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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**SDDVA Secretary Whitlock's August Column – There is no Time Like Fair Time!**

The South Dakota State Fair is a time-honored tradition and always promises an experience for all who attend.

Our State Fair is unlike any other. Where else can you inhale a massive plate of fried food while walking toward the carnival rides or having a corn dog for your main entree and funnel cake for dessert? Where else can you get anything fried on a stick, visit a car show, tractor show, goat tying, arm wrestling, and play arcade games all within a few blocks of each other? Where else can you shop, learn, and connect with old friends while tracking thousands of steps on your walk app? The list goes on and so does the fun!

The State Fair also provides great opportunities for veterans. We may not be serving up fried pickles, cotton candy, kettle corn, or turkey legs; but we'll be staffing booth 5A in the Expo Building for all six days of the Fair. Our team of experts will be prepared to answer veteran's questions on disability, compensation, healthcare, long term care, home loans, rehabilitation and education, employment and training programs, pension, and death benefits. Our booth will also be staffed by veterans who had boots on the ground and continue to serve as they focus on enhancing the lives of their fellow veterans. Our team will be available from 9:00 am – 8:00 pm on Wednesday through Sunday and 9:00 am – 5:00 pm on Monday.

On Wednesday and Thursday evenings, during the Red Wilk Construction Tuff Hedeman Bull Bash, Red and his team will honor veterans. As a Vietnam Veteran himself, Red knows the importance of honoring veterans for the sacrifices they have made for their country. Over the years, Red has honored hundreds of veterans from all over South Dakota.

The State Fair will present a "Salute to Veterans" on Thursday, August 29. The day allows all veterans free gate admission and a recognition program that starts at 10:30 am on the Northwest Energy Freedom Stage. A trip to the state fair is a tradition families have passed on from generation to the next, where lasting memories are made.

Hope to see you there!

Greg Whitlock, Secretary  
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs