

The Groton Independent

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New home décor store 'Cloverly' opens its doors in Groton

A longtime dream became reality earlier this month as Cloverly, a new home décor store owned by Tanya Johnson, officially opened its doors in Groton on Dec. 13. It is located in the former Subway space at the mall along US 12.

Located in a newly renovated space, Cloverly specializes in home décor with an emphasis on seasonal displays. While Christmas décor currently fills the store, Johnson said the inventory will rotate throughout the year, offering everyday décor alongside seasonal themes such as Valentine's Day, spring, fall and the holidays.

"This is something I've wanted for years," Johnson said. "Ever since I was a little girl, I've loved décor and decorating. Having a store like this has always been a dream."

Cloverly is Johnson's first retail business, though she has previously done freelance interior decorating for clients. Without formal design training, Johnson said her work grew naturally as friends and acquaintances admired her home décor and asked for help designing their own spaces.

"I just started doing it for people because they liked what I did," she said. "Now I get to do that on a larger scale."

The store carries wholesale décor items, many of which are arranged or customized in-house. Johnson said she also creates wreaths, swags and ribbon accents to help customers personalize their purchases.

The name "Cloverly" has special meaning for Johnson and her family. She and her husband met on St. Patrick's Day, and clovers have long been a family symbol. With four sons, Johnson said the clover represents both luck and family, making it a fitting name for the store.

Renovations on the building began in late August and wrapped up in early December. Much of the work was completed with help from family members, including her father, Brian Olson of Britton, and Peyton, who assisted with much of the construction and finishing work.

Cloverly currently employs Gracie Whitley, Peyton's girlfriend, who works alongside Johnson and helps customers find pieces that fit their homes and personal styles.

"It is a family business," Whitley said. "It's amazing to come to work every day and see people get excited about what they're buying. When customers leave happy and inspired, that's the best part."

Johnson said she enjoys working directly with customers and helping them visualize how décor items will look in their homes. She encourages shoppers to bring photos of their spaces, allowing her to offer personalized suggestions.

Business hours at Cloverly are Tuesday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. While the store is still new, Johnson said the response so far has been positive, and she's focused on spreading the word.

"A lot of people don't even realize we're open yet," she said. "But it's been a great start."

Looking ahead, Johnson hopes Cloverly will continue to grow, with plans to eventually expand into a larger space offering additional furniture and interior design services.

"For now, I'm just grateful," she said. "This really is a dream come true."



Tanya Johnson and Gracie Whitley will be greeting you at the store. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



The Cloverly store is currently specializing in Christmas items. Soon, Valentine's will fill the store. (Photos by Paul Kosel)

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FACT BRIEF
SOUTH DAKOTA NEWS WATCH
GIGAFACT

Fact brief: Does South Dakota have the highest percentage of Native American residents?

By Michael Klinski
South Dakota News Watch

No.

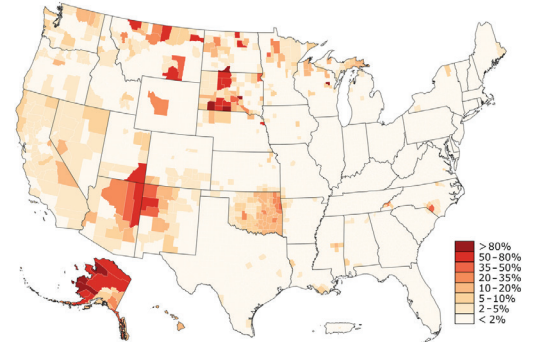
South Dakota ranks fourth in the nation for the percentage of residents who identify as Native American.

As of the 2020 census, almost 100,000 people in South Dakota identify at least partially as Native American – 11.1% of the population (98,842 total).

Alaska has the highest percentage (22%), followed by Oklahoma (16%) and New Mexico (12%). In 1980, 6.5% of South Dakota was Native American (44,948) – the third highest-percentage in the country.

Indigenous people make up more than 50% of the population in nine South Dakota counties, with the highest percentage being Oglala Lakota County on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation at 95.6%.

Native Americans have been undercounted in the official U.S. Census historically. In 2010, for instance, the Census estimated that the population was undercounted by 4.9%. The Census moved the response deadline up 30 days in 2020, prompting concerns that the earlier deadline would lead to greater undercounts.



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Fact brief: Does South Dakota lead the nation in cattle per capita?

By Michael Klinski
South Dakota News Watch

Yes.

South Dakota's cattle population outnumbers the state's human residents by roughly a 4-to-1 margin, the highest ratio in the country.

As of January 2023, the state had 3.6 million head of cattle -- 4% of the nation's inventory. With a human population of roughly 920,000, that puts the cattle-to-people ratio at 3.9. Nebraska is second, followed by North Dakota and Wyoming.

The number of cattle in the Rushmore State has trended downward the past decade. In 2018, South Dakota's cattle-to-human ratio was 4.6-to-1. Nationally, the U.S. Department of Agriculture said that the country had 87.2 million head of cattle in 2024, the lowest amount since 1951.

The USDA reported in July that beef production would drop 4% in 2025 and a further 2% in 2026, citing drought across the country as one of the factors.

That's contributed to record-high beef prices: up 51% since 2020.



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Fact brief: Has South Dakota ever supplied the National Christmas Tree in Washington, D.C.?

By Michael Klinski
South Dakota News Watch

Yes.

South Dakota has provided the tree for the National Christmas Tree display in Washington, D.C., two times since the tradition started in the 1920s. A third tree was selected to be displayed at the U.S. Capitol in 1997.

The trees are placed annually near the White House on the Ellipse. The Rushmore State provided the tree for the display in 1955 and 1970.

In 1955, a 67-foot Black Hills spruce from Nemo was selected. A commemorative sign was placed at the site. In 1970, a 78-foot tree from the Black Hills was transported on a train that derailed twice in Nebraska. Winds blew the tree over on the weekend before the event, requiring new branches to be affixed to it. Later, lights on the bottom half of the tree exploded.

The 1997 tree that was placed in front of the Capitol building was a Black Hills Spruce.

Send questions or feedback to factbrief@sdnewswatch.org.

This story was produced by South Dakota News Watch, an independent, nonprofit organization.



Fact brief: Does South Dakota require front license plates?

By Michael Klinski
South Dakota News Watch

Yes.

South Dakota is one of almost 30 states that requires front and back license plates on vehicles, though there are a couple of exceptions.

Vehicles that are used for "occasional transportation, public displays, parades and related pleasure hobby activities" can use a rear-only plate. The plates cost \$25 in addition to the normal registration cost. To qualify, drivers must provide their odometer reading at the time of registration and not exceed 7,500 miles in a year.

Motorcycles are also only required to have one plate.

Why use rear-only plates? Many owners don't like how front plates take away from the aesthetic of their vehicles. But dual plates are touted as a way to assist law enforcement with crime.

South Dakota offers more than a dozen different types of plates: construction, emblem, habitat conservation, Dignity sculpture, historical, amateur radio license, disabled person, firefighter, EMS, tribal, tribal veteran, veteran and several military plates.



