

THE Groton Independent

South Dakota

Growing Families & Opportunities

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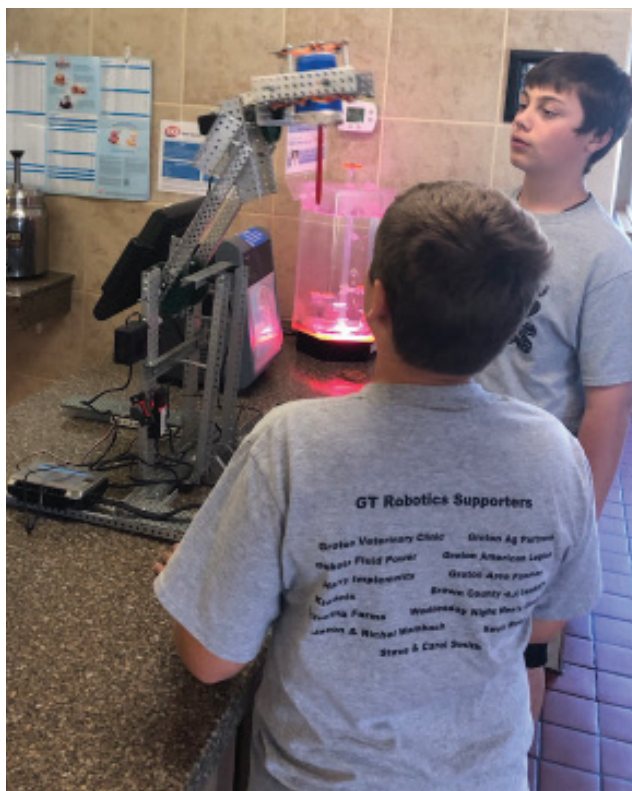


Dairy Queen donates to GT Robotics

Dale Grenz, owner of the Groton Dairy Queen, is pictured above presenting the River Pardick with a check for \$500 for the Groton Robotics Club.

Jim Lane, who oversees the Groton Robotics Club, said that having a robot serve Blizzards has been an idea for three years. This year, one of the teams, the Geek Squad, did not qualify for state. "I wanted them to have some project and I thought the robot would be a good project for them. The robot served Blizzards upside down at the Groton Dairy Queen. It was a win-win situation for all parties involved. Grenz said he was happy to have the fundraiser opportunity.

Members of the Geek Squad that built the robot were Isaac Smith, Steven Paulson, Nick Morris and Lee Iverson. Nick Morris and Axel Warrington are pictured on the right.



Jeff Thaler named CEO of Full Circle Ag

September 1 is the beginning of a new chapter for Full Circle Ag. Following the retirement of David Andresen, Jeff Thaler has been hired to fill the CEO position. Jeff comes to Full Circle Ag with a wealth of knowledge and 24 years of experience in the retail and wholesale ag marketplace. He and his family currently reside in Groton, South Dakota, and are extremely excited to be a part of the Full Circle Ag family. "I am looking forward to being part of a team that is focused on exceeding the needs of the member-owners, while delivering results with a focus on the future."



In addition to joining the Full Circle Ag family and the Groton community, Jeff is looking forward to the fishing and hunting opportunities that the area provides. In his spare time, Jeff is in the process of restoring his grandfather's 1949 Chevy pickup. Being an SDSU alumni and a Philadelphia Eagles fan, he is looking forward to the upcoming football season.

Full Circle Ag is thankful to have had David Andresen for 24 years and wish him the best in his retirement. They warmly welcome Jeff Thaler and look forward to what the future holds for the member-owned cooperative.

Guthmiller takes second at NEC Golf Tourney

Cade Guthmiller finished three strokes behind the leader at the Northeast Conference Golf Tournament held Monday in Moccasin Creek Country Club in Aberdeen. Mason Carrels of Aberdeen Roncalli won the meet with a score of 77 while Guthmiller finished with an 80. Guthmiller shot a 40 in both sets of nine holes.

Also participating were Brevin Flihs who shot a 101, Tristan Traphagen shot a 102, Brody DeHoet a 111 and Hunter Kassube a 111.

Roncalli won the team title with a 332 followed by Sisseton with a 366 and Groton with a 394.



