

## NEWSLETTER

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



# CHECK OUT THE 988 POST IT WALL

If you find yourself in the Sioux Falls area in the month of May, stop by the Washington Pavilion to check out the 988 Post it Wall Installation.



Stuck to a wall are over 13,000 sticky notes, which symbolize the number of calls, texts and chats made to 988 in 2024. The post it notes are filled with positive affirmation and words of encouragement—a reminder to those that help that hope is available through the lifeline.

The installation on the third floor of the Pavilion will be available to see throughout May's Mental Health Awareness Month. We encourage you to see if for yourselves—there is nothing like it!

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# VETERANS, SEE WHAT'S BREWING!

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs (SDDVA), in partnership with our county veterans service officers, will be hosting "Coffee and Conversation" events throughout the

state. This gathering is part of the Department's "What's Brewing" program—an outreach effort to connect directly with veterans, hear their stories, and provide updates on services and benefits available to them.

"The 'What's Brewing' series serves as an important platform for meaningful conversations with our veterans," said SDDVA Secretary Jeremiah Schneider. "These gatherings not only allow us to better understand the concerns and challenges veterans are facing, but also provide a forum to share updates on benefits, services, and resources



available to them. It's our duty as advocates to stay connected to their experiences and honor the sacrifices they've made in service to our country."

Secretary Schneider, members of the SDDVA team, and the CVSOs will be available to answer questions and provide information on a wide range of veterans' benefits and services, including compensation, education, pensions, healthcare, burial benefits, the State Veterans Cemetery, and the State Veterans Home.

All veterans are encouraged to attend. For those unable to make it, the SDDVA remains just a call or click away. Reach the Department at 605.333.6869 or locate their county or tribal Veterans Service Officer at: <a href="https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/veteransserviceofficers/locatevso.aspx">https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/veteransserviceofficers/locatevso.aspx</a> Upcoming events are as follows:

Sturgis Library (1st Floor)	Sturgis	10:00 am (MT)
American Legion Post 8	Pierre	1:00 pm (CT)
American Legion Post 4	Mobridge	1:00 pm (CT)
American Legion Post 311	Piedmont	10:00 am (MT)
Community Club	Chamberlain	1:00 pm (CT)
BHSU Joy Center	Spearfish	1:00 pm (MT)
FEM Electric	Ipswich	1:00 pm (CT)
Harding County Court House	Buffalo	10:00 am (MT)
	American Legion Post 8 American Legion Post 4 American Legion Post 311 Community Club BHSU Joy Center FEM Electric	American Legion Post 8 American Legion Post 4 American Legion Post 311 Community Club BHSU Joy Center Pierre Mobridge Piedmont Chamberlain Spearfish

# ANGLERS FOR VETERANS FISHING TOURNAMENT

There's nothing like a day on the lake. This May, it's all about sharing that experience with

those who have served.
Community Action for Veterans (CAV) will be hosting the Anglers for Veterans
Fishing Tournament on May
16 and 17, 2025, at Lake
Thompson.

The goal is simple. Get veterans in boats and bring people together through fishing, fellowship, and community support.

The tournament will feature \$10,000 in prizes and is expected to draw 40 teams from across the region. The entry fee is \$300 per team or just \$250 if a veteran is in the boat.

The weekend begins with Lines In: Official Check-In & Kickoff Night on Friday, May 16, at Half Pint Steaks & Spirits in De Smet, South Dakota. All teams must check in at this event to participate in the tournament. The evening will include opportunities to bid on prizes and participate in a calcutta auction.



### \$10,000 IN PRIZES

PRIZE MONEY BASED ON 40 TEAMS-ACTUAL PAYOFF BASED ON NUMBER OF TEAMS ENTERED.

**Tournament Payout** 

1st Prize: \$5,000

2nd Prize: \$2,500

3rd Prize: \$1,200

4th Prize: \$800

5th Prize: \$500

## MAY 16-17, 2025 LAKE THOMPSON, SOUTH DAKOTA

#### **Rules and Regulations**

#### ELIGIBILITY:

All participants MUST have a valid fishing license to participate in the tournament. The total entry fee is \$300 per team or \$250 per team with a Veteran crew member. Contestants MUST check in on Friday, May 16, 2025, starting at 5:30 PM and ending at 7:30pm. LOCATION: Half Pint Steaks & Spirits; 104 3rd St SW, De Smet, SD.

