



**West River/Lyman-Jones
Rural Water Systems Inc.**

OCTOBER 2026
VOLUME 22, ISSUE 2

Quality On Tap!

**CLEAN WATER,
BETTER GAINS:
HOW RURAL WATER
SUPPORTS CATTLE
PRODUCTION**

**WORKING
TOGETHER FOR
CLEAN WATER**

**SDWARN: UTILITIES
HELPING UTILITIES
WHEN DISASTER
STRIKES**

**OFFICIAL
NOTICE OF
WRLJ
37TH ANNUAL
MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY,
OCTOBER 14, 2026
PHILIP SHOP BUILDING
PHILIP, SD**

*Registration will be from 4:00 PM
to 4:30 PM MT followed by a brief
business meeting and door prizes.*

Each membership will receive a
\$10 water credit at registration.

**NOTICE OF DIRECTOR
VACANCIES - SEE PAGE 3**

MANAGER'S REPORT

Jake Fitzgerald

Manager, West River/Lyman-Jones RWS



As I write this in early August, we are experiencing one of the hottest and driest summers I can remember. The latest U.S. Drought Monitor shows the WR/LJ service area is experiencing moderate to severe drought conditions.

As a result, WR/LJ has pumped more water than ever before. Water usage in April, May, and June each set new monthly records. Then, in July, we pumped more water than in any other month since WR/LJ began providing service in 1993.

Making it through a challenging summer like this has been no accident. It has taken the dedication and hard work of many people, and I am sincerely grateful for their efforts.

Thank you to the WR/LJ field technicians, who have worked tirelessly through intense heat and demanding conditions to keep our system operating. Thank you to the Oglala Sioux Rural Water Supply Project water treatment plant and core pipeline operators for ensuring a continuous and reliable water supply. And thank you to our members and member communities for doing your part to conserve water as we implemented water conservation measures.

Working together, we have met the demands of this historic summer while continuing to provide reliable water service across the WR/LJ system.

2027 WATER RATE ADJUSTMENTS

To continue providing safe, reliable water service and maintaining our water distribution system, the WR/LJ Board of Directors approved a modest rate adjustment effective January 1, 2027. The updated rates will help offset increasing operational costs, infrastructure maintenance, and system improvements while ensuring we continue to meet the needs of our members.

	Current Base Rates	2027 Base Rates
Rural - Initial	\$40.00	\$41.00
Rural - Additional	\$20.00	\$22.00
Rural Large User	\$75.00	\$80.00
City Individual	\$20.00	\$22.00
Rural Churches, Cemeteries & Community Halls	\$20.00	\$22.00
Volumetric Rate per 1,000 Gallons	\$2.70	\$2.75

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dave Fuoss, Draper – President
 Richard L. Doud, Midland – Vice President
 Dodie Garrity, Hayes – Sec./Treas.
 Casey Krogman, White River
 Brad Smith, Vivian
 Dean Nelson, Murdo
 Quint Garnos, Presho
 Marion Matt, Philip
 Jiggs O'Connell, Creighton
 Dana Kerns, Belvidere

MURDO PROJECT OFFICE

307 Main Street
 PO Box 407
 Murdo, SD 57559

Jake Fitzgerald.....Manager
 Amy Kittelson.....Office Manager
 Kati VenardBilling Secretary
 Brandon Kinsley.....O & M Foreman
 Ed Venard.....O & M
 Steve Baker.....O & M
 Brian Flynn.....O & M

Ph: 605-669-2931 or 1-800-851-2349

E-Mail Address:

wrlj_ruralwater@goldenwest.net

PHILIP FIELD OFFICE

PO Box 144
 Philip, SD 57567

Mike VetterO & M Foreman
 Eddie Dartt.....O & M
 John Kramer.....O & M
 Nick KonstO & M

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OFFICIAL NOTICE OF 37TH ANNUAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2026
PHILIP SHOP BUILDING – PHILIP, SD

Registration will be from 4:00 to 4:30 MT followed by a brief business meeting and door prizes.

Each membership will receive a \$10 water credit at registration.

WRLJ 2025 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES (DRAFT)

The annual meeting of West River/Lyman-Jones Rural Water was held at the Murdo Shop Building in Murdo, South Dakota on Wednesday, October 15, 2025.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those in attendance.

The meeting was called to order by President Dave Fuoss at 4:30 p.m. (CT) and a quorum was declared present.

Manager Fitzgerald read the annual meeting notice as published in the October 2025 newsletter and the local legal newspapers, and the official proof of mailing statement that indicated 1,889 newsletters were mailed from the U.S. Post Office at Madison, SD on September 2, 2025.

