

# progress

MAGAZINE

2024 | JANUARY - FEBRUARY

[aberndeen-chamber.com](http://aberndeen-chamber.com)

Paid Promotional Space



*The Relocation  
Companion*



## Raising Our Recruitment, Relocation & Retention Game



### IN THIS ISSUE .....

program of work 4  
why join the chamber 12  
christmoose with the chamber 17  
new board members 21  
city manager update 26

The Official Magazine of the Aberdeen Area Chamber of Commerce





# FORTÉ LIVING

COMMUNITY • CULTURE • COMFORT

Welcome to Forté Living, a vibrant apartment home community designed for seniors 55 and better who enjoy a connected lifestyle. Nestled in Aberdeen, SD, Forté provides a distinctive senior living community tailored for vibrant individuals who appreciate stress-free living and an active lifestyle. When you come to Forté, you come home to convenience, comfort and culture.

Look at the great amenities Forté offers below!



Fitness Room



Entertainment Room



Dog Area



Garden Boxes



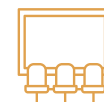
Picnic & Grilling Area



Telemed Room



Coffee Bar



Movie Theater



# Recruitment. Relocation. Retention.

One of the hottest topics in business continues to center around the workforce – specifically, not enough people to fill the hundreds of openings just in our area alone. As the value of a single qualified employee continues to rise for many owners and managers, the focus often turns to creative ways to attract and retain human capital.

Staying true to the mission of each respective organization, the Aberdeen Area Chamber of Commerce and Aberdeen Development Corporation have been spending more time than ever developing ways to assist our businesses in their attraction and retention efforts.

Two of the most recent initiatives include partnering with The Relocation Companion and the State of South Dakota's Freedom Works Here campaign.

## The Relocation Companion Relocation Assistance

JUST LAUNCHED! Aberdeen's program, called *Your 57401 Journey*, offers invaluable resources for new residents and local employers (of any size) to assist those new residents and employees as they transition into the community and acclimate to Aberdeen, with the goal of retaining them as residents for the long term. The Chamber staff completed the assessment and strategic planning in the second half of 2023, with the official launch this month!



### • Data Collection

- A survey has been created (via Survey Monkey) for people who are considering moving here, or who have recently moved here, to let us know their thoughts, challenges, interests and more. This will help us gain valuable insight into the new resident experience and establish a baseline to understand which new resident retention efforts are needed in the future.

### • Relocation Resources

- For employers: ***Aberdeen's Game Plan for Workforce Success with New Residents***. Regardless of if you offer employee relocation packages or not, your company can benefit from this resource if you hire employees that have moved to Aberdeen within the past 18 months.
- For employees/new residents: ***Your 57401 Game Plan***. This resource is designed specifically for individuals and families to have a self-guided and personalized resource that fills the gaps in their traditional relocation support. All encompassing support is necessary for relocation success.

### • New Resident Connection & Support

- To ensure meaningful and ongoing support for new residents during the crucial 12 to 18 months following their move, it's essential for Aberdeen to establish continuous touchpoints through email and social media. These ongoing connections will play a pivotal role in fostering a sense of community and providing support needed for a successful and lasting integration into Aberdeen.

Cover photo credit: Troy McQuillen

## Freedom Works

In collaboration with the Governor's Office of Economic Development, the ADC and Chamber are actively assisting individuals with an interest in moving to the Aberdeen area.

With the state's unemployment rate hovering around 1.7% (as of December 20th), this is an opportunity to attract an additional workforce pool to fill open positions.

As resumes are received from those who are interested in making the Hub City their home, they are passed along to local businesses based on resume qualifications. In addition to offering a great quality of life, our community has stepped up with an incentives package to help make the move and transition as easy as possible. This includes the City of Aberdeen, the Aberdeen Family YMCA, Climate Control, Northern State University, The Aberdeen Insider, Brown County Speedway, Aberdeen Wings and Brown County Fair.



In addition, the Chamber of Commerce offers the following events and programs to benefit recruitment and retention efforts:

- The Workforce and Education Committee facilitates the Hub City Link Program, designed to get them connected in the community with areas of interest for themselves and their families. Chamber staff and/or a Chamber volunteer reach out to each individual to provide them with additional information and contacts.
- The Workforce & Education Committee, in partnership with Aberdeen Area Human Resource Association, hosts the Workforce Innovation Summit each October in Aberdeen. The Summit provides employers and HR professionals with resources and information they can use in recruiting, retaining, and upskilling their employees.
- We provide hundreds of relocation packets to local companies to utilize when interviewing and hiring candidates. We also provide packets to newcomers who contact our office or reach out to us via both social media and the [aberdeensd.com](http://aberdeensd.com) and [aberdeen-chamber.com](http://aberdeen-chamber.com) websites.
- We work with local businesses to provide community tours for candidates they are interviewing or for individuals they have recently hired.
- We host New Employee Welcome Mixers each quarter to assist new citizens and new employees in getting connected in the community so they are more likely to stay.
- We host EDGE luncheons and events for young professionals aged 21-40, designed to help retain and engage young workers in our community.

# Celebrating 140 Years in 2024!



**Gail Ochs,  
IOM**

*Chief Executive  
Officer,  
Aberdeen Area  
Chamber of  
Commerce*

The Chamber has hit another milestone – celebrating 140 years of leading the way to a better Aberdeen and region. We do this by convening innovative leaders, collaborating with like-minded organizations, advocating for positive change, and helping businesses grow. Our strength and longevity are due to the support, dedication and involvement of area businesses and individuals who support our efforts. We can't thank our members and volunteers enough for sharing their time and talent with us to develop programs and projects that impact our community, not only today but for years to come. We promise to continue to work hard each day on your behalf.

For 2024, we plan to continue much of our existing programming, while also implementing and expanding on the key principles below. New efforts for 2024 are highlighted here:

## **Membership Benefits**

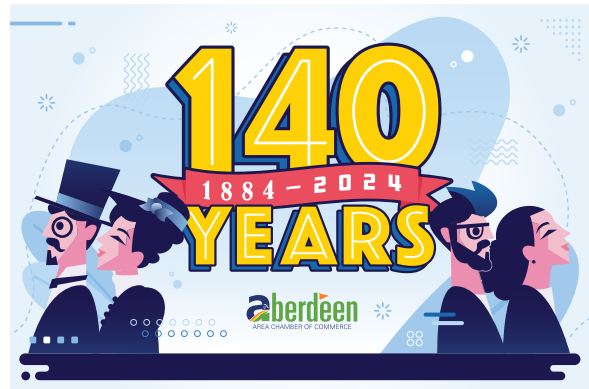
The Chamber will continue to focus on improvements to Chamber programs and services, member communications, and focused member development and education to include:

- Facilitating the Workforce Innovation Summit to provide employers education on workforce recruitment, retention, and upskilling opportunities and resources.
- Increasing the number of educational articles and information for employers through the PROGRESS Magazine on a variety of workforce topics.
- Researching opportunities to expand student involvement and interaction with local employers.

## **Promotion and Advocacy**

The Chamber will continue to promote and advocate on behalf of our organization, its members, and the community including:

- Engaging and educating membership on Legislative Platform Priorities and key legislative issues developed through the Public Policy Committee.
- Partnering with Northern State University on marketing and engagement efforts for workforce recruitment, student retention, and community pride.
- Expanding legislative efforts and interactions to keep Aberdeen and our region at the forefront including enhancement of Aberdeen Day and legislative tour of Aberdeen.
- Growing the Live Local, Shop Local campaign for area retailers and events.



## **Creating Connections**

The Chamber will create authentic business connections for its members through meaningful networking and experiences, and support business connections to government, education, and quality-of-life resources including:

- Creating opportunities for Top 4 Under 40 nominees to connect and get further engaged in the community.
- Implementing New Member Events quarterly to educate and engage new members/businesses.
- Connecting individuals with opportunities to represent Aberdeen and our region on state and national boards and programs.

## **Building Capacity in the Community**

The Chamber will continue to support community and regional growth initiatives, gather, and communicate member needs, and continue to advance the Aberdeen message to include:

- Inviting speakers and facilitating constructive conversations at weekly CART (Community Action Resource Team) meetings to generate better communication among local business and community leaders.
- Continuing efforts with the Relocation Companion on strategies to connect and gather information from potential residents as well as new and departing residents.
- Working with the City of Aberdeen and Aberdeen Development Corporation on workforce recruitment strategies such as Freedom Works Here, as well as retention strategies for local employers.

If you have any questions on the projects and programs listed above, please reach out!

## Moolah Spent Locally Makes Our Pastures GREENER.

Shopping locally keeps Aberdeen  
and our rural area moo-ving forward.

605.225.2860    





CHANGING THE GAME

SHOP,  
SPEND,  
EAT, ENJOY  
LOCAL

[aberdeensd.com/living-here/shopping-services](http://aberdeensd.com/living-here/shopping-services)



## Chamber Leadership

### EXECUTIVE BOARD

Cam Schock, President	Climate Control, Inc.
Zach Flakus, Vice President	NSU Foundation
Kila LeGrand, Treasurer	Sanford
Courtney Rott, Secretary	Riddle's Jewelry
Katie Washnok, Past President	Blackout Industries

### STAFF

Gail Ochs	Executive Director
Lisa Anderson	Marketing & Collaboration
Kami Spieker	Promotions & Partnerships
Julia Coon	Outreach & Engagement
Kathy Bjerke	Finance & Administration

### FULL BOARD

Mohamed Abul-Hawa	Kessler's Food & Liquor
Alexandra Grieben	Dacotah Bank
Angela Kelly	First Premier Realty
Brodie Mueller	The Market on the Plaza
Jarrett Rix	Rix Farms Inc.
Mike Sommers	Double D Body Shop
Daryl Thoennes	3M Company
Judy Vrchota	US Senator John Thune
Taylor Wensmann	Midstates Inc.
Tanner White	Avera St. Luke's
Brent Hanson, CVB Board Liaison	NVC
Spencer Sommers, ADA Board Liaison	Co-Op Architecture
Katie Washnok, ADC Board Liaison	Blackout Industries
Mike Bockorny, Ex-Officio	Aberdeen Development Corporation
David Novstrup, Ex-Officio	Wylie Thunder Road/Allevity Entertainment
Casey Weismantel, Ex-Officio	Aberdeen Area CVB

[www.aberdeen-chamber.com](http://www.aberdeen-chamber.com) • 605.225.2860



This magazine is a bi-monthly publication of the Aberdeen Area Chamber & of Commerce.

COVER: Aberdeen Relocation & Retention Efforts

#### INFORMATION:

Provided by the Aberdeen Area Chamber of Commerce, 516 South Main Street  
Aberdeen, SD 57401



Designed & printed by Quality Quick Print/  
Midstates Inc., Midstates Group  
Companies. For advertising opportunities,  
contact Dan Goetz at 605-226-2547 or  
email [dang@myqqp.com](mailto:dang@myqqp.com).

# Take Advantage of Chamber Opportunities in 2024

It doesn't seem that long ago I interviewed for the Chamber Board because time goes so quickly, but here I am starting 2024 as the President of the Aberdeen Area Chamber Board of Directors. I have lived in Aberdeen since 1992 and am originally from the once upon a time wheat capital of the world, Eureka, SD. I have been married to the one and only amazing Amy for 24 years and we have 2 incredible daughters, Alexis and Abigail. Believe me, my daughters are incredible due to the amazing Amy. As the esteemed Mr. Krueger would say, 'nuff said.

From the time I moved to Aberdeen until now, I realize I have only ever considered leaving one time, right after our wedding, in all the years since. It didn't take long for Amy and I to realize we would be crazy not to be here in Aberdeen when we started raising our family. We were right, and have never looked back on that decision since.