#### TACKLE AND EQUIPMENT:

Both artificial and live bait are permitted. Each team may use up to four rods.

#### FISHING AREA:

The designated fishing area is Lake Thompson. Launching site is the North Ramp.

#### SCORING

Prizes will be based on pounds and ounces most weighted during the tournament day. Each boat will be permitted to catch eight walleyes. Six walleyes of at least 15 inches will be weighed, with only two over 20 inches.

#### TEAMS:

Contestants can enter as two, three, or four person teams. Tournament payouts will be awarded to the top five teams. Each team is encouraged to include Veterans as part of their crew.



For more information on sponsorship or to register a ream, visit <a href="https://www.sdvets.org/">https://www.sdvets.org/</a> anglers-for-veterans-fundraiser or email <a href="mailto:Jill@sdvets.org">Jill@sdvets.org</a>.

## CIVIC LEADERS GET INSIDE LOOK AT SDNG OPERATIONS

Last week in Sioux Falls, Major General Mark Morrell, Adjutant General of the South Dakota National Guard, hosted an unforgettable experience for civic leaders, offering them a rare, behind-the-scenes glimpse into the Guard's mission, values, and operations.

The event provided attendees with a deeper understanding of the vital role the Guard plays in both state and national defense. From meeting service members to learning about the



Guard's diverse capabilities, the evening was filled with insight and inspiration.

The highlight of the night came as civic leaders witnessed F-16 fighter jets take off for a nighttime training mission—an awe-inspiring display of precision, skill, and dedication. The experience served as a powerful reminder of the unwavering commitment of South Dakota's citizen-soldiers to protect and serve.



## **SDDVA OUTREACH**

Yesterday, the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs (SDDVA) joined KELOLAND

Media Group at the South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance for a special event honoring Vietnam Veterans during an early screening of the upcoming KELO-TV special, "Vietnam War: A Lost Generation."

The event featured an outreach booth hosted by SDDVA.
Appeals and Training Manager
David Huntimer and Field Service
Officer David Denson, along with
Lincoln County Veterans Service
Officer Dave Ekle, were available
to assist veterans with filing
claims and answering questions
about benefits and services.



Following the screening, a panel discussion was led by KELO's Don Jorgenson. The panel included Vietnam Veterans Hawk Mayer, Gene Murphy, David Rowe, and Bill McGinnis, who shared powerful reflections

on their experiences and the impact of the war on their lives and community.

KELOLAND's special presentation, "Vietnam War: A Lost Generation," will officially air this Saturday at 7 p.m. on KELO-TV. Viewers can also tune in to a special edition of Inside KELOLAND airing Saturday at 9 a.m. and again on Sunday at 10:30 p.m., where local Vietnam Veterans are introduced, and viewers get a glimpse into KELOLAND's historic trip to Vietnam in 1988.

The evening served not only as a tribute to Vietnam Veterans, but



also as an opportunity to bring attention to the ongoing needs of those who served and the importance of remembering their sacrifices.

### **VETERANS PICNIC**

This event is an opportunity for camaraderie, connection, and collaboration among veteran support organizations in the Sioux Empire. Coming together for an afternoon of great food, conversation, and shared purpose in our collective mission of supporting those who served.

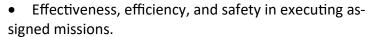
Please RSVP to <u>director@wingsofvalorlodge.org</u>, so they plan appropriately for food and seating.



# SD WING COMPLETES SUCCESSFUL COMPLIANCE

The South Dakota Wing of the Civil Air Patrol recently concluded a Compliance Inspection (CI) conducted by both CAP and CAP-USAF Inspector General offices. The inspection, held from 30 January to 4 April 2025, is part of an ongoing effort to ensure mission readiness, operational safety, and adherence to regulations across all CAP units. South Dakota is the first wing this cycle to receive a rating of "Highly Effective".