Manager Fitzgerald followed with introductions of WR/LJ Directors, staff and attorney.

The minutes of the October 16, 2024, Annual Meeting were published in the October 2025 issue of *Quality on Tap* newsletter that is mailed to all members. President Fuoss asked for a motion to approve the minutes. A motion was duly made and seconded to approve the minutes as mailed. Motion Carried.

Manager Fitzgerald presented the manager's report. He provided a system overview, including annual water sales and water sources. He informed the members of a rate study evaluating current water

rates, reviewed the lead service line inventory, and provided details of two water storage upgrades at the Creighton Reservoir and Elbon Tower. He also expressed appreciation to the Oglala Sioux Rural Water Supply System and Bureau of Reclamation for securing funding for an additional 5.8 million gallons of storage on the Mni Wiconi south core system. His report concluded with an overview of the Western Dakota Regional Water System project.

Jessica Hegge, Attorney for West River/Lyman-Jones Rural Water, reported there are no pending lawsuits against WR/LJ and they are legally sound. A motion was duly made and seconded to approve Manager Fitzgerald and Attorney Hegge's reports. Motion Carried.

Attorney Hegge conducted the election of Directors and declared that, having no opposition, incumbent Directors David Fuoss – Zone 3A, Jiggs O'Connell – Zone 4, and Marion Matt – Zone 5 were re-elected to the Board of Directors. A motion was duly made and seconded to cast a unanimous ballot. Motion Carried

President Fuoss called for old business. There was none.

President Fuoss called for new business. There was none.

There being no further business to address, President Fuoss adjourned the meeting at 5:08 p.m. (CT).

WRLJ NOTICE OF DIRECTOR VACANCIES

The West River/Lyman-Jones Rural Water Systems, Inc. in accordance with Bylaws, Article VIII, Section I, hereby gives notice to its membership that the following seats upon the Board of Directors will be up for election at its Annual Meeting on October 14, 2026

Zone 1 – Rural Stanley County north of the Bad River; current Director Dodie Garrity

Zone 2A – Rural Lyman County west of Township line between Range 75W and Range 76W; and rural Stanley County south of the Bad River; current Director Brad Smith

Zone 3 – Rural Jackson County, north of the White River; current Director Dana Kerns

Zone 4A – Rural Mellette County; current Director Casey Krogman

ELIGIBILITY FOR NOMINATION:

1. Must be a member of the corporation
2. Must have contracted for a service tap in area to represent
3. Must file a petition no later than 4:00 P.M. (CT) October 5, 2026, at the rural water system office in Murdo, S.D.
4. Petition must be signed by no less than 15 members
5. No proxy voting allowed
6. Nominations will not be allowed from the floor at the annual meeting unless no petitions have been filed for a directorship

NOMINATING PETITIONS CAN BE ACQUIRED BY CONTACTING:

West River/Lyman-Jones RWS, Inc.
 PO Box 407 • 307 Main St. • Murdo, SD 57559
 Phone: 605-669-2931



Dodie Garrity



Brad Smith



Dana Kerns



Casey Krogman

Get Your Home Ready for Winter

Warm days may still be hanging on, but colder weather is not far behind. Taking a few simple steps now can help protect your home, plumbing and water meter before freezing temperatures arrive.

Frozen pipes can crack or burst, leading to significant water loss and costly damage. Even a small, 1/8-inch opening can release approximately 3,200 gallons of water in a single day. Preparing early is much easier than dealing with an emergency in the middle of winter.

Insulate Vulnerable Pipes

Check pipes located in crawl spaces, attics, basements, garages and other areas that may not receive adequate heat. Foam pipe sleeves and fiberglass insulation are inexpensive options available at most hardware stores.

Heat tape may also be used on vulnerable pipes and valves. Always choose a UL-approved product and follow the manufacturer's installation instructions carefully. If heat tape is already installed, inspect it before winter to make sure it is still working properly.

Locate Your Shut-Off Valves

Make sure everyone in your household knows where the main water shut-off valve is located. In an emergency, shutting off the water quickly can prevent extensive damage. If your water meter is located in the basement, the valve is generally nearby.

You should also know the location of the service line valve that controls water to your entire property. Contact your rural water system before operating any valve owned by the system.

Check Your Meter Pit

Inspect the meter pit for visible damage and make sure the lid is secure. Additional insulating material may be placed inside the pit if recommended by your rural water provider.

Clearly mark the meter pit's location so it can be seen after heavy snowfall and avoided by snowplows, vehicles and other equipment. Contact your rural water system if the pit, lid, meter or nearby plumbing appears damaged.