Welcome Back

A select group of business people were invited to the Groton Area Elementary School where they welcomed the students with high fives on the first day of school. (Photo by Tina Kosel)

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NOTICES

St. John's Lutheran Church is having its annual soup, sandwich, and pie luncheon (\$2.00 each) on Thursday, September 12th, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. along with crafts and a bake sale.

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Erickson has Yard of the Week
 The Seth and Megan Erickson yard at 902 N. 3rd Street was chosen as the August 12th Yard of the Week by the members of the Groton Garden Club. Also pictured are their children, Max and Haley. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Waage has Yard of the Week
 The Brenda and Brad Waage yard at 201 E. 9th Ave. was chosen as the August 19th Yard of the Week by the members of the Groton Garden Club. This photo was taken in their back yard. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Senior Hippology took first at State 4-H Horse Show

The 4-H Senior Hippology team got first place at State Horse in Huron
 Teams members are Dylan Krueger, Cassandra Townsend, Jazmine Hart Crissman, and Hanna Miller.
 Cassandra also placed first in individuals. (Courtesy Photo)



Senior Quiz Bowl Judging Team took second at State 4-H Horse Show

The 4-H Senior Quiz Bowl Judging team got second place at State Horse in Huron
 Team members are Gabi Siefkes, Jazmine Hart Crissman, Hanna Miller, and Dylan Krueger
 As individuals Gabi got third, Hanna got sixth and Dylan got eighth. (Courtesy Photo)



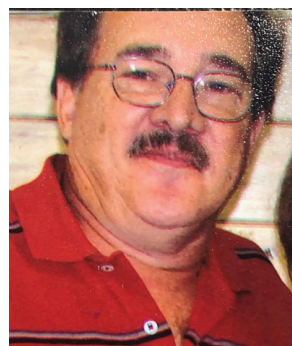
Junior Hippology took first at State 4-H Horse Show

The 4-H Junior Hippology Judging Team received first place at State Horse in Huron.
 Team members are Alicia Davis, Mallory Miller, and Blake Pauli.
 As individuals Mallory placed fourth and Alicia placed seventh. (Courtesy Photo)



Kluess has Yard of the Week
 The Rod and Arlys Kluess yard at 401 N. 5th St. was chosen as the August 26th Yard of the Week by the members of the Groton Garden Club. The Kluess' are celebrating their 48th Anniversary! (Photo by Paul Kosel)

The Life of Dennis Kurtz



Dennis Kurtz was born December 19, 1950 and was raised on a farm near Groton. He attended Joan of Arc Country School and graduated from Groton High.

He and his wife, Sue, lived in Oklahoma where he was employed by American Airlines. He retired in the spring of 2019.

They then moved to Texas after his retirement and was building a new home there.

A couple of years ago, he was diagnosed with bladder cancer.

He passed away in Texas on August 16, 2019 and leaves his wife, Sue, a daughter, Tessa, of Colorado; a son, Jurrarl of New Mexico; two step-children four sisters, one brother and several nieces and nephews.

He was the youngest of eight children.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Darrel and Cora Kurtz, one sister and one brother.

His funeral was held in Ft. Worth, Texas, on August 21, 2019.

S.D. among worst for ‘Brain Drain’ as best and brightest continue to flee the state

By: Nick Lowrey

Despite years of effort to reverse the trend, South Dakota remains among the worst states in the nation in terms of losing its most highly educated citizens to other areas of the country, according to a new report from Congress.

The loss of skilled, educated residents can slow the state’s economic growth as well as cause further political polarization in the state and nation, the new study shows. Brain drain has also been shown to weaken the ability of communities to support basic institutions such as churches and little leagues.

The affects of brain drain are especially acute in rural states like South Dakota. Recruiting of doctors and nurses to work at rural hospitals has become more difficult, which in turn has made accessing healthcare services tougher. Finding high-quality teachers to work in rural schools has become more difficult too, causing some districts to increase class sizes. Some employers in high-paying fields such as medicine and technology must recruit foreign workers through visa programs to fill open jobs.

According to the study, called “Losing our Minds: Brain Drain Across Across the United States,” South Dakota’s most highly educated citizens are moving away at a higher rate than in nearly every other state. The report also contradicts the commonly held conception that highly educated people leave the state in their 20s and return in their 30s to raise families.

