



NEWSLETTER

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



MESSAGE FROM SDDVA SECRETARY WHITLOCK

As Memorial Day approaches, it is a great time to pause and consider the true meaning of this holiday. This is a day for national awareness and reverence. It's a day to honor those Americans who died while defending our nation and our values. We can never underestimate or over appreciate the costs they bore for us.

Let us never forget how fortunate we are to live in freedom. And let us always commemorate our history and honor the sacrifices these heroes gave to protect that freedom. They led colorful, vivid, and passionate lives, and we owe it to them and their families to honor and pay tribute to them.

To me, cemeteries are like libraries – rich in history with hundreds of headstones that each tell a story. I challenge you to visit a cemetery, especially a veteran's cemetery, walk down each row and capture each veteran's story. You'll read about great Americans, recognize their valor, and applaud the blessings their bravery secured. They came from all backgrounds, ages, faiths, colors, and creeds.

Books help us open our minds and increase our understanding of the world around us. Veteran's headstones tell their stories. They tell us when they served, where they served, and what their mission was. Each veteran is unique and exploring their memoirs will leave a lasting impact.

Never forget that our veterans sacrificed their future and their dreams, and it is our duty to keep their legacy fresh in the memories of future generations.

Greg Whitlock, Secretary
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs

Table of Contents

- Yankton County What's Brewing . 2
- Memorial Day at State Cemetery 3
- Mother's Day 4
- Corson County What's Brewing .. 4
- SFVA Walk and Roll 5
- Totton Joins Dewey County 6
- MJFSVH Update 6
- National Nurses Week 7
- Veterans Appreciation Fair 8
- Upcoming Events 9-10



WHAT'S BREWING IN YANKTON COUNTY!

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs will be hosting a “Coffee and Conversation” program in Yankton. This program is in partnership with Yankton County Veterans Service Officer Rob Stickney. The department welcomes the opportunity to visit one-on-one with veterans and see what’s brewing!

The “What’s Brewing” program will be held Tuesday, May 21, at the VFW Post 791 (209 Cedar Street) at 10:00 am (CT).

“What’s Brewing’ is a great opportunity for us to visit with veterans and hear about the challenges they might be experiencing first-hand. These programs also allow us the opportunity to speak with them about new benefits and services,” said SDDVA Secretary Greg Whitlock. “As the advocates for South Dakota veterans, we need to hear about the things our veterans are facing. We walk among veterans every day, and yet we may not even realize the magnitude of their sacrifices to serve our country.”

The SDDVA team and CVSO Stickney will address questions about veteran’s benefits including compensation, education, pension, healthcare, burial, state veterans cemetery, and state veterans home.

We encourage veterans to join us if they can. As always, they can reach our SDDVA team at 605.333.6869, or they can locate their county or tribal veterans service officer by visiting <https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/veteransserviceofficers/locatevso.aspx>.



**Veterans,
See
What’s
Brewing!**



We invite all veterans to join us for a
“Veterans Coffee and Networking.”
Free coffee and treats while you chat with new and old friends
alike and learn more about veterans benefits from the South
Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs.

Tuesday—May 21, 2024
10:00 am (CT)
VFW Post 791
(209 Cedar Street—Yankton)



SD VETERANS CEMETERY MEMORIAL DAY PROGRAM

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs will host a Memorial Day program on Monday, May 27. The program will begin at 12:00 pm (CT) at the SD Veterans Cemetery (25965 477th Avenue) in Sioux Falls.

“Memorial Day is an opportunity to pay our respects and to reflect on the high cost of freedom,” said South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Greg Whitlock. “Americans who put their lives on the line to protect our freedoms and our way of life have stories worth telling. It’s on us to tell their stories, to honor their lives, and to offer their families and loved ones our eternal support.”

Keynote speakers include Lieutenant Governor Larry Rhoden and CSM (Ret) Brooks Schild, both of whom have lived a life of public service.

Larry Rhoden is South Dakota's 39th Lieutenant Governor, and is a lifelong rancher, former legislator, dedicated husband and father, and a proven leader with a record of service to South Dakota and our nation. Rhoden served six years in the South Dakota National Guard, carrying on a family legacy of military service that began in the Revolutionary War.

Schild retired from the South Dakota National Guard with over 33 years of service to his country and his state. He had two overseas deployments to Kuwait and Iraq. He also served on the South Dakota Veterans Commission for four years, and taught science for 32 years.

“Memorial Day is the day we pause and honor those that have given so much,” said South Dakota Veterans Cemetery Director Erin Brown. “We hope you can join us in providing the proper remembrance they deserve.”

Attendees are encouraged to bring lawn chairs.