The CI is a comprehensive, value-added process designed not only to assess compliance but also to help improve mission accomplishment. Inspectors focused on several key areas:



- Compliance with applicable laws, regulations, instructions, and technical orders.
- The leadership's efforts to enhance mission capabilities and implement improvements.
- Attention to the detection and prevention of fraud, waste, and abuse.

The inspection team expressed appreciation for the professionalism and dedication of the South Dakota Wing's volunteer members.



Volunteers serving America's communities, saving lives, and shaping futures.









Everyone and Everything is Welcome... Cars, Pickups, Motorcycles, Buses, Etc., Etc., Etc.

SAT, JUNE 7TH REGISTRATION DEGINS AT 12:00 At The Keg in Tabor - \$20 Entry 1pm Start

FIREWORKS DISPLAY DURING CZECH DAYS Like Us On I

RichSchildMemorialFireworks 50/50 Split

Door Prizes







is proud to host

Riding





Sioux Falls/Sanford

States in 22 Days

Medical Center

**Partner** Hotel

## Veteran Suicide Awareness Ride

8th State - Leg 8

Friday May 30th, 2025 9:00am KSU 10:30am

**Proceeds Benefit** 



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

Suggested Donation: \$20 Rider, \$10 Passenger

Find Ride Routes, Host Stops,
Hotel Partners,
Order T-Shirts and MORE at
www.riding22in22vsa.com





## **BUDDY NIGHT**

Friday, April 25th from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. State Vets Home, Minnekahta Ave Hosted by Smokehouse Grill

Buddy Night is an opportunity for veterans, their families and friends and community members to connect over a casual night of food and fun.

Please join us, whether you are new to the community or a long-time resident...we'd love to have you!

Sponsored by Casting Vets in partnership with the Hot Springs Veterans Suicide Prevention Coalition.

Contact us for a ride at: info@castingvets.org or 605-846-3203





THURSDAY, MAY 22, 2025
GRAND RIVER CASINO & RESORT

(10AM - 2PM CST)

LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED

RESOURCE FAIR AND OUTREACH EVENT FOR VETERANS.

**VA PROGRAMS AND VA BENEFITS STAFF** 

WILL BE AVAILABLE TO ANSWER QUESTIONS.

PLEASE BRING A COPY OF YOUR DD FORM 214, DEPENDENT INFORMATION AND IDENTIFICATION TO THE EVENT.

DOCUMENTATION IS NEEDED SO

WE CAN FULLY SERVE YOU AND YOUR NEEDS.

### SERVICES OFFERED

CLOTHING LEGAL ASSISTANCE READJUSTMENT COUNSELING EMPLOYMENT SERVICES VA BENEFITS HOUSING REFERRALS

**MUCH MORE!** 

POC: CLAUDETTE WALKING ELK, DIRECTOR SRST DEPT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (701) 854 8527

POC: VA BLACK HILLS
CLAY THOMPSON (605) 206 0046 clay.thompson@va.gov
CHELSEA TAKEN ALIVE (605) 490 1765 chelsea.takenalive@va.gov





SOUTH DAKOTA

## SOUTH DAKOTA GAME, FISH AND PARKS VETERAN AND ACCESSIBILITY PROGRAMS



#### SOUTH DAKOTA STATE PARKS

South Dakota has over 60 state park and recreation areas that offer a variety of activities, amenities, and events. Several discount programs provide opportunities for all to enjoy the parks as well as accessible campsites, fishing and hunting areas, and Trackchairs<sup>©</sup>, so everyone can have outdoor adventures.

### DISABLED VETERAN AND PRISONER OF WAR LIFETIME STATE PARK ENTRANCE LICENSE

The Division of Parks and Recreation offers lifetime state park entrance licenses for disabled veterans who are residents of South Dakota and are deemed 100 percent total and permanent disabled or is a "K" Award recipient. Approved applicants also receive a 50-percent discount on camping fees. The application and additional information can be found at *gfp.sd.gov*, search "Military Park Entrance License."

#### **MILITARY GROUP SPECIAL EVENTS**

Park entrance licenses are not required for past and present military personnel or their family and guests if participating in an approved military group event held in a state park. This includes South Dakota veterans, members of the South Dakota National Guard and military reserve units, patients of veterans' hospitals in South Dakota and family members, and guests attending the event. To host a military event in a state park, complete the Special Event Application at *gfp.sd.gov*.

