

NEWSLETTER

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY



SDDVA EMBARKS ON THEIR 2024 WHAT'S BREWING VOYAGE

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs team hit the road last week for the first of many “Veterans What’s Brewing” events this year.

SDDVA’s Secretary Greg Whitlock, Deputy Secretary Aaron Pollard, Field Service Officer Kevin Bowen, Claims Manager Brett Dickerson and Cemetery Director Erin Brown attended the event in Chamberlain last week. Brule County Veterans Service Officer Tim Thomas coordinated



this gathering with SDDVA for veterans in Brule, Buffalo, Jones, and Lyman Counties.

These events are great opportunities for the Department to visit with veterans and hear about the challenges they might be experiencing first-hand, as well as brief them on new benefits and services. SDDVA’s team and CVSO Thomas addressed questions about compensation, education, pension, healthcare, burial, care in the community, transportation reimbursement, state veterans cemetery, and state veterans home.

- The schedule for remaining “What’s Brewing” events is as follows:
- Apr 12—VFW Post—(521 First St West)—Webster—5:00 pm (CT)
 - Apr 16—School Multi Purpose Room—(805 10th St)—Eureka—1:00 pm (CT)
 - May 7—Pavilion—(Main and First Ave)—McIntosh—10:00 am (MT)
 - May 9—American Legion Post 6—(223 Main Street)—Gregory—5:00 pm (CT)
 - May 21—VFW Post 791—(209 Cedar St)—Yankton—10:00 am (CT)

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SDNG'S CFMO PRESENTED WITH TOP ENVIRONMENTAL AWARDS

The South Dakota Army National Guard Construction and Facilities Management Office (CFMO) was again recognized for their continued environmental and sustainment efforts, as well as their project execution and management. The CFMO was presented three awards for their fiscal year 2023 achievements at a ceremony on March 26, 2024.

"These awards showcase the efforts of the SDARNG to be stewards of our environment in all we do because it's our culture, our mission, and it's for our community," said Maj. William Domagall, SDARNG Environmental Program manager.

The SDARNG CFMO was the recipient of the following: The Environmental Stewardship Award is presented to the state or territory with the highest overall score of all the states and territories within the four environmental sections of G-9: Cleanup, Conservation, Technological Innovation, and the Planning division to include the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) score and a military construction (MILCON) score. The SDARNG CFMO received a perfect score in energy management and was a leader in the nation in the waste diversion program.

Environmental Quality Team, third place, was presented to the environmental team based on their management of environmental programs within their state. South Dakota highlights include the completion and improvement of spill containment plans, Energy Resiliency Conservation Investment Program (ERCIP) construction project submittals for energy conservation, and the ability to garner statewide support from the entire SDNG into the environmental programs.

And they received the Region 6 Fred Aron Award. The regional awards are given to the highest performing state in each of the seven regions in eight areas selected by the Branches, the Division Chiefs, and the G-9 Chief. The accuracy, effectiveness, and timeliness of submissions are considered for many of these scores. For others, prudent execution of federal funding in program execution is considered. Scores are reported by the subject-matter experts across the Division based on performance.

"Your work speaks for itself, and the kind of culture that has developed over many years in this organization is worth cultivating," said Maj. Gen. (S.D.) Mark Morrell, SDNG Adjutant General, "It is worth continuing to work on. Who we are matters."



NEW CTVSO PARTNERS

We have had four new partners join the county/tribal veterans service officer ranks recently.

Mike Mullen is the new VSO for Hughes County. Mike served in the South Dakota National Guard from 1981 to 2024 and was deployed once to Afghanistan and twice to Iraq.

Mike's office hours are 8:00 am—5:00 pm—Monday—Friday. He can be reached at 605.773.6975 or emailed at mike.mullen@co.hughes.sd.us.



Mike Mullen



Nellie Menard

Nellie Menard is new to the team in the Rosebud Sioux Tribal Veterans Service Office. She served in the U.S. Army for eight years and had two years and six months of foreign service in Korea and Kuwait. She can be reached at 605.747.2593 or emailed at: nelliepearl42@gmail.com.

Tyler Grotewold is the new CVSO for Minnehaha County. Tyler served in the U.S. Army from 2003-2009 and exited as an E-5 Sergeant with two tours of duty.

Prior to joining the veteran network, Tyler worked for the Social Security Administration where he processed retirement and disability claims. He most recently worked from the regional office as a disability claims rater.

