

BDM

RURAL WATER SYSTEM

Quality On Tap!

April 2026 | Volume 21, Issue 4

**SOUTH DAKOTA'S
GROWING PFAS
RESPONSE**

**SIMPLE WAYS
CONSUMERS CAN
KEEP WATER COSTS
DOWN**

**PICK-SLOAN AT 80:
A SOUTH DAKOTA
PERSPECTIVE ON
PROMISES, PURPOSES,
AND BALANCE**

**BDM'S 46TH
ANNUAL
MEETING**

**Monday,
March 30, 2026**

**Britton Event Center
1203 3rd Street
Britton, SD**

See page 15 for more info

**ATTENTION:
SCHOLARSHIPS
AVAILABLE**

**SEE PAGE 13 FOR
APPLICATION DETAILS**

FROM THE MANAGER

Tom Jones
Manager, BDM Rural Water System, Inc.



“It was the best of times; it was the worst of times.” Along with an old Snoopy standby, this is the opening line of one of the most iconic novels of all time. If you have ever started a new position with a new employer in the middle of winter, it also describes what those first months can feel like. I have also used the phrase “drinking from a firehose” several times lately to describe my first months as the newest manager at BDM Rural Water.

Greetings. My name is Tom Jones, and I took over the management responsibilities at BDM from longtime manager Rod Kappes upon his retirement on December 31. I thought this month I would share a little about myself, provide an update on what is happening at BDM, and highlight some items to be aware of going forward.

I was raised on the family farm south of Britton, SD, and I remember well the first BDM pipes going into the ground – and when we were finally able to quit running the 400-foot-deep well that gave us no end of trouble. We could simply drink good, clean water that didn’t stain everything in the house, including our teeth. I also remember very well that I did not like the taste at the time, as our hard mineral water was delicious to me back then. I cannot imagine what it would taste like now, if I could even drink it, but that is how youth work and you love that to which you are accustomed.

I attended SDSU and graduated with a degree in Range Science with a business emphasis. I farmed for six years, but after the unexpected loss of my father, I decided to change my plans. I went into government service and spent the last 20-odd years working for USDA – first with the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Sisseton and Forman, ND, and then with the Rural Utilities Service on the DC staff for the past ten years. With RUS, I worked with electric cooperatives on financing issues, including all the cooperatives that provide electricity to our BDM service territory and to our pumping sites.

When Rod told me he was going to retire, the stars aligned, and I was able to make the transition to BDM seamlessly – starting October 1 of last year and officially taking over January 1, 2026. I am extremely excited to be here and am working hard to learn everything I need to know to support the team and plan for what the next ten years at BDM will look like. I am stepping into an organization that is financially solid and poised for success, guided by a focused mission.

So, what have I seen at BDM so far? First of all, the team here is busy. They hustle hard all day long to cover a lot of issues over a very large footprint. Winter has slowed things down somewhat, but it hasn’t made things any easier. Your staff is dedicated to providing you with the very best service possible, and they are responsive. I was fortunate to spend a couple of months last fall in the field with

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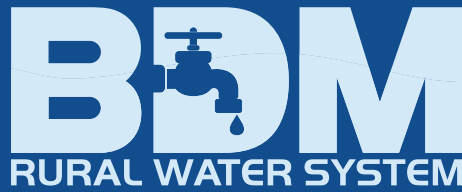
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BDM MEMBERSHIP CORNER



46th ANNUAL MEETING

Be sure to join us for BDM's 46th Annual Meeting to be held at 6:00 pm on Monday, March 30th at the Britton Event Center located at 1203 3rd Street in Britton. There will be no election, as nominating petitions for the incumbent Directors for Districts Two and Five were the only ones received. Supper will be served. In case of inclement weather, the meeting will be held on Monday, April 6th at the Event Center.

More info can be found on page 15.

THE BDM OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED:

**MONDAY, MAY 25TH
(MEMORIAL DAY)**

As always, if you have an emergency, please call the office at 605-448-5417 or toll free at 1-800-448-9236. You will then receive a message with the telephone number of the employee on call. Please call that person for assistance in an emergency only.

KAPPES RETIRES



Congratulations to Rodney Kappes, who retired from BDM Rural Water at the end of December. Rod has served as BDM's General Manager for the past 10 years, having established a strong financial foundation for BDM. Rod joins his wife Patricia in retirement, and is looking forward to attending his grandchildren's activities, spending more time at his family farm, traveling, and maybe catching a fish or two! We wish Rod a long and happy retirement!

