



# First District News

418 18th Avenue NE | PO BOX 1207 | Watertown, SD 57201

Phone: (605) 882-5115 | Fax: (605) 882-5049 | Web: <http://association.1stdistrict.org/>

December 2019

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## WELCOME TO FIRST DISTRICT'S NEW HOME

After calling 124 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue NW home for 35 years the First District Association of Local Governments (FDALG) and the First District Development Company (FDDC) have made the move to the north end of Watertown. Construction of the new office building began in June and was completed in November. The 5,400 square foot building houses 16 offices, copy room, break room, conference room and 2 mechanical/storage rooms. Financing for the project was provided by Codington-Clark Electric through its Rural Electric Economic Development (REED) Fund.



The FDALG and FDDC were closed from November 7<sup>th</sup> through the 13<sup>th</sup> to accommodate the move. The last month has been devoted to unpacking and getting settled while still providing membership services. The project will be complete next spring after parking lot striping and landscape improvements.

Both Todd Kays, Paula Hulscher and their staff would like to thank the leadership of their respective governing boards in believing in this project. An open house is being planned for next Spring. If you are in the neighborhood, stop in at 418 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. We look forward to seeing you.



**GO GREEN!** If you would like the Newsletter emailed to you, please email [suzie@1stdistrict.org](mailto:suzie@1stdistrict.org)

## First District Welcomes New Employee

Beginning on January 2, 2020 Payton Schafers will be the new Planner/Economic Development Officer at the First District. Payton is from Tripp, South Dakota and is a 2019 SDSU graduate with degrees in Horticulture and Landscape Architecture degree. She is currently a Community Assistance Fellow with the National Parks Service. A more detailed bio will be included in the next newsletter.



## MY THOUGHTS...

By: Todd A. Kays

I always like to take this time of the year to promote the First District Staff and remind our membership of the myriad of services that we have provided for more than 48 years. As many of you are aware, the First District is a voluntary association of local governments (11 counties and 76 municipalities). Our purpose has always been to provide technical services to our members that focuses on a regional approach to planning and community/economic development which ultimately improves the quality of government services. Within the First District, local governments, businesses, church groups, hospitals, landfills, rural water systems, sanitary districts, tourism associations, non-profit organizations, development corporations, historic preservation groups, local housing organizations, water development districts, educational and training institutions and citizens have all received direct and indirect benefits from First District Work Activities.

In 2019, the First District was involved in more than 150 specific projects in the areas of planning, GIS, grant writing/project administration, small business finance and other community/economic development activities. We were also fortunate to assist members in obtaining over 8 million dollars in grants and low interest loans for various community and economic development projects. Since 2008 the First District has helped its members receive 70 million dollars in grants resulting in a return on investment of over \$25 for every dollar of membership dues.

Our 13 dedicated employees have over 196 combined years of experience working for our First District members. Their expertise is in the following areas:

**Planning for Community and Economic Development** - The First District provides a variety of planning services including but not limited to Board of Adjustment Staff Support, Zoning Administration, Annexation Studies, Capital Improvement Plans, Utility Rate Analysis, Comprehensive Plans, Emergency Plans, Housing Needs Assessments, Policy Development, Special Purpose Ordinances, Strategic Planning, Tax Increment Financing and Zoning Ordinance Development. Your Community and Economic Development Planning contacts are Todd Kays, Luke Muller and Thomas Nealon.

**Grant/Loan Application & Project Administration** - One of the most common areas of assistance the First District provides to its members is identifying, acquiring and administering funding sources for local community and economic development projects. Such projects range from sewer and water infrastructure to community facilities like community centers or fire halls. Your Grant/Loan Application and Project Administration contact is Greg Maag.

**Geographic Information Systems (GIS)** - Geographic Information Systems (GIS) is an important, inter-related component of all the services provided by the First District. Staff develops and maintains a wide variety of GIS data used for the creation of maps, policy development, project funding GIS training and GIS webhosting. Your GIS contacts at the First District are Ryan Hartley, Darin Stein, Amy Arnold, and Jackie Erickson.