Tyler has been looking for an opportunity to do more outreach and give back to the community and believes he has found that in this position. He's excited to get started and can't wait to help better serve our veterans.

Tyler can be reached at 605.367-4201 and emailed at: tgrotewold@minnehahacounty.gov.

Pennington County has added their fourth county veterans service officer. Please join us in welcoming Chris Dieball to the network.

Chris was born in Florida and raised in South Dakota where his dad was stationed at Ellsworth AFB. Chris joined the U.S. Air Force as an aircraft maintenance technician, and with 20 years of service, he retired in 2020, as a Master Sergeant.

Chris can be reached at 605.394.2266 and emailed at: chris.dieball@pennco.org.



Chris Dieball

PIERRE TO HOST AIRSHOW

Pierre will be hosting "Let Freedom Fly International Airshow," a spectacular celebration of aviation, patriotism, and community spirit on Memorial Day weekend. Proceeds generated during this weekend extravaganza will be dedicated to Pierre United Way.

The weekend promises thrilling performances and captivating ground displays. Performers include the following.

Jim Peitz, a local pilot, will perform an exciting aerobatic demo in the P51D "Dakota Kid II" from the Dakota Territory Air Museum. He will also give a second performance in his F33C Bonanza.

Vicky Benzing, an accomplished pilot, skydiver, aerobatic performer, and air racer with over 9500 hours of flight time and over 1300 parachute jumps will also be performing.

Kent Pietsch has been performing in air shows in the United States and Canada for over 40 years, entertaining millions of spectators at hundreds of shows. In his iconic Interstate Cadet, he created and flies some of the most unique routines in the air show industry, including a deadstick glider routine, hilarious comedy act, and a breath-taking truck-top landing.

Matt Younkin's Beech 18 performance is likely the most unusual act on the airshow circuit today. The Beech 18 was never designed for aerobatic flight; however, that doesn't make it incapable of doing just that.

The Chuters are a veteran owned and operated parachute team that provides precision aerial parachute demonstrations across the globe.

In 1980, Warren Pietsch began to modify his 1946 Taylorcraft, reducing the wingspan to 14 feet to become a hyper-maneuverable "clipped-wing". He flies an aerobatic routine that is quick, precise, and up close. This amazing act has a combination of classic and gyroscopic aerobatic maneuvers that demand your attention and leave every crowd wanting more!

Bill Stein has logged over 7,000 hours of aerobatic and formation flight. Bill began flying aerobatics when he was still a student pilot and has been dedicated to perfecting his skills ever since. Since 1995 Bill has performed at air shows across the United States and has entertained millions of air show fans.

Philipp Steinbach, an aircraft designer who flies his own designed aircraft in airshows. The GB1 GameBird he designed, was engineered from the outset to be the best aerobatic and touring airplane in the world.

To learn more about this event scheduled for May 25-26, 2024, visit <https://lffairshow.org/>



VA ANNOUNCES NEW PROGRAM TO HELP VETERANS STAY IN THEIR HOMES

On May 31, 2024, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs will launch a new program — the [Veterans Affairs Servicing Purchase \(VASP\) program](#) — to help veterans experiencing severe financial hardship avoid foreclosure and stay in their homes.

VASP is a new, last-resort tool in the VA's comprehensive suite of home retention options for eligible veterans, active-duty service members, and surviving spouses with VA-guaranteed home loans who are experiencing severe financial hardship. Through VASP, the VA will purchase defaulted VA loans from mortgage servicers, modify the loans, and then place them in the VA-owned portfolio as direct loans. This will empower VA to work directly with eligible veterans to adjust their loans — and their monthly payments — so they can keep their homes. With VASP, these borrowers will have a fixed 2.5% interest rate, which will provide a consistent, affordable payment for the remainder of their loan.

Veterans will not apply directly for VASP. Instead, beginning May 31, mortgage servicers will identify qualified borrowers and submit requests on behalf of veterans based on a review of all home retention options available and qualifying criteria. Veterans facing financial hardship should work with their mortgage servicers to explore available options.

The VA anticipates that VASP will result in a government subsidy spending reduction of approximately \$1.5 billion from 2024 to 2033, making it beneficial for veterans, taxpayers, servicers, and loan holders alike. This is because the savings associated with avoiding foreclosures outweighs the cost of purchasing these homes.

