mostly residential Aberdeen in the early 1980s. Lots has changed since then. Not only has residential growth occurred, but the community has also added some larger, industrial system customers and our system is operating at peak capacity. Some call these growing pains. I call them opportunity. Throughout 2021 lots of discussion will be focused on the direct correlation that exists between water and wastewater capacity and positive community growth. I will try not to bore you too much. But hey, at least I have a New Year's Goal!



**Joe Gaa**  
Aberdeen  
City Manager

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 (605) 225-2455  
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 Presentation College



## Diplomats

Taylor Wensmann  
 Fulfillment Manager  
 Midstates Group



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 City of Aberdeen



## Health & Wellness

Jessica Rehder, CDP, CADDCT, CMDCP  
 Sales Director  
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Devin Reints, CRSM, CRSC  
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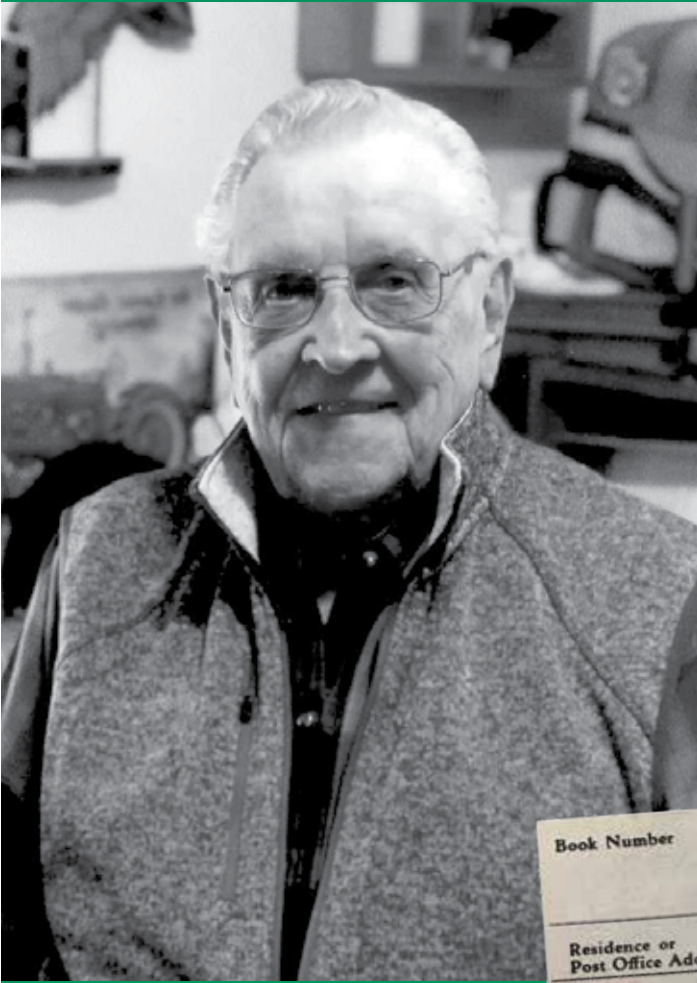
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A \$25 investment in a brown envelope in exchange for a handshake in 1946 is how George Casanova found himself a founding member of a credit union. Little did George know, nearly 75 years later, his investment not only funded a seedling credit union movement in Brown County, but eventually become part of the second largest credit union in South Dakota. “The last merger with Dakotaland was a good move, exclaimed George, they were able to bring the services we needed and can make much larger loans than we ever could in the past.” The stability and expansion were enough to convince George to leave a 60-year-old business relationship with another financial institution and return to where it all started...at his credit union.

“I like to know who I am doing business with and I have always appreciated how the credit unions take care of their members.”

— George Casanova  
75 Year Credit Union Member  
Aberdeen, South Dakota

Book Number	NAME (to be filled in by the treasurer) <i>George R. Casanova</i>		
Residence or Post Office Address	<i>R#3 Box 168 Aberdeen, S. Dak.</i>		Telephone or Ext. No. <i>169 J3</i>
Occupation	<i>Farming</i>	Division or Department	
Date of Birth	<i>Feb. 8, 1925</i>	Husband's first name or wife's maiden name	<i>Ruth Anderson</i>
I hereby make application for membership in the <i>Brownco Federal Credit Union</i>			
Credit Union and agree to conform to its laws and amendments thereof and subscribe for at least one share.			
SIGNATURE:	<i>George R. Casanova</i>		
This application approved by the Board of Directors and entered			
Date:	<i>Nov. 10, 1949</i>	Clerk:	<i>Doris G. Smith</i>
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