Being involved with the Chamber in the past years and now serving all of you as the Board President, is an honor and opportunity to show gratitude. Aberdeen has supported Amy and I as we have worked, raised a family, and started a business, all in this great community where someone is always willing to help out. Over the years you realize how important it is to have supporting members of the community around you for all things in life and business. The Chamber excels in pulling it all together for greater support and celebration of successes.

Beginning my term also means Katie will not be the one speaking and leading all these amazing Chamber events. While I am going to do the best I can in recruiting her for repeat performances, I will do my best when trying to reach the bar that she set so very high. Thank you Katie for everything this past year, but darn you are a tough act to follow.

Please take some time this year to engage in something you haven't done before, you never know what opportunities await you just after that moment of wondering if it was worth your time. I look forward to seeing everyone this year at all the Chamber events. Cheers to 2024!



**Cam Schock**  
2024 Chamber  
Board President,  
Owner, Climate  
Control Inc

The next New Employee  
Welcome will be on  
Thursday, February 8th at  
4:15 pm. If you have new  
employees at your business,  
they are able to attend this  
event for free.  
Pre-registration is required!

**new employee  
welcome**

For more information, contact  
Julia @ 605-225-2860 or  
[julia@aberdeen-chamber.com](mailto:julia@aberdeen-chamber.com)

# Member Milestones



5 Years

**Agtegra Cooperative**  
Jason Klootwyk, CEO  
908 S Lamont St • 605-225-5500  
jason.klootwyk@agtegra.com  
agtegra.com



5 Years

**One-Legged Pheasant Brewery**  
Dave & Sandra Welling, Owners  
723 S Main St • 605-725-1534  
oneleggedpheasant@yahoo.com  
oneleggedpheasant.com



10 Years

**Pounders Inc**  
Kraig Schlaht, Owner  
1702 6th Ave SE • 605-725-2337  
beer@poundersbeer.com  
poundersbeer.com



15 Years

**Dakota Plains Real Estate & Development**  
Heath Johnson & Rob Johnson, Owners  
12 2nd Ave NW, Ste 204 • 605-290-4694  
heathj@dakota-plains.com  
dakota-plains.com



15 Years

**Jimmy's Pizza**  
Nick & Michelle Schaunaman, Owners  
318 6th Ave SW • 605-225-7000  
jimmysaberdeen@gmail.com  
jimmyspizza.com/aberdeen



35 Years

**Sewer Duck Inc**  
Jeff & Sara Goldade, Owners  
915 135th St SW • 605-225-1655  
admin@sewerduck.com  
sewerduck.com



# Member Milestones



45 Years

## ZuntaFi

Katie Carlson, Partner Relationship Manager  
105 1st Ave SW • 605-622-4400  
katiec@zuntafi.com  
zuntafi.com



60 Years

## Bantz, Gosch & Cremer

Kenneth Gosch, James Cremer, Rory King, Greg Peterson, Melissa Neville, Justin Scott & Joshua Wurgler, Partners  
305 6th Ave SE • 605-225-2232  
attorneys@bantzlzaw.com  
bantzlzaw.com

# Ambassador Visits



Addition

## Aberdeen Fire Rescue Pierce Engine at Fire Station 2

Joel Weig, Fire Chief  
1825 8th Ave NW • 605-626-7067  
joel.weig@aberndeen.sd.us  
<https://www.aberndeen.sd.us/384/Station-2>



Relocation

## Animal Care Clinic

Dr. Robin O'Neill, Owner  
1315 6th Ave SE • 605-229-1691  
drrobin@midconetwork.com  
animalcareclinicsd.com



Name Change

## Baker Garrington Capital Corp

Bob Baker, President  
208 S Main St • 605-216-2196  
rbaker@bakergarrington.com  
bakergarrington.com



Renovation

## Canterbury Deli & Catering

Stephanie Aas, Owner  
412 S Main St • (605) 228-1912  
canterbury-deli-catering.business.site



# Ambassador Visits



Relocation

**Dakotaland Federal Credit Union**  
Cheryl Sivertsen, Branch Manager  
224 6th Ave SE, Ste 1 • 605-225-7711  
aberdeen@dakotalandfcu.com  
dakotalandfcu.com



Expansion

**NSU Cramer Center for Design & Innovation at Beulah Williams Library**  
James P. Cramer, Donor  
1200 S Jay St • 605-626-3018  
reference@northern.edu  
northern.edu/library/cramer-center



Re-Opening

**Shoe Science on Main**  
McKenzie Farnen, Manager  
315 S Main St • 605-225-5111  
shoescienceaberndeen@gmail.com  
facebook.com/profile.php?id=61551844893701

**ARE YOU PROVIDING SUPPORT FOR AN:**

- ❖ AGING PARENT
- ❖ SPOUSE
- ❖ SIGNIFICANT OTHER
- ❖ RELATIVE
- ❖ FRIEND

**JUST LOOKING FOR RESOURCES?**

Open to the Public + All Are Welcome

**CAREGIVER SUPPORT MEETING**

**2024 Months / Times**

January, March, May, July, September, November – 10:00am  
February, April, June, August, October – 5:30pm  
**2nd Tuesdays of the Month**

*Caregiver Support Group was created to provide an added support system for those that are caring for another and may be living with the daily stressors of the process of caring for another person along with attempting to care for themselves.*

**Activity Room**  
**Aberdeen Senior Center**  
**1303 7th Ave SE**  
**2nd Tuesday of Each Month**

Share Experiences – Receive Support From Others – Embrace Learning Opportunities  
For more information or to RSVP please contact  
Erin Paulson (605) 216-3596 or Jackie Witlock (605) 626-3330

**WINTER DRIVING TIPS!**

**STAY PREPARED!**

**Preparation is the Key to Safe Winter Driving**

- ✓ Before driving in adverse conditions, check <https://www.sd511.org/> for the most up-to-date road and weather conditions.
- ✓ Plan your travel route and let someone know your plans and anticipated time of arrival.
- ✓ Give yourself extra time, don't be in a rush!
- ✓ Have an emergency kit somewhere in your vehicle in case your vehicle breaks down.
- ✓ Put down your phone and other distractions!

**HOW TO ACCESS SD511**

- 📞 Dial 511 on your phone.
- 🌐 Visit <https://www.sd511.org/> on the web.
- 📱 Download the SD511 app.

**DON'T CROWD THE PLOW**

**SAFETY REMINDERS:**

Give snowplows room to groom - plows travel slowly, make wide turns, and stop often. Follow plows at a safe distance and use extreme caution when passing.

**SAFETY IS KEY!**

**Use These Tips to Drive Safe This Winter**

- ✓ Slow down and drive for the road conditions.
- ✓ Turn your lights on, particularly in snowy blizzard conditions.
- ✓ Always wear your seatbelt!
- ✓ Increase your following distance when road conditions are impacted.

GET THE SD511 APP



# Community Champions Luncheon

Tuesday, February 13th | 11 AM | AmericInn Convention Center

The Community Champions Awards Luncheon recognizes volunteer leaders within Aberdeen and the region.

Scan the QR code to learn more about the awards, access the nomination forms, applications and to register to attend.

Nominations are due January 12th, 2024



## DRIVING ECONOMIC GROWTH IN BROWN COUNTY



SUMMIT CARBON  
SOLUTIONS

We believe our contributions will help schools, improve the area, and support the local townships.

Estimates are subject to change based on factors like final route and cost of the project.

### \$845,000

Summit Carbon Solutions will pay an estimated \$845,000 in property taxes paid to Brown County each year.

### ~ \$580,000

Most of SCS's property taxes, \$580,000, will go to schools.

### ~ \$198,000

Approximately \$198,000 goes to the General Fund to be used at the County's discretion.

### ~ \$67,000

\$67,000 will go to the various townships.



## ABERDEEN COMMUNITY THEATRE PRESENTS ITS 44<sup>TH</sup> SEASON SUBSCRIBE TODAY & SAVE!



ABERDEENCOMMUNITYTHEATRE.COM

# HAPPY 2024 *from the Chamber!*

# Bezos Scholar's Community Project Encourages More Students to Give Back



**Elissa Dickey**  
Communications and  
Marketing Director,  
Aberdeen Public  
School District

As South Dakota's first ever Bezos Scholar, Aberdeen Central High School senior Breanna Wollman is launching a project that will benefit the community and encourage more of her fellow students to give back. Wollman was selected last spring as a Bezos Scholar out of more than 12,000 applicants nationwide. Now, she has introduced her community action project to enhance the CHS Golden Hour program at the Rachel's Challenge event at CHS. Wollman said the Rachel's Challenge program is a great springboard for her project because it emphasizes the importance of kindness, empathy and gratitude.

"It installs those important characteristics in kids, and then the Bezos project, the Golden Hour, is how we act upon those characteristics," she said. Golden Hour projects involve CHS students performing volunteer work for area organizations. Past projects have typically involved specific groups, such as athletic teams or student clubs. Wollman's project will expand the program to include super study classes, with transportation provided and approval to leave for projects during school

hours. Super study classes can choose their own project, or they can get ideas and resources from student representatives of Wollman's project team.

While some classes might not take on a project, all will have the opportunity to do so. The goal, Wollman said, is to provide more students with the opportunity to get involved and give back. "There are a lot of students who will walk through the door here every single day for four years and still not see the opportunities and have that sense of belonging here," she said. "The disconnect that so many students feel—that breaks my heart because of the opportunities that Central has provided me."



## ACTIVE AT CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL

Wollman is active with Future Business Leaders of America and the Speech and Debate Team. She said both groups have helped her develop leadership skills, public speaking abilities and a passion for community service. "If it wasn't for the Speech and Debate team, I would have no idea how to use my voice or see the importance of being able to speak up," she said.

Wollman has also received a lot of support from her family, including her parents, Joyce and Tony, and sister, Kaitlyn, a CHS sophomore. She said her parents, former Hutterites, did not go to high school. "I think that's been transformational on my journey because they didn't have any huge expectation of me that some parents have," she said. "I've had the opportunity to do anything I want, to make my high school experience whatever I want to, and that's been phenomenal."

The Bezos Scholars Program has also been very beneficial for Wollman. She attended this summer's Aspen Ideas Festival with CHS teacher Kerry Konda, a Bezos Educator Scholar. She also received a \$1,000 grant, which she is using for an awareness event for the Golden Hour project. The Bezos program has provided personal development resources for now and the future. Wollman's future plans are to pursue a career in government, though she hasn't decided on a college.

## ADVICE FOR OTHER STUDENTS

For other students, Wollman has this advice: Don't be afraid to apply for things. When she first learned of the Bezos Scholars Program, it was intimidating because scholars were predominantly from the East and West Coast. But she didn't let that stop her—and neither should other students. Said Wollman, "Just because you're from South Dakota doesn't mean you don't have perspective and gifts to show."

## Key Considerations for a Successful Family Business Transition

**EideBailly**  
CPAs & BUSINESS ADVISORS

**P**roactive and strategic succession planning allows your family business to move forward confidently and successfully, regardless of who takes over after you're gone. It also helps ensure the preservation of family wealth and the achievement of a lasting legacy.

However, transitioning your business requires careful consideration and preparation. It's a series of choices, assessments, and reassessments, and the earlier you start, the better.

To begin, consider these key considerations for a successful family business transition:

### Tax and Estate Planning for Next-Generation Transitions

Business owners who are intentional with tax planning are more likely to transition wealth to their beneficiaries while minimizing tax liabilities. It is crucial to be aware of the current estate and gift tax laws when preparing to transition your business.

Additionally, a deceased spouse's unused exemption may be transferred to a surviving spouse by making an election on an estate tax return. With portability of the exemption, a married couple may gift up to \$25.84 million in 2023, either during life or at death, without incurring any federal gift or estate taxes.

### Preparing Your Finances for Post-Transition Life

A momentous shift occurs at retirement – you switch from an accumulation mindset to a distribution mindset. Common questions to consider include: How much can I spend? When should I draw Social Security? How do I pay for healthcare costs? Can I afford a second property? Can I afford to gift to my family members?