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The Minnesota Vikings, winners of two straight, faced off against the New York Giants on Sunday. New York had lost eight straight and was in position for the number one overall pick in the 2026 draft. This should have been an easy win for Minnesota. Instead, the Vikings narrowly escaped with the 16-13 win. The Vikings are 7-8 this season with two games left on the schedule.

The Vikings got the ball to begin the game and stalled right outside of the red zone, but a Will Reichard field goal gave them a 3-0 lead. New York responded with a decent drive of their own, but a Jalen Redmond sack on fourth down prevented the Giants from putting points on the board. J.J. McCarthy threw an interception on Minnesota's next possession, keeping the score 3-0 after fifteen minutes of play.

The first quarter was a snooze-fest, but the second quarter had plenty of fireworks. New York tied the game with a 27-yard field goal, then Minnesota responded with a field goal of its own to reclaim the lead. A Byron Murphy interception ended the Giants' next possession, and three plays later McCarthy scrambled for a 12-yard touchdown. The Vikings' defense forced a three-and-out, and it looked like the Vikings were starting to pull away in this one. However, McCarthy was blasted by a blitzing linebacker and fumbled the ball, which the Giants scooped up and returned 27 yards for a touchdown. With only 17 seconds left in the half, and McCarthy in the injury tent, the Vikings took a knee and went into halftime.

The third quarter was quiet, with both teams having one complete possession each, and both ended in punts.

New York put together a long 14-play drive, taking over nine minutes off the clock, but only managed a field goal to tie the score 13-13 early in the fourth quarter. The Vikings responded with a 14-play drive of their own, this one also ending in a field goal. The Giants had one more opportunity to tie or take the lead, but a turnover on downs gave the ball to Minnesota, who put the game away and returned home with a 16-13 victory.

J.J. McCarthy completed 9 of 14 passes for 108 yards, no touchdowns, and one interception. He did have a rushing score, but also fumbled, which led to New York's only touchdown. He didn't return to the game because of the injury sustained in the second quarter. Max Brosmer took over, completing 7 of 9 passes for 52 yards.

Jordan Mason was injured early in the game, leaving Aaron Jones Sr. to shoulder the load. He carried the ball 21 times for 85 yards. Justin Jefferson finally had a good game, leading the team in both receptions (6) and receiving yards (85).

The Groton Independent

21 N Main, Groton 605/397-NEWS (6397)
Paul Irvin Kosel, Publisher paperpaul@grotonsd.net ~ 605-397-7460

Tina Kosel, Office Manager office@grotonsd.net ~ 605-397-7285

Notices: legals@grotonsd.net

News Items: news@grotonsd.net

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Defensively, the Vikings had a solid game, holding the Giants' offense out of the end zone and to only 141 total yards. The defense had five sacks, six tackles for a loss, six QB hits, one interception, and four pass deflections.

Looking ahead, the Vikings will play the Lions on Christmas Day. The game will be on Netflix, and the kickoff is scheduled for 3:30 pm. The Lions are fighting for a playoff spot, so the Vikings have a chance to spoil their postseason plans. Skol

"Keeping Us in Balance: The Work of the Kidneys"

Picture a man crawling through the desert in tattered clothing, whispering "water" as he nears an oasis. He isn't thinking about his kidneys, yet they may be the main organ still keeping him alive.

The human body does an amazing job at maintaining the balance of our internal environment, known as homeostasis. The kidneys, those two bean-shaped organs at our sides, are vital for maintaining that balance. Through filtration, reabsorption, and the secretion of hormones, the kidneys are one (or two) of our most important organs.

Each day, the kidneys filter roughly 50 gallons of blood, enough to fill a bathtub. In doing so, they remove waste products and toxins that would otherwise build up and cause harm. They also regulate electrolytes such as sodium, potassium, calcium, and phosphate, which are essential for proper muscle, nerve, and heart function.

The kidneys regulate our fluid balance. If we are dehydrated, they will reabsorb more fluid back into the bloodstream. Meanwhile, if there is excess, they will increase urine production. On a normal day, a healthy person usually only needs to drink when feeling thirsty. Anti-diuretic hormone is secreted by the brain when you start to get dehydrated, telling the kidneys to retain more fluid, and giving yourself the sensation of thirst.

The kidneys help regulate blood pressure through their control of salt and water retention or excretion. They maintain acid-base balance, keeping the body's pH within a narrow, safe range. In addition, the kidneys secrete hormones involved in bone health and stimulate the bone marrow to produce red blood cells.

With all these responsibilities, preserving kidney health is essential. You can support your kidneys by preventing imbalance where possible. Eat a healthy diet low in salt and added sugar. See your healthcare provider regularly to screen for diabetes and monitor blood pressure, the two leading causes of chronic kidney disease. Avoid taking excessive amounts of medications such as ibuprofen or naproxen. Other prescription and over-the-counter drugs, supplements, and herbal preparations can strain the kidneys as well—so use them carefully and follow directions.

With the kidneys, balance is key. Avoid excess, protect your health, and your kidneys will likely manage the rest. Whether you are sleeping soundly at home or desperately seeking water under a desert sun, your kidneys continue their quiet work—filtering, regulating, protecting, and keeping your body in balance.



Andrew Ellsworth, MD

Dr. Andrew Ellsworth is a Family Medicine Physician at Avera Medical Group Brookings in Brookings, SD. He serves as one of the Prairie Doc Volunteer Hosts during its 24th Season providing Health Education Based on Science, Built on Trust. Follow The Prairie Doc® at www.prairiedoc.org, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Tik Tok. Prairie Doc Programming includes On Call with the Prairie Doc®, a medical Q&A show (most Thursdays at 7pm on SDPB, YouTube and streaming on Facebook), 2 podcasts, and a Radio program (on SDPB, Sundays at 6am and 1pm).

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Forecast for a New Year!

1. Small drones will be delivering pizzas _____
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3. Art shown on computer displays as well as canvases. YES NO
4. Cars will travel on the roads with no one driving them. YES NO
5. An entire meal will fit into one tiny pill. YES NO

Fact brief: Does South Dakota have the highest fertility rate in the nation?

By Michael Klinski
South Dakota News Watch

Yes.

South Dakota ranked No. 1 in the nation for fertility rates in 2023, with 65.6 live births per 1,000 women aged 15-44. Nebraska is second (65.2) followed by Alaska (62.4).



The United States recorded 54.5 births per 1,000 women aged 18-44 in 2023. Rates across the country have fallen since 2013, including in South Dakota. There were 78.1 births per 1,000 women that year in the state.

Then-South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem touted the state's top ranking in 2024, saying that the birth rate shows that residents "want to raise a family."

Though the fertility rate is falling, South Dakota's No. 1 ranking is a combination of family and religious values, the state's prominent agriculture sector and a strong economy, experts say.

South Dakota was 15th in infant mortality rates nationally, with 6.34 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2023, according to the CDC.

Fact brief: Is South Dakota's rate of chronic absenteeism in schools increasing?

By Michael Klinski
South Dakota News Watch

No.

The number of students who are marked as chronically absent in the South Dakota public school system has stayed flat since falling from a COVID-era spike.