BDM RURAL WATER SYSTEM, INC. RATE SCHEDULE (EFFECTIVE 7/1/2025)

GENERAL USER RATES:

Debt Service monthly payment: \$46.00 per hookup per month

\$7.25 per thousand gallons for the first 2,000 gallons used per month

\$6.25 per thousand gallons for the next 5,000 gallons used per month

\$5.25 per thousand gallons for the next 8,000 gallons used per month

\$4.25 per thousand gallons for over 15,000 gallons used per month

Gallons Used Per Month	Monthly Total	Gallons Used Per Month	Monthly Total
1,000	\$ 53.25	25,000	\$ 176.25
2,000	\$ 60.50	30,000	\$ 197.50
3,000	\$ 66.75	35,000	\$ 218.75
4,000	\$ 73.00	40,000	\$240.00
5,000	\$ 79.25	45,000	\$ 261.25
6,000	\$ 85.50	50,000	\$ 282.50
7,000	\$ 91.75	55,000	\$ 303.75
8,000	\$ 97.00	60,000	\$ 325.00
9,000	\$ 102.25	65,000	\$ 346.25
10,000	\$ 107.50	70,000	\$ 367.50
11,000	\$ 112.75	75,000	\$ 388.75
12,000	\$ 118.00	80,000	\$ 410.00
13,000	\$ 123.25	85,000	\$ 431.25
14,000	\$ 128.50	90,000	\$ 452.50
15,000	\$ 133.75	95,000	\$ 473.75
16,000	\$ 138.00	100,000	\$495.00
17,000	\$ 142.25	125,000	\$ 601.25
18,000	\$ 146.50	150,000	\$ 707.50
19,000	\$ 150.75	175,000	\$ 813.75
20,000	\$ 155.00	200,000	\$920.00

ALL USERS:

No water is included in the debt service payment. All water used is in addition to the monthly debt service payment. Payments are due by the 15th of the month. A \$10.00 fee applies to all payments received after that date. Service is subject to disconnection if payment is not received by the 22nd.

AFTER HOURS & WEEKENDS WATER EMERGENCIES:

Please call the BDM Office at 605-448-5417 or 1-800-448-9236 & a message will direct you to the employee on call.

WATER ENGINEERS: The People Who Help Water Help Us



In some parts of the world, fresh water is hard to find. Water engineers help solve this problem by turning salty ocean water into fresh drinking water through a process called desalination. This helps communities that live near the sea but do not have many freshwater sources.

Water engineers also protect nature. They work to keep pollution out of rivers, lakes, and oceans and help clean up messes like oil spills. By doing this, they protect fish, plants, and animals that depend on clean water to survive.

Many engineers design and build the tools that make water systems work. Pumps, pipes, filters, and valves all need to be carefully planned and maintained. Some engineers even invent new water-saving devices, like low-flow toilets or taps that turn off automatically, to help conserve water every day.

One important job water engineers do is finding leaks. A tiny leak can waste a lot of water over time. Using special equipment, engineers track down hidden leaks underground and fix them so water is not lost.

Water engineers help keep communities safe, healthy, and prepared for the future. Without them, clean water would be much harder to find and protect. If you enjoy science, building things, or helping the planet, becoming a water engineer might be a great job for you one day!

Every time you turn on the tap, take a shower, or flush a toilet, water engineers are working behind the scenes to make it all possible. Water engineers are problem-solvers who figure out how to move, clean, protect, and save water so people and nature can stay healthy.

Some water engineers focus on how water moves through the world. Rain does not always fall where people need it, and sometimes too much water can cause floods. These engineers study rivers, pipes, and underground water to help guide water safely to homes and communities while also protecting people from flooding.

Other water engineers work on cleaning water. Water from rivers, lakes, and wells often needs to be treated before it is safe to drink. Engineers design special systems that remove dirt, germs, and harmful chemicals so the water coming out of your faucet is clean and safe. They also help clean used water so it can safely return to the environment.

Water Word Search

S	E	W	E	R	E	W	L	M	H	S	L	T	C
L	I	F	E	E	A	T	F	E	R	E	S	N	L
E	I	D	L	I	F	P	E	F	M	P	I	R	E
H	Y	D	R	A	N	T	E	U	N	U	R	H	A
H	A	T	P	I	A	D	W	T	A	M	I	T	N
W	N	L	I	P	N	M	H	S	P	P	V	H	F
F	A	U	C	E	T	K	A	L	D	S	E	D	E
S	T	R	E	A	M	V	A	E	A	F	R	W	W
M	A	V	H	T	L	A	E	H	T	N	E	A	T
A	R	M	E	T	E	R	E	U	T	L	E	T	C
E	E	A	R	E	T	L	I	F	L	A	Y	H	L
I	E	I	S	R	W	R	P	S	F	A	P	T	D
T	C	T	F	A	F	H	E	S	L	A	K	E	A
E	W	A	T	E	R	S	P	I	P	E	S	P	I

Did You Know?