#### TRAIL USER SERVICE FEE EXEMPTIONS

The following guests who enter the George S. Mickelson Trail area for a special event hosted by their organization, are exempt from the trail fee:

- » Members and guests of a South Dakota veteran's organization or group
- » South Dakota National Guard or military reserve unit and guests
- » Patients currently admitted to a veteran's hospital in South Dakota and their attendants

An approved special event permit must be obtained at least five days before the event. The park manager shall issue a special free trail user pass to participants of the special event.

#### **CHECK OUT SOUTH DAKOTA STATE PARKS**

In partnership between the Department of Education and the

Department of Game, Fish and Parks, library card holders may check out a 3-day state park vehicle pass at their local participating public library. The Check Out South Dakota State Parks library park pass is valid for entry of one passenger vehicle into any South Dakota State Park, Recreation Area, or Nature Area.

View the list of participating libraries on the GFP website. Don't see your local library listed? Contact your library to request their participation.

#### PARK RX

Any Heathcare provider licensed to prescribe in South Dakota can write a Park Prescription, which is redeemable for a free, 1-day pass to any South Dakota state park or a discounted annual pass for year-round activity.

Regular outdoor activity and exercise are proven to benefit both physical and mental health. We encourage all providers to sign up for the program and get all South Dakotans to work on wellness at one of the amazing state parks.

Talk to your doctor today to see if they participate in the South Dakota Park Prescription program. If not, it's easy for them to sign up and start writing prescriptions.

The program is being administered by the South Dakota Department of Health in partnership with South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks and SDSU Extension.

#### **ADA CAMPING**

Accessible campsites (39 parks) and camping cabins are found in most state park areas. They feature accessible picnic tables, sidewalks, electricity, close parking, and are usually located near the park's comfort station.

Campers can make reservations for accessible campsites online or through the call center by providing their ADA/Handicap Placard ID

#### **HUNTING AND FISHING**

A reduced fee license for eligible residents and several accessibility permits are available within the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks, so everyone has access and opportunities to South Dakota's great outdoors.

#### **REDUCED FEE LICENSE**

Veterans and other eligible applicants for this small game and fishing license must be a resident of South Dakota and meet at least one of the following conditions:

- » Has a total disability (limited to a wheelchair and permanently physically unable to walk);
- » Provide a copy of a letter from the VA indicating they have received the "K" award, or they receive a veteran's allotment for a total (40 percent) disability which is deemed a service-related injury and will meet eligibility as established in state law 41-6-10.2;
- » Provide a copy of your summary of benefits letter from the Social Security Administration indicating they are receiving a 40 percent Social Security disability and verification they have served on active duty in the Armed Forces or as a member of the Armed Forces Reserve or National Guard; or
- » Provide a copy of the discharge papers showing their former status as a Prisoner of War.

A veteran may provide proof at the time of application. If you do not have the verification papers in your possession, you may contact the Veterans Administration in Sioux Falls (*vetaffairs.sd.gov* or 605.333.6869) and have them sent to you.

#### CROSSBOW/DRAW-LOCK PERMIT

- » Available to any person who is incapable of using a conventional bow with a minimum draw weight of 30 pounds, due to the loss of use of one or both arms, caused by birth defect, injury, disease, or who uses a wheelchair for mobility.
- » This permit is not a license. Applicants must acquire the appropriate archery license for the season and area they are hunting.

#### **DESIGNATED SHOOTER PERMIT**

Available to any person, who:

- » Is blind/visually impaired as defined by the state of South Dakota or to any person with paralysis of all four limbs.
- » This permit is not a license. Applicants must be legally licensed for the specific season hunted.
- » The permittee must be in immediate physical presence of the designated shooter and participates in the hunt.

#### SHOOT FROM VEHICLE PERMIT

Authorizes any individual with a qualifying disability to lawfully shoot game animals from a stationary motor vehicle. The vehicle must be pulled over to the shoulder of the road and placed in park. Individuals can not shoot across the road. This includes big game animals such as deer, antelope, elk, and turkey, and small game animals such as grouse, pheasants, partridge, rabbits, and waterfowl. The hunter will need to obtain the required state licenses for whatever species are to be hunted.