Creating a comprehensive wealth plan helps you identify the resources you'll need for retirement and provides a roadmap for helping you achieve your financial goals. It also considers your financial legacy and how you envision passing on your wealth to future generations.

It's the planning you do today that provides the confidence needed to navigate your future – and the future of your business.

### Planning for Yourself – and Your Future

Even if a potential transition is years down the road, now is the best time to focus on planning.

There are several things you must consider before, during, and after your transition to ensure your personal and professional goals are accomplished, starting with identifying your goals and expectations for the transition.

As you prepare to start the transition process, ask yourself the following: Are you looking for a quick exit or are you willing to train the next generation to take over? What is your biggest priority for the transition? Maybe it is making an impact on the community or ensuring the company culture you've built endures with the new ownership. Or perhaps trying to provide opportunities for loyal employees or family members is at the top of your list of goals.

Properly addressing these considerations will not only make sure your company endures and thrives under new ownership but is also an important part of setting yourself up for post-transition success.

A smooth and successful family business transition requires careful consideration and planning. Taking early and incremental action to prepare will help ensure that this significant event is accomplished with your short and long-term goals at the forefront.

*Is transition to the next generation not an option for your family business?*

Here's how you can prepare for a strategic exit regardless of who the next owner may be.



**LEARN MORE**



For example, under the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, the gift and estate tax exemption doubled from approximately \$5.5 million to \$11 million per person to account for inflation. However, the increased estate and gift tax exemption (set at \$12.92 million per person in 2023) is scheduled to "sunset" on December 31, 2025. This will result in an exemption of \$6 to \$7 million for 2026, depending on inflation.



# Hill Takes the Helm at AAAC

Hello, I am Jason Hill, the new Executive Director for the Aberdeen Area Arts Council. I am excited to continue the work and events that have become an Aberdeen tradition while also looking toward the future with local, regional, and national arts programming. I am a Michigan native and have called Aberdeen my home for 28 years. I am a graduate of Northern State University and I also have a degree in Visual Communications from Ferris State University. I have worked in the Developmental Disability field helping write grants, create access to services, and advocate for children and adults with special needs. I have spent my free time in Aberdeen as a musician, organizing local art shows, and volunteering for various local organizations and Special Olympics.

One of the first things the Aberdeen Area Arts Council will be working on in 2024 is announcing the results of the Arts and Economic Propensity 6 study. Aberdeen and five other communities (Brookings, Rapid City, Sioux Falls, Spearfish, and Yankton) collected audience and organizational surveys over a years time and these were compiled by the Americans for the Arts organization. Two exciting

facts from the 2022 survey is that the nonprofit arts and culture industry in Aberdeen generated \$4.3 million in economic activity and supported 68 jobs.

Fairy Tales on Ice will take the stage once again in the Civic Theatre on Wednesday, February 28 at 6:30 pm. Get ready to embark on an enchanting journey through the magical world of Neverland as Fairytale On Ice proudly presents their NEW show "The Adventures of Peter Pan and Wendy." They will take the timeless tales of your favorite storybook characters and bring them to life on the ice like never before. Ticket information will be released later this month.

Arts in the Park will take place June 15-16th. Applications will be available the end of January for exhibitor spaces and are due March 15. If you would like to be considered for a booth, please contact our office. It will be a great weekend at Melgaard park enjoying the shopping, food and entertainment!

For more information on these events or the Aberdeen Area Arts Council, please contact us at 605-226-1557 or visit our web site at [www.aberdeenareaartscouncil.com](http://www.aberdeenareaartscouncil.com).



**Jason Hill**  
Executive Director,  
Aberdeen Area  
Arts Council

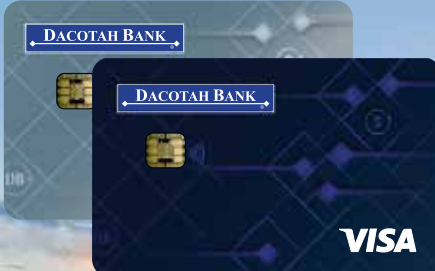


see more online  
[HKGarchitects.com](http://HKGarchitects.com)

you  
bring  
the  
**VISION**  
we  
bring  
it to  
**life**

**hkg**  
architects

605.225.6820  
524 S Arch Street  
Aberdeen, SD 57401



THE BANK YOU TRUST.  
**THE CREDIT YOU DESERVE.**

Apply in our APP or online  
[dacotahbank.com](http://dacotahbank.com)

**DACOTAH BANK**

BANKING ♦ INSURANCE ♦ MORTGAGE ♦ TRUST

# Why Join the Chamber



**Julia Coon**

*Outreach & Engagement,  
Aberdeen Area  
Chamber of  
Commerce*

Aberdeen is filled with entrepreneurs, small businesses, and corporate businesses all seeking the same thing: growth, networking, and support. The Aberdeen Area Chamber of Commerce thrives on actively working to foster the growth and prosperity of local businesses.

So, why should a business, big or small, join the Chamber of Commerce?

- **Connections:** One of the primary advantages of joining the Aberdeen Area Chamber of Commerce is the networking opportunities we provide. By becoming a member, you gain access to a diverse community of local business professionals, creating a platform for collaboration, partnerships, and valuable connections. Regular events such as Business After Hours and CART facilitate meaningful interactions that can lead to new clients, suppliers, and even lifelong business relationships.

- **Visibility and Credibility:** Being a Chamber member instantly boosts your business's credibility in the eyes of potential clients and customers. The Chamber often acts as a stamp of approval, signaling that your business is reputable and invested in the local community. In addition, the Chamber actively promotes our members through our weekly newsletter, the Chamber website, Membership Directory, Progress Magazine, and social media, increasing your business's

visibility and enhancing its reputation.

- **Advocacy and Representation:** The Chamber of Commerce plays a crucial role in advocating for the interests of local businesses at the city, state, and even national levels. By joining, you align yourself with a powerful collective voice that can influence policies, regulations, and initiatives that directly impact your business. This advocacy ensures that your concerns are heard, giving you a say in the shaping of the local business environment.

- **Educational Resources:** Staying ahead in business requires continuous learning. Aberdeen Area Chamber of Commerce organizes a Workforce & Innovation Summit, quarterly luncheon with the EDGE task force, and Cracker Barrels, providing members with valuable insights and resources. Whether you're a seasoned business professional or a startup owner, these educational opportunities empower you to sharpen your skills and navigate the ever-changing business dynamic.

Joining the Aberdeen Area Chamber of Commerce is not just about becoming a member; it's a strategic move for meaningful connections, enhances credibility, provides a powerful voice in advocacy, and equips businesses with the knowledge to thrive in a dynamic business environment.

## Family and Friends of Aspire and the Aspire Foundation

We look back at this past year and say WOW!! It has been one amazing year!! WE are so blessed and grateful to be part of a kind, generous and caring community!

The Aspire Foundation is thrilled to announce again this year that C-Express has agreed to serve as a Matching Fund Partner for our 2023-2024 Annual Giving Campaign for \$10,000!! Parents/family members of participants Larry & Letitia Krause (in honor of Mike Krause) donated \$5,000, Larry & Sue Olson (in honor of Heather Olson) donated \$3,000 & Chad & Candi Olson (in honor of Heather Olson) donated \$5,000 towards this campaign. Can we count on you to help meet our goal of \$46,000?

Aspire has been providing support to people with intellectual disabilities for the past 63 years! I have been fortunate enough to have worked at Aspire for the past 33 years and have witnessed the progress we have made throughout those years! We want to continue with that progress and with YOUR SUPPORT we can!!!

With your generosity, Aspire can continue to provide a wide array of services to people with intellectual



disabilities in the Aberdeen community. State and federal dollars do not cover all of our expenses, making your financial support more important than ever. Today is a great day to make your charitable donation for 2023! Remember, the first \$23,000 in donations will be doubled thanks to C-Express and generous family members!!

On behalf of everyone at Aspire, THANK YOU for remembering us this holiday season!! Possibilities are endless for people with disabilities!!! Because of YOU, dreams will come true!

*Contributed by Janae Hamilton, Foundation Development Director.*



# A Glimpse into the Northern Innovation & Startup Center's 2024 Programing

The Northern Innovation & Startup Center begins 2024 with the momentum generated from the first annual Technology and Entrepreneurship Summit, co-hosted by the Aberdeen Development Corporation. The Summit took place on November 15th, attracting over 400 attendees throughout the day. In early January, we will announce the date of the 2024 Technology & Entrepreneurship Summit.

We have an exciting calendar of events for early 2024. All workshops and events are free to attend and are offered in hybrid formats, either via Zoom or through recorded sessions.

Below is a sneak peek at our workshop schedule.

## • How to Launch Your Business

Kelly Weaver, Small Business Development Center  
Tuesday, January 9th from 4 – 5 PM  
K.O. Lee Library

## • The Idea Workshop

Dr. Hannah Walters, Dr. Dan Shannahan & Dr. Sal Villegas  
Thursday, January 11th from 3:30 – 5 PM  
NVC - 3211 7th Ave SE Suite #102

## • Idea to Market: 8-Week Program

Dr. Hannah Walters, Dr. Dan Shannahan & Dr. Sal Villegas  
Thursdays, January 18th – March 7th from 3:30 – 5 PM  
NVC - 3211 7th Ave SE Suite #102

## • ChatGPT 101 for Startups: What is it? How Do I Use It?

Joshua Citrak, NSU Director of Innovator Empowerment

Tuesday, January 30th from 3:30 – 4:30 PM

Beulah William Library, NSU

## • Outgrew My Garage, Now What?

Heath Johnson, Dakota Plains Companies  
Tuesday, February 13th from 4 – 5 PM  
K.O. Lee Library

## • Startup Funding: Loans, State Programs and More!

Travis Dovre, South Dakota Governor's Office of Economic Development

& Olaf Hanson, Dacotah Bank

Tuesday, March 19 from 3:30 – 5

K.O. Lee Library

## • The Biotech Entrepreneurial Journey

Joni Ekstrum, South Dakota Biotech & Jon Mitchell, NSU  
Professor of Biology

Tuesday, April 9th from 1 – 2 PM

Jewett Science Center, NSU

## • The Heart of Marketing for Startups

Troy McQuillen, McQuillen Creative Group & Aberdeen Insider

Tuesday, April 23rd from 1-2 PM

K.O. Lee Library

For information and registration information about upcoming programs, workshops, and events, please visit our website at [www.northernstartupcenter.com](http://www.northernstartupcenter.com). Or follow us on Facebook [facebook.com/northernstartupcenter](https://facebook.com/northernstartupcenter).



**Bea Smith**

*Director, Northern  
Innovation &  
Startup Center*

# ADC Awarded \$50,000 South Dakota Community Based Childcare Planning Grant

The Aberdeen Development Corporation (ADC) has been announced as a recipient of the South Dakota Governor's Office of Economic Development Community Based Childcare Planning Grant. The ADC has applied for these funds to assist the Aberdeen, South Dakota, community in developing innovative strategies that address childcare needs in the community. The ADC is committed to effectively leveraging these funds to enhance quality childcare infrastructure and is working with several contracted partners that will facilitate the planning of this grant.

In July 2023, a comprehensive market study funded by ADC highlighted the critical shortage of childcare infrastructure within a 15-minute radius of Aberdeen. Existing licensed/registered home daycares, childcare centers, and after-school programs fall short of meeting the needs of children under four and those aged nine and under. Aberdeen faces a pressing need to expand its capacity, with a measured gap of 1,784 enrollment spots compared to 3,862 children in the target area.

Childcare providers in Aberdeen encounter barriers and challenges that hinder their ability to meet

current demands. The major hurdles to overcome are a shortage of qualified childcare workers, difficulty retaining workers, balancing operational costs with tuition rates, and accessing necessary expertise and financing for facility expansion.