Currently, more than 3.7 million veterans have active home loans guaranteed by the VA, and the VA guaranteed 400,695 home loans in 2023 alone.

Veterans who are having difficulty reaching a resolution with their mortgage servicer can contact the VA at 877-827-3702, option 4. [Learn more about the policy](#) and the VASP program. For more information on VA home loans, visit the [VA home loans](#) website.

VETERAN RESOURCE FAIR

APRIL 16, 2024
11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

the **ALLIANCE**

1600 W Russell St.
Sioux Falls, SD 57104



PACT ACT

Expanding healthcare and benefits for Veterans exposed to burn pits, Agent Orange, and other toxic substances.

- Enroll for VA Health Care
- Benefit Claims Assistance



Scan QR Code to learn more about the PACT Act and what to bring.

ADVANCE CARE PLANNING



Get Ready

- Who might be a good choice to be your decision maker?

Get Set

- Will the person make decisions that are in line with your wishes?

Go

- What is the most important thing you want your decision maker to know about your wishes?



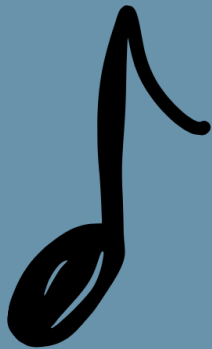
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Sioux Falls VA Health Care System

MINGO

(MUSIC BINGO)

FRIDAY, APRIL 26

6:30 PM - 9:30 PM



HAY CAMP BREWING CO.
601 KANSAS CITY ST
RAPID CITY, SD 57701



\$5 MINGO CARDS
\$25 FREEDOM BUNDLES
\$1/PINT DONATED BACK



PROCEEDS BENEFIT



**MIDWEST
HONOR FLIGHT**

midwesthonorflight.org



SCAN TO DONATE

PROUD EVENT SPONSOR





SAVE THE
date

April 24, 2024
4:00pm - 7:00pm
Vermillion Eagles Club
114 West Main St.

- **FREE Meal for Military-Connected People**
- **Meet with Vital Resources and Service Providers**
- **Service Members, Veterans, and their Families have the chance to receive up to \$250 in Grocery Gift Cards**



Contact: Joseph Knoer, Student Veteran Resource Coordinator, USD; Joseph.Knoer01@usd.edu; 605-658-3570

Eliminating food insecurity among veteran and military families living in rural South Dakota



SUPPORT OUR ARMY RESERVE FAMILIES

April 27, 2024
11:00am-1:00pm
Vern Eide Marine
4501 E Arrowhead Pkwy, Sioux Falls

- **FREE Meal for U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers and their Spouses**
- **Meet with Vital Resources and Service Providers**
- **Launch of the Ready to Serve Food Pantry for Reservists and their families**

**Contact: SSG Zachary Cosens; Zach.Cosens1992@gmail.com;
(417) 459-7500 or Jill Baker at Jill@sdvets.org**

Eliminating food insecurity among veteran and military families living in rural South Dakota

UPCOMING EVENTS

Apr 12—Day County What's Brewing—VFW Post—(521 First St West)—Webster—5:00 pm (CT)

Apr 12—Purple Up for Military Kids

Apr 16—McPherson County What's Brewing—School Multi Purpose Room—(805 10th St)—Eureka—1:00 pm (CT)

Apr 17—SD Veterans Council Meeting—VFW Post 1273—Rapid City—9:00 am (MT)

Apr 19—Mogen's Heroes Dance—El Riad Shrine—(510 S. Phillips)—Sioux Falls—6:00 pm (CT)

Apr 23—SDDVA Mini Conference—Pennington County Conference Room—(321 Kansas City St)—Rapid City—10:00 am—2:00 pm (MT)

Apr 24—SDDVA Mini Conference—Post 8 AL Cabin—(520 S. Pierre St)—Pierre—10:00 am—2:00 pm (CT)

Apr 24—Operation Chow Line—Vermillion Eagles Club—(114 W. Main St)—Vermillion—4:00—7:00 pm (CT)

Apr 25—SDDVA Mini Conference—SD Military Heritage Alliance—(1600 W. Russell St)—Sioux Falls—10:00 am—2:00 pm (CT)

Apr 26-27—DAV State Convention—Deadwood Lodge

Apr 27—Operation Chow Line—Vern Eide Marine—(4501 E. Arrowhead Pkwy)—Sioux Falls—11:00 am—1:00 pm (CT)