A combination of factors likely is driving younger, more highly educated people away from South Dakota. Jeremy Rud, a Madison, S.D. native who earned a bachelor’s degree from South Dakota State University in 2014 and went on to earn a master’s in linguistics from the University of Colorado in Boulder, Colo., just finished three years of teaching at SDSU. He said his reason for leaving South Dakota, now for the second time, was about a search for more cultural diversity.

“I don’t have any specific vendetta against South Dakota, it’s just that my specific cultural tastes lie elsewhere,” Rud said. “I also want a greater diversity of ideas, languages and access to the rest of the world.”

Rud was getting ready to move to California — the number two destination for highly educated South Dakotans who migrate — to pursue a Ph.D in linguistics when he spoke with South Dakota News Watch. Another part of his decision to move was a lack of opportunity to advance in his career field. He said he’s not alone in his desire for better opportunities.

“I have so many friends that have a master’s degree that now live in Minnesota,” Rud said.

Published in April 2019 by the Congressional Joint Economic Committee, the new study



Jeremy Rud, a Madison, S.D. native is preparing to leave the state and head to California where he hopes to land a good job. Rud said his reasons for leaving South Dakota, now for the second time, include a search for more cultural diversity and better job opportunities. Photo: Submitted



found that highly educated South Dakotans who leave the state tend to end up in Minnesota, California or Colorado by the time they reach 40. California and Colorado both tend to be hubs for the migration of highly educated people from all over the country. The fact that such hubs exist points to much bigger problems for the country as a whole, the study said.

Increasingly, people are congregating themselves geographically and along educational lines, said Rachel Sheffield, a senior policy adviser for the committee. Highly educated people, who tend to hold more liberal viewpoints, are concentrating themselves in cities in California, Washington, Oregon, Colorado, Texas, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey and Washington, D.C, she said. Conservatives, meanwhile, are tending to stay in more rural areas. The two groups are interacting less, Sheffield said, which is exacerbating political divisions.

“If you’re not interacting with people with different political viewpoints, then you are less likely to have a face to go with differing viewpoints; that could lead to seeing different political viewpoints as connected to this unrelatable group that you never talk to and it’s easier to demonize people you don’t actually know,” Sheffield said.

Another problem identified in the study is that as certain areas have attracted more of the country’s highly educated people, they also have attracted a greater share of the nation’s venture capital and wealth. Entrepreneurs, particularly those in high-tech fields, face heightened pressure to move to areas such as Boston or Silicon Valley. That, in turn, has led to yet more highly educated people concentrating in those areas as more jobs that required their skills are created. The economies of those select portions of the country have boomed, while the economic fortunes of other areas grew far more modestly or in some cases actually shrank.

South Dakota is on the low end of the spectrum in economic growth. The state’s growth in annual Gross Domestic Product is generally smaller than national GDP growth. Since 2012, South Dakota’s GDP growth has averaged just shy of 1 percent every year, which is less than half of the 2.3 percent average national GDP growth.

Despite continued growth in the state’s population between 2010 and 2017, the share of South Dakota’s population that is between the ages of 18 and 64 shrank by 1.8 percent, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

State officials and universities, meanwhile, are trying to find ways to keep educated people in the state. Start-up incubators at SDSU,

South Dakota School of Mines & Technology and the University of South Dakota are helping highly educated South Dakota residents get their research or business ideas off the ground.

Dakota State University in Madison is planning to open a new computer technology research and development laboratory in October to lure top technology talent. The state Legislature passed a .5% sales tax increase in 2016 to generate new revenues to boost teacher pay to keep top educators from leaving after graduation.

Communities such as Sioux Falls, Rapid City and Aberdeen are making efforts to deepen the scope and breadth of their entertainment and cultural events to help keep young people in the state, said South Dakota Board of Regents Executive Director Paul Beran, who made keeping graduates from leaving one of his top three priorities when hired in 2018.

“I think you’d be putting your head in the sand if you didn’t think (brain drain) was a problem,” Beran said.

Low pay, fewer opportunities

LeighAnn Dunn, a special education teacher who earned her bachelor’s degree in speech pathology and audiology from USD with financial help from the federal G.I. Bill, said school districts in South Dakota aren’t capable of paying her or others a truly livable wage. Dunn has also earned a master’s degree in multi-categorical special education from USD and is about a year away from earning a doctorate in education.