- ◆ Water engineers help clean water so it can be used again and again.
- ◆ Water travels through miles of pipes before it reaches your home.
- ◆ Engineers use computers, science, and math to solve water problems every day.
- ◆ Water engineering jobs help protect rivers, lakes, and oceans.

RIVER	FAUCET	METER	SEWER	CLEAN
DRINK	HEALTH	LIFE	WATER	WELLS
TAP	LAKE	PIPES	STREAM	PUMPS
HYDRANT				FILTER



Simple Ways Consumers Can Keep Water Costs Down

Water is essential to everyday life, but that doesn't mean it has to strain your household budget. With a few smart habits and small upgrades, consumers can reduce water use, lower utility bills, and still enjoy reliable service.

Fix Leaks Promptly

Even small leaks can waste thousands of gallons of water each year. A dripping faucet, running toilet, or leaking outdoor spigot adds up quickly. Regularly check toilets for silent leaks and repair them as soon as possible.

Use Water-Efficient Fixtures

Installing high-efficiency toilets, low-flow showerheads, and water-saving faucet aerators can significantly reduce indoor water use without sacrificing performance. Many of these upgrades are inexpensive and pay for themselves over time.

Be Smart with Outdoor Watering

Outdoor use is often the largest source of water consumption. Water lawns early in the morning or late in the evening to reduce evaporation. Use sprinklers efficiently, avoid watering pavement, and consider drought-tolerant landscaping that requires less water overall.

Run Appliances Efficiently

Dishwashers and washing machines use the most water

when they're running. Wait until you have full loads before starting them, and use eco- or water-saving cycles when available. High-efficiency appliances can also reduce water and energy costs.

Practice Everyday Conservation

Simple habits make a difference. Turn off the tap while brushing your teeth, take shorter showers, and only use running water when necessary. These small actions add up over time and help keep utility bills manageable.

Know Your Water Bill

Review your water bill regularly to understand how much water you're using and when usage spikes occur. Catching unusual increases early can help identify leaks or inefficient habits before they become costly.

Protect Your Plumbing

Cold weather and aging pipes can lead to costly breaks and water loss. Insulate pipes, disconnect hoses before winter, and maintain plumbing to avoid unexpected repair expenses and wasted water.

By staying aware and making thoughtful choices, consumers can control water use, reduce monthly costs, and help ensure a sustainable water supply for their community – all without major lifestyle changes.

South Dakota's Growing PFAS Response

Protecting Water from Source to Tap

Across South Dakota's rivers, wetlands, aquifers, and rural landscapes, water connects communities in visible and invisible ways. From headwater streams and riparian corridors to municipal wells and rural water towers, protecting water quality requires attention at both upstream and downstream points. Today, one of the most significant emerging challenges to that protection effort is PFAS.

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, often called "forever chemicals," are synthetic compounds that have been used for decades in firefighting foams, nonstick products, water-resistant fabrics, and industrial processes. Their durability made them valuable in manufacturing, but that same durability allows them to persist in soil, groundwater, and surface water long after their use.

With the finalization of national drinking water standards in 2024, PFAS monitoring has moved from research and voluntary testing into a new era of regulatory implementation. The U.S.

Environmental Protection Agency established enforceable limits of 4.0 parts per trillion for PFOA and PFOS, along with a hazard index approach for several additional PFAS compounds. These levels are measured in parts per trillion — concentrations so small that they require extraordinary sensitivity to protect public health.

The new rule establishes a clear timeline. Public water

systems have three years from the rule's effective date to complete their initial PFAS monitoring, with the first round of compliance sampling beginning in 2027. If initial monitoring results show concentrations above Maximum Contaminant Levels, systems then have up to five years from promulgation to achieve full compliance, including installing treatment if necessary. This means communities must meet the new standards by 2029. The

phased approach allows time for data collection, engineering design, funding coordination, and construction, while maintaining continued oversight and public transparency.

In South Dakota, the response is unfolding through coordinated effort rather than isolated action. The South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources serves as the state's drinking water primacy agency and is leading implementation of the new standards. The Department is organizing monitoring schedules for public water systems statewide, guiding communities through compliance timelines, and administering funding to support potential treatment or alternative water sources.

Under the federal rule, monitoring extends to all regulated community and non-transient noncommunity Public Water Systems across the state. Every

system must complete initial PFAS sampling within the established timeline to create a consistent statewide baseline. This comprehensive approach ensures that both large municipalities and small rural systems contribute to a clearer understanding of PFAS occurrence across South Dakota's diverse water sources.

While regulation sets the framework, implementation

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happens locally. The South Dakota Association of Rural Water Systems provides hands-on technical assistance to rural and small-town systems that may not have dedicated laboratory staff or environmental compliance departments. PFAS sampling requires careful handling, strict contamination controls, and precise documentation. SDARWS staff assist with coordinating sample events, ensuring proper procedures are followed, and helping operators interpret results. For many communities, that support bridges the gap between regulation and practical field work.