Disconnect Outdoor Hoses

Remove, drain and store garden hoses before temperatures fall below freezing. Drain exterior faucets and shut off their indoor supply valves when possible. Underground sprinkler



systems should also be properly drained or blown out before winter.

Seal Out Cold Air

Inspect the areas around foundations, sill plates, doors, windows and utility openings. Seal cracks and gaps with caulk, spray foam or insulation to prevent cold air from reaching nearby pipes. Close and secure basement windows, crawl-space openings and access doors.

A Few Final Reminders

During extreme cold or a winter power outage, open cabinet doors beneath sinks to allow warmer air to circulate around plumbing.

When leaving home for an extended period, keep the heat on and arrange for someone to check the property. Contact your rural water system if the water service needs to be shut off.

Clean leaves and debris from gutters to help prevent ice dams, and make sure downspouts direct water away from the foundation. Trim weak or overhanging tree branches that could break under the weight of snow and ice.

A little preparation this fall can help keep your water flowing – and protect your home – all winter long.



WORKING TOGETHER FOR CLEAN WATER

Clean, reliable water does not arrive at the faucet by accident.

Behind every glass of water is a network of wells, pipelines, pumps, storage tanks and treatment facilities. Much of that infrastructure is out of sight, but it is essential to everyday life. It supports homes, schools, hospitals, farms and businesses in communities across South Dakota.

Building those systems has required decades of planning, local commitment and financial partnerships. For more than 60 years, South Dakota's communities and rural water systems have worked with state and federal agencies to bring dependable water service to residents throughout the state.

South Dakota's modern rural water story began in the early 1960s. Early systems responded to a basic need. In many rural areas, individual wells could not always provide enough water or the quality residents needed. Regional systems offered a more dependable solution by serving many farms, homes and communities through a shared network.

The challenge was cost. Constructing treatment facilities and laying miles of pipeline across sparsely populated areas was beyond what locals could reasonably finance alone.

Federal assistance became critical. The Farmers Home Administration—now USDA Rural Development—was the primary funding partner for 22 of South Dakota's first 32 major rural water systems. That support was combined with local contributions and assistance from the state, water development districts, Community Development Block Grants, CoBank, local lenders and other partners. No single program built South Dakota's rural water network. It was created through cooperation.

A Major State Commitment

One of the most important turning points came in 1993, when the South Dakota Legislature created a dedicated state funding mechanism for water projects.

Through the Water Environment Fund, South Dakota began providing grants and affordable financing for drinking water, wastewater, stormwater, flood-control, irrigation and other eligible water infrastructure. The programs also support large regional projects identified as important to the state's long-term water future.

From 1993 through June 2026, South Dakota obligated approximately \$332.3 million in dedicated state funding through the Consolidated Water Facilities Construction Program and the State Water Resources Management System.

Of that amount, approximately \$178.5 million supported drinking-water projects. About \$135.4 million went specifically to regional and rural water systems or projects directly connecting to them.



Funding That Keeps Working

South Dakota expanded its funding tools through state revolving loan programs. These are federal funds that are allocated to the EPA, then directed to the state for funding eligible water projects.

The Clean Water State Revolving Fund began supporting wastewater and water-quality projects in 1989. The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund followed in 1998.

The idea is straightforward. Communities and water systems receive affordable, long-term loans to complete projects. As those loans are repaid, the money returns to the fund and can be loaned again.

In that way, the same dollars can support multiple generations of water infrastructure. Some projects also

qualify for grants or principal forgiveness, which means a portion of the loan does not have to be repaid.

From the beginning of the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund in 1998 through June 2026, South Dakota obligated approximately \$1.457 billion. Of that total, approximately \$641.6 million supported rural and regional water systems.

The Clean Water State Revolving Fund has provided even more assistance. Since the program began in 1989, approximately \$1.99 billion has been obligated for wastewater and other eligible clean-water projects.

That funding is an important part of the water story. Supplying safe drinking water is essential, but communities must also be able to properly collect, manage and treat the wastewater produced after that water is used.

A Historic Surge in Investment

South Dakota entered another important period of water investment following the COVID-19 pandemic. The state directed a significant portion of its federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding toward drinking water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure.

Through June 2026, approximately \$695.2 million from South Dakota's share of ARPA funding had been allocated through the Board of Water and Natural Resources for eligible water-related projects.

Of that amount, approximately \$394.6 million supported drinking-water projects. About \$283.3 million went to regional and rural water systems or projects directly connecting to them.

Those investments allowed communities to replace aging infrastructure, expand treatment and storage capacity, improve wastewater systems and extend service to growing areas.

They also showed the scale of South Dakota's continuing water needs.