Dunn, 35, teaches in a state that borders South Dakota and commutes to work from her home in Vermillion (she did not want to name which state.) She said the

higher pay, incentives for continuing education and good job security offered in her current position are more than worth the extra commute and even paying income tax in a state where she does not reside.

“My pay, with my education, is almost double what I’d get in South Dakota and it increases yearly ... If I worked in South Dakota, I could not afford even to get a home loan,” Dunn said. “The cost of living might be low but we are really behind the times in our wages around the state.”

In 2017, average teacher salaries in states surrounding South Dakota ranged between \$5,300 and \$11,200 more per year than in the Rushmore State. Dunn said many of her classmates have left the state in pursuit of higher pay.

“I can’t imagine myself coming back to teach in South Dakota, which is bad because I’ve got a lot of training and a lot of expertise,” Dunn said.

The congressional study looked at data from



South Dakota Board of Regents Executive Director Paul Beran said the state’s brain drain problem is exacerbated by the high cost of college attendance. Beran has made keeping S.D. graduates in the state after their schooling a top priority. Photo: Nick Lowrey, South Dakota News Watch

each U.S. Census taken between 1940 and 2000 as well as data from the Census Bureau's 2010 and 2017 American Community Surveys. The study specifically targeted people between the ages of 31 and 40 who were considered to be in the top one-third of educational attainment for the U.S. In 2017 — essentially those who had obtained a bachelor's degree or higher.

The study looked at two measures of brain drain. "Gross brain drain" is the number of highly educated people born in the state who choose to leave. "Net brain

drain" is the gap between the number of highly educated people who were born in a state and choose to leave and the number of highly educated people who move into the state from somewhere else.

In every census since 1960, South Dakota was shown to have experienced a net loss of people in the top third of educational attainment. In 2017, the most recent year for which data is available, South Dakota had the second-highest rate of gross brain drain in the country. None of South Dakota's neighbors, meanwhile, made the top 10 list for gross brain drain, meaning they retained more of their highly educated children into their 40s. Vermont had the nation's highest rate of gross brain drain.

South Dakota also had the third-highest rate of net brain drain in 2017, meaning the state was third worst in the country at replacing its losses of highly educated people with highly educated people from somewhere else. North Dakota topped the net brain drain list and Delaware was number two. Iowa came in at number four on the net brain drain list.

The loss of native-born residents is another of the problems for states with high rates of gross brain drain identified in the congressional study. Highly educated people who live and work in the state they grew up in often have a better picture of a state's needs than highly educated people who move in from somewhere else, the study said.

Nick Kelly, 28, who holds a master's degree in engineering management from SDSM&T, said the decision to leave South Dakota mainly had to do with a lack of job options, the absence of a large airport and lack of cultural opportunities. He now lives in Bloomington, Minn., just outside of Minneapolis with his wife — who holds a master's degree in biomedical engineering from SDSM&T — and their child. Both Kelly and his wife were able to find good paying jobs in engineering there, he said.

Kelly said that while he was in school and looking for jobs at engineering career fairs, he was disappointed to see that most in-state jobs dealt with chemical engineering in the ethanol industry. He wasn't interested in those. Most of the other employers at the job fairs weren't recruiting for positions in South Dakota, Kelly said.

"There just weren't very many opportunities," he said.

A Mitchell-based company did offer him a job after he graduated, Kelly said. The offer wasn't good enough to keep him in the state in part because his wife wouldn't have been able to pursue her own career goals there. Kelly now works for an electronics company that designs equipment which makes shipping packages more efficient, a job he said he wouldn't have found in South Dakota.

Many South Dakota college graduates say they don't want to leave the state. Ray Hes-



Special education teacher LeighAnn Dunn teaches in one of South Dakota's neighboring states because the pay is roughly double what she can make in her home state. She holds a master's degree in multi-categorical special education and is about a year away from earning a doctorate in education. Photo: Submitted

pen graduated from SDSM&T in 2009 with a degree in mining engineering. He said he loved Rapid City and the Black Hills and had a goal to get a job at a Rapid City cement plant so he could stay. The plant was about the only employer in the Black Hills at that time that needed mining engineers. Unfortunately, there weren't any openings.