Laboratory capacity within the state is also expanding. The South Dakota Public Health Laboratory continues strengthening its environmental testing capabilities as demand grows. Historically, many PFAS samples were shipped out of state for drinking water analysis, increasing turnaround time and costs, but soon the South Dakota Public Health Laboratory will be able to run PFAS analysis on-site. Building in-state proficiency enhances responsiveness and reinforces local oversight of drinking water quality.

At South Dakota State University, researchers and laboratory scientists are working to expand certification for PFAS analysis while advancing research on the presence of these compounds in soils, biosolids, and other environmental media. Their efforts help bridge the gap between drinking water data and the broader landscape, examining how PFAS move through watersheds, interact with soils, and persist over time.

In addition, SDSU is developing a surface water method capable of analyzing up to 40 PFAS compounds using EPA Method 1633. This method is much more expansive than the compounds currently required for drinking water monitoring, providing a broader understanding of PFAS occurrence across environmental systems.

Further west, the South Dakota School of Mines & Technology focuses on characterization and understanding how PFAS behave in groundwater and surface water while exploring innovative treatment approaches. Because these compounds resist natural breakdown, research into filtration technologies and emerging destruction methods is critical for communities that may one day need removal systems.

Private laboratories such as Mid-Continent Testing Laboratories in Rapid City continue to provide essential support for routine water quality monitoring across the state. Even as specialized PFAS analysis expands, local laboratory services remain foundational to maintaining strong water quality data from source to distribution system.

What emerges is a layered response that mirrors the structure of a watershed itself. Federal standards establish protective benchmarks and timelines. State agencies coordinate oversight and assist with funding avenues. Technical assistance providers work alongside operators in the field. Universities advance scientific understanding. Private laboratories maintain day-to-day analytical support. Each layer strengthens the whole.

PFAS regulation represents a new chapter in drinking water protection, but it is also part of a larger story — one that recognizes the connection between land, water, infrastructure, and community health. As monitoring moves toward the 2027 sampling milestone and communities prepare for the 2029 compliance deadline, South Dakota's collaborative approach reflects a commitment not only to meeting federal standards but to protecting water at every point along its journey.

From riparian corridors to rural wells, stewardship and water quality remain the common thread.



Pick-Sloan at 80: A South Dakota Perspective on Promises, Purposes, and Balance

Few river systems in the United States are as complex or consequential as the Missouri River. For South Dakota, the river is not merely a navigation channel or a line on a hydrologic map. It is a federally managed system that reshaped our geography, redefined regional economies, and required profound sacrifice from our citizens, tribal nations, and communities.

The Missouri River Mainstem System, operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, exists because of the 1944 Flood Control Act, commonly known as the Pick-Sloan Act. More than 80 years later, that law still governs how the river is managed. Its authorized purposes and federal obligations remain in force. Time has passed, but the commitments have not expired.

This article presents a South Dakota perspective, firm and fair, recognizing that every basin state depends on the river and that long-term success requires balance, clarity, and mutual respect.

A System Built on Upper Basin Land and Sacrifice

South Dakota is home to four of the six major Missouri River mainstem dams authorized under Pick-Sloan: Oahe, Big Bend, Fort Randall, and Gavins Point. Together with Fort Peck in Montana and Garrison in North Dakota, these dams created large reservoirs designed to regulate flows, reduce flooding, generate power, and support multiple beneficial uses.

The construction of these dams came at extraordinary cost, a cost borne almost entirely by the Upper Basin states of Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

Approximately 1.7 million acres of land were inundated in these three states. Prime farmland, ranchland, transportation corridors, entire communities, and tribal lands were permanently flooded. The economic base of numerous counties was fundamentally altered. Tribal nations experienced disproportionate impacts through the loss of ancestral lands, cultural sites, and economic opportunity.

These were not temporary disruptions. They were permanent geographic changes undertaken so the entire basin could benefit from a stabilized and federally managed river system.

The Pick-Sloan Framework, Coequal Purposes

Pick-Sloan emerged during World War II as a compromise between competing federal visions for managing the Missouri River. Congress authorized the river, along with its facilities and structures, to serve multiple coequal purposes, including flood control, navigation, hydroelectric power generation, irrigation, municipal and industrial water supply, recreation, water quality, and fish and wildlife.

These purposes were not ranked in order of superiority. They were intended to be balanced.

The Act further states that navigation shall not conflict with beneficial consumptive uses in other basin states. That language remains part of federal law and reflects Congress's intent that no single use dominate the system at the expense of others.

Realized Benefits and Unfulfilled Promises

South Dakota acknowledges that many benefits of Pick-Sloan have been realized.