May 6-18—Fareway Round Up Campaign at participating stores

May 7—Corson County What's Brewing—Pavilion—(Main and First Ave)—McIntosh—10:00 am (MT)

May 7—Midwest Honor Flight Mission 18—Welcome Home Ceremony—Sioux Falls Convention Center—(1201 N. West Ave)—Sioux Falls—9:30 pm (CT)

May 9—Gregory County What's Brewing—American Legion Post 6—(223 Main Street)—Gregory—5:00 pm (CT)

May 21—Yankton County What's Brewing—VFW Post 791—(209 Cedar St)—Yankton—10:00 am (CT)

May 21—Midwest Honor Flight Mission 19—Welcome Home Ceremony—Convention Center—(1201 N. West Ave)—Sioux Falls—9:30 pm (CT)

May 27—SDDVA Memorial Day Program—SD Veterans Cemetery—12:00 noon (CT)

Jun 5—Midwest Honor Flight Mission 20—Welcome Home Ceremony—Convention Center—(1201 N. West Ave)—Sioux Falls—9:30 pm (CT)

Jun 7—8—VFW State Conference—Holiday Inn—Spearfish

Jun 14—Midwest Honor Flight Day of Sweetness—Chick-fil-A—(4005 W. 41st St)—Sioux Falls—7:00 am —10:00 pm (CT)

Jun 20—23—American Legion State Conference—Pierre

Jun 30—Midwest Honor Flight Honor Ride—SD Military Heritage Alliance—(1600 W. Russell St)—Sioux Falls—Registration—1:00 pm/Ride Begins at 2:30 pm (CT)

Jul 15—6th Annual Tee it up for the Troops Midwest Honor Flight Fundraiser—Arrowhead Country Club—(3675 Sheridan Lake Road)—Rapid City—7:15 am (MT)

Jul 17—SD Veterans Council Meeting—VFW Post 17—(802 S. Main St)—Aberdeen

Aug 1—2—South Dakota Suicide Prevention Conference—Convention Center—(1201 N. West Ave)—Sioux Falls

Aug 21—SD Veterans Council Meeting—VFW Post 791—(209 S. Cedar)—Yankton

Aug 26—Midwest Honor Flight Fundraiser—The Barrel House—(4701 E. 54th St)—Sioux Falls—11:00 am—8:00 pm (CT)

Aug 29—Veterans Day at the SD State Fair—Northwest Energy Freedom Stage—Huron

Aug 29—Sep 2—SD State Fair—Huron

(Continued)

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Sep 3—5—SDDVA Annual CTVSO Benefit School—SD Military Heritage Alliance—(1600 W. Russell St)—Sioux Falls
Sep 18—SD Veterans Council Meeting—Rapid City
Oct 12—Midwest Honor Flight Third Annual Elvis Night—SD Military Heritage Alliance—(1600 W. Russell St)—
Sioux Falls
Oct 16—SD Veterans Council Meeting—American Legion Post—(1229 Western Ave)—Brookings
Nov 9—Fifth Annual Northern Hills Veterans Appreciation Fair We've Got Your Six—Sturgis
Nov 18—Wreaths Across America Fundraiser—The Barrel House—(4701 E. 54th St)—Sioux Falls—11:00 am—8:00
pm (CT)
Nov 20—SD Veterans Council Meeting—DAV—(1519 W. 51st St)—Sioux Falls
Nov 20—SD Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—Sioux Falls
Nov 21—SD Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—Watertown
Nov 22—SD Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—Rapid City
Nov 23—SD Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—Pierre
Dec 3—Governor's Budget Address—1:00 pm
Dec 14—Wreaths Across America Wreath Laying Ceremony at South Dakota Veterans Cemetery—Sioux Falls—
11:00 am (CT)

2025 Events

- Jan 14—Governor's State of the State Address—1:00 pm
Jan 14—Legislative Session starts
Jan 15—SD Veterans Council Meeting—Pierre
Feb 14—16—American Legion Mid-Winter Conference—Oacoma
Jun 12—15—VFW State Convention—Ramkota—Pierre
Jun 19—22—American Legion State Conference—Huron
Dec 13—Wreaths Across America Wreath Laying Ceremony at South Dakota Veterans Cemetery—Sioux Falls—
11:00 am (CT)

Audry Ricketts, Public Information Officer
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