Hespen spent four years touring around the country and chasing job opportunities. He started his career in Tulsa, Okla., then moved to California, then to Chicago, then went to Baltimore and finally landed in Colorado in 2013. That year, Hespen and his friend, David Kingman, founded Property Meld, a company based around a software program that automates parts of the property management business as a way to save money and improve customer service.

"I moved to Denver as kind of a hedge. If my company didn't work out, I figured I could find something there," Hespen said.

As Property Meld gained traction and started growing, Hespen said, he was able to move back to the Black Hills after nearly a decade of looking for a job there.

"What's crazy is, I had to start a business to come back," Hespen said.

Slowing the drain

Property Meld's first official headquarters was an office at Ascent Innovation, a business incubator created by the Rapid City Development Corporation on the SDSM&T campus. Business incubators provide space for new businesses as well as free or low-cost business services. They also aim to allow entrepreneurs such as Hespen collaborate with fellow business owners.

Ascent Innovation is one of several business incubators that have been built on or near university campuses around the state. The idea is to allow university students and researchers to take their ideas from the lab to the open market and, ultimately, to create the types of job opportunities that will prevent highly educated people from leaving the state in the first place, said Joseph Wright, associate vice president for research and economic development at SDSM&T.

"There are plenty of students who would want to stay in the state if we had the kind of jobs that attract that kind of talent," Wright said.

One such success story in Rapid City is VRC



Ray Hespen saw few opportunities to land a good job as a mining engineer in the Black Hills after graduating from the South Dakota School of Mines & Technology in 2009. He traveled the country to find a good job before eventually diving into entrepreneurship with his company, Property Meld. Hespen said being his own boss was the only way he would return to the Black Hills. Photo: Submitted

Metal Systems, which recently moved to a new facility outside of Ellsworth Air Force Base. The company makes machines that spray metals onto other surfaces at such a high speed that they permanently bond to the surface. The process can be used to repair everything from aircraft to bridges.

Hespen's company, though, isn't hiring too many engineers or software developers in South Dakota. He said most of his local employees do have bachelor's degrees but are working in sales, tech support and marketing. The company's software developers, including company co-founder David Kingman, work remotely from areas outside the state.

Thanks to the internet, a growing number of workers in the technology sector are able to work remotely.

Dakota State University in Madison is hoping to capitalize on the trend with its new cyber security research facility called Madison Cyber Labs.

"Many (computer technology) students get scholarships and grants that require them to work for government agencies after they graduate. Those students have nowhere in South Dakota to go to fulfill those requirements," DSU President José-Marie Griffiths said.

Madison Cyber Labs is intended to function both as a research and development hub and as a potential satellite office for private companies and federal agencies engaged in cyber security.

"Many agencies are looking to open satellite offices," Griffiths said.

Sometimes, just giving graduates a better picture of what jobs are available in South Dakota can help keep them in the state or lure them back, Griffiths said.

The state Department of Labor and Regulation has been working to do that for the better part of a decade through its Dakota Roots program, which is aimed at bringing talented people back to South Dakota. Around 4,100 people have been placed across a wide array of jobs through Dakota Roots, said Dawn Dovre, who manages the program.

Dakota Roots doesn't target people based on education and is open to everyone but there are some highly educated people who have been placed in jobs through the pro-



Part of Dawn Dovre's job is managing the South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation Dakota Roots program, which has helped bring about 4,100 people who left South Dakota return to live in their state. Photo: Nick Lowrey, South Dakota News Watch

Photo: Nick Lowrey, South Dakota News Watch

gram, Dovre said. "We've seen a little bit of everything," she said.

Still, she added, it's easier to keep workers in South Dakota than to try to recruit them back later.

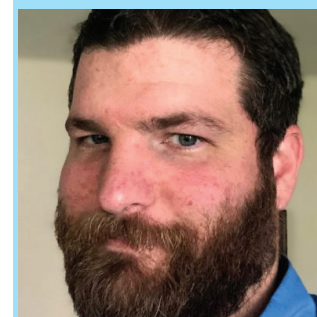
Reducing the cost of college could go a long way to keeping graduates in the state, said Beran, CEO of the Board of Regents. The state's public universities have some of the highest net costs of attendance in the nation, according to BOR data, and federal data show that many graduates in South Dakota carry high levels of college debt.