This permit is intended for use in situations where an applicant's physical or medical condition makes it impossible or causes severe pain or physical hardship on the applicant, when walking afield while hunting.

#### **ANGLER ASSISTANCE PERMIT**

Available to a person with a valid fishing license, or who is exempt from licensing requirements, who has a physical or developmental disability that prevents them from being able to perform any of the activities associated with fishing. The permit allows another person to assist the permitted individual while fishing, in accordance with existing regulations, and without the need to possess a valid fishing license. The permit limitations or guidelines specify what a person legally can and cannot do while in possession of an Angler Assistance Permit.

#### **TRACKCHAIRS®**

Game, Fish and Parks has partnered with South Dakota Youth Hunting Adventures to provide physically disabled outdoorsmen and women with an Action Track powered wheelchair. The chair can be booked for up to two weeks at a time.

The chair is available, free of charge, at: The Outdoor Campus West, 605.394.2391 The Outdoor Campus East, 605.362.2700 Good Earth State Park, 605.213.1036 Custer State Park, 605.394.2693

#### **LEARN MORE**

For more information on these permits or to obtain an application, visit gfp.sd.gov/accessibility-permits or contact GFP at 605.223.7660 or wildinfo@state.sd.us.



## **2025 UPCOMING EVENTS**

Apr 25-26—State DAV Convention—AmericInn—Aberdeen

Apr 27-30—VFW Proficiency Training Conference—Annapolis, MD

May 1—Loyalty Day

May 6—Mission 24 Midwest Honor Flight Operation Welcome Home—Sioux Falls Arena—(1201 N. West Avenue)—Sioux Falls—9:30 pm (Doors open at 7:30 pm) (CT)

May 6—SDDVA Mini Conference—Pennington County Conference Room—(312 Kansas City St)—Rapid City—10:00 am—2:00 pm (MT)

May 7—SDDVA Mini Conference—Post 8 American Legion—(520 S. Pierre St)—Pierre—10:00 am—2:00 pm (CT)

May 8—Victory in Europe Day

May 8—SDDVA Mini Conference—SD Military Heritage Alliance—(1600 W. Russell St—Heritage Room)—Sioux Falls—10:00 am—2:00 pm (CT)

May 9—Military Spouse Appreciation Day

May 17—Armed Forces Day

May 20—Mission 25 Midwest Honor Flight Operation Welcome Home—Sioux Falls Arena—(1201 N. West Avenue)—Sioux Falls—9:30 pm (Doors open at 7:30 pm) (CT)

May 22—Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Veterans Stand Down—Grand River Casino—Mobridge—10:00am (CT)

May 26—State Offices Closed—Memorial Day

May 26—SDDVA Memorial Day Program at State Veterans Cemetery—12:00 noon (CT)

Jun 3—Mission 26 Midwest Honor Flight Operation Welcome Home—Hawthorne Aviation—(5815 Mitchell Street #1207)—Sioux City, IA —9:30 pm (Doors open at 7:30 pm) (CT)

Jun 6—Pine Ridge Veterans Stand Down—Pine Ridge Pow Wow Grounds—10:00am (MT)

Jun 7—Rich Schild Memorial Poker Run—The Keg—Tabor—12:00 noon (CT)

Jun 10—MWHF Day of Sweetness—Chick-Fil-A—(4005 W. 41st Street)—Sioux Falls—6:30 am—10:00 pm (CT)

Jun 14—8th Annual MWHF Pars and Pubs—Downtown Sioux Falls—11:00 am—4:00 pm (CT)

Jun 19—State Offices Closed—Juneteenth Day

Jun 19-22—VFW State Convention—Ramkota—Pierre

Jun 19-22—American Legion State Conference—Huron

Jun 29—MWHF Honor Ride—SD Military Heritage Alliance—(1600 W. Russell Street)—Sioux Falls—1:00 pm (CT)

Jul 4—State Offices Closed—Fourth of July

Jul 14—Black Hills Tee it up for the Troops Tournament—Arrowhead Country Club—Rapid City

Jul 16—SD Veterans Council Meeting—Mitchell VFW Post—(215 N. Main Street)—Mitchell—1:00 pm (CT)