Flood control has reduced catastrophic damage in both upper and lower basin communities. Hydropower generation has exceeded early expectations, producing more than 2,600 megawatts of capacity across the system. Reservoir-based recreation has become one of South Dakota's leading industries, ranking just behind agriculture in statewide economic impact.

Major drinking water systems, including WEB, Mid-Dakota, Mni Wiconi, and Lewis and Clark, have delivered reliable municipal and rural water to hundreds of thousands of people.

Yet from a South Dakota perspective, some cornerstone promises remain largely unfulfilled.

Irrigation development was central to the Pick-Sloan bargain. South Dakota was promised irrigation potential approaching one million acres. Today, only a small fraction of that acreage has been developed. Similar shortfalls occurred in Montana and North Dakota. The large-scale irrigation development envisioned in 1944 did not materialize as planned, and the anticipated economic benefits were never fully realized.

Hydropower presents another question of proportional

benefit. The dams producing that power are located in the Upper Basin, primarily in South Dakota, yet substantial portions of that energy are exported outside the basin. States that bore the land losses do not always see benefits commensurate with the infrastructure they host.

These realities do not negate the system's successes. However, they shape how many South Dakotans view the federal government's ongoing obligations and the pace at which unresolved commitments have been addressed.

Flow Contributions and Fair Use

Recent opinion pieces in Missouri have suggested that Upper Basin water use threatens downstream users and navigation interests. A clear understanding of the facts is important.

All basin states contribute water to the system. The Upper Basin states, Wyoming, Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota, consistently contribute at least half of the total flow.

Current and planned Upper Basin water uses represent a very small fraction of total system flows. Even at full build out, North Dakota's Red River Valley Water Supply project would utilize approximately 165 cubic feet per second. By comparison, average flow near the Missouri River's confluence with the Mississippi exceeds 94,000 cubic feet per second. That diversion represents less than two tenths of one percent of downstream flow.

Earlier projects involving approximately 20 cubic feet per second were challenged and dismissed in court. While North Dakota has drawn particular attention because some projects cross a continental divide within the state, those uses remain small in scale and subject to regulation.

From a South Dakota standpoint, small, regulated, in-state and in-basin uses do not meaningfully impair downstream access. They fall within reasonable state water development consistent with federal authorization.

It is also important to recognize that all authorized purposes except navigation are enjoyed by every basin state. Navigation benefits primarily accrue to downstream states. That does not diminish their value, but it reinforces the coequal structure Congress established.

A Shared Concern, Export Outside the Basin

A concern that can unite Upper and Lower Basin states is the potential for large-scale export of Missouri River water outside the basin states entirely.

South Dakota's position is that water contributed by basin states, and infrastructure hosted by Upper Basin states, should first serve reasonable in-basin uses. Proposals to move significant volumes of water permanently outside the basin warrant careful review and coordination among all basin states.

In basin cooperation strengthens every state's ability to advocate for balanced federal management.

Operations in a Changing Climate

Extended drought, cumulative reservoir deficits, evaporation, and aging infrastructure affect every basin

state. Winter release reductions can impact downstream power plant cooling. Low-flow navigation seasons affect agricultural transport. Reservoir recovery after prolonged deficits can take years.

These pressures are driven primarily by hydrologic variability and long-term system design, not by minimal upstream municipal uses.

The Missouri River system was engineered for mid twentieth century conditions. It now operates in a twenty-first century climate and economic environment. That reality underscores the need for flexible, balanced management and continued collaboration among basin states.

Eighty Years Later, Obligations Remain

More than eight decades have passed since Pick-Sloan became law. Institutional memory may fade, but statutory obligations remain binding.

Upper Basin states sacrificed land, tax base, communities, and cultural resources so the entire basin could benefit from flood control, hydropower, recreation, water supply, and navigation stability.

South Dakota's position is grounded in mutual recognition and respect. Each basin state should pursue reasonable development within its borders, so long as such use does not interfere with prior rights of others and acknowledges the foundational sacrifices that made the system possible.

Balance does not mean subordination. It means honoring all authorized purposes, addressing unfinished commitments where feasible, and ensuring federal management reflects both historical sacrifice and contemporary needs.

A Shared Future

The Missouri River remains one of the nation's most significant water systems. The six mainstem reservoirs located in the Upper Basin hold approximately 73.4-million-acre feet of storage capacity. Their flows support agriculture, municipal systems, industry, wildlife, recreation, and transportation.

For South Dakota, the path forward is clear:

- Recognize that the Upper Basin contributed both the water and the land that built the system.
- Manage the river according to its coequal authorized purposes.
- Respect reasonable in-basin and in-state water development.
- Remain vigilant regarding large-scale export outside the basin.
- Pursue collaboration rather than division among basin states, agencies, and stakeholders.