The planning grant focuses on addressing and exploring feasible solutions in four key areas:

I. Workforce Development Strategy for Careers in Childcare

II. Funding and Budgeting Sustainability for Childcare Providers

III. Facility Opportunity Exploration

IV. Collaboration and Innovation Across Sectors

The planning process seeks to engage childcare stakeholders, which include childcare providers, community leaders, education, business, and nonprofit partners. We ask that anyone interested in participating in this planning process contact Taylor Hanson at the Aberdeen Development Corporation at (605)229-5335 or by email at [taylorhanson@adcsd.com](mailto:taylorhanson@adcsd.com) to be added to the invite list.



**Taylor Hanson**

*Vice President  
of Business  
Development,  
Aberdeen  
Development  
Corporation*

# Scholarships Now Available for Retail, Hospitality, and Trade Students



**Nathan Sanderson**

*Executive Director,  
South Dakota  
Retailers  
Association*

Careers in retail, hospitality and trades are in high demand in South Dakota. The South Dakota Retailers Association is offering scholarships to help students reach their goal of entering those fields. Students may apply online at [sdra.org/scholarships](https://sdra.org/scholarships).

The Retailers Association scholarship program is designed to assist students studying for a career as an owner, manager, or employee in a wide range of occupations. To be eligible for consideration, applicants must be currently enrolled or plan to enroll in a retail, hospitality, or trade course of study at a university, technical college, or trade school in the fall of 2024.

In 2023, the association awarded funds to six students in amounts ranging from \$2,100 to \$3,500. Since the program was launched in 1992, the Retailers Association has awarded 275 scholarships, totaling nearly \$238,000.

By investing in the next generation of aspiring

business leaders, the Retailers Association aims to continue their mission of fostering strong communities within South Dakota.



Every community in South Dakota is eager to attract people who want careers in retail, hospitality and trade businesses. Our scholarship program can help launch those individuals on a rewarding career path. Investing a few minutes to apply could result in a scholarship award of \$2,000 or more.

If you know a student in South Dakota who could use a hand reaching their goals, South Dakota Retailers want to help them succeed in our state!

Visit [sdra.org/scholarships](https://sdra.org/scholarships) to download the application and view the full eligibility guidelines, or call (605) 224-5050 for information. Submission deadline is Tuesday, April 23, 2024.

## Chamber Ambassador Annual Hat & Mitten Drive

2023 marked the 11th year of the Ambassador hat & mitten drive, which took place from October 11 to December 11. Ambassador representatives delivered hats, mittens, gloves, undergarments, blankets and school supplies to local students. The Ambassadors send a big thank you to all who donated and the businesses which generously offered space for the collection boxes.



*Aberdeen Christian School*



*Bethlehem Lutheran Preschool*



*Aberdeen Public Schools*



*Safe Harbor*



# Welcome to 2024!

It's a new year, and that means it's time to set new goals and take on new challenges.

Maybe it's your branch's turn to host the corporate retreat and you have no idea where to start, or your service club is hosting a social event and you need help getting the word out; the Aberdeen Area Convention & Visitors Bureau is here to help.

From venue selection to registration assistance, the Convention & Visitors Bureau will make sure your event has all the support it needs as you plan and prep – and not just for your conference attendees. We want to make sure any guests have a great time when they visit Aberdeen!

From suggesting off-site activities to helping plan team building experiences, we can connect your group with the Aberdonians that will make your convention the one all the others strive to live up to. We'll help make sure everyone has a place to stay with special room rates for your group.

We can help spread the word about craft fairs or harvest festivals through our social media channels, our weekly videos and our newsletters that come out every other week. Submit them to [AberdeenAreaEvents.com](http://AberdeenAreaEvents.com) and let our team handle the rest!

We had a great 2023, hosting old favorites like the South Dakota Film Festival and brand-new events like the South Dakota High School Association State Softball Tournament. We can't wait for the fun to continue in 2024.

Layton Holmstrom and Katherine Grandstrand Quail are here to help!

To find out more about how the Aberdeen Area Convention & Visitors Bureau can help you plan your next big meeting or event, head to [visitaberdeensd.com](http://visitaberdeensd.com), email [info@visitaberdeensd.com](mailto:info@visitaberdeensd.com), give us a call at 605-225-2414 or stop by our office at 506 S. Main St., Suite 1.



**Katherine Grandstrand Quail**

*Convention Sales & Marketing Director,  
Aberdeen Area Convention & Visitors Bureau*

## ADC Launches Pathways Program

The Aberdeen Development Corporation (ADC) recognizes the critical workforce challenges facing its region, state, and nation. To address the issue proactively, the community is leveraging its significant asset, Northern State University (NSU), as a source of talent. While we are very proud

of the many NSU graduates who choose to stay in Aberdeen historically, myself (Taylor) included, a survey conducted in 2021 revealed that only 12% of students planned to stay in the area after graduation.

In response to these findings, the ADC has initiated the Pathways Program. The program aims to increase student exposure to local career opportunities, forge strategic partnerships between NSU and employers, and ultimately boost the retention of NSU graduates in Aberdeen. By focusing on strengthening career pathways from the beginning of students' educational journeys through graduation, the program seeks to improve the current retention rate.

The Pathways Program will engage with NSU faculty and staff to enhance student exposure to local work opportunities, including part-time jobs, internships, volunteer work, and entrepreneurial programs, such as those offered by the NSU Startup & Innovation Center. Recognizing the impact of early experiences on students' career choices, the program emphasizes creating positive impressions during their educational journeys.

To support these efforts, the ADC plans to expand the Aberdeen Internship Network and create an Aberdeen Internship Guide to assist employers in establishing or enhancing internship programs. Additionally, a comprehensive marketing plan, including advertising, graphics, promotional items,



banners, and social media strategies, will be implemented to raise awareness among students about the opportunities and advantages of starting a career in Aberdeen.

To further refine their strategies, the ADC has engaged two NSU Honors students as consultants.

These students will conduct additional research to understand what factors could change a student's decision from a "no" or "maybe" to a "yes" in terms of staying in Aberdeen post-graduation. The results will be shared through an open forum, facilitating community-wide collaboration and engagement.

Employers: If you would like to engage the Pathways Program, access our Aberdeen Internship Guide, or engage your interns in the Aberdeen Internship Network, please contact Taylor Hanson at 6052295335 or [Taylorhanson@adcsd.com](mailto:Taylorhanson@adcsd.com).



**Taylor Hanson**

*Vice President of Business Development, Aberdeen Development Corporation*

### Serving our Region for a **CENTURY**

For over one-hundred years, Woodman Refrigeration has been your source for hvac and commercial refrigeration.

**Woodman**  
- REFRIGERATION -  
**100 Years of Service**

**Carrier**  
turn to the experts

[woodmanrefrigeration.com](http://woodmanrefrigeration.com) | ph 605.225.5212 | Aberdeen, SD

# 2023 WORKFORCE INNOVATION SUMMIT

The first Workforce Innovation Summit, in collaboration with the Aberdeen Area Human Resource Association, was held in October in Aberdeen. This was part of the Chamber's 2023 Program of Work to build capacity in the community. There were 32 breakout sessions, a luncheon keynote, some roundtable discussion and social hour networking over the course of two days. Topics included upskilling, recruitment & retention strategies, internship programs, remote workforce and much more.

The event was sponsored by:

PLATINUM - 3M, Agtegra, Banner Engineering, Blackout Industries, Dakota Broadcasting, Demkota Ranch Beef, SD Department of Human Services, Quality Quick Print and Twin City Fan Companies.

GOLD - Avera St. Luke's Hospital, Dacotah Bank, Glacial Lakes Energy, Helms & Associates, Northwestern Energy and ZuntaFi

SILVER - Climate Control, Sanford Health Aberdeen, SDSU Extension and The Swag Shoppe

Below is a short, inspirational article by keynote speaker Anne Bonney (YourChangeSpeaker.com).

## Boosting Confidence in Unknowns by Asking a Different Question

By Anne Bonney

Have you ever been on the precipice of change, and your inner voice of doubt turns up the volume? Or maybe someone doesn't react the way you were expecting, or you get some negative feedback at work and need to make some changes, or you're walking into an interview or networking event, and there is that voice, echoing everything that could possibly go wrong. I always say that my voice of doubt knows too much! She knows everything I've messed up, every tiny and colossal foible, every disaster and challenge and problem, and she pulls them out just when I need a boost of confidence. SUUUUUPER helpful!

But fear not, there is a way around this. I once heard Dr James P Gills Jr speak. Dr Gills is a 6-time double Ironman triathlon finisher...a stunning feat of endurance by any definition. When you're completing a 5 mile swim, 240 miles of biking and 52 miles of running, you have a LOT of time for your voice of doubt to get in the way, so I feel like he has some experience with this! He said, "I learned to TALK to myself rather than LISTEN to myself."

That hit me like a ton of bricks! I'm over here listening to that voice in my head rather than talking to myself!! So here's the hack!

When you hear that inner voice of doubt start kicking up dust in your ol' brain box...talk to yourself. Ask yourself this question... "What if this goes WELL?"

And start listing out what happens if it goes well and enjoy the instant shot of confidence. You'll still be nervous, but at least it won't be all doom and gloom as you courageously step into the unknown.



Anne Bonney





# CHRISTMOOSE WITH THE CHAMBER 2023



The first ever ChristMoose with the Chamber, sponsored by MIDCO, was held on Thursday, December 14 at the Dakota Event Center.

Masters of Ceremonies for the evening were Katie Washnok and Brodie Mueller.

Eighteen moose were on hand to run the track and compete for all the glory!

Moose and human prize winners include:

- Moose Racing Champion - Chamber Diplomats with Pleasure Palace
- People's Choice Moose - Sanford Aberdeen with Elon Mooske
- Rookie of the Year - Team MIDCO with Chris
- Most Spirited Crash - Team Climate Control with Frank
- Tail End Trophy - HKG Architects
- Best Dressed Human - Christina Dykman
- Spirited Sportsman - Reed Kessler

Thank you to all sponsors and attendees!

We appreciate you helping us make this a magical, moose-tical event!

Moose adoptions for the 2024 ChristMoose race are open now! Contact the Chamber office to reserve yours.





# Big Idea Breaks Records with 2023 Competition!



**Kelly Weaver**  
Regional Director,  
Small Business  
Development  
Center

The 2023 BIG Idea Competition marked a milestone with new opportunities for high school students. A record-breaking total of 365 entries were received involving 443 students from 77 schools. For a second year in a row, a separate virtual competition was held for finalists outside of South Dakota. These were judged by a separate judging panel and separate prizes awarded. The 2023 event wrapped up Wednesday, December 6, at Northern State University (NSU) with the Awards Ceremony. Winners from both competitions were announced along with five special category awards. A total of \$50,000 in cash and scholarships was awarded. The livestream link for the event can be found on the BIG Idea Facebook page (@



**BIG Idea – Finalists.** Back row: (From left to right) Morgan Haselhorst, Warner (3rd Place); Hunter Reede, Milbank; Carter Simon, Groton; Dallas Stoltenberg, Northwestern (1st Place); Corbin Tople, Centerville (Hometown Business Winner); Grant Schlueter, Tri-Valley (Makers Winner). Front row: (From left to right) Jersey Deibert-McPartland and Brooklyn Bossly, Warner (3rd Place); Kasen Bender, Watertown; Kiara Tulowetzke, Watertown; Augustus Sieh, Leola (2nd Place); Cullen Pollard, Centerville (Hometown Business Winner) Not Pictured: Bennett Gordon, Sturgis (Ag Innovation Winner); Emerson Mead, Dakota Valley (Marketing Design Winner) and Jaidryn Rice, Webster. Picture Credits: Elizabeth Varin, Northern State University

BIGIdeaSD). During the Awards Ceremony, attendees heard an inspiring message from John T. Meyer on eight rules to be "Better Every Day". The Partners in Business Award is sponsored by Angelhaus to reward the networking and mentorship experiences teachers have incorporated into their classroom. This year's recipients of the Partners in Business award are Shelli Eide at Centerville High School, Pam Lane at Warner and Shauna Severson at Frederick High School. A full list of finalists, category winners and honorable mention entries can be found at [www.bigideasd.com](http://www.bigideasd.com).