"Where we are failing right now is making sure everyone who is capable of getting into the next level of education is getting there," Beran said.

South Dakota's brain drain isn't going to be slowed by a single program or initiative, Beran said. Cities across the state will need to support entrepreneurs, push for the expansion of broadband internet service, look for ways to deepen their sense of community and broaden their cultural horizons.

"There are going to be many small solutions," Beran said. "That, ultimately, is going to be what makes the state strong."

ABOUT NICK LOWREY



Nick Lowrey, based in Pierre, S.D., is an investigative staff reporter for South Dakota News Watch. A South Dakotan for more than 20 years, he is a former editor of the Pierre Capital Journal.



Keeping Score

Superintendent Joe Schwan runs the scoreboard at the soccer games on Friday in Groton. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Lots of Toads! and a salamander

The toads have been plentiful this year as they can be seen jumping all over. This bucket of toads was removed from the backwash pit at the pool. They were safely removed and relocated to the edge of town near water where they will live happily ever after!



The nets come down

The nets at the ball field have been taken down for the winter. In addition, the dugouts on Locke-Karst Field have also been removed as new ones will be installed. Dan Sunne is pictured here cutting cutting the zip ties that hold the net up. Sunne and Landon Johnson folded up the nets as they were taken down and put away.



It's a smelly job!

It's a . . . well, you can see what kind of a job this is! Branden Abeln is dumping the sewer lift station basket at the park last week. It requires the use of a bucket truck which Landon Johnson was operating, lifting the basket from the wet well and into the payloader bucket where it is emptied. It should be noted that there were a lot of "disposal" towels in the basket which then slows up the flow of sewage. Because of these "disposal" towels, the basket at the park lift station has to be emptied often.

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Cavaliers hand Tigers first loss

Groton boys lost 2-1 to St. Thomas More. Austin Jones scored the lone goal with an assist from Piet Solling. The Tigers are 2-1 on the season and will travel to Vermillion on Saturday.



Jace Kroll
(Photo by Dawn Imrie)



Jayden Zak
(Photo by Dawn Imrie)



Tucker Carda
(Photo by Marjae Schinkel)



Jackson Cogley
(Photo by Dawn Imrie)



Garrett Schroeder
(Photo by Dawn Imrie)



The Winning Score!

It almost looks like Piet Solling is pointing for the ball to go in the net. It was the play in the right photo that led to a penalty and Solling had the shot for the penalty kick. He made the shot and it was the the only goal scored in the game as Groton defeated Belle Fourche, 1-0. The penalty kick happened with about 15 minutes left in the game. The Tigers played an aggressive hard fought game with great defense and teamwork! Grady O'Neill had some great saves at Goal. The win propels Groton to a 2-0 record. (Photos by Paul Kosel)



Anthony Schinkel
(Photo by Paul Kosel)



Kenzie McInerney
(Photo by Paul Kosel)



Laila Roberts
(Photo by Paul Kosel)



**Coach Chris Kucker
Carly Guthmiller**
(Photo by Paul Kosel)



Dragr Monson
(Photo by Paul Kosel)

Belle Fourche wins girls game

Belle Fourche won the girls soccer game Friday in Groton, 2-1. Carly Guthmiller drew a penalty in the box which resulted in Kenzie McInerney scoring Groton's lone goal on a penalty kick. The Tigers had about 16 opportunities to score.

Latex and Mylar Balloons

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Get to Know 2019 Rural Dakota Pride Honoree, Jim Lane, Groton

Jim was selected as one of five volunteers by the South Dakota Farmers Union for the 2019 Rural Dakota Pride Honor, for his robotics leadership. Jim will be honored along with the other four selected volunteers Saturday, Aug. 31 during Farmers Union Day at the South Dakota State Fair. The letter Jim received said the event will be held on the Freedom Stage on the fairgrounds beginning at 10:30 a.m. It will include the Rural Dakota Pride Award presentation followed by a Farmer's Share Lunch.

When Jim Lane hears his peers make negative comments about "kids these days." He is quick to disagree.

"I get to work with kids who put an incredible amount of work into their projects. Their work ethic, fortitude and personal drive are why I like volunteering as the robotics coach," Jim explains, about the Groton High School students who make up the robotics team he has coached since 2011.