Chronically absent students jumped from 14% in 2018-19 to 22% in 2021-22 and have stayed at 21% since then. Chronic absenteeism is when students miss more than 10% or more of school – about two days per month.

Nationally, chronic absenteeism reached 31% in 2021-22 and fell to 28% in 2022-23.

South Dakota's chronic absenteeism is largely fueled by absences at Native American schools. During the 2023-24 school year, 51% of Indigenous students were chronically absent from school.

Chronic absenteeism is linked to a higher likelihood of students not finishing high school.

In 2023, the state Department of Education awarded grants to nine South Dakota school districts to address chronic absenteeism by implementing programs that will fund transportation, community engagement opportunities and mentoring, among others.

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Fact brief:
**Has South Dakota seen the largest
 homeschool growth of any state?**

By Michael Klinski
 South Dakota News Watch

Yes

South Dakota's rate of home-schooled students increased 143% from 2015-16 to 2023-24, according to a database compiled by John Hopkins University.

The number of home-schooled students in the state grew from 4,333 to 10,536 during that time.

Of the states that reported data for every year during the range, Tennessee (135%) and North Dakota (114%) had the next highest gains of homeschooled students.

The rapid increase in South Dakota has forced belt-tightening at public schools. Districts receive \$7,000 per student from the state, resulting in a collective drop of more than \$60 million in funding. The Rapid City School District sent mailers out to households where students had dropped attendance with the goal of getting them back to public school.

The state's home-school numbers could increase even more after Gov. Larry Rhoden announced South Dakota will opt into a federal tax program that is designed to help students attending alternative schooling.



**Fact brief: Did a South Dakota city
 register the fastest temperature
 change in recorded history?**

By Michael Klinski
 South Dakota News Watch

Yes.

On Jan. 22, 1943, Spearfish recorded a temperature increase of 49 degrees Fahrenheit in 2 minutes and a temperature drop of 58 degrees in 27 minutes. Both still stand as records more than 80 years later.

At 7:30 a.m. on that day, it was minus 4 degrees. Two minutes later, thermometers shot up to 45 degrees. Then at 9:30 a.m., the temp crashed back downward from 54 degrees to minus 4.

The geographic nature of the Black Hills makes the region prone to these frontal conditions. The National Weather Service described the event as "warmer Pacific air (rolling) like an ocean tide along the northern and eastern slopes of the Black Hills" before the cold returned. Windows fogged up and some glass cracked.

The greatest temperature change in a 24-hour period was in Loma, Montana, on Jan. 14-15, 1972, when mercury rose 103 degrees from minus 54 to 49.



NEW YEAR 2026
 "The righteous care for the needs of their animals." — Proverbs 12:10

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Fact brief: Is Donald Trump the first president to have his City of Presidents statue placed while in office?

By Michael Klinski
South Dakota News Watch

Yes.

President Donald Trump is the first president to have his City of Presidents statue in Rapid City placed while he is in office.

Trump's statue, the 44th statue of a president in downtown Rapid City, was placed Tuesday. It was commissioned in 2021 after Trump's first term ended and completed before his re-election in 2024.

City leaders waited until after the election to determine when the statue would be installed. Ultimately, they decided it wouldn't be fair to donors or the artist to wait four more years.

Trump's statue, which was made by artist Jim Maher, features the president wearing a red tie and speaking at a lectern with his right hand gesturing. A phone placed on the lectern prominently displays a Twitter logo.

President Grover Cleveland, who also served non-consecutive four-year terms, has just one statue on the City of Presidents, which started honoring former chief executives in 2000. Former President Joe Biden's statue is currently in progress.



Fact brief: Are South Dakota police departments using automatic license plate reader cameras?

By Michael Klinski
South Dakota News Watch

Yes.

Several South Dakota police departments, including Sioux Falls and Madison, are using Flock Safety automatic license plate readers for surveillance purposes with the goal of cutting back on crime.

In early 2025, the Sioux Falls City Council approved a \$168,000 contract for the police department to purchase and implement software for 25 cameras. According to Flock and the Sioux Falls Police Department, those cameras are only used to detect license plates.

Police Chief Jon Thum said the cameras cannot be used for facial recognition, and a transparency portal on the Flock website says the cameras are not used for immigration enforcement.

But Flock cameras have been used in immigration enforcement in other places across the country. Santa Cruz, California, paused its use of data sharing after out-of-state agencies, including U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, accessed license plate data illegally.

The cameras have been used for immigration reasons in several other states, including Colorado and Virginia.



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**Fact brief:
Did South Dakota stop publishing
pheasant population estimates?**

By Michael Klinski
South Dakota News Watch

Yes.

The South Dakota Game Fish & Parks Department stopped publishing an estimate of the pheasant population ahead of the hunting season in 2019.

The counts were conducted by state employees who would drive the same routes every year and count the number of pheasants they saw. That data would then be extrapolated to determine a population estimate, which would provide hunters an outlook on how plentiful the birds were ahead of the hunting season.

In a 2020 marketing plan, the state GF&P said the estimates were stopped "... to ensure that South Dakota is not unintentionally deterring hunters from coming to our state based on the media headlines reporting of low bird numbers."

The last pheasant estimate to be conducted by the state was in 2018, when 7.1 million pheasants were reported. The year before that, 4.6 million were reported.

The 2025 season opened for non-residents on Oct. 18.



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**Fact brief:
Has South Dakota ever voted to
eliminate daylight saving time?**

By Michael Klinski
South Dakota News Watch

Yes.

South Dakota voters shot down an attempt to eliminate daylight saving time in a referendum in 1968, with 59% voting against the measure.

Two states – Hawaii and Arizona – observe standard time year-round. Nineteen states have voted to permanently observe daylight saving time year-round, but federal law only allows for standard time to be permanent.

South Dakota state Rep. Carl Perry, R-Aberdeen, introduced legislation to permanently end daylight saving time in the state in 2025, but a committee rejected the plan 8-1.

Supporters of the proposal said it would improve sleep, health, public safety and avoid students having to adjust to the new time and losing focus at school.

Rep. John Sjaarda, R-Valley Springs, opposed the plan, saying daylight saving time is better for farmers.

Daylight saving time this year, where clocks "fall back" an hour to standard time, ends on Nov. 2.



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Fact brief: Is South Dakota's percentage of clean-energy the highest in the country?

By Michael Klinski
South Dakota News Watch

Yes.

South Dakota is ranked No. 1 in the nation for the percentage of its energy that is produced by renewable sources.

The state's share of clean-energy production is 92% as of 2024, up from 70% in 2023. Iowa is second (83%) and Kansas third (74%). In 2025 when the state's share of renewable energy was 81%, wind power generated 59% with most of the rest coming from hydropower.

South Dakota wind turbines provide enough energy to take the equivalent of 2.2 million cars off the road, and wind energy in the state has quadrupled since 2019.

That clean-energy boom has led to an increase of jobs. The state has 12,500 jobs in the field, representing a 1.6% bump since 2024.

Solar power generation increased from 4 gigawatt hours (GWh) in 2022 to 346 GWh in 2024, enough to power 35,000 homes.



