



South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs
Soldiers and Sailors Building
425 E. Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501
Phone: 605-773-8242
<https://vetaffairs.sd.gov>

FOR RELEASE: Tuesday, September 10, 2024

For more information, contact: Audry Ricketts at 605-773-8242 or audry.ricketts@state.sd.us
(South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs)

Leaders Recognized for their Service to Veterans

PIERRE, S.D. – Last week, the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs (SDDVA) recognized five of their team members for outstanding commitment, leadership, and dedication to serving veterans and their families.

The award ceremony was held in Sioux Falls in conjunction with the Department’s annual veterans' benefits training conference for county and tribal veterans service officers (CTVSO).

“Although the conference focuses on training for the CTVSO’s, it is also important for us to take a few moments out of our busy schedules to come together in fellowship, celebrate each other, and say thank you for what we accomplish,” said SDDVA Secretary Greg Whitlock. “These great partners have a gift for knowing how important every veteran is.”

Receiving this year’s recognitions were:

- Outstanding New Veterans Service Officer of the Year – Sean Henderson (County Veterans Service Officer for Meade County);
- Outstanding Veterans Service Officer of the Year - Christopher Hicks (County Veterans Service Officer for Roberts County);
- Outstanding SDDVA Benefits Staff of the Year – Will Huffmon (SDDVA Field Service Officer in western South Dakota);
- Outstanding Leader, Mentor, and Advocate of the Year – Misty Litwiller (SDDVA Claims Examiner in the Sioux Falls Office); and
- Partner of the Year – Paul Weckman (Sanford Health’s military and veterans affairs director).

“These awards, which recognize individuals who have demonstrated exceptional commitment to bettering the lives of our veterans, centered on the tangible difference they have made in the lives of countless veterans and how their tireless efforts have set a standard of excellence for all to emulate,” continued Whitlock.

“They have personified the adage of ‘never leave a brother or sister behind’ and in doing so have embodied what it takes for South Dakota to be the best state for veterans,” concluded Whitlock.

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs and its partners assist South Dakota veterans in receiving over \$1 billion in annual benefits. The Department’s mission is to provide comprehensive care to veterans and their families regarding healthcare, education, disability benefits, long-term care, and burial honors. Visit the Department online at: <https://vetaffairs.sd.gov>.