About BIG Idea: The BIG Idea Competition aims to promote entrepreneurship, spur creative thinking and encourage students to start a business. The competition is coordinated by the Small Business Development Center and funded by Sanford Health, East River Electric, REED Fund, Dacotah Bank, First Bank & Trust, Angelhaus, Aberdeen Development Corporation, Northwestern Energy, McQuillen Creative Group, The Tom and Danielle Aman Foundation, Midcontinent Communications, GROW South Dakota, the South Dakota Agriculture Foundation, 3M, Missouri River Energy Services, Agtegra, South Dakota Retailers Association, Independent Health Solutions, Blackout Industries, and Plains Commerce. Scholarships are provided by Northern State University and South Dakota School of Mines & Technology. The competition is a result of the input and collaboration of these organizations along with: Aberdeen Area Chamber of Commerce, Aberdeen Catholic School System – Roncalli High School, and Aberdeen School District – Central High School. For more information about the competition, see [www.BIGIdeaSD.com](http://www.BIGIdeaSD.com).

**CHAMBER AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION PARTNERSHIP**

The Aberdeen Area Chamber of Commerce and the Aberdeen Development Corporation are once again working collaboratively to bring Aberdeen's voice to Pierre this legislative session! Both of our organizations are committed to business advocacy and quality growth for Aberdeen and the region. By devoting additional time and resources to establish a stronger presence within political and government processes this legislative session and year-round, we believe that we will be able to advance sound public policy and promote a stable environment for our business community to flourish.

**WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE BRIEFINGS**

We invite you to join us every Thursday starting January 18th for a legislative briefing with Julie Johnson and Mike Bockorny from 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm.

Join via Zoom by clicking the link below or at:  
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81996199196>  
 Meeting ID: 819 9619 9196  
 One tap mobile: 16699006833,81996199196#

Any Questions, Contact the Chamber at (605) 225-2860 or [info@aberndeen-chamber.com](mailto:info@aberndeen-chamber.com) or the Aberdeen Development Corporation at (605) 229-5335.



## Big Idea Breaks Records with 2023 Competition! (continued)

### 2023 SOUTH DAKOTA FINALISTS

Place	Business Name	Team Members	School Name	School
1 <sup>st</sup>	Stoltenberg Tailgate Seating	Dallas Stoltenberg	Northwestern High School	Anne Frericks
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Clean Car Detailing Co	Augustus Sieh	Leola High School	Trevor Van Tilburg
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Paw's Who Care	Morgan Haselhorst, Brooklyn Bossly, Jersey Deibert-McPartland	Warner High School	Pam Lane
Other Finalists	Swing and a Miss	Carter Simon	Groton High	Eric Swenson
	Environ-Mental Food	Hunter Reede	Milbank High School	Jennifer Cleveland
	Conservation Covers	Kiara Tulowetzke	Watertown High School	Tom Lenox
	Bender's Sports	Kasen Bender	Watertown High School	Tom Lenox
	SoDak Feeds	Jaidryn Rice	Webster High	Kaylan Pool

### 2023 OUT-OF-STATE FINALISTS

Place	Business Name	Team Members	School Name	School Advisor
1 <sup>st</sup>	Extentek LLC	Nir Pechuk	Davidson Academy Online (NV)	Independent Study
2 <sup>nd</sup>	ReactGlove	Omar Reyes, Ary Dhanani, Saheb	The Awty International School	Independent Study
3 <sup>rd</sup>	MentalMetrics	Abigail Hsu	Newark Academy	Independent
Other Finalists	SamariAID	Pratham Muriki, Sameet Das	Valley Christian High School (CA)	Independent Study
	Luminescence	Pratham Muriki, Rohit Mekkoth	Valley Christian High School (CA)	Independent Study
	AirSense	Meghana Penmathsa	Columbus North High School (IN)	Independent Study
	TranquiliTea	Pamika Amrute, Anugraha Anandh	Lebanon Trail High School (TX)	Independent Study
	Reblankit	Cindy Wang	Barrington High School (IL)	Independent Study

### BIG IDEA MARKETING DESIGN WINNER

Sponsored by McQuillen Creative Group

Business Name	Team Members	School Name	School Advisor
Your Acai	Emersen Mead	Dakota Valley High School	Justine Sponder

### BIG IDEA WELLNESS WINNER

Sponsored by Sanford Health

Business Name	Team Members	School Name	School Advisor
MentalMetrics	Abigail Hsu	Newark Academy (NJ)	Independent Study

### BIG IDEA AGRICULTURE INNOVATION WINNER

Sponsored by South Dakota Agriculture Foundation

Business Name	Team Members	School Name	School Advisor
Hello Ag	Bennett Gordon	Sturgis Brown High School	Independent Study

### BIG IDEA HOMETOWN BUSINESS WINNER

Sponsored by South Dakota Retailers Association

Business Name	Team Members	School Name	School Advisor
C & C Spaw's Pet Grooming	Corbin Tople, Cullen Pollard	Centerville High School	Shelli Eide

### BIG IDEA MAKERS WINNER

Sponsored by Blackout Industries

Business Name	Team Members	School Name	School Advisor
ArrowX	Grant Schlueter	Tri-Valley High School	Tracy Vogt

The Old Cronies motorcycle enthusiasts, in a partnership with the Woody Williams Foundation, have made it a mission to bring a **Gold Star Families Memorial Monument** to Aberdeen, with the future site at Anderson Park, for all of Northeast SD. The Old Cronies are now accepting donations to help fulfill this mission.

Donation levels include:

- Bronze level: \$5,000 - \$9,999
- Silver level: \$10,000 - \$24,999
- Gold level: \$25,000 - \$50,000
- Donations of \$50,000 or more will qualify the donor for one of the benches surrounding the monument, in their honor.

To make a donation, scan the QR code below or go to the Aberdeen South Dakota Gold Star Families Memorial Monument donation page at <https://hwwmohf.kindful.com/?campaign=1250956>.

Donations can also be mailed to the Old Cronies at 1020 6th Ave SE Suite #2, PMB #175, Aberdeen, SD 57401. Please add Gold Star Memorial in the memo. Any donation, no matter the size, will be greatly appreciated!

For more information, contact Tim Timmerman at 605-228-1101 or [theoldcronies@gmail.com](mailto:theoldcronies@gmail.com).

*A Gold Star Family is family members and relatives of those who have sacrificed a loved one for our freedom. Our mission is providing honor, hope and healing for grieving military families who have lost a loved one while serving on active duty, regardless of military loss.*



## ABERDEEN HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION

### 23rd Annual Home Show

*Saturday March 9th 9am-5pm*

*Sunday March 10th 10am-4pm*

*Holum Expo Building, Aberdeen, SD*

Connect with our office by  
calling Hope Brudvig at  
605.225.2055 or Email  
[Aberdeenhba@gmail.com](mailto:Aberdeenhba@gmail.com)



# APSF Seeks Central High School Hall of Fame Nominations



**Gretchen A. Sharp**

*Executive Director,  
Aberdeen Public  
Schools  
Foundation, Inc.*

The Aberdeen Public Schools Foundation is proud to announce that nominations for the 2024 Aberdeen Central High School Hall of Fame are officially open. This prestigious recognition honors outstanding individuals and teams who have made significant contributions to the school community and beyond.

Nominations are accepted in the areas of Academics/Achievement, Athletics, Fine Arts, and Distinguished Service. Nominees should be known for their outstanding contributions and dedication that sets them apart from their peers at the high school, university, and/or professional levels. Nominees may also include non-alumni who have made significant contributions to Central High School as staff, administration, school board, volunteers, or the general public.

The nomination process is open to the public. Nominations may be submitted online through the Aberdeen Public Schools Foundation website, [www.AberdeenPublicSchoolsFoundation.org](http://www.AberdeenPublicSchoolsFoundation.org).



[AberdeenPublicSchoolsFoundation.org](http://AberdeenPublicSchoolsFoundation.org), or by contacting the Foundation office at 605-725-7118 or Gretchen.Sharp@k12.sd.us. The deadline for submissions is January 15, 2024.

Eligible nominees are contacted in January to provide information and supporting documentation. Candidates submitting information and documentation are then reviewed by the selection committees who choose each year's Hall of Fame inductees.

The APS Foundation looks forward to receiving a diverse range of nominations that showcase the school's rich history and the accomplishments of its exceptional alumni.

The 2024 CHS Hall of Fame Banquet will take place in September 2024 as part of CHS's Homecoming festivities. Tickets will go on sale in the summer 2024.

The Hall of Fame is a special project of the Aberdeen Public Schools Foundation. For more information about how the APS Foundation promotes excellence in education by forging partnerships among our schools, community and alumni, visit | [www.AberdeenPublicSchoolsFoundation.org](http://www.AberdeenPublicSchoolsFoundation.org).



## Mardi Gras

### BENEFIT

**JAN. 27, 2024**  
DAKOTA EVENT CENTER




**5PM SOCIAL & SILENT AUCTION**  
**7PM DINNER FOLLOWED BY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT, ROULETTE, BLACKJACK & CRAPS**

*Scan the code to get your tickets!*




**FOR TICKETS**  
**605.226.1212**  
\$75 Advance  
\$85 After Jan. 5th  
[safeharborsd.org/mardi-gras](http://safeharborsd.org/mardi-gras)  
*Dress code is semi-formal.*



### Annual Banquet & Fundraising Event with

**Keynote Speaker: Ben Leber**



Friday, February 16, 2024  
@ Dakota Event Center (DEC)  
6:30pm-8:30pm  
(Doors open at 5:30pm)

Spend an evening supporting the youth of the Boys & Girls Club of Aberdeen Area. This year's special guest speaker is South Dakota native, Kansas State Wildcat, San Diego Charger ('02-05), Minnesota Viking ('06-'10) and Los Angeles Ram (2011), Ben Leber.

A 1997 Vermillion High School graduate, Ben played 10 seasons as a linebacker in the NFL. The 6-foot-3, 244-pounder was a third-round draft pick of the San Diego Chargers in 2002 and was an immediate standout as he was named to the Pro Football Weekly and Football Digest All-Rookie teams, finishing the year with 50 tackles. As an unrestricted free agent, he signed with the Minnesota Vikings in 2006 and finished his career with a year as a Los Angeles Ram in 2011.


This is a fundraising event including several ways to support programming for Aberdeen area youth throughout the evening. If interested in sponsoring a table please fill out the enclosed registration form and return by February 2<sup>nd</sup>. Tables and tickets are available on a first come, first served basis.

Sponsored by:



For more information or to purchase a ticket please contact:  
Boys & Girls Club of Aberdeen Area:  
1121 1st Ave SE, Aberdeen, SD 57401  
605.225.8714 – [bgca@midconetwork.com](mailto:bgca@midconetwork.com)  
[www.bgcaberdeen.org](http://www.bgcaberdeen.org)

**GREAT FUTURES START HERE.**





# Chamber Board of Directors Adds Four for '24

With each new year the makeup of the Chamber Board of Directors changes as terms expire and new members are brought on board.

The following board members were recently elected and began their three year term:



**Mohamed Abul-Hawa**  
Kessler's Food & Liquor



**Angela Kelly**  
First Premier Realty



**Judy Vrchota**  
US Senator John Thune



**Taylor Wensmann**  
Midstates Inc



**Brent Hanson** will be serving as the liaison to the board representing the Aberdeen Area Convention & Visitors Bureau.