Why the Need Continues

One-time funding can accomplish a great deal, but it cannot replace a long-term strategy. Water infrastructure does not last forever. Pipes corrode. Pumps wear out. Treatment equipment must be replaced. Communities grow, regulations change and construction costs rise.

These challenges are especially difficult for small communities. A project costing several million dollars may have to be supported by only a few hundred customers. Even an affordable loan can result in a significant increase in household water bills.

That is why grants, principal forgiveness and state matching funds matter. They do not eliminate the local responsibility to maintain a water system. Instead, they help keep essential projects within reach.

State dollars can also leverage federal investment. Many federal programs require matching funds, completed planning or evidence that a project is ready to proceed. A dependable state commitment gives South Dakota a stronger opportunity to bring additional federal resources home.

An Investment in Every Community

Reliable water supports nearly every part of community life.

It protects public health, allows businesses to operate, supports housing development and provides the water needed for emergency services. Effective wastewater

treatment protects rivers, lakes and groundwater.

South Dakota's water systems were not built through one funding source or one historic investment. They are the result of more than six decades of local leadership and state and federal partnership.

That history offers an important lesson for the future.

One-time funding can help meet urgent needs, but long-term progress requires a dependable state commitment. Consistent investment allows communities to plan responsibly, keep projects affordable and make the best use of available federal funds.

Investing in water is not simply about pipes, pumps and treatment plants. It is an investment in public health, economic opportunity and the future of every South Dakota community.



BUILDING REGIONAL SYSTEMS

Some of South Dakota's water projects have been too large to build through local and state resources alone.

Major regional systems such as WEB Water, Mni Wiconi, Mid-Dakota Rural Water System, Perkins County Rural Water System and Lewis & Clark Regional Water System required significant federal investment through the Bureau of Reclamation.

These projects were designed to serve large areas where local supplies were limited, unreliable or unable to support future growth. They also demonstrated what can happen when communities cooperate across county and even state boundaries.



CLEAN WATER, BETTER GAINS: HOW RURAL WATER SUPPORTS CATTLE PRODUCTION

For many rural South Dakota households, raising cattle is part of daily life. Whether a family manages a large cow-calf operation or keeps a smaller herd on an acreage, dependable water is one of the most important resources available to those animals.

Feed, genetics and pasture management often receive the most attention when producers look for ways to improve cattle performance. However, water can be just as important. Cattle need an adequate supply of clean water to maintain their health, regulate body temperature, digest feed and support milk production and weight gain.

According to SDSU Extension, research has found that cattle provided with clean water may spend more time grazing and less time resting than cattle drinking directly from a pond. Calves may gain as much as one-quarter pound more per day when their mothers have access to clean water. Cattle drinking clean water from tanks have also gained as much as one-half pound more per day than cattle relying on lower-quality water from ponds or dugouts. [SDSU Extension (1)]

Over an entire grazing season, even a modest improvement in daily gain can make a noticeable difference.

Water Quantity Matters

Cattle require significant amounts of water, and their needs change with their size, stage of production and the

weather. A common guideline is that dry cows and bulls need approximately one gallon of water per 100 pounds of body weight each day. Lactating cows may require about two gallons per 100 pounds. [SDSU Extension (2)]

That means a 1,300-pound lactating cow could require approximately 26 gallons of water per day. During periods of extreme heat, cattle may drink even more. University of Minnesota Extension reports that cattle under heat stress can consume more than 20 gallons per day and emphasizes that watering systems must refill quickly enough to keep up with demand. [University of Minnesota Extension (3)]

A dependable rural water connection can help provide a consistent supply during dry summers, when shallow wells, dams and dugouts may become unreliable. Producers should make sure pipes, tanks, valves and floats are sized to meet the herd's peak demand – not merely its average daily use.

Quality Matters, Too

A pond may appear to contain plenty of water, but cattle entering the water can reduce its quality. Manure, urine, stirred-up sediment and damaged banks may introduce bacteria, nutrients and other contaminants. Warm temperatures and reduced water levels can make these problems worse.

High concentrations of certain minerals can also affect

cattle performance. For example, excessive sulfate in drinking water may reduce average daily gain and feed efficiency and can contribute to serious health problems. University of Minnesota Extension notes that water containing less than 1,000 parts per million of sulfate is generally considered safe, although the animals' total sulfur intake from both feed and water must be considered. [University of Minnesota Extension (3)]

Water that has an unusual color, odor or taste – or a source that changes during drought – may need to be tested. A veterinarian, livestock nutritionist or Extension specialist can help interpret livestock water-test results.