Jul 19—Veterans Information Day—BG Ernie Edwards Readiness Center—(1951 N. HWY 20)—Watertown— 10:00 am—2:00 pm (CT)

Jul 24—Rosebud Sioux Tribe Veterans Stand Down—Sinte Gleska Multipurpose Building—Antelope—10:00am (CT)

Jul 26—3rd Annual Korean War Veterans Appreciation Day—Brookings Outdoor Adventure Center—(2810 22nd Avenue S)—Brookings—9:00 am—2:00 pm (CT)

Aug 4-5—Your Journey Matters 2025 Behavioral Health Conference—Sioux Falls Sheraton Convention Center

Aug 7—Purple Heart Day

Aug 9-13—National VFW Convention—Columbus, OH

Aug 11—Barrel House Day of Giving for Midwest Honor Flight—(4701 E. 54th Street)—Sioux Falls—11:00 am—Midnight (CT)

(continued)

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

- Aug 20—South Dakota Veterans Council Meeting—Virtual—1:00 pm (CT)
- Aug 21—Cheyenne River Veterans Stand Down—Eagle Butte Vet Center Building—Eagle Butte—10:00am (MT)
- Aug 27-Sep 1—South Dakota State Fair
- Aug 28—Veterans Day at the South Dakota State Fair
- Sep 1—State Offices Closed—Labor Day
- Sep 9-12—SDDVA Annual CTVSO Benefit School
- Sep 16—SD Veterans Council Meeting—Yankton VFW Post—(209 S. Cedar Street)—Yankton—1:00 pm (CT)
- Sep 19—POW/MIA Day
- Sep 21-25—NVS Accredited Representative Skill Training—Annapolis, MD
- Sep 21-26—NVS Basic for New Accredited Representatives—Annapolis, MD
- Sep 25—Rapid City Veterans Stand Down—DoubleTree by Hilton Rapid City Downtown Convention Center— (505 N. 5th Street)—Rapid City—10:00am (MT)
- Oct 13—State Offices Closed—Native American Day
- Oct 15—SD Veterans Council Meeting—Virtual—1:00 pm (CT)
- Oct 18—4th Annual Midwest Honor Flight Fundraiser—South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance—(1600 W. Russell Street)—Sioux Falls—7:00 pm
- Nov 7—MWHF Bingo—Severance Brewing—(701 N. Phillips Avenue)—Sioux Falls—7:00—9:00 pm (CT)
- Nov 8—Northern Hills Veterans Appreciation Fair—Sturgis Community Center—(1401 Lazelle Street)—Sturgis—11:00 am—2:00 pm (MT)
- Nov 10—Barrel House Day of Giving for the South Dakota Veterans Cemetery WAA—(4701 E. 54th Street)—Sioux Falls—11:00 am—Midnight (CT)
- Nov 11—State Offices Closed—Veterans Day
- Nov 19—SD Veterans Council Meeting—DAV Headquarters (1519 W. 51st Street)—Sioux Falls—9:00 am (CT)
- Nov 27—State Offices Closed—Thanksgiving
- Nov 29—Side by Side MWHF Poker Run—Pilot Mikes Roadhouse—(4901 N. Ellis Road)—Sioux Falls—11:00 am (CT)
- Dec 2—Governor's Budget Address—SD State Capitol—1:00 pm (CT)
- Dec 13—Wreaths Across America Wreath Laying Ceremony at South Dakota Veterans Cemetery—Sioux Falls—11:00 am (CT)
- Dec 25—State Offices Closed—Christmas Day

2026

- Jan 13—South Dakota Legislative Session Opens
- Jan 13—Governor's State of the State Address—SD State Capitol—1:00 pm (CT)
- Jan 14—South Dakota Veterans Council Meeting—American Legion Post 8—(520 S. Pierre Street)—Pierre—2:00 pm (CT)
- Jan 14—South Dakota Veterans Council Legislative Reception—American Legion Post 8—(520 S. Pierre Street)— Pierre—5:30 pm—7:30 pm (CT)

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Soldiers and Sailors Building - 425 E Capitol Avenue—Pierre, SD 57501



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