**Courtney Rott** has moved up to the Executive Board as Secretary. A full list of current board members can be found on p. 5 of this publication.

The Board and staff thank the following past board members who exited the Board of Directors in 2023:



**Tom Cogley**  
Cogley Law Office



**Marcus Garstecki**  
Northern State University



**Kellie Kolb**  
SDSU Extension



**Jane Kuhn**  
Agtegra Cooperative

## Chamber Big Dates

### Ag Committee

Thursday, January 18, Noon, Chamber  
Thursday, February 15, Noon, Chamber

### Ambassador Committee

Tuesday, January 9, Noon, Chamber

### Business After Hours

Thursday, January 11, 5:15 pm, Agtegra  
Thursday, February 8, 5:15 pm, TBD

### CART

Every Thursday at 8:30 am, Chamber

### Chamber Executive Board

Friday, January 10, 8 am, Chamber  
Friday, February 9, 8 am, Chamber

### Chamber Full Board

Wednesday, January 17, 8 am, Chamber  
Wednesday, February 21, 8 am, Chamber

### Community Champions Luncheon

Tuesday, February 13, 11 am, Americinn

### Diplomat Committee

Thursday, January 11, 3 pm, Chamber  
Thursday, February 8, 3 pm, Chamber

### Enhance Aberdeen Committee

Friday, February 23, 8:30 am, Chamber

### Health & Wellness Committee

Wednesday, January 3, 8 am, Chamber  
Wednesday, February 7, 8 am, Chamber

### Leadership Aberdeen

Thursday, January 11, 3 pm, KO Lee Aberdeen Public Library  
Friday, January 12, 9:30 am, KO Lee Aberdeen Public Library  
Tuesday, January 16, 5 pm, Agtegra  
Tuesday, January 23, 5 pm, Quality Quick Print  
Tuesday, January 30, 5 pm, Avera  
Tuesday, February 6, 5 pm, Glacial Lakes Energy  
Saturday, February 10, 5 pm, Kessler's Champions Club @ NSU Barnett Center  
Tuesday, February 13, 5 pm, Demkota Ranch Beef  
Thursday & Friday, February 22 & 23, Pierre  
Tuesday, February 27, 5 pm, 3M

### Legislative Cracker Barrel

Saturday, January 27, 10 am, Kessler's Champions Club @ NSU Barnett Center  
Saturday, February 10, 10 am, Kessler's Champions Club @ NSU Barnett Center  
Saturday, February 24, 10 am, Kessler's Champions Club @ NSU Barnett Center

### Military & Veterans Committee

Tuesday, January 2, Noon, Chamber

### New Employee Welcome

Thursday, February 8, 4:15 pm, TBD

### Workforce & Education Committee

Tuesday, January 16, 8:15 am, Chamber  
Tuesday, February 20, 8:15 am, Chamber

The Chamber office will be closed  
January 15 and February 19.



## BUSINESS BRIEFS

### SANFORD HEALTH PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT IN ABERDEEN RECOGNIZED WITH ADVANCED PRACTICE PROVIDER AWARD

Susan Pfeiffer-Hanson, PA-C, has been awarded the 2023 Distinguished Wisdom Keeper Award at Sanford Health. This award recognizes outstanding leadership, participation and contributions to the field of advanced practice. James Johnston, DPM, a podiatrist at the Sanford Aberdeen Clinic, nominated Pfeiffer-Hanson for the recognition.



"Sue spends her time on direct patient care," said Dr. Johnston. "She was an orthopedic nurse for 10 years before becoming an APP, which she has practiced for 30 years. She leaves nothing to doubt about her professionalism, conduct and code. She was our provider on the frontline during the COVID pandemic."

As a nurse practitioner, Pfeiffer-Hanson practices at the Sanford Aberdeen Acute Care Clinic and specializes in family medicine and acute care medicine, treating a variety of conditions for all ages. She is board certified by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants.

### DACOTAH BANK AMERICAN BANKER 2023 BEST BANKS TO WORK FOR

In recognition of its dedication to employees and their families, Dacotah Bank has again been named one of the Best Banks to Work For by American Banker. This marks the sixth consecutive year of this honor. Dacotah Bank is proud to be ranked #8 on the 2023 list, marking six consecutive years of receiving this honor. In the past three years, their rankings have been #28, #39, and #22, demonstrating their commitment to consistent excellence. Dacotah Bank strives to be one of the best banks to work for and an employer of choice throughout their territory.



This recognition is a testament to their efforts to center their focus around employees, communities, customers, and shareholders. In addition to an enhanced paid parental leave program, they eliminated employee-paid premiums for medical and dental insurance for employees and their families, believing these changes demonstrate their commitment to the entire Dacotah Bank family, who contribute so much to the Company and the communities in which they live and work.

Dacotah Bank has created a great workplace culture utilizing teams and resources focused on attracting talent, appreciating effort, investing in people, retaining key employees, and preparing for succession. Their DacotahGrown internship program immerses young professionals in the organization's functions, teams and culture as a foundation for success should they choose to stay with Dacotah Bank upon graduation. Dacotah Bank's Culture Committee focuses on employees and making Dacotah Bank an employer of choice. The Give Where We Live program empowers employees to make a positive impact by choosing a community organization to support. Dacotah Bank prioritizes employee engagement by offering various growth opportunities, including leadership and development programs for both employees and supervisors. The bank also invests in a comprehensive performance management and leadership framework to foster ongoing discussions regarding employee development and career advancement.

The Best Banks to Work For program, initiated in 2013 by American Banker and Best Companies Group, identifies, recognizes and honors US banks for outstanding employee satisfaction. Full results of this year's program are available at [AmericanBanker.com](https://www.AmericanBanker.com). Best Companies Group managed the overall registration, survey process and analysis of the data. They used their expertise to determine the final ranking. The program is open to commercial banks, thrifts, savings banks and other chartered retail financial institutions with at least 50 employees in the United States. For more information on eligibility or other questions related to the Best Banks to Work For program, visit [www.BestBankstoWorkFor.com](https://www.BestBankstoWorkFor.com).

### AVERA ABERDEEN FAMILY PHYSICIANS NOW OFFERING SAME DAY SICK VISITS

Avera St. Luke's has increased access to quality health care by expanding services at Avera Aberdeen Family Physicians. The community can now see a provider for same day sick visits from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday and 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. "This will allow us to accommodate patients that might not be able to get in right away with their family physician, as each of our Primary Care Providers and Advanced Practice Providers are incredibly talented and ready to assist anyone with their health care needs," said Dan Bjerknes, Regional President and CEO.



With this, Avera's Health Services clinic on the campus of Northern State University also transitioned to Avera St. Luke's campus. Northern students will now benefit from the availability of onsite services such as lab, imaging, vaccines, and pharmacy, experience quicker lab turnaround times, have direct access to physicians and be able to choose from more options for appointment times, as well as optional virtual visits.

Just as at Avera After Hours Clinic, same-day sick visits will assist patients with a broad range of issues including sore throat, cough, cold/flu symptoms, Covid symptoms, fever, sinus congestion, ear pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, rash, burns (minor), mild allergies, seasonal allergies, UTI, bumps, cuts, scrapes, headaches (minor), sprains and strains, stomachache (mild abdominal pain), insect bites, and animal bites (minor).

While the new clinic area will operate much like a walk-in, appointments should be scheduled when possible to ensure efficient and timely visits. Walk-ins will be seen on a first come, first served basis. For same day sick visits, patients will call 605-225-0378 and select option number five.

### SANFORD ABERDEEN MEDICAL CENTER RECOGNIZED FOR PERFORMANCE LEADERSHIP BY THE CHARTIS CENTER FOR RURAL HEALTH

As part of National Rural Health Day, Sanford Aberdeen Medical Center has been recognized with a 2023 Performance Leadership Award for excellence in outcomes.





Compiled by the Chartis Center for Rural Health, the Performance Leadership Awards honor top quartile performance (i.e., 75th percentile or above) among rural hospitals in quality, outcomes and/or patient perspective.

The Performance Leadership Awards are based on the results of the Chartis Rural Hospital Performance INDEX®, the industry's most comprehensive and objective assessment of rural hospital performance. INDEX data is relied upon by rural hospitals, health systems with rural footprints, hospital associations and state offices of rural health around the country to measure and monitor performance across several areas impacting hospital operations and finance.

For more information about Sanford Health in Aberdeen, visit [SanfordHealth.org](https://SanfordHealth.org) keyword: Aberdeen.

### LANE IS NEW ABERDEEN US BANK BRANCH MANAGER

US Bank is proud to announce the appointment of Jason Lane as the new U.S. Bank Branch Manager in Aberdeen. Jason is a seasoned leader. With over two decades of extensive experience in banking and finance management, Jason brings a wealth of expertise to the institution.



Throughout his career, Jason has demonstrated a remarkable ability to navigate the complexities of the financial industry, fostering growth and stability within various organizations. His profound knowledge of banking, operations, risk management, and strategic planning will help enhance the bank's ability to serve the community and their valued customers. Please stop by and welcome him to the branch.

### 2023 SUPPLY HOUSE OF THE YEAR: PLUMBING & HEATING WHOLESALE

Plumbing & Heating Wholesale Inc., which has a location in Aberdeen, was named Supply House of the Year by Supply House Times, the official publication of the American Supply Association.

Based in Sioux Center, Iowa, Plumbing & Heating Wholesale was started in the late 1970s by three plumbing contractors who were doing a significant amount of travel to get the supplies and products they required to complete their jobs. The three men joined forces with a salesperson experienced in the industry to create a new distribution company. Today the company has 10 locations throughout the Midwest with approximately 115 team members, which has doubled in size over the last eight years.

In 2016 the company implemented the Entrepreneurial Operating System (EOS), a business management system that empowers entrepreneurs to reach their goals while promoting transparency throughout the organization. Plumbing & Heating Wholesale holds one primary goal top of mind – to serve the trade professional with its distribution center strategy. Their core values are people, integrity, hunger, teamwork & productivity and their culture is one of inclusion, acceptance, accountability, humility & fun.



The business can be found at 804 South 5th Street in Aberdeen and online at [pandhwholesale.com](https://pandhwholesale.com). To read the full article, go to <https://www.supplyht.com/articles/105535-2023-supply-house-of-the-year-plumbing-and-heating-wholesale>

### SANFORD HEALTH RECEIVES RECOGNITION AS THE TOP HEALTH CARE EMPLOYER FOR VETERANS IN THE NATION

For the fifth year in a row, Sanford Health has been recognized by Military Times as one of the best health care employers across the country for veterans.



The 2023 Best for Vets: Employers List highlights 175 employers, and Sanford Health landed at No. 1 in the health care category of employers.

Sanford offers several programs for military and veteran employees, including continuation of benefits and differential pay for service members during their deployment. This year, Sanford Health expanded their support to active-duty members and their spouses by partnering with the Department of Defense (DoD) Skillbridge Program and the Military Spouses Employment Program.

People who disclose they are veterans of the United States uniformed services when applying for a job at Sanford Health are automatically given a screening interview. Military and veteran employees have the option to continue their education and apply for a \$5,000 scholarship or receive a \$3,000 Veteran Educational Grant to help them do this.

The survey captures the areas of greatest importance to transitioning service members, veterans and their families when looking for an employer. Recruitment and employment practices, as well as retention and support programs, were given the most weight and importance in scoring and final rankings.

The survey submissions are analyzed by Military Times' data experts. They are unbiased and completely objective – purely looking at the stats and information provided by each company.

For more information about veteran resources for patients and employees at Sanford Health, visit [SanfordHealth.org](https://SanfordHealth.org) keyword: Military.

### SANFORD HEALTH ABERDEEN CLINIC ADDS FAMILY MEDICINE PHYSICIAN

Marcus Ibrahim, MD, recently joined Sanford Health Aberdeen Clinic as a family medicine physician.