Better Water Distribution Benefits the Pasture

Reliable water can also improve how cattle use available grass. SDSU Extension reports that cattle spend 77% of their grazing time within 1,200 feet of water. When only one water source is available, cattle may overgraze nearby areas while leaving more-distant forage underused. [SDSU Extension (1)]

Pipelines and strategically placed stock tanks can distribute cattle more evenly across a pasture. More-uniform grazing can improve forage use, spread manure nutrients across a

larger area, reduce pressure around ponds and streams, and help protect grass and soil health.

For households served by a rural water system, that reliable supply can provide benefits extending well beyond the home. Where system policies and capacity allow, rural water delivered to properly designed livestock tanks can help cattle drink more consistently, graze more efficiently and remain productive during South Dakota's hottest and driest conditions.

Before adding or expanding a livestock connection, contact your rural water system to discuss available capacity, rates, metering requirements and backflow protection. A well-planned watering system is an investment not only in convenience, but also in healthier cattle, better pasture use and the long-term productivity of the operation.

(1): extension.sdstate.edu/water-quality "Water Quality"

(2): extension.sdstate.edu/weather-and-water-intake-beef-cattle "Weather and Water Intake in Beef Cattle - SDSU Extension"

(3): extension.umn.edu/beef-feedlot/managing-heat-stress-feedlot-cattle#sources-847910 "Managing heat stress in feedlot cattle"





SDWARN

UTILITIES HELPING UTILITIES WHEN EMERGENCIES STRIKE

Clean drinking water and reliable wastewater service are essential to every South Dakota community. These services protect public health and allow homes and businesses to function normally.

Most days, local water and wastewater professionals manage these responsibilities quietly and effectively. But a major storm, flood, equipment failure, power outage, contamination event, or other emergencies can quickly exceed the personnel and resources available to a single utility.

When that happens, South Dakota utilities can turn to the South Dakota Water and Wastewater Agency Response Network (SDWARN).

What Is SDWARN?

SDWARN is a statewide mutual assistance network founded on a straightforward principle: utilities helping utilities.

The network helps water and wastewater systems prepare for natural and human-caused emergencies, organize their response, and share personnel, equipment, supplies, and technical expertise when assistance is needed. Its purpose is to help utilities respond to emergencies and restore essential services as quickly and safely as possible.

Participation is open to public and private water and wastewater utilities operating in South Dakota. A utility becomes a member when the Mutual Aid Agreement is signed by an official with legal authority to enter into contracts on behalf of the utility, such as a mayor, board chair, or president. There is no cost to participate.

Why a Specialized Water Network Is Needed

Water and wastewater emergencies often require knowledge and equipment that are not commonly available from other responding organizations.

A neighboring utility may have:

- A certified operator who can assist with treatment or system operations
- A specialized pump, generator, valve, or repair tool
- Leak-detection, excavation, or sewer-cleaning equipment
- Laboratory, sampling, or water-quality expertise
- Personnel experienced with a particular treatment process
- Replacement materials or emergency supplies
- Operators who understand state and federal water-quality requirements

Another utility is often best positioned to understand the problem, identify the correct equipment, and work safely within a water or wastewater facility. SDWARN also works in conjunction with the South Dakota Association of Rural Water Systems, whose field staff regularly assist communities with operational, technical, and emergency related challenges.

Emergencies Covered by SDWARN

The SDWARN agreement defines an emergency broadly. It may include a natural or human-caused event that threatens life, property, public health, or a utility's ability to continue operating.

The agreement is intended for situations that are, or could reasonably become, beyond the affected utility's ability to manage with its own personnel, equipment, and facilities.

How Mutual Assistance Works

Before an emergency occurs, each SDWARN member identifies an authorized official such as the manager or assistant manager who may request, offer, decline, or withdraw assistance. Members also maintain emergency contact information and identify resources that may be available to help another utility.

When an emergency occurs, the authorized official may contact another participating utility and request personnel, equipment, or supplies.

The responding utility evaluates the request and determines whether it has resources available. Membership does not require a utility to respond. Each utility retains complete discretion to decide whether it can safely assist without jeopardizing service to its own community.

If assistance is available, the responding utility communicates what resources it can provide and when those resources are expected to arrive.

SDWARN and SDARWS Working Together

SDWARN provides the mutual aid network that allows water and wastewater utilities to assist one another during emergencies. That response is strengthened by the technical resources of the South Dakota Association of



Rural Water Systems.

SDARWS Circuit Riders, wastewater technicians, source water protection specialists, and trainers work with utilities across the state and can help assess problems, troubleshoot system failures, locate leaks, protect drinking water sources, and connect communities with needed personnel and equipment.