*A Day to Remember and Honor
SDDVA Memorial Day Program
South Dakota Veterans Cemetery*

Monday—May 27, 2024

12:00 Noon

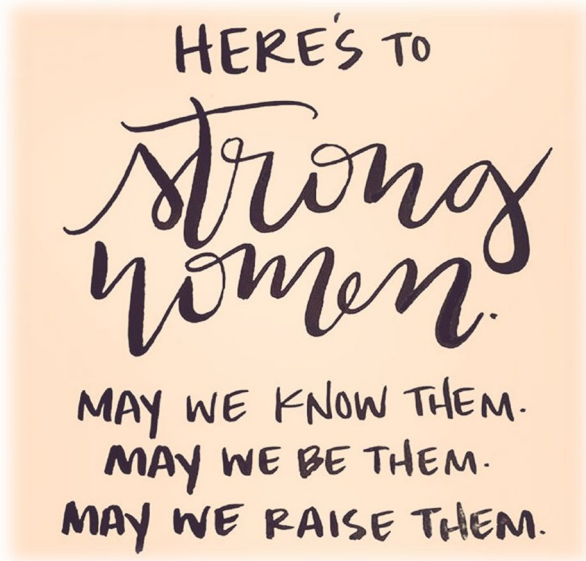


*25965 477th Avenue
Sioux Falls*

HAPPY MOTHERS DAY

Happy Mothers Day to the Warrior Moms, the Blue Star Moms, the Gold Star Moms, the moms who wear two sets of shoes because their spouse is away defending our nation, and to all of the moms who support these moms.

Happy Mothers Day!



WHAT'S BREWING


This week, our SDDVA team traveled to McIntosh for the Corson County “What’s Brewing” program.

Special thanks to VSO Kevin Dyda for hosting the event.

SDDVA’s Secretary Greg Whitlock, Deputy Secretary Aaron Pollard, Field Service Officer Kevin Swanson, State Veterans Home Director Chuck Johnson, and Cemetery Director Erin Brown provided briefings.

These events are great opportunities for the Department to visit with veterans and hear about the challenges they might be experiencing first-hand. As the advocate for South Dakota veterans, we need to know what challenges our veterans and their families are facing.





14th ANNUAL NATIONAL VA2K WALK AND ROLL

Tuesday, May 14th
11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Location: Sioux Falls VA Health Care System

ENCOURAGING HEALTHY LIVING &
SUPPORTING HOMELESS VETERANS

Tuesday, May 14th
11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Registration table located at the front entrance

Donations are optional and are not required to participate in the VA2K.

Items requested by the homeless program include laundry detergent, toiletries, toilet paper, small garbage cans and bags, and cleaning supplies.

Donation Dropoff Sites:

- Registration table on day of the event
- Designated bin in VCS retail store



TOTTON JOINS VSO NETWORK

Marshall Totton is the new Dewey County Veterans Service Officer.

Totton served in the U.S. Army from 2001-2006 in the communications field. He deployed to Iraq for OIF tours one and three. After leaving the Army, he served one year in the South Dakota National Guard.

He currently, and for the past 15 years, serves as an EMT with the Cheyenne River Health Center EMS department.

Totton noted he decided to apply for the VSO position because he learned first-hand how difficult signing up for VA benefits can be doing it solo and welcomes the opportunity to serve his fellow veterans.



MJFSVH UPDATE

This week, the residents at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home had the opportunity to paint some canvas.

This low-impact activity assists our veterans in keeping the joints limber, firming up those muscles, expressing themselves and growing their motor skills and dexterity.



Northern Hills Veterans Appreciation Fair

Saturday, November 9, 2024 Sturgis Community Center

11:00 am to 2:00 pm

Open to ALL Veterans and their families

Veterans Service
Officers (VSO) from
Butte, Lawrence,
Meade, and State

VA Services

VA Flu Clinic

Support Groups

Veteran Organizations

Service Dogs

Employment

Housing

Education

Outdoor Recreation

and more...



Backpacks

Clothing

Toiletries

Lunch

Coffee & Water

ALL Free

While Supplies
Last!



<https://wevegotyoursix.weebly.com>

Bring your DD214 , NGB-22 or other proof that you are a veteran.
VSO's can help you if you don't have one.

If you need assistance, contact Julie Malcolm at

Northernhillsgotyour6@outlook.com

UPCOMING EVENTS

- May 9—Gregory County What's Brewing—American Legion Post 6—(223 Main Street)—Gregory—5:00 pm (CT)
- May 13—Operation Chow Line—Rosalle's Restaurant—(9 8th Avenue E)—Sisseton—2:00—7:00 pm (CT)
- May 16—Black Hills National Cemetery Carry the Load Program—Sturgis—3:00 pm (MT)
- 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—Sioux Area Veterans Council Memorial Day—SD Military Heritage Alliance—(1600 W. Russell St)—Sioux Falls—10:00 am (CT)
- May 27—SDDVA Memorial Day Program—SD Veterans Cemetery—12:00 noon (CT)
- Jun 1—Rich Schild Memorial Poker Run—Keg—Tabor—1:00 pm (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 28—Sep 2—SD State Fair—Huron
- Aug 29—Veterans Day at the SD State Fair—Northwest Energy Freedom Stage—Huron
- 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

(Continued)

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Nov 9—Fifth Annual Northern Hills Veterans Appreciation Fair We’ve Got Your Six—Sturgis Community Center—(1401 Lazelle Street)—Sturgis—11:00 am—2:00 pm (MT)
- Nov 9—Third Annual Day County Veterans Banquet—Webster Armory—5:00 pm (CT)
- 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
 South Dakota Department of the Military <https://military.sd.gov/>
 South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs <https://vetaffairs.sd.gov>
 Soldiers and Sailors Building - 425 E Capitol Avenue
 Pierre, SD 57501
 Phone: 605-773-8242
 E-mail address: audry.ricketts@state.sd.us