Ibrahim received his medical degree from Avalon University School of Medicine in Curacao and completed his family medicine residency in Jacksonville, FL. Ibrahim specializes in care for the entire family, ranging from children to adults.

"Treating patients is an honor and a privilege," says Ibrahim. "I believe the relationship between a doctor and a patient should be based on ethical and safe delivery of care that improves the patient's life."

To schedule an appointment with Dr. Ibrahim, call the Sanford Health Aberdeen Clinic at (605) 226-5500.



## BUSINESS BRIEFS

### SPECIAL STRONG SOUTH DAKOTA

Hunter and Cassidy Bauer are excited to base Special Strong South Dakota out of Aberdeen, Hunter's home town. They were recently awarded the first statewide Special Strong territory. Special Strong will offer science-based one-on-one and group training adaptive fitness programs that are designed to meet unique situations of children, adolescents, and adults with mental, physical and cognitive challenges at any fitness level.

Hunter and Cassidy are thrilled to be able to serve this community. They have first-hand seen the benefits of adaptive fitness. Hunter grew up in Aberdeen alongside his older sister, Bailey, who needed adaptive training throughout her life due to a brain disorder. Hunter was also a Special Olympics swimming coach for his cousin Tucker, who has Down Syndrome. As a child, Cassidy participated in adaptive fitness to minimize the loss of muscle mass and function from chemotherapy she received while battling leukemia.

This franchise ownership became evident to them because it is faith based, has affordable programs, promotes health and well-being, is led by certified trainers, partners with local gyms, and is community focused to ensure an inclusive culture.



Whitney Rauscher, Cassidy Bauer, Hunter Bauer and Tucker Green

Hunter and Cassidy both graduated from Bethel University in Saint Paul, Minnesota. Hunter has a degree in Ministry and Cassidy in Finance. They feel blessed to be able to bring Special Strong to Aberdeen to help individuals build strength and confidence in order to live a more independent and abundant life. They are looking forward to their Grand Opening celebrating with their potential clients, family and friends on Saturday, January 27th at Allevery Entertainment from 10am-1pm.

For more information on private, semi-private, or group training sessions in home or at a local gym, you may reach Hunter or Cassidy at 605.606-2292.



## MIXER Calendar

THURSDAY  
**JAN 11, 2024**

@ Agtegra Cooperative  
Hosted by Agtegra Cooperative



THURSDAY  
**FEB 9, 2024**

@ Thee Glass Doktor  
Hosted by Thee Glass Doktor LLC



THURSDAY  
**MAR 14, 2024**

@ Yelduz Shrine  
Nonprofit Month Hosted by Plains Commerce Bank



THURSDAY  
**APR 11, 2024**

@ Dakotaland Federal Credit Union  
Hosted by Dakotaland Federal Credit Union



THURSDAY  
**MAY 9, 2024**

@ Interior Design Concepts  
Hosted by Interior Design Concepts



THURSDAY  
**JUN 13, 2024**

@ Kessler's Champions Club, Barnett Center, NSU Campus  
Hosted by Kessler's Food & Liquor



THURSDAY  
**JUL 11, 2024**

@ Budget Furniture  
Hosted by Budget Furniture



THURSDAY  
**AUG 8, 2024**

@ Pierson Ford-Lincoln  
Hosted by Pierson Ford-Lincoln



THURSDAY  
**OCT 17, 2024**

@ Best Western Ramkota Convention Center  
Hosted by Workforce Innovation Summit



THURSDAY  
**NOV 14, 2024**

@ Montgomery's  
Hosted by Montgomery's



THURSDAY  
**DEC 12, 2024**

@ Dakota Event Center  
ChristMoose with the Chamber hosted by Midco





# Papa John's Pizza to Pay 175,000 to Settle Disability Discrimination Lawsuit

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guarantees that people with disabilities have the same opportunities as everyone else to enjoy the right to work, purchase goods and services, and participate in state and local government programs. However, all too often employers must be reminded of their obligations to disabled workers.

Papa John's Pizza, an international chain of pizza restaurants based in Louisville, Kentucky, has agreed to pay \$175,000 to a disabled worker and provide other relief to settle a disability discrimination lawsuit filed by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

According to the EEOC's suit, in early 2020, Michael Barnes, who is legally blind, applied for a job at his local Papa John's restaurant in Georgia. Barnes advised his local store manager that he needed his service dog for his commute to and from work. Barnes was hired but told he could not start until his accommodation request to bring his service dog to work was formally granted by Papa John's.

Papa John's later denied Barnes's accommodation request and fired him before he worked a single shift. The EEOC filed suit against the company after attempts to resolve the matter through its conciliation process failed. Papa John's later agreed to settle the

suit through a two-year consent decree, requiring it to pay \$175,000 in monetary damages to Barnes; train its employees on the ADA; review its employment policies; and allow the EEOC to monitor complaints of discrimination or retaliation.

"Not allowing blind and visually impaired people to travel to and from work in the way that affords them confidence and independence is akin to telling sighted workers who rely on the flexibility and independence of driving that they may not travel to work by car," said the EEOC's general counsel. "We are glad that Papa John's has agreed to provide training to its employees and hope that in the future, no other job applicant who uses a service dog will experience the discrimination that Mr. Barnes faced."

Employers must ensure that people with a disability are afforded equal opportunities to work, which applies to things like recruitment, hiring, promotions, training, pay, and social activities. This is a complex area of the law, so seeking the advice of an attorney experienced in the ADA is well advised before making any decision concerning a disabled worker that would cause the EEOC to come knocking.

*\*\*This article is being provided for informational purposes only and should not be construed as legal advice.*



**Kim Dorsett**

Partner,  
Richardson,  
Wyly, Wise,  
Sauck & Hieb

Windshield replacement and repair      Collision repair and painting      AUTHORIZED ClubCar DEALER      Golf Cart Sales & Service

**Double D Body Shop, Inc.**  
MIKE SOMMERS, OWNER

1-605-229-4488 | 1-605-380-9891 Cell | 1-605-229-4365 Fax  
424 North 4th St. | Aberdeen, SD 57401 | doubledauto@gmail.com

[www.doubledbodyshop.com](http://www.doubledbodyshop.com)

Specializing in **Small Businesses & HUD Agencies**

**Rich Gallorath, Owner**

**FEE ACCOUNTING**  
**SMALL BUSINESS SOLUTIONS**  
**PROPERTY MANAGEMENT**

Phone (605) 229-0180 | Website [ram.solutions](http://ram.solutions)

The Aberdeen **AQUA ADDICTS** Water Ski Team

## ICE FISHING DERBY

### YOU'RE INVITED !!

**Saturday, February 10th 2024**  
**8:00am - 12:30pm**

**COST:** \$125 per person (includes dinner and drink ticket)  
**CASH PAYOUT:** Top 3 heaviest fish in each category  
**CATEGORIES:** WALLEYE, PAN FISH, NORTHERN  
**BIGGEST FISH PAYOUT:** Biggest fish caught pays out \$500  
**PRIZES:** LOTS OF PRIZES DRAWN AT THE END OF THE DERBY

### Derby Schedule

Friday - February 9th	Saturday - February 10th
@The Zoo Bar	@ Dahme Lake
Check In ⇒ 6:00pm-7:00pm	Set Up ⇒ 6:30am-8:00am
Rules Meeting ⇒ 7:00pm	Fishing Time ⇒ 8:00am-12:30pm
Dinner ⇒ 7:15pm	

REGISTER ONLINE @ [www.aquaaddicts.org/icefish](http://www.aquaaddicts.org/icefish)

# Community Improvements in Store for 2024



**Robin Bobzien**  
PE, CFM,  
PWLF  
Aberdeen  
City Manager

As I write this note, I am seeing everyone busy themselves for the upcoming Christmas Season. We have had bonus weather this year, but anyone from this part of the country knows that Mother Nature will eventually get even. I know that the golf courses in and around Aberdeen are still bustling with golfers looking to get in one last round. I'm also seeing a lot of people using the trail system yet, with many bikers still active.

Our departments are very busy working to make improvements. Currently Public Works has been helping the Parks and Recreation at the Dome doing valving for a drainage system and water line for a needed fire suppression system. They are also helping with drainage improvements and relocating soil at Lee Park Golf Course.

The Parks and Recreation Department is working on the finishing touches on how the programming will look at the Dome and Strode Center. This will include a plan for a fee structure to help recoup some of the costs that we expect to have.

The Engineering and Planning Departments have been working with a few developers, as more subdivisions and other properties for housing and hospitality are expected to be built or renovated in the upcoming year. It is exciting to see more investment in our community!

As you have heard in the past, the upgrades for the Water Reclamation Plant are currently under

design and should be bid on in the Spring

of 2024. Plans for the new water tower and transmission line are also being developed with bidding expected in the next few months. Plans are complete for a new bridge on 10th Ave SE, near our outdoor Aquatics Center, and we expect that to be constructed in the 2024 spring/summer season. Smaller projects continue to be accomplished at the water treatment plant to improve our ability to monitor and treat the water that is delivered to your tap daily.

Many of our programs at the Senior Center and Library are flourishing and it is expected that there will be more to come in the next year.

The Public Works Department is working to slightly modify the snow removal process for the 2023/24 season to help make it more clear on how the program is currently being done. The downtown parking lots will be cleared 1st to give better and clearer areas for people to park in before the core area is hauled.

The Community Development Department (formerly known as Planning and Zoning) is working on methods to help streamline some of their programs by having some approvals being done administratively, rather than having to go through the Planning Commission or Zoning Board of Adjustment.

Our Public Safety Departments (Police and Fire) continue to work on programs to recruit and retain well qualified staff. They have had a very busy year, and that is expected to be the case for the upcoming year.

I am so thankful for all of the effort put in by our staff to help make our community a thriving place to live.

WELLNESS • COMPASSION • EXPERIENCE • RESULTS




## Prairie Heights Healthcare

Skilled Nursing Care  
Post-Acute Rehabilitation  
In-Home Therapies • Long-Term Care  
Outpatient Therapy



400 8TH AVE. NW | ABERDEEN, SD 57401  
605-225-2550 | INFO@PRAIRIEHEIGHTSHC.COM

## LEGISLATIVE CRACKER BARRELS



- JANUARY 27
- FEBRUARY 10
- FEBRUARY 24

KESSLER'S CHAMPIONS CLUB | BARNETT CENTER | NSU | 10 AM

Ensuring laws and legislation remain conducive to Aberdeen's healthy and vibrant business climate is a top priority for the Aberdeen Area Chamber. Providing this type of structure for business leaders to communicate effectively with government is just one of the opportunities we provide our members and the Aberdeen community.

Sessions offer an excellent opportunity for legislators and their constituents to publicly discuss issues of importance and stay up to date on top business, civic and social priorities. Legislators representing Brown County and the surrounding area have been invited to take part.

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC | COFFEE AND ROLLS WILL BE SERVED



# Rules of the Road for Artificial Intelligence

The launch of a new wave of consumer-facing artificial intelligence (AI) applications over the past year has ushered in a renewed focus on AI. Amazon chatbots, Netflix recommendations, and even directions on our phone all use AI, but recent developments demonstrate that the technology is about to take a giant step forward. While the applications with which most people have already interacted are trained to perform narrow tasks, the next generation of AI is designed to produce original content and make complex decisions based on massive amounts of data.

This new technology brings with it seemingly endless possibilities. It promises potentially tremendous advances in medicine, farming, and manufacturing. It can improve everything from national defense to daily life. But, as with any sophisticated technology, this next generation of AI also presents risks. The challenge, then, is how to encourage the promise of AI while ensuring there are basic safeguards in place to minimize potential dangers.

I believe the light-touch approach the United States has taken on internet regulation is a good model to follow for AI. The explosive growth of internet innovation in our country is in large part a result of government not weighing down a new technology with heavy-handed regulation. Leadership in AI will benefit our economy and make America more competitive, so we need to be sure we're promoting innovation while protecting consumers from the riskiest applications of AI.