SDWARN also maintains a limited inventory of emergency response equipment, including portable pumps. When those resources are combined with SDARWS field expertise and equipment, utilities are often able to respond more quickly, reduce damage, and restore service sooner.

Together, SDWARN and SDARWS provide communities with both a formal mutual aid network and experienced technical support when the unexpected occurs.

Preparation Before the Emergency

The strongest mutual aid programs are built before disaster strikes.

SDWARN helps participating systems:

- Develop relationships with neighboring utilities.
- Maintain current emergency contact information.
- Identify available personnel, equipment, and supplies.
- Establish procedures for requesting and providing assistance.
- Coordinate with emergency-management agencies.
- Support training and emergency-response planning.
- Reduce administrative delays during a crisis.

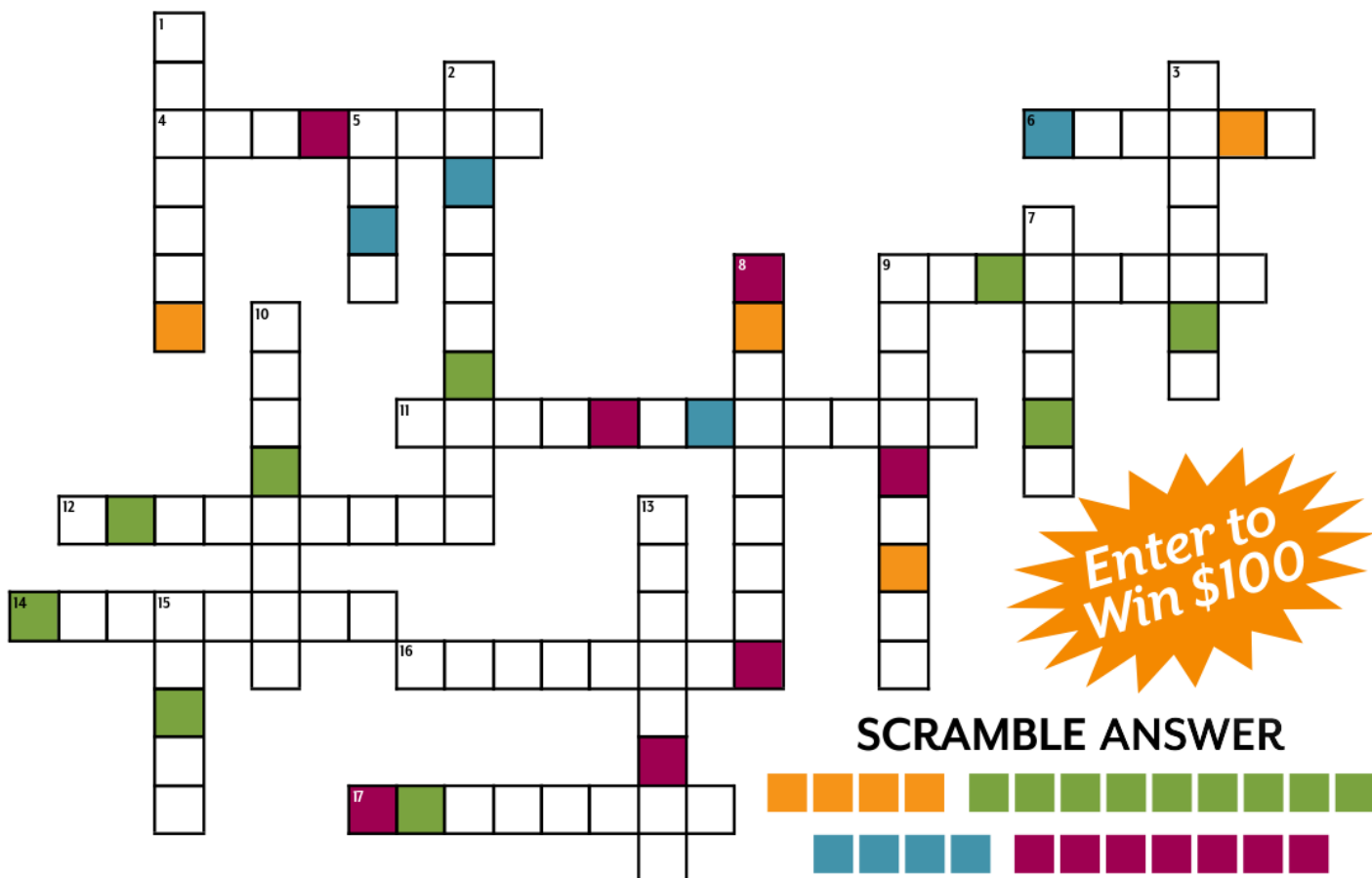
What SDWARN Means for Consumers

SDWARN reflects a tradition familiar throughout South Dakota: neighbors helping neighbors. By establishing a dependable process for utilities to share personnel and resources, the network strengthens the resilience of water and wastewater systems and the communities that depend on them.