The Pick-Sloan Act reshaped the Missouri River Basin in 1944. Its promises were made in exchange for real and lasting sacrifices.

Eighty years later, those promises still matter!

KINGBROOK RURAL WATER SYSTEM

In 1974, a group of local leaders began exploring the idea of creating a rural water system to serve residents in portions of Brookings, Kingsbury, Lake, and Miner Counties. After a preliminary engineering study confirmed the project's feasibility, the proposal was submitted for federal funding consideration. With strong community support and more than 1,500 water users signed on, Kingbrook Rural Water System was officially formed, launching a project that would reshape access to safe drinking water in eastern South Dakota.

One of the earliest and most forward-thinking decisions made by Kingbrook's Board of Directors was to partner with Brookings-Deuel Rural Water System to construct a shared water treatment plant. Built just north of Bruce in the late 1970s, the facility continues to serve both systems today. As demand grew, two additional treatment plants were constructed near DeSmet and Chester, creating a strong foundation for future expansion.

By the time original construction was completed in 1981, Kingbrook had grown into a large, interconnected system of pipelines, wells, treatment plants, storage reservoirs, and meters. The project ultimately served nearly 2,200 connections at a total cost of \$12.4 million — a remarkable achievement for a young rural water system.

Meeting Growing Demand

Throughout the 1990s and beyond, demand for clean, reliable drinking water continued to increase. Many rural residents were seeking alternatives to private wells affected by nitrates and other contaminants, and small communities began looking to Kingbrook as a dependable water source.

In response, the system invested in major upgrades, including improvements at all three treatment plants, additional supply wells, expanded storage capacity, and system extensions to serve new areas. These efforts allowed Kingbrook to grow from its original four-county footprint to the eleven counties it serves today.

Kingbrook also adapted to meet the needs of a diverse customer base, including agricultural operations such as cattle feedlots, hog confinements, and dairies, while continuing to provide high-quality drinking water to homes and communities.

Today's System

From its original 2,200 customers, Kingbrook Rural Water System has grown to serve more than 5,758 individual service connections. The system now provides bulk water service to eight municipalities and individual service to fourteen small communities. With more than 3,100 miles of pipeline, 7.3 million gallons of storage capacity, and annual water sales exceeding 900 million gallons, Kingbrook is one of the largest rural water systems in South Dakota.

Protecting its water sources has remained a top priority. Kingbrook draws water from wells near its three treatment plants and has implemented extensive wellhead protection measures, including purchasing land surrounding well fields to safeguard water quality for generations to come.

Investing in the Future

As water demand continued to rise, Kingbrook submitted a major funding application in late 2021 to address facilities operating beyond their firm capacity and to plan for future needs. In 2022, the system received \$37,722,298.00 in funding support through a combination of low-interest loans and grant assistance, allowing Kingbrook to move forward with a multi-phase improvement project.

The project includes nine planned improvement components, several of which are already complete or nearing completion. While inflation and high regional construction demand have increased costs, the investment is proving essential to ensuring long-term reliability and affordability.

A Commitment to Safe Drinking Water

Headquartered in Arlington, Kingbrook Rural Water System now serves approximately 2000 square miles, stretching east to west from Brookings to Iroquois and north to south from Hayti to Montrose. For more than 50 years, the system has remained committed to one mission: providing safe, reliable, and affordable drinking water to the rural communities it serves.

Through careful planning, strategic partnerships, and continued investment in infrastructure, Kingbrook is well-positioned to meet today's challenges — and tomorrow's needs — while continuing to protect the health and quality of life of its members.

KINGBROOK RURAL WATER SYSTEM



Kingbrook was named Rural Water System of the Year by the South Dakota Association of Rural Water Systems in 2025.



DIRECTORS:

- Scott Tolzin**
Chairman – District 2, DeSmet, SD
- Brian Christensen**
Vice-Chairman – District 3, Arlington, SD
- Corey Dorhout**
Secretary/Treasurer – District 6, Madison, SD
- Norman Andenas**
District 7, Howard, SD
- Barry Loomis**
District 4, Bruce, SD
- Doyle Renaas**
District 5, Nunda, SD
- Damon Stormo**
District 1, Lake Norden, SD

STAFF:

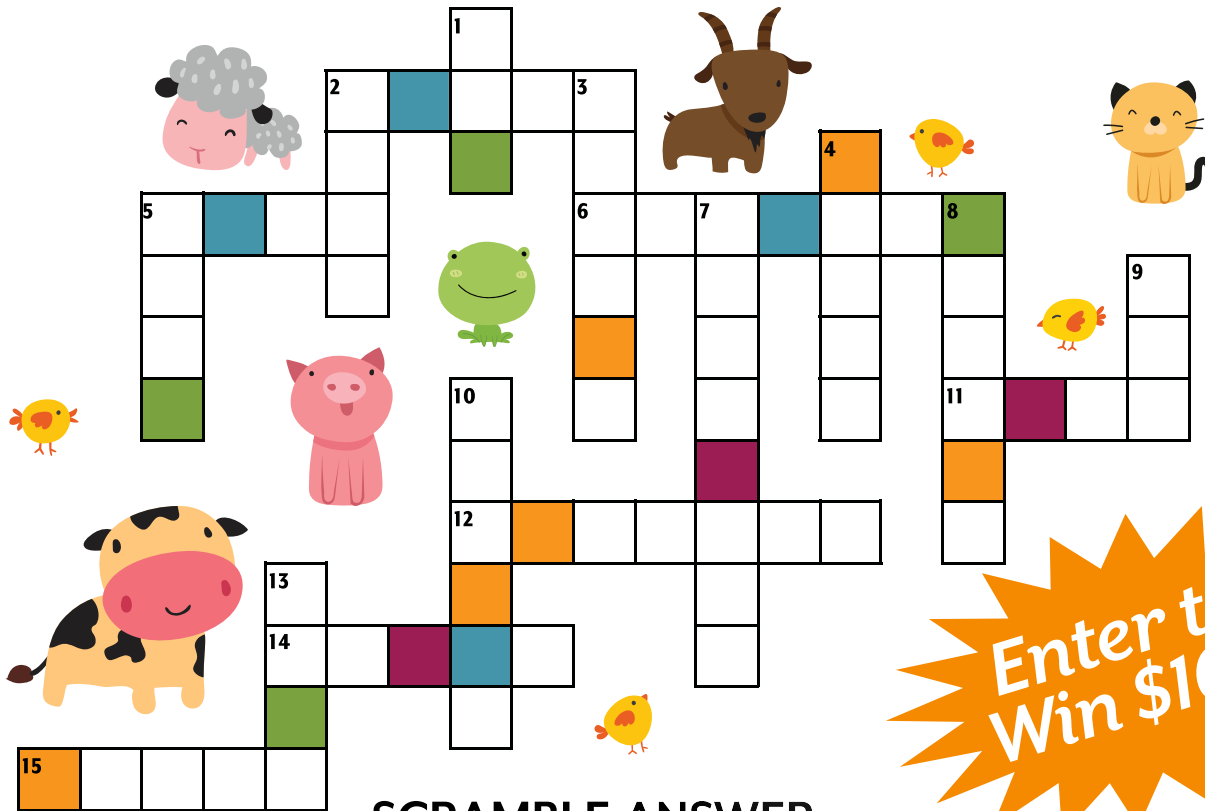
- Heath Thompson**, General Manager
- Brian Callies**, Operations Manager
- Jon Ekern**, Treatment Plant Manager
- Jerrud Kruse**, Senior Operations Specialist
- Bill Osterberg**, Treatment Plant Specialist
- Logan Calmus**, Treatment Plant Specialist
- Chad Bjerke**, Operations Specialist
- Mike Warner**, Operations Specialist
- Corey Clelland**, Operations Specialist
- Alan Brown**, Operations Specialist
- Nick Kramer**, Operations Specialist
- Aaron Jeffrey**, Operations Specialist
- Caleb Clark**, Operations Specialist
- Reid Cummings**, Operations Specialist
- Benjamin Jones**, Operations Specialist
- Tabitha Duffy**, Office Manager
- Danielle Zeck**, Bookkeeping & Accounting Specialist
- Teresa Mohr**, Accounts Receivable Specialist

STATISTICS:

- Hookups:** 5,695
- Miles of Pipeline:** 3,000
- Water Source:** Wells
- Counties Served:** Portions of Beadle, Brookings, Clark, Kingsbury, Lake, McCook, Minnehaha, Miner, Moody, Hamlin, and Sanborn
- Towns Served Individual:** Carthage, Erwin, Fedora, Franklin, Hetland, Junius, Manchester, Nunda, Oldham, Osceola, Roswell, Sinai, Unityville, Vilas, Winfred
- Towns Served Bulk:** Arlington, Bancroft, Badger, Howard, Iroquois, Lake Preston, Montrose, Oldham, Ramona

RURAL WATER CROSSWORD & WORD SCRAMBLE CONTEST

BABY ANIMALS



SCRAMBLE ANSWER



Across

- 2. Newly hatched bird
- 5. Young horse still on unsteady legs
- 6. Gilled amphibian before growing legs
- 11. Woolly youngster of the pasture
- 12. Downy waterfowl learning to swim
- 14. Nocturnal bird still dependent on parents
- 15. Young canine learning its first tricks



Down

- 1. Young goat known for playful jumps
- 2. Young bovine or juvenile whale
- 3. Playful feline in its earliest stage
- 4. Young bird raised for Thanksgiving
- 5. Spotted woodland youngster
- 7. Fluffy pond swimmer
- 8. Young raptor in the nest
- 9. Young predator raised in a den
- 10. Small squealing farmyard youngster
- 13. Pouch-dwelling marsupial youngster

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) or **enter online at www.sdarws.com/crossword.html** with the correct phrase by May 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 Judy Wallman from Mid-Dakota Rural Water who had the correct phrase of "Leadership: ideas over ego" for January 2025.



