



# First District News

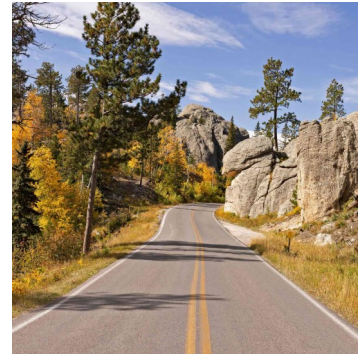
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## January 2025

## Annual DOT Roadway Update

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 contacts individuals with jurisdiction over roads and asks for assistance in updating any changes in an effort to keep 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 we all benefit through this multi-agency cooperation.

## BRIC Funding Available

The South Dakota Office of Emergency Management recently announced the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program funding opportunity. Approximately \$2,000,000 of funding is now available for local governments and certain private non-profit organizations to apply for hazard mitigation projects that will reduce the loss of life and property by lessening the impacts of future disasters. Project cost shares are as follows: **75%** Federal Match / **10%** State of SD OEM Match / **15%** Local Applicant Match. If you are interested in finding out more about the eligibility of mitigation projects or applying for these funds, please contact Todd, Luke or Mason at First District.

**Since the deadline for application submittal is February 14, 2025, FDALG respectfully requests hearing from you about your project no later than January 24, 2025.**

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## MY THOUGHTS... By: Todd A. Kays



Happy New Year!!

2024 was another busy year here at First District. Staff was involved with more than **235** specific projects in the areas of planning, GIS, grant writing/project administration and other community/economic development activities. We were fortunate to assist our members in obtaining over **\$42.4 million** in grants and **\$41.3 million** in low interest loans for various community and economic development projects. Since 2008, First District has helped its members receive **\$303.4 million** in grants resulting in a return on investment of **\$70** for every dollar of membership dues paid.

Every year I like to take the opportunity to promote the staff at First District and remind our membership of the myriad of services that we have provided for more than 53 years. I am very grateful and proud of our team as they continue to provide a wide variety of technical services to our members with complete professionalism. Our 9 dedicated employees have over 134 combined years of experience working for our members. In addition, Ryan Hartley will soon be celebrating his 30<sup>th</sup> year with the First District.

Your staff's expertise is in the following areas:

**Planning for Community and Economic Development** - First District provides a large of variety of planning services including but not limited to - 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 Jessica Tesch.

**Geographic Information Systems (GIS)** - Geographic Information Systems (GIS) is an important, interrelated component of all the services provided by 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 are Ryan Hartley, Darin Stein, Amy Arnold, and Kelli Henricks.

**Grant/Loan Application & Project Administration** - One of the most common areas of assistance First District provides to its members is identifying, acquiring, and administering funding sources for local community and economic development projects. 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 Mason Weidenbach.

**Office Management** - Finally, I would be remiss if I did not mention our Office Manager, Suzie Zirbel. Suzie directs the daily traffic, takes care of us and keeps the operation of the office moving smoothly.

So, as you are thinking about your upcoming 2025 projects that involve the expertise listed above, just remember to give us a call.

I also want to recognize those Governing Body members who will not be returning to the Board in 2025 and thank them for their service to this organization. (Jason Aho—Hamlin County Municipal Representative).

The longer I am here at the First District, almost 32 years, the more I realize that the important work this office is involved with never stops or even slows down and that is a testament to our membership and their investment into their communities, counties, and our region. In an attempt to manage time and work, every year since Covid I try to choose a new mantra to guide my thoughts and actions and keep my blood pressure down. Ha. They have evolved from “Change” to “Thankful” to “Hope” and last year to “Believe”. To navigate the past year, I think I relied on all of them.

While I recently turned 60, and sometimes feel that I might be slowing down, or just get tired easier, I know workloads in 2025 will continue to be heavy. So, this year I have chosen a mantra of “Learn”. I want to learn to be more introspective, more patient yet driven, more open to change yet maintaining principles, and finally learn to make more time to celebrate the things that truly matter: Faith, Family, Friends, Coworkers and Community. I encourage you all to join me this year on a path of “Learning”. As always, I leave you with a few words for the new year to reflect upon. These come from my favorite lyricist, Neal Peart.

I can learn to compromise anything but my desires  
I can learn to get along with all the things I can't explain  
I can learn to resist anything but frustration  
I can learn to persist with anything but aiming low

On behalf of the entire First District staff, we want to thank the Governing body and our membership for their continued support. It truly has been a privilege to serve you, and we look forward to a prosperous new year.

## First District Development Company Merger

First District’s sister organization, First District Development Company (FDDC), recently merged with Black Hills Community Economic Development (BHCED), resulting in the formation of a new organization, Ally Dakota Development. Ally Dakota Development offers financing and development support to small businesses in South Dakota. The organization is committed to supporting economic growth by meeting the diverse needs of businesses and communities across the state.

Currently, BHCED and FDDC are in the transition phase of the merger and the teams at both companies are working together to integrate their operations, processes, and values. Services offered by Ally Dakota



include originating SBA 504 loans and other funding options for small businesses. First District has entered into an agreement with Ally Dakota Development to service and market our existing Revolving Loan Portfolio. If you have any questions regarding Ally Dakota Development or accessing FDALG Revolving Loan funds, please contact Amy Waite at [awaite@allydakota.com](mailto:awaite@allydakota.com)

**First District  
Governing Body Officers**

Mike Bartley.....Chairperson  
 Brookings County At-Large

Gary Jaeger.....Vice Chairperson  
 Deuel County

Myron Johnson.....Secretary  
 Codington County Commissioner

Todd A. Kays.....Executive Director

# Upcoming Events

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

**February 17**—Presidents’ Day, Office Closed

**February 25-27**—GOED Conference, Pierre

**April 24**—Governing Body Meeting (Tentatively)

**DEADLINES FOR SUBMITTING DOCUMENTS TO THIS OFFICE MAY BE PRIOR TO DEADLINES LISTED HERE. PLEASE CONTACT OUR OFFICE.**

**October 15**—Bridge Improvement Plan Deadline

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

## FUNDS AWARED

**Bryant** – \$44,095 HMGP Grant

**Elkton** – \$430,000 SDDOT Community Access Grant

**Garden City** – \$10,000 SDDANR Small Community Planning Grant

**Sioux Rural Water System** – \$154,504 HMGP Grant