For consumers, that can mean shorter service interruptions, reduced damage, continued protection of drinking water quality, and a faster return to normal.

RURAL WATER CROSSWORD & WORD SCRAMBLE CONTEST

LOCAL MASCOTS



ACROSS

4. Miller's mascot sounds like someone rounding up cattle
6. Watertown teams compete under this sharp-pointed nickname
9. Gregory athletes take their name from this powerful primate
11. Aberdeen Central teams soar under this two-word mascot
12. Aberdeen Roncalli athletes use this knightly nickname
14. Rapid City Central teams share a name

with someone who repairs shoes

16. Madison athletes proudly answer to this tough canine name
17. Hamlin teams compete under this energetic mascot name

DOWN

1. This Mitchell mascot is a nod to South Dakota agriculture
2. Newell's unusual mascot reflects the importance of water to agriculture
3. Brookings athletes share their name with this wild feline
5. Brandon Valley teams are named for this

elusive wild cat

7. Huron athletes take the field with this striped mascot
8. Redfield teams are named for South Dakota's famous game bird
9. Pierre's mascot fits perfectly for South Dakota's capital city
10. Yankton girls are represented by this speedy animal
13. Sturgis Brown has one of South Dakota's most unusual mascot names
15. Yankton boys compete under the name of this male deer



RULES: Use the colored squares in the puzzle to solve the word scramble above. Call your Rural Water System (See page 2 for contact information), **scan the QR code**, or **submit online at www.sdarws.com/crossword** with the correct phrase by October 15, 2026 to be entered into the \$100 drawing.

Only one entry allowed per address/household. You must be a member of a participating rural water system to be eligible for the prize. Your information will only be used to notify the winner, and will not be shared or sold.

Congratulations to Joshua Anderson from BDM Rural Water who had the correct phrase of "ADVENTURE BEGINS OUTSIDE" for July 2026.



RURAL WATER

ACROSS SOUTH DAKOTA

SOUTH LINCOLN RURAL WATER CELEBRATES NEW TREATMENT PLANT

South Lincoln Rural Water welcomed customers and community members to an open house on June 17, offering tours of its new water treatment plant near Beresford. The new facility represents an important investment in providing safe, reliable drinking water today while preparing for the future needs of the growing system.

As South Lincoln Rural Water added new wells to meet increasing demand, higher levels of iron and manganese created the need for additional treatment. The new plant is designed to remove those naturally occurring minerals, helping maintain the high-quality water customers expect. It can currently treat up to 4.5 million gallons of water each

day and can be expanded as water needs continue to grow.

Reliability was also a major focus of the project. Backup power and redundant systems were included in the design to help keep water flowing even if equipment or electrical problems occur. The plant was also designed so portions of the treatment process can be taken offline for maintenance while the rest of the facility continues operating.

For South Lincoln Rural Water customers, the project is about more than a new building. It is an investment in dependable service, improved treatment and a water system built to serve homes, farms, businesses and communities for many years to come.



Manager: continued from page 2

These adjustments are designed to keep pace with rising costs while allowing WR/LJ to continue investing in the reliability and longevity of our water system. We remain committed to providing quality service at the lowest reasonable cost.

If you have any questions about the 2026 rate schedule, please contact the WRLJ Rural Water office. We appreciate your continued support and the opportunity to serve our members.

**In observance of the following holidays,
WR/LJ Rural Water offices will be closed on
the following days:**

October 12, 2026 – Native American Day

November 26, 2026 – Thanksgiving Day

November 27, 2026 – Day after Thanksgiving

In case of an emergency,
please call the Murdo area at 530-0932
or the Philip area at 530-1136 for assistance.

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS SAY ‘THANK YOU’

I am honored to be a recipient of the 2026 scholarship, and I would like to express my sincere gratitude for your continued support of students like me.

As I work hard this summer and prepare to transition into attendance at the University of South Dakota this fall in their Health Science program, your scholarship has opened a door and the prospect of a brighter future, and will play a key role in shaping me into a successful person in the future. Donors like you make life brighter for us, and I can only hope that one day, I too will be in a position to bring a smile to another student.

I cannot express my gratitude enough, and I want you to know that your generous support will see me achieve my dreams.

Thank You,
Aleksa Garcia

Thank you so much for choosing me as the recipient for the West River Lyman-Jones Rural Water Scholarship.