Fact brief: Is South Dakota one of the easiest states to acquire residency?

By Michael Klinski
South Dakota News Watch

Yes.

South Dakota is one of the easiest states to establish residency in, with several websites promoting the practice for full-time RVers, Americans living abroad, military personnel or those seeking tax savings.

The organization South Dakota Residency Center says it can be "easily" done in three steps: securing a physical address in the state from a local mailbox provider service; staying one night at a state campground or hotel; and bringing required documents to the Department of Motor Vehicles.

The America's Mailbox website provides mailbox services, as well, and touts the South Dakota residency as a way to "avoid state income and other taxes, save on vehicle insurance and more."

In 2024, a Connecticut state comptroller asked prosecutors to investigate whether any of their state residents were using South Dakota to get out of state taxes.

One South Dakota legislator estimated in 2024 that 30,000 people are full-time traveler residents.



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DECEMBER 16, 2025 – GENERAL MEETING

Meeting called to order by Chairman Sutton at 8:45 A.M. in the Commission Chambers, Courthouse Annex, Brown County, SD. Present were Commissioners Dennert, Dinger, Gage, Sutton and Wiese. Commissioner Wiese led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Moved by Commissioner Wiese, seconded by Dennert to approve the agenda. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Chairman Sutton thanked the Auditor's office for decorating the Commission Chambers to make it a bit more festive.

FAIR CONTRACTS: Rachel Kippley wanted to take a moment to recognize Alemita Sheldon, who is with Brown County Fair Board and Greg Markley, who is former Fair Board member and is now on the Fair Foundation, who were in attendance.

McKenzie Bierman, Fair & Parks Assistant Manager presented the following Fair Contracts for approval and authorizing Chairman Sutton to sign. Moved by Commissioner Dennert, seconded by Wiese to approve the WOW Talent & Entertainment, LLC/Jurassic Bark Live contract for August 10-16, 2026 for 3 shows a day for \$11,000.00 and authorize Chairman to sign. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

Moved by Commissioner Dinger, seconded by Wiese to approve and authorize Chairman to sign the contract with Radiance Works Entertainment/Jodie Smalley to do Fire Performances for 2 days and Stilt Walking for 2 days at \$5,000.00. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

Moved by Commissioner Wiese, seconded by Gage to approve and authorize Chairman to sign the contract with Home Clean Home by Maria for cleaning bathrooms and showers throughout the Fairgrounds the week of the Fair, plus 2 utility carts, radios and cleaning chemicals at the cost of \$21,000.00. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

Moved by Commissioner Dennert, seconded by Gage to approve and authorize Chairman to sign the contract with Ro Sham Bo Creative to do the Digital Marketing for the Brown County Fair for \$10,000.00. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

Moved by Commissioner Wiese, seconded by Gage to approve and authorize Chairman to sign the contract with Winterset Concert Events, LLC for the ZZ-3 to perform August 14 & 15, 2026 at the cost of \$6,500.00 plus motel rooms. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

FAIR UPDATE: Rachel Kippley, Fair/Fairgrounds/Parks Manager met with the Commission to give them an update on the 2025 Brown County Fair. It was a successful year and able to get some big projects done: the Sprinkler System in the Expo Building was repaired; the Bunny Barn was replaced with the new Mega Construction Small Animal Barn, new concrete and tension wall for the wash rack at the Beef Barn and roads in primitive campground area. Also, Bob Cat and Telehandler this year for equipment. In addition, at Richmond Youth Camp the windows project Dorm 3 was completed. Rachel shared that this was the first year with the Fairgrounds Liquor License and gross revenue was \$151,000 but net profit was \$81,000.00, which they would like to see go back in the Fairgrounds Improvement Fund (FIF). The Fair Board brought in \$1,795,357.00 in revenue and estimated that there will be \$100,000.00 remaining at year-end so would like to see that go into the FIF, also along with a couple of donations and grants. Commissioner Dennert asked what he thought made the revenue go up so much, Rachel stated the Auditor's office is conservative when estimating revenue due to possible rain days, but the Fair Board will do whatever it can to have the concert that typically wouldn't happen. Also, they are now checking campers that come in early and charging them for the extra days, along with checking

vendors that are using more electrical than stated in their contract and charging them for the additional costs. The Fair Board is putting more time and effort into this because the Commission has been willing to put the excess into the FIF. The Community is starting to take notice as well. Commissioner Wiese stated our community needs to be commended because the vendors have commented that even on rainy days, the people still show up here, where they don't at other venues they have been at; they are going to come for a good time and good value. Chairman Sutton shared that he has been a Commissioner Liaison to the Brown County Fair Board for 17 years and in years past the amount that the Fair made would just go back to the County General Fund; but by the Commission committing to the FIF, and putting money into this it will speed up the Grandstands and other needed improvements at the Fairgrounds. Kudos to the Fair Office, Fair Board and everyone to put on the best Fair in the Region, in his opinion. Commissioner Dennert thanked Rachel for having the Strategic Plan to show the Commission where she wants the FIF funds to go towards that will benefit the Fair. Chairman Sutton mentioned the partnership with the City of Aberdeen to get sales tax funds beginning in 2026. Discussed potential costs for a new Grandstand – without bathrooms \$3.3 Million and with bathrooms \$4.2 Million, which is included in the strategic plans for the Fairgrounds. They are still waiting for some revenue to come in from the ATM Fees and Centennial Village. They would appreciate any amount the Commission would allocate to the FIF at year-end.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY:

Moved by Commissioner Wiese, seconded by Gage to approve and authorize Chairman Sutton to sign the Memorandum of Understanding with Dakota State University to protect and enhance the cybersecurity posture of SD Counties and Municipalities through the SecureSD Program. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

MINUTES: Moved by Commissioner Dinger, seconded by Wiese to approve the General Meeting Minutes for December 9, 2025. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