To this end, I recently introduced bipartisan legislation that would establish some basic rules of the road for artificial intelligence. Our proposal focuses on two things: transparency for consumers and risk-based oversight of high-impact AI applications. On transparency, our bill would require big internet platforms to clearly inform consumers if the platform is using generative AI to create content. For AI being used to make high-impact decisions – such as those related to health care or critical infrastructure – our bill establishes an oversight

framework to ensure it meets certain standards. This bill won't be the last word on AI, but it's the right place for Congress to start to preserve space for innovation while protecting against serious dangers and the knee-jerk reaction from Washington to overregulate.

It's clear that a race to regulate AI has already begun. President Biden has issued a sweeping executive order that empowers multiple government agencies to regulate AI systems. The European Union is pressing forward with a heavy-handed regulatory regime. But this is the wrong approach. It risks stifling innovation just as it's getting started, which we cannot afford to let happen. If we fall behind adversarial nations, particularly China, there will be profoundly dangerous implications for our national security and economic prosperity.

Unlike these heavy-handed approaches, the bipartisan bill I'm proposing does not assume the worst about artificial intelligence, and it doesn't rush into sweeping regulation of all uses of AI. Instead, the bill puts guardrails in place to mitigate dangers on high-risk, high-impact AI applications, while leaving American innovators and entrepreneurs free to move forward. I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues to get this bill across the finish line, and to ensure the United States is once again the leader in an important new technology.



**John Thune**  
US Senator (R-SD)

**ALL OVER ROOFING**

**HOT SHINGLES IN YOUR AREA  
LOOKING TO GET NAILED**

**605.759.0000**

1003 6TH AVE SE, ABERDEEN, SD 57401

**Historic Service**  
Trusted for over a century with your  
business and personal insurance.

**It all starts with a relationship.**  
In times of disaster or significant loss, the agents at RhodesAnderson Insurance will stand by your side to help you recover. Since 1880, we have been protecting Aberdeen's business community and constantly building relationships to ensure success into the future.

**Get to know us.**

**RHODESANDERSON**  
INSURANCE

LIFE | HEALTH | AUTO | HOMEOWNERS | BUSINESS | FARM

605.225.3172 | RHODESANDERSON.COM

# Stay Active This Winter with Help from APRF!

The Aberdeen Parks, Recreation and Forestry department has been busy making plans for a wide variety of winter activities. The winter/spring brochure has been distributed through the mail and is posted online at [www.aberdeen.sd.us/parksandrec](http://www.aberdeen.sd.us/parksandrec). Registration for classes may also be done online.

## Aberdeen Recreation & Cultural Center (ARCC)

- If you've thought about trying something new, now is the time to take a class at the ARCC! There are many options for children through adults.

- A variety of youth classes such as Pottery Pals, parent/child wheel thrown pottery, Me and My Shadow, many types of dance and much more

- Music programs, for youth through adults, offer private lessons for most band instruments, an extensive strings program, beginning guitar and voice lessons

- An wide variety of adult and teen classes like pottery, painting, Just for Fun, fiber & textile arts, glasswork, photography and special interest



classes such as dog obedience, computers and technology & wellness

- Adult lessons for social dance styles include senior line dance, country two step and partner dancing

## Aberdeen Area Senior Center

- The place to become involved if you're over 50

- Offering a wide range of weekly activities, such as pool, Bingo, Scrabble, line dancing and Mexican Train Dominoes

- Exercise room available for use

## YAPatorium

- Great place for teens ages 10-17 with lots of activities

- Homework help, Art Crew, board games and pizza party nights

- E-Sports and pool leagues

## Ice Skating

- The two outdoor ice rinks and Odde Indoor Ice Area are great places for recreational skating

- Rental skates and skating lessons are available

- Enjoy a cup of hot chocolate!

## Cross Country Skiing

- Skis can be rented at the Manor Park rink

- Trails are groomed in Manor Park

- XC ski lessons are available

## Sledding

- Check out the Baird Park sledding hill

## Special Events


- Free Skate Day on January 4

- Winter Fun Day

- Aberdeen Optimist Club Family Free Throw Contest


Check out the Winter/Spring Brochure and sign up for one of the many programs. Winter fun begins with the Aberdeen Parks, Recreation and Forestry department!

*Article submitted by Gene Morsching, Recreation Superintendent, Aberdeen Parks, Recreation & Forestry.*




**Health care  
plus  
FEDERAL  
CREDIT UNION**

**NCUA**




# Dedication FOR DECADES

**LOCAL DECISION MAKING  
LONGEST DRIVE THRU HOURS  
7:30AM - 6PM MONDAY - FRIDAY  
9AM - NOON ON SATURDAY**



**605.725.0900 | 203 S. DAKOTA ST.  
ABERDEEN, SD 57401  
WWW.HCPCFU.COOP  
PEOPLE YOU TRUST.  
SERVICE YOU DESERVE.**





# Working Smarter in the New Year

As we kickoff 2024, it is the perfect time for small businesses to assess operations and look for ways to improve processes in the next year. Making technical additions and upgrades help many business owners to smooth out day to day operational flow – from the way inventory is managed, to taking electronic payments, to hiring and oversight of employee time and pay. Additionally, many small businesses are creating technology-based innovative products and services that increase sales opportunities. National Technology Day is celebrated on January 6th and encourages all of us to think about how technology is improving our everyday business and personal lives.

The U.S. Small Business Administration serves as the coordinating agency for programs that provide the high-growth small business community to develop commercially viable innovations. Nearly \$4 billion are available annually for small businesses to use in the creation of new technologies through the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs. These highly competitive programs encourage domestic small businesses to engage in Federal Research/Research and Development (R/R&D) with the potential for commercialization.

**Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR):** Established in 1982, the mission of the SBIR program is to stimulate technological innovation in the U.S. economy through the investment of federal research

and development (R&D) funds into innovative high-tech US small businesses. The SBIR statute requires federal agencies with extramural R&D budgets over \$100 million to set aside a percentage of their annual extramural R&D budget for small businesses.

**Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR):** Created nearly a decade after SBIR, STTR awards are made to small businesses that pursue technological innovation through cooperative research and development with nonprofit scientific and educational research institutions. STTR requires federal agencies with extramural budgets exceeding \$1 billion to set aside a percentage of their annual extramural R&D budget for small businesses that work in cooperation with universities, federally funded research and development centers, and other nonprofit scientific and educational institutions.

The SBIR Center in South Dakota can assist you with:

- One-on-One Counseling
- Assistance with Federal Registrations
- Identify Funding Opportunities
- Link You with University Researchers
- Proposal Editing
- Publish Monthly Newsletters

More information is available at: <https://sdbusinesshelp.com/small-business-innovation-research/>.



**Jaime Wood**

*South Dakota  
District Director,  
U.S. Small Business  
Administration*



An Authorized Independent Agent For



Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield of South Dakota is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

## EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

- ✓ Health
- ✓ Dental
- ✓ Vision

**CAROL SOMMERS**

**605.225.4270**



*Because...  
Things Happen.*

# Off to the Races: 2024 Legislative Session



**Julie Johnson**

Attorney at Law  
and Registered  
Lobbyist

While the 2024 Legislative Session begins in January, an unofficial start to 2024 is the Governor's Budget Address, given just before this article was written. By the time you read this article, the Legislature will be working on examining the Governor's recommendations, as well as some of their own, and getting to the business of "legislating".

So, let's look at a few key issues in the Budget Address, particularly as they affect Aberdeen and the region:

**Water Development:** A very key investment in this region is in water development, particularly in the "WINS" project, a partnership between WEB Rural Water, City of Aberdeen and BDM Rural Water. The Governor's proposed budget allocates \$95 million of the remaining federal dollars (known as ARPA) to the Department of Ag and Natural Resources, for distribution to eligible applicants.

WINS and WEB and the team are "ARPA ready". In other words, they have done all the necessary work to be able to put those hard-earned federal dollars to work within the timelines set by the federal government. We can be proud of the work they have done. We are hopeful that the project will be more than eligible for some of those funds when distributed in 2024.

Also, WINS and WEB are being recommended for funding in the "Omnibus Water Bill", which is another

mechanism used to distribute state and other funds to eligible water, etc., projects. We are proud of their position in the bill and looking forward to solidifying that deal.

**Richmond Lake Dam:** Many of us did not realize that replacement of the Richmond Lake Dam is a priority for all of us, including Aberdeen. It is a "high-hazard dam", in the state's system, perhaps the highest priority. It is included for significant funding in the Governor's budget, and we are hoping for some additional federal funding to finish the effort.

**Workforce:** There are some key investments in the workforce system, for which we are thankful. We will continue to monitor all those important moving parts.

**Child Care:** While not included in the speech, there is a lot of work going on to work on the whole child care system, particularly as an important part of our workforce system. Stay tuned for those details. Some of the best have devoted time and energy to looking for remedies and solutions.

**Northern State University:** We will continue to work to ensure that NSU has all it needs for the students and the region to succeed, including the E-Learning Center, and more.

**Newspapers:** We are hopeful that a legislative change will be made to reflect the rapidly changing technology in the news business, including that in our area. What is a "legal newspaper" under current law needs to be changed. Work is going on behind the scenes on this subject.

**Housing:** We will also proudly defend the allocation of federal and state funds for housing infrastructure, made over the last 2 years. Aberdeen was proud to submit a couple of applications for funding, some of which are still under consideration as we write this. Anything else we can do to support the housing equation will be key for our region.

**Increases:** The Governor is recommending a 4% increase for state employee salaries, Medicaid providers, and schools. We will follow this closely to be sure we know all the details in the end for our area.

Session starts January 9! And we will host Aberdeen Day at the Legislature on February 22.

So much more! This is just a thumbnail sketch of things we will watch for our region, and things our region needs for the future. Stay tuned for future reports!

Go, Aberdeen and NE South Dakota!

*Julie M. Johnson is an attorney at law, and registered lobbyist for several area groups and interests. She looks after economic development, small business, regulatory, housing, HR, workforce, taxation, and similar topics every year at the SD Legislature. She can be reached at johnson2@abe.midco.net.*

The world needs you.

Physically  
**STRONG.**



Mentally  
**STRONG.**

Your mental health is as important  
as your physical health.



Northeastern  
MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

(605) 225-1010



nemhc.org





Shaun Falken  
605-725-1011

Scan to connect with  
Shaun Falken, the newest  
member of our sales team!



Internet

Phone Systems

Voice



725-1000

[nvc.net](http://nvc.net)

Less banking.  
*More stability.*

With CorTrust, you'll find a steady banking relationship that keeps moving ahead through market swings and all of life's changes. Count on us to be a stable financial partner for years to come - **we're not going anywhere.**



2016 6<sup>th</sup> Ave SE • Aberdeen  
(605) 229-5069 • [CorTrustBank.com](http://CorTrustBank.com)

Member FDIC • Bank ID 405612



# Any financial advisor can know the markets. *We know our clients.*

Understanding your goals is the first step in providing personalized financial advice to help you reach them. We take the time to know what you're looking forward to, as well as what your challenges are, to help you build the financial future you want.

**Call us today  
to get started  
605.725.5770**



Legacy Financial Partners  
Ameriprise Private Wealth Advisory Practice

## Legacy Financial Partners

A private wealth advisory practice of  
Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

1108 S Main St, Ste 101  
Aberdeen, SD 57401  
[planwithLFP.com](http://planwithLFP.com)

Ameriprise Financial cannot guarantee future financial results.

**Investment products are not insured by the FDIC, NCUA or any federal agency, are not deposits or obligations of, or guaranteed by any financial institution, and involve investment risks including possible loss of principal and fluctuation in value.**

Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC. Member FINRA and SIPC.

© 2023 Ameriprise Financial, Inc. All rights reserved.

Ameriprise  
Financial