Robotics is a unique extra-curricular activity where teens are given the rules of a game, and then expected to build and program a robot to play that game, competing against another robot built by an opposing team. Governed by an international organization, Robotics Education & Competition Foundation, the youth compete on the state level to qualify for regional, national and international competitions.

As the coach, Jim sees his role as practice organizer, supply provider, provider of transportation and teaching youth problem solving skills. "I don't tell them anything. Robotics is not like basketball or football where the coach tells kids how to play the game," he says, explaining that when the teens ask him questions, he asks them more questions. "Robotics teaches them how to problem solve by help-

ing them think through issues. All their lives, they will have to solve problems. No matter what they do or where they go, there will be a problem. Whether it is a mechanical problem or a people problem."

To emphasize his point further, Jim shares a story about a time when the Groton team qualified for a nation competition with more than 350 teams. "Our team was doing very well and close to the top at the end of the first day of matches. Then, their robot broke in last seconds of competition."

The teens painstakingly took their robot apart, spending hours testing the parts to locate the problem. By 10 p.m. when the facility closed for the night, they were forced to leave their robot, which they still needed to finish putting back together. The next morning, they arrived early to finish putting the robot back together.

The Groton team ended up placing third overall in their division. "They won because they spent the time working on their robot, finding the problem and fixing it."

Problem solving is something Jim enjoys. It's a skill that comes in handy. He is a small business owner of a handyman business, Jim of All Trades. "I enjoy projects and I have a curi-



Jim Lane

ous mind. The things I read for pleasure are Discovery Magazine and National Geographic."

Jim first got involved in coaching robotics when his son, Logan, was in high school. Logan had been taking a robotics unit and the teacher learned of a competition in Sioux Falls. Logan and some of his friends were interested in participating, but they needed a parent to provide transportation. When the teacher asked Jim, he said, "yes."

Then, Jim organized some practices...he was hooked. Even after Logan graduated, Jim is still involved.

"I like watching kids take ownership of their robot and the work it takes," Jim says.



Along with the opportunity to mentor local youth, Jim appreciates the opportunity to give back to the community he's called home since 1976. "I like the fact it's a small town and, when my kids were young and running around, people knew

who they were and where they belonged. If they got into trouble, people know where to come."

Jim has five grown children, Jamie Forrest, CJ, Lincoln, Logan and Marshall. In addition to robotics, Jim and his wife, Melodee, volunteer their time in other areas of the community as well. A few years ago, couple dedicated two years to organizing efforts to fundraise and build a warming house for the community ice rink.

To learn more about the Robotics Education & Competition Foundation, visit <https://www.roboticseducation.org/>.

More about Rural Dakota Pride

Jim is one of five volunteers recognized for their selfless contributions to South Dakota rural communities by South Dakota Farmers Union (SDFU) with the 2019 Rural Dakota Pride Honor August 31, during the 2019 South Dakota State Fair.

"Community is created and maintained through the efforts of volunteers," explains Karla Hofhenke, SDFU Executive Director.

The other 2019 Rural Dakota Pride honorees include: Angie Mueller, Ethan; Jeannie Hofer, Huron; Rich Bakeberg, Frederick and Franklin Olson, Pierpont.

As an organization which serves South Dakota's family farmers and ranchers, Doug Sombke, SDFU President, says Farmers Union recognizes the important role strong rural communities play in supporting agriculture producers and their families.

"South Dakota's agriculture producers and their communities are closely connected. In good economic times they both prosper. When the economy is down, like today with the trade war, low commodity prices and extreme weather conditions, they both feel the pain," Sombke said. "The Rural Dakota Pride honor is one of many ways SDFU works to show our support for both."

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South Dakota State Land Sale

- 113.89 Acres in Highmore
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- 5.99 Acres near Madison
- 8,092 Sq. Ft. Building in Rapid City

Pursuant to South Dakota Codified laws, Chapter 5-9, the above described parcels of state land will be offered for sale to the highest bidder at a public auction.

For more information contact Mike Lauritsen, South Dakota Office of School and Public Lands State Capitol Building, 500 East Capitol Ave., Pierre, SD 57501 / PH: 605-773-3303

<https://sdpubliclands.sd.gov>