CLAIMS/PAYROLL: Moved by Commissioner Gage, seconded by Wiese to approve the following Claims/Payroll: Claims: Professional Fees: Alcohol Monitoring Systems, Inc. \$1,973.00; Blackburn & Stevens, Prof. LLC \$552.78; Custom Installation Solutions \$15,000.00; Dakota Group LLC \$2,500.00; Dohrer Law Office, PC \$4,824.00; Faulk County Sheriff's Office \$5,400.00; IMEG Corp \$14,400.00; Language Line Services, Inc \$418.11; Lenling Law Office, Prof. LLC \$5,010.00; Northeastern Mental Health Center \$875.00; RapidSOS, Inc. \$11,445.00; Saber Shred Solutions \$3,586.64; Sanford Health Occupational Medicine \$51.00; SD Dept of Legislative Audit \$34,657.20; Taliaferro Law Firm, PC \$3,204.00; Tyler Technologies, Inc. \$217.50. Publishing: Groton Daily Independent \$1,073.35; Gray Local Media, Inc \$500.00; McQuillen Creative Group, Inc \$907.29. Rentals: Advantage Self Storage \$276.00; Vestis \$268.48. Repairs & Maintenance: Big Scoop Snow Removal \$272.00; Central Network Retail Group LLC \$72.79; ComTech Inc \$9,638.24; Dakota Supply Group \$1,442.78; DustPods LLC \$6,300.00; EcoLab Pest Elimination Division \$132.12; Leidholdt Electric, LLC \$735.18; Lien Transportation Company \$3,097.50; Pierson Ford Lincoln, Inc \$1,485.89; Pump's Tire Service, Inc \$920.46; Richard Marberg \$4,038.01; Sewer Duck, Inc \$1,200.00; Team Eagle LTD \$2,300.00. Supplies: Amazon Capital Services, Inc \$385.23; Century Business Products \$4,900.30; Cole Paper Inc \$2,493.28; Cornwell Drug \$12.00; Custom Installation Solutions \$5,500.00; Dakota Oil \$1,668.57; Farm & Home Publishers LTD \$1,782.00; Geffdog Designs \$323.70; Gov-Connection, Inc \$126.00; Hall Sand & Gravel, Inc \$7,075.33; House of Glass \$429.59; J.D. Power \$519.00; Jason Vilhauer \$153.99; Kessler's \$76.27; Leidholdt Tool Sales, LLC \$13.95; Leidholdt Electric, LLC \$152.70; LW Sales, Inc \$137.00; Maximum Promotions Inc \$137.42;

Menards \$490.69; Midstates Group \$90.00; NVC \$32.28; Performance Oil \$1,610.25; Premier Biotech Labs, Inc \$1,243.59; Rinse & Go Car Wash \$63.00; Runnings \$51.96; Safety Service \$225.92; Sandy Woytassek \$6.11; Sherwin Williams \$102.55; Team Eagle LTD \$42,573.00; Thomson Reuters – West Payment Center \$237.96; Titan Machinery \$270.15. Travel & Conference: Crossroads Hotel & Huron Events Center \$1,287.86; Jason Vilhauer \$334.40; Joel Torigan \$14.00; Kyle Couchey \$14.00; Lenling Law Office, Prof. LLC \$120.00; Trent Anderson \$46.00. Utilities: Big Scoop Snow Removal \$1,088.00; Century-Link \$76.27; City of Aberdeen Treasurer \$2,010.61; City of Hecla \$228.87; Northern Electric \$93.50; Northwestern Energy \$2,866.60; NVC \$2,999.78; State of South Dakota PMB 0112 \$82.00; T-Mobile USA Inc \$2,830.82; Verizon Wireless \$460.29. Other: Andax Industries LLC \$1,156.00; Haztech Systems, Inc. \$1,312.00. Machinery & Equipment: RDO Equipment Co \$470,522.00.

Payroll: Commission \$4,896.51; Elections \$2,099.55; Auditor/Welfare \$11,393.91; Treasurer \$15,425.11; SA \$37,180.72; Public Defender \$9,778.21; Maintenance \$12,776.67; Assessor \$16,594.60; Register of Deeds \$10,905.91; VSO \$4,741.87; GIS \$2,946.49; IT \$10,005.68; HR \$5,477.94; Sheriff \$66,307.04; Jail \$87,725.84; Coroner (Voucher) \$750.00; Court Security \$8,465.79; JDC \$38,594.82; Museum \$13,493.48; Parks/Fairgrounds \$7,140.50; Fair Board \$4,444.44; 4-H \$709.58; Weed \$1,179.67; Planning & Zoning \$8,062.18; Highway \$60,538.83; Dispatch \$44,505.97; Emergency \$5,498.56; 24/7 Sobriety \$2,724.94; Landfill \$20,755.21; Meal Benefits \$28.00; FICA \$30,544.42; Medicare \$7,143.40; HSA \$2,360.72. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

HR REPORT: Moved by Commissioner Dinger, seconded by Gage to approve the following Human Resource Report submitted by Allison Tunheim, Human Resources Director:

o Retirement of Marty McDermid as Landfill Heavy Equipment Operator, FT; effective December 9, 2025. Request to fill.
o Resignation of Steven Ramsdell as Landfill Grounds Worker, PT; effective December 1, 2025.
o Hiring of Logan Hanson as Brown County Jail Detention Officer, FT; starting wage \$21.93/hr. – effective December 17, 2025.
o Reclassification of Building and Grounds Maintenance Worker from grade 11 to 12; effective January 1, 2026.
o Reclassification of Building Service Worker from grade 9 to grade 10; effective January 1, 2026.

o Transfer of Alaina Perry from PT Brown County Museum Guest Services Coordinator to FT Brown County Museum Guest Services Coordinator; starting wage \$23.73/hr. – effective December 21, 2025.
o Promotion of the following employees effective December 21, 2025:
o Taylor Harman from Brown County Jail Detention Officer to Brown County Jail Senior Detention Officer; starting wage \$25.55/hr.
o Emily Jacobs from Brown County Jail Detention Officer to Brown County Jail Senior Detention Officer; starting wage \$24.32/hr.
o James Marnette from Brown County Jail Detention Officer to Brown County Jail Senior Detention Officer; starting wage \$25.55/hr.

o Sheila Haugen from Brown County Sheriff Office Record Technician to Brown County Sheriff Office Administrative Assistant; starting wage \$22.59/hr.
o Brittany Watts from Brown County Jail Administrative Assistant to Brown County Jail Administrative Coordinator; starting wage \$24.93/hr.
o Danial Bray from Brown County Deputy Sheriff to Brown County Senior Deputy Sheriff; starting wage \$33.53/hr.
o Terrence Evans from Brown County Deputy Sheriff to Brown County Senior Deputy Sheriff; starting wage \$37.01/hr.
o Ermelinda Marcuson from Brown County Deputy Sheriff to Brown County Senior Deputy Sheriff; starting wage \$33.53/hr.
o Nathan Smith from Brown County Deputy Sheriff to Brown County Senior Deputy Sheriff; starting wage \$36.11/hr.
o Jill Crosby from Brown County 911 Communications Officer to Brown County 911 Senior Communications Officer; starting

wage \$28.91/hr.
o Nichole Krenz from Brown County 911 Communications Officer to Brown County 911 Senior Communications Officer; starting wage \$28.21/hr.
o Makayla Madsen from Brown County 911 Communications Officer to Brown County 911 Senior Communications Officer; starting wage \$28.21/hr.
o List of Holidays for 2026:
o New Year's Day: 1st
o Martin Luther King Jr. Day: Third Monday in January
o President's Day: Third Monday in February
o Memorial Day: Last Monday in May
o Juneteenth: June 19th
o Independence Day: July 4th
o Labor Day: First Monday in September
o Native American's Day: Second Monday in October
o Veteran's Day: November 11th
o Thanksgiving Day: Fourth Thursday in November
o Day after Thanksgiving: Fourth Friday in November
o Christmas Eve: December 24th
o Christmas Day: December 25th

o Plus, any other day that is proclaimed as a holiday by the Governor of South Dakota or the President of the United States

o If a holiday falls on a Saturday, it is observed on the preceding Friday. If a holiday falls on a Sunday, it is observed on the following Monday. (Sheriff's Deputies, Correctional Officers: Jail, JDC/HD, 24-7 and Dispatchers, who are required to work, are paid for the actual Holiday Day.)