Creston Burns

Thank you for awarding me the West River/Lyman-Jones Rural Water Systems scholarship. I truly appreciate your support and investment in my future. This scholarship will help me continue my education and work toward my goals and I am very grateful for your kindness.

Shaylee Porch

I would like to sincerely thank you for your generous scholarship. I am truly grateful for your support and investment in my education at South Dakota State University, where I plan to major in Agricultural Business. I am very excited to continue learning about an industry that is a very important part of my life. Thank you again for your generosity in supporting me and my goals. I truly appreciate your kindness and will work very hard to make the most of this great opportunity.

Sincerely,

Austan Kjerstad

MEET OUR NEWEST DIRECTOR - DANA KERNS

Dana Kerns grew up in the Philip area and graduated from Philip High School in 2006. After high school he attended college before beginning his career in agriculture.

For the past 11 ½ years he worked in the crop insurance industry for Crew Agency Ltd. In addition, he and his family also operate a cow/calf ranch near Belvidere.

Dana chose to serve on the board because he believes dependable rural water is essential to our communities and agriculture. As a board member, his goal is to help ensure the system remains reliable, financially sound, and well managed for years to come. He is committed to representing the interests of our members and supporting responsible decisions that protect and strengthen our rural water system for future generations.



Visit us online at: www.wrlj.com

DANR RECOGNIZES WEST RIVER/LYMAN-JONES FOR DRINKING WATER EXCELLENCE



The South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources (DANR) announced that the West River/Lyman-Jones Rural Water System and the system's certified operators have been awarded a Drinking Water Certificate of Achievement Award.

The award is for outstanding water system operations and environmental compliance with state drinking water standards for the past year.

"Safe and dependable drinking water plays an important role in protecting public health and supporting economic growth," said DANR Secretary Hunter Roberts. "This recognition highlights the hard work of our drinking water professionals across South Dakota who keep these systems running every day."

This award honors public water systems and their operators that met all state drinking water standards, monitoring, reporting, and certification requirements in 2025.

THANK YOU, VERYL PROKOP

After 26 years of dedicated service, WR/LJ Rural Water proudly recognizes Veryl Prokop as he retires from the Board of Directors.

Veryl, a Jackson County rancher and retired educator, joined the Board in May 2000 and has been a steadfast advocate for the members of WR/LJ ever since. During his tenure, he served as a board member through 13 of the system's 20 years of major project construction, helping guide important improvements and expansion of the rural water system. He also served on the Board when the City of Kadoka became a bulk water customer, an important milestone in the continued growth and success of WR/LJ and his hometown.

Throughout his years of service, Veryl brought a strong commitment to providing reliable, high-quality water service to our members in western South Dakota. The Board of Directors and staff extend their sincere appreciation to Veryl for his 26 years of faithful service and wish him and his family the very best.





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WATER MATTERS

LAKES IN SOUTH DAKOTA



According to Webster's Dictionary, a lake is "a considerable inland body of standing water." Our neighbor to the east (Minnesota) is commonly referred to as the "Land of 10,000 Lakes," but the real count is closer to 15,000. By contrast, lakes are a relatively rare commodity in South Dakota, and even the smallest bodies of water can be treasured recreational resources.

South Dakota lakes fall into two basic categories. In the eastern part of the state, lakes exist where there are natural depressions in the land surface. In most cases, these depressions formed when one or more large chunks of the last glaciers that covered the area were left behind. When they finally melted, the resulting "hole" in the landscape filled with water and a lake was formed. Pickerel Lake in Day County, Lake Kampeska near Watertown, Wall Lake near Sioux Falls, along with all of the Round and Mud Lakes (most eastern SD counties have at least one of these!) formed in this manner.

In western South Dakota, natural depressions are quite rare, and most lakes owe their existence to human efforts. In order to create bodies of standing water, barriers have been built across the valleys of streams and river to hold back water that would otherwise flow away. These can range in scale from small stock dams holding back a few acres of water for livestock, all the way up to the Lake Oahe on the Missouri River, which covers over 370,000 acres and backs up water as far as Bismarck, North Dakota. Sheridan and Deerfield Lakes in the Black Hills, along with Lake Sharp and Lake Francis Case on the Missouri River were formed in a similar manner.

In a state where water is often a scarce resource, lakes provide opportunities of residents and tourists alike to enjoy a peaceful day or two away from the hustle and bustle of daily life. What's your favorite South Dakota lake?

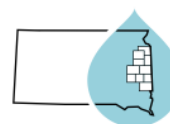


Lake Herman, Madison, SD



Lewis & Clark Lake, Tabor, SD

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