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**Business Development** - Our sister organization the First District Development Company is a Small Business Administration Certified Development Company which promotes economic development and job creation by providing long-term commercial loans. Your Business Development contacts are Paula Hulscher, Amy Waite, Shelby Kraemer, and Andrea Thyen.

**Office Management** - Finally, I would be remiss if I did not mention our Office Manager, Suzie Zirbel. Suzie keeps the operation of the office moving smoothly.

I realize that there may be other organizations providing similar services within the First District, However, I know for a fact that none of them have the wealth of experience and the established relationships that our members have with the First District staff. Also, I am quite confident that because of the special nature of the membership of the First District, we will be able to provide these quality services for less cost. So, as you are thinking about your upcoming 2020 projects that involve the expertise listed above just remember to give us a call.

This last month, much like all of 2019, has been a whirlwind for all of us at the First District. With setting up our new domain server combined with learning how to operate the phones and trying to maintain existing workloads, I am still trying to get settled. But for the first time in nearly 27 years I have a window and while it is white outside today, I already look forward to Spring and being able to look outside and see green every day. So today as I look out my window thinking about next year, I know that for myself and the Staff we enjoy providing technical services to our membership.



We believe that our work does make a difference and the services provided do focus on initiatives that continue to positively impact the First District communities and counties. I also need to take this opportunity to say thanks. First, thank you to the Staff for their hard work throughout the year. I am very grateful and proud of our team as they continue to provide a wide variety of services to our members with complete professionalism. In addition, I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity on behalf of the entire First District Staff to thank the membership for their continued support. It truly has been a privilege serving you and we look forward to a prosperous new year. Will see you at our open house this Spring. Merry Christmas!!

## Annual DOT Roadway Update Getting Underway



Since 1995, the South Dakota Department of Transportation (SDDOT) in cooperation with the South Dakota Planning and Development Districts has been collecting city, county, township and federal roadway information using Global Positioning System (GPS) technology. This information is utilized by the SDDOT for several purposes, including reporting mileage to the Federal Highway Administration and county auditors, as well as creating county and city maps.

Annually, on behalf of the SDDOT, First District staff contact individuals with jurisdiction over roads and ask for assistance in updating any changes in an effort to keep this roadway information current.

The assistance of county, city and township officials is critical to the accuracy and overall success of the SDDOT public road inventory. We believe that we will all benefit through this multi-agency cooperation.

# Upcoming Dates

## First District Governing Body Officers

Brenda Hanten.....Chairperson  
Codington County Commissioner

Joe Jensen.....Vice Chairperson  
Kingsbury County Commissioner

Gary Jaeger.....Secretary  
Deuel County Commissioner

Todd A. Kays.....Executive Director

## FUNDS AWARDED

**Grant County**—HMGP Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan Grant \$13,905

**Moody County**—HMGP Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan Grant  
\$11,906

**Oldham (Kingbrook Rural Water System)**—Drinking Water State  
Revolving Loan \$1,245,000 with \$945,000 principal forgiveness

**Watertown**—Local Infrastructure Improvement Program \$75,000

**Watertown**—Local Infrastructure Improvement Program  
\$385,961

**December 23 - 25**—Christmas, Office Closed

**January 1**—New Years Day, Office Closed

**January 14**—2020 SD Legislative Session Opens

**January 20**—Martin Luther King Day, Office  
Closed

**February 17**—President’s Day, Office Closed

**March 13**—HMGP Grant Deadline

**March 26**—Governing Body Meeting  
(Tentatively)

**April 30, July 31, Oct. 31, & Jan. 31**—Deadlines  
for Local Infrastructure Improvement Program

**April 30, July 31, Oct. 31, & Jan. 31**—Deadlines  
for Economic Development Partnership Program

**April 1, July 1, Oct. 1, & Jan. 1**—Deadlines for  
State Revolving Fund (SRF) Applications

**April 1 & Oct. 1**—Deadlines for CDBG  
Applications

**May 1, Aug. 1, Oct. 1, & Feb. 1**—Deadlines for  
State Water Plan (SWP) Applications