o Wages effective December 21, 2025 for a pay date of January 9, 2026 as follows: Per Pay Period – Commissioners: Duane Sutton @ \$1,074.49; Drew Dennert @ \$1,022.83; Kyler Dinger @ \$1,022.83; Mike Gage @ \$1,022.83; Mike Wiese @ \$1,022.83. All eligible employees per hour: Lynn Heupel @ \$56.24; Stephanie Jacobson @ \$25.55; David Engraf @ \$26.85; Erin Kumpf @ \$31.14; Sara Swisher @ \$36.11; Patricia VanMeter @ \$47.86; Dorene Borchard @ \$36.11; Sonja Day @ \$22.04; Tracy Engquist @ \$24.32; Elizabeth Hovendick @ \$23.73; Heather Ramsay @ \$22.04; Jo Sheffield @ \$31.14; Brandi Trusty @ \$23.15; Karly Winter @ \$71.01; Ross Aldentaler @ \$49.78; Tucker Anderson @ \$41.87; Kristin Barstad @ \$28.91; Jason Erickson @ \$40.85; Christine Haggerty @ \$23.73; Penny Hart @ \$21.22; Annie King @ \$22.04; Adelaide Mounga @ \$28.21; Karla Nelson @ \$46.22; Jessica Rychlik @ \$23.73; Jennifer Stoddard @ \$49.78; Kelsi Vinger @ \$33.53; Bradley Borge @ \$70.33; Christal Burchard @ \$31.14; Tracy Madsen @ \$26.85; Judy Dosch @ \$39.86; Jon Daschel @ \$16.97; Monty Forsting @ \$22.04; Richard Geary @ \$16.97; Joel Randall @ \$20.97; Jason Reed @ \$16.97; Mickey Schulz @ \$25.55; Sally Swanson @ \$16.97; Randy Zens @ \$33.53; Gene Loeschke @ \$39.86; Kathryn Fischer @ \$31.14; Jillian Klein @ \$22.59; Joseph Kraft @ \$28.91; Russell Metz @ \$36.11; Stephanie Morgan @ \$27.52; Sarah Swenson @ \$32.71; Mariann Malsom @ \$43.05; Anne Dohman @ \$23.73; Andrew Janusz @ \$24.32; Martha Stohr @ \$23.15; Cindy Woodford @ \$29.64; Aaron Walberg @ \$34.37; Jesse Millbrandt @ \$28.21; Scott Madsen @ \$38.88; Patrick Wolberg @ \$54.94; Joseph Adam @ \$38.88; Cory Lane @ \$38.88; Allison Tunheim @ \$43.99; Jessica Johnson @ \$27.52; Dave Lunzman @ \$52.24; John Anderson @ \$28.21; Austin Ball @ \$29.64; Daniel Bray @ \$33.53; Bryan Gordon @ \$29.64; Wesley Graff @ \$36.11; Sheila Haugen @ \$22.59; Michael Hill @ \$36.11; Derek Hoefert @ \$29.64; Samuel Hoppock @ \$29.64; Lynn Kamin @ \$32.71; Joseph Kretschmer @ \$29.64; Jacob Kumpf @ \$28.91; Joshua Lee @ \$29.64; Jonathan Lemke @ \$46.22; Ermelinda Marcuson @ \$33.53; Brandon Mills @ \$33.53; Anthony Sorenson @ \$35.23; Tammy Spellman @ \$20.97; Erin Spencer @ \$30.38; Sandra Woytassek @ \$32.71; Lynn Zacher @ \$25.55; Aleigha Allison @ \$23.15; Keith Baker @ \$38.88; Payton Beidler @ \$22.59; Neil Bittner @ \$27.52; Chantz Burcham @ \$23.73; Riley Burnett @ \$23.15; Alexandra Chavez-Alvarez @ \$18.09; Alex Conn @ \$23.73; Hope Conn @ \$39.86; Kyle Couchey @ \$27.52; Sylvester David @ \$18.09; Daniel Dow @ \$23.73; William Esser @ \$24.32; Caden Galbraith @ \$23.15; Chase Galbraith @ \$24.32; Karry Geuther @ \$23.15; Logan Hanson @ \$23.15; Taylor Harman @ \$25.55; Mitchell Hen-

jum @ \$23.15; Hunter Holweger @ \$23.73; David Hunter @ \$27.52; Emily Jacobs @ \$24.32; Michael James @ \$22.59; Abby Jones @ \$20.97; Kent Karlen @ \$27.52; Christopher Klingensmith Jr. @ \$23.15; Scott Kolb @ \$27.52; Jeffrey Leinen @ \$23.73; Mary Jane Lunzman @ \$22.59; James Marnette @ \$25.55; Alexis Marrero Rodriguez @ \$23.15; Jeree Meyers @ \$27.52; Cynthia Mitchell @ \$31.91; Cody Richards @ \$24.93; Tyler Richards @ \$24.32; Jonathan Roberson @ \$24.32; Angela Senger @ \$27.52; Nathan Smith @ \$36.11; Christopher Travis @ \$23.15; Micah Trollden @ \$23.15; Jeremias Vega @ \$29.64; Brit-tany Watts @ \$24.93; Steven Westby @ \$27.52; Wyatt Youngblom @ \$23.15; Terrence Evans @ \$37.01; Makendra Ochsner @ \$28.21; Russell Ochsner @ \$28.91; Jacob Carrillo @ \$24.93; Kymberly Gasser @ \$24.32; Julie Hermansen @ \$22.59; Troy Knebel @ \$29.64; Jennifer Kolb @ \$24.93; Johann Kolb @ \$24.93; Samiuela Mounga @ \$30.38; Rhaecine Sam @ \$24.32; Savanna Simon @ \$24.32; Caid Stevens-Verzani @ \$24.32; Jason Stichk @ \$24.32; Joel Torigan @ \$23.73; Stacie Wasem @ \$31.14; Ellie Weinmeister @ \$24.93; Patricia Kendall @ \$34.37; Brandon Duxbury @ \$28.21; Jennifer Hopkins-Entzel @ \$18.90; Levi Margolies @ \$18.90; Marianne Marttilaa-Klipfel @ \$26.19; Alaina Perry @ \$23.73; Jessica Puente Castro @ \$24.93; Sherri Rawstern @ \$26.85; Rachel Kippley @ \$39.86; McKenzie Bierman @ \$32.71; Joe Kaven @ \$25.55; Jason Kumpf @ \$24.32; Misty Dosch @ \$22.04; Sara Hartje @ \$26.85; Chris Hemen @ \$31.14; Clifton Bader @ \$48.56; Dorion 'Chris' Anderson @ \$28.91; Ronald Keller @ \$28.91; Dirk Rogers @ \$48.56; Jerome Akin @ \$25.55; Jerry Bjerke @ \$25.55; Cindy Eppard @ \$24.32; John Florey @ \$32.65; Charles Gruenstein @ \$25.55; Matthew Heupel @ \$32.71; Casey Jensen @ \$28.21; Nicholas Juenger @ \$28.21; Joseph Keough @ \$24.93; Kyle Kost @ \$25.55; Bernel Lee @ \$23.15; Gerald Lehrkamp @ \$28.21; Joshua Matthews @ \$32.71; Brad Nehlich @ \$26.85; Darrin Olson @ \$24.32; John Peterson @ \$24.32; Kurt Pigors @ \$28.21; Michael Rohrbach @ \$28.21; Jeffrey Seiler @ \$26.19; Joshua Ulmer @ \$26.19; Paul Wipf @ \$28.91; Dean Zumbaum @ \$28.21; Kenton Jones @ \$43.99; Sarah Jesz @ \$37.01; Dawn Allam @ \$32.71; James Bisset @ \$24.32; Ian Cole @ \$24.32; Jill Crosby @ \$28.91; Aaron Gasser @ \$32.71; Junia Hofer @ \$24.32; Kayleene Holzer @ \$24.93; Sierra Kamin @ \$28.91; Nichole Krenz @ \$28.21; MaKayla Madsen @ \$28.21; Haydn Podoll @ \$29.64; Abigail Rang @ \$24.32; Tonya Walth @ \$31.91; Heather Wilkinson @ \$24.32; Scott Meints @ \$39.86; Patti Woods @ \$32.71; Ryan McClain @ \$28.91; Henry Fulda @ \$19.45; Michael Scott @ \$39.86; Jarell Arndt @ \$27.52; Robert Baumgartner @ \$28.21; William Bishop @ \$19.48; Jason Kallenberger @ \$28.21; Rhonda Kvernevig @ \$20.27; Terry Lout @ \$28.21; Mark Milbrandt @ \$20.27; Hunter Miller @ \$20.27; Tobias Stugelmayer @ \$20.27; Walter Wageman @ \$19.48.

All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

TRAVEL REQUESTS: Moved by Commissioner Wiese, seconded by Dennert to approve the following Travel Requests: Bryan Gordon, Sheriff's Office to attend 2026 Sex Offender Registration Conference on April 7-9, 2026 in Deadwood; Terry Evans, Sheriff's Office to attend Court Safety & Security Conference on March 23-26, 2026 in Appleton, WI; Brandon Mills, Sheriff's Office to attend Leading Without Rank: The Emerging Leader on March 19, 2026 in Vermillion. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

CLAIM ASSIGNMENTS: Moved by Commissioner Dennert, seconded by Wiese to approve and authorize Auditor Heupel to sign the Claim Assignments against individuals to Credit Collections Bureau for the purpose of collecting liens. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

OTHER BUSINESS: Chairman Sutton shared that there will be no Commission meeting on Tuesday, December 23, 2025 due to the Christmas Holiday. Senator, Carl Perry informed the Commission of the Youth Awards given out by the Exchange Club of Aberdeen for December: Youth Citizen Awards went to Hattie Anderson & Elaina Eckardt from Aberdeen Roncalli; Ava Schwan & Bennett Brenner

from Holgate; Grace Preszler & Abigail Johnson from Simmons and Reagan Jett from Aberdeen Christian. Youth of the Month Awards went to Grace Steger from Aberdeen Central; Gianna Madsen from Aberdeen Roncalli and Danial Opdahl from Aberdeen Christian.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Moved by Commissioner Wiese, seconded by Dinger to go into Executive Session per SDCL 1-25-2 for Personnel. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

Chairman Sutton declared the Executive Session closed with No Action taken.

CORONER YEARLY UPDATE: Brian Koens, Coroner met with the Commission to report on his first year as Brown County Coroner. He informed the Commission that he had 81 Death Investigations, which included some Blood Draws for Toxicology; Autopsies; SD Violent Death Reports and Unintentional Drug Overdose Reports. In addition, Brian has completed 40 hours of Training and used only 4 days of Deputy Coroner On Call Pay. This year he purchased a new Van, Gurney and Scoop.

ADJOURNMENT: Moved by Commissioner Wiese, seconded by Dennert to adjourn the Brown County Commission at 10:04a.m. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

Lynn Heupel, Brown County Auditor

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DECEMBER 23, 2025 – SPECIAL MEETING

Meeting called to order by Chairman Sutton at 8:45 A.M. in the Commission Chambers, Courthouse Annex, Brown County, SD. Present were Commissioners Dennert, Dinger, Gage, Sutton and Wiese. Commissioner Wiese led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Moved by Commissioner Wiese, seconded by Dinger to approve the agenda. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Moved by Commissioner Wiese, seconded by Dennert to go into Executive Session per SDCL 1-25-2 for Legal. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

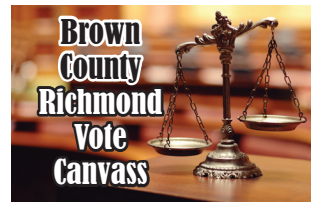
Chairman Sutton declared the Executive Session closed with No Action taken.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Advised by Legal Counsel a public comment slot on the Agenda was not required for this Special Meeting.

ADJOURNMENT: Moved by Commissioner Dennert, seconded by Wiese to adjourn the Brown County Commission at 10:15a.m. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

Sara Swisher, Brown County Chief Deputy Auditor

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DECEMBER 9, 2025 – CANVASS OF RICHMOND ROAD & DRIVE ROAD DISTRICT

Brown County Commissioners Chairman Duane Sutton, Vice-Chairman Mike Gage, Mike Wiese and Kyler Dinger convened for the purpose of canvassing the December 2, 2025 Richmond Road & Drive Road District Election. Commissioner Dennert was absent.

Moved by Commissioner Dinger, seconded by Wiese to approve the Official Canvass on shall Richmond Lane and Drive Road District be formed, as follows:

Yes..... - 2
No..... - 13
All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

Lynn Heupel, Brown County Auditor

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Weekly SUDOKU — King Crossword —

Answer

4	1	2	6	5	7	3	9	8
3	5	9	1	2	8	4	7	6
8	7	6	3	9	4	5	1	2
5	6	7	2	8	3	9	4	1
1	9	8	7	4	6	2	5	3
2	3	4	9	1	5	6	8	7
6	8	1	5	3	9	7	2	4
9	4	3	8	7	2	1	6	5
7	2	5	4	6	1	8	3	9

King Crossword Answers

Solution time: 26 mins.

J	I	B	R	C	A	S	H	A	S	H		
I	S	U	I	O	T	A	E	Q	U	I		
F	A	L	L	F	L	A	T	A	U	N	T	
			G	I	L	T		B	R	A	G	S
G	L	A	D	E		G	L	U	T			
O	U	R	S		F	L	A	T	H	E	A	D
S	R	T		A	L	E	R	T		S	S	E
H	E	A	D	W	I	N	D		S	C	A	B
			R	O	T	S		H	E	A	P	S
C	O	R	A	L		A	A	R	P			
A	P	O	P		W	I	N	D	F	A	L	L
T	A	L	E		O	L	D	E		D	I	A
E	L	L	S		E	L	I	S		E	N	D

We are thinking up ways to... ...live our lives a little bit better.

Newspaper Fun!
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Kids: color stuff in!

Happy New Year, Everyone! Out With the Old Year, In With the New!

I really like the New Year celebration. It comes around and gives me a new chance every year to do a little better or start doing something in a new way. What do you know about the celebration of the new year? Read these clues to help you fill in this New Year puzzle:

A happy, healthy New Year to you and your family.

Clues: baby, Father, fireworks, healthy, song, midnight, old man, resolutions, football, parade.

- in Ancient Rome, the new year started in _____ because the month of January did not exist yet
- to represent the birth of a New Year we use a newborn _____ dressed in a top hat and a sash
- by the end of the year the child grows into a wrinkled _____
- _____ time is used to represent the passage of years; he usually carries an hourglass
- to celebrate the new year many people gather to eat, drink and dance at a _____; the biggest is in New York City in Times Square
- _____ light up the sky in celebration; they can be seen behind the Statue of Liberty, the Eiffel Tower and the Forbidden City in China
- the new year officially begins when the clock strikes _____
- everyone's favorite New Year's _____ is "Auld Lang Syne," which means 'old long since'
- after the parties of New Year's eve, many people relax by watching the big _____ game, "The Rose Bowl"
- after the game people line the streets to watch the "Rose _____," which takes place in California
- friends wish each other a happy, _____ New Year
- people use the start of a new year as a way to better themselves through New Year's _____

What's a New Year's Resolution?

I promise to... Have you ever heard of a **New Year's resolution**? It is a promise you make to yourself to change something or add something to your life. My New Year's resolution is to do my chores without being reminded by my Mom. What will be *your* New Year's resolution?

This 2-part puzzle has ideas that **you** might like to try. **First, read the clues and fill in the crossword puzzle. Next, match each resolution to its 2nd part that would "kick it up" a bit.**

- get more fresh air and _____
- finish all your _____
- spend less time talking on the _____
- try out a new _____ or sport
- clean your _____
- watch less _____
- develop a new, special _____ (singing, dancing, juggling)
- feed your _____
- think about how to make yourself healthy _____
- do your _____ well before it is due
- save up your _____
- get to _____ on time

Options A-L:

- and invite friends and family over instead
- and help your brother and sister with theirs
- and put on a show for your family to enjoy
- and take on a few extra little jobs without being asked
- and choose an exciting book to read instead
- and spend it on someone else
- and make a chart of your progress
- with clean clothes and a clean you!
- and help your parents shop and pick out fruits you like
- and help with the rest of the house too
- and play with it every day, and keep it clean too
- and become the best you can at it

Clues for crossword: exercise, school, chores, homework, pet, hobby, talent, television, telephone, snacks, allowance.

Forecast for a New Year!

Circle "yes" if you think an item could happen in the new year and "no" if it is just silly:

- Small drones will be delivering pizzas and packages. yes no
- We will build a colony on the moon and live there. yes no
- Art shown on computer displays as well as canvases. yes no
- Cars will travel on the roads with no one driving them. yes no
- An entire meal will fit into one tiny pill. yes no

Follow the color key to see one thing you can count on next year:

Color Key: B = Blue R = Red O = Orange Y = Yellow P = Pink G = Green

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Westport Town
Notice of Vacancy
NOTICE OF VACANCY MUNICIPALITY OF WESTPORT
The following office will become vacant due to the expiration of the present term of office of the elective officer:
Mitchell Wilson 3 yr term
Circulation of nominating petitions may begin on February 2nd, 2026 and petitions may be filed in the office of the finance officer located at 29 East Main Street Westport SD between the hours of 5 p.m. and 8 p.m. not later than the 24th day of March, 2026 at 5:00pm. For questions, please call finance officer at 605-228-3703.
Deb Schlosser
Finance Officer
Published December 24 and 31, 2025 at the total approximate cost of \$14.13 and may be viewed free of charge at www.sdpublicnotices.com. 26331

5 WORDS CAN SAVE A LIFE:
Are you thinking about suicide?

CALL OR TEXT 24/7
988
to speak with a mental health professional

GO TO your nearest Emergency Department

Avera Behavioral Health
More signs of potential suicide can be found at Avera.org/AskTheQuestion.

BHCS-1436350

Weekly SUDOKU

		2		5		3	9	8	
		9		2		4	7		
	7				4	5	1		
				8	3	9			
1			7		6		5	3	
2				1		6	8	7	
6		1		3	9		2	4	
		3							
		5	4	6	1			3	

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦
♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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Classifieds
AUCTIONS

DOUBLE J FARMS
52ND Annual Simmental, SimAngus Bull & Bred Female Sale. LIVE: DVAuction.com Noon, Friday, Jan 23 @ Garretson, SD Kipp Julson 605-351-9088 doublejsimentals.com

EMPLOYMENT

GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENT for the 2026 season with groundskeeping responsibility. Please contact Miller Golf Course Board. Reno Brueggeman 605-870-0056. Dylan Templeton 605-270-1670

NOTICES

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HAPPY NEW YEAR! 2026
HOLIDAY STORE HOURS for New Year's Eve, December 31st
• Ken's Food Fair & Shell Express in Groton & Ipswich will close 5pm New Year's Eve
• Ken's Super Fair Foods & Butte Shop Aberdeen will be open until 11pm New Year's Eve
• Ken's Food Fair in Britton, Clark & Eureka will be open until 5pm
HOLIDAY STORE HOURS for New Year's Day, January 1st
• Ken's Food Fair & Shell Express in Groton & Ipswich will be open 8am - 12pm New Year's Day
• Ken's Super Fair Foods & Butte Shop Aberdeen will be open until 11pm New Year's Day
• Ken's Food Fair in Britton, Clark & Eureka will be open 8am to 12pm New Year's Day

USDA CHOICE DEMKOTA BONELESS CHUCK ROAST \$5.99 Lb.
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SMITHFIELD WHOLE PORK BUTT \$1.79 Lb.
KEN'S FRESH 80% LEAN GROUND BEEF \$4.59 Lb.

BEVERAGE: COKE, DIET COKE SPRITE 2/\$9
GROCERY: OLD DUTCH RESTAURANTE STYLE CHIPS \$4.99
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King Crossword

ACROSS

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12				13						14		
15				16						17		
			18						19			
20	21					22	23					
24					25					26	27	28
29				30						31		
32				33						34		
				35					36			
37	38	39					40					
41						42	43				44	45
46						47					48	
49						50					51	

DOWN

1 Skippy rival
2 "This — stick-up!"
3 Sofia's land
4 Rummage (through)
5 Stallion-to-be
6 — standstill
7 Plopped down
8 Fireplace part
9 Water color?
10 Crooned

11 Chart toppers
16 Pot covers
19 Cigar remnant domain
20 "Holy cow!"
21 Entice
22 Secluded spots
23 Cooking fat
25 Move like a butterfly
26 Adventure
27 Now, in a memo
28 Society newbies
30 Missing GI

34 Lowly worker
36 Devil's
37 Blanchett of "The Aviator"
38 Milky gem
39 Sandwich bread
40 "The King —"
42 Misery
43 Under the weather
44 Architect Maya
45 Young fellow

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