PO Box 49
705 7th Street
Britton, South Dakota 57430
www.bdmruralwater.com
605-448-5417

2026 Scholarship Application

BDM Rural Water is sponsoring four \$500 scholarships to be presented for the 2026 school year.
Two boys and two girls will each receive the \$500 award to be drawn at random.

APPLICANT INFORMATION:

Last Name _____ First Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email Address _____

Telephone Number _____ Date of Birth _____

FAMILY INFORMATION:

Parents Names _____

BDM Rural Water System, Inc. Account Number _____

ACADEMIC INFORMATION:

Name of High School _____ Year of Graduation _____

University/College/Technical Institute you are or you will be attending _____

At present I am or plan on majoring in _____

REQUIREMENTS:

- You must be a child of a member of BDM Rural Water System, Inc. with a billing account directly from BDM Rural Water.
- GPA must be a minimum of 2.0. A sealed official transcript from your current school must accompany this application.
- You must attend either a 2-year or a 4-year college or vocational institute.
- In order for this application to be considered, a photo to be used for publicity purposes must be submitted along with your application.

*All forms must be returned to the BDM Rural Water office by May 1, 2026.
BDM Rural Water System, Inc., PO Box 49, Britton, SD 57430*

*This institution is an equal opportunity provider.
Esta institucion es un proveedor de servicios con igualdad de oportunidades.*

them. Frankly, they impressed me with their knowledge and dedication and I am extremely proud to get to lead them.

A brief story helps illustrate this. Two weeks ago, as I am writing this in early February, we experienced a brutally cold week, with Friday being the coldest of all. While working that Friday, someone (whom I won't name, to protect the guilty) commented on how amazing it was that we hadn't had a leak yet in 2026. Everyone had gone home, and Operations Manager Ryan Vrchota and I were talking through plans for the next week as we headed out the door a little after 5:00 p.m. The phone rang, and Ryan grabbed it — me mumbling, "Here we go!"

Thankfully, it was just a call from Groton about frozen water on their side of the meter. As Ryan was handling that, the other line rang, and I took a call reporting that we did, in fact, have a real leak on the north end of Lake Traverse. Cole was on call, so he came in after hours, drove out, and assessed what needed to be done. Over the next four days, we had two more leaks — all while temperatures were more than 10 degrees below zero. Our staff dealt with them quietly as each came up in turn, all after hours, and kept the water flowing when it was brutally cold outside.

This is nothing out of the ordinary for this crew of operators, and I knew this was how things worked even as a BDM customer. But seeing it firsthand is different, and I want each of you to know that these folks will do whatever it takes to keep your water running. Their dedication is second to none, and I want you to hear that directly from me.

Looking ahead, the new Water Treatment Plant will be coming online this spring. It will provide both additional treatment capacity and redundancy in case our system were ever impacted by some form of disaster. The WINS

(Water in Northern South Dakota) project has also made great strides in construction and financing. If you travel west of Aberdeen toward Selby, you may have noticed activity in the ditches west of Bowdle all winter long. The large fiberglass pipes being installed today will, in just a few short years, carry Missouri River water to WEB and the City of Aberdeen — and in the future, bring that same water to supplement BDM's supply. This is a major step forward in diversifying our water sources.

Finally, I am sure you are reading the same articles and experiencing the same realities that I am. While no decisions have been made and analysis is just beginning, inflation has not disappeared. Electricity — our largest variable cost — is increasing nearly ten percent from last year. While it is great to be wrapping up construction of the new water treatment plant, that also means adding insurance costs and beginning repayment on its construction.

BDM now finds itself in the enviable position of having a bit of excess treatment capacity for the first time in many years. However, this does create some cost pressure until additional water demand develops. All of this is to say that inflation continues to impact the utility market, and there may need to be a rate adjustment later in 2026. More information will be shared in future columns as this process moves forward.

Whew — that's a lot to cover! As you can tell, I am a bit of a talker, and we truly have a great story to tell at BDM. I look forward to visiting with you at your Annual Meeting at the end of March, as detailed elsewhere in this publication. In the meantime, if there are topics you need help with, or if there is anything we at BDM can do to better serve you, please feel free to reach out to me directly — by stopping in or giving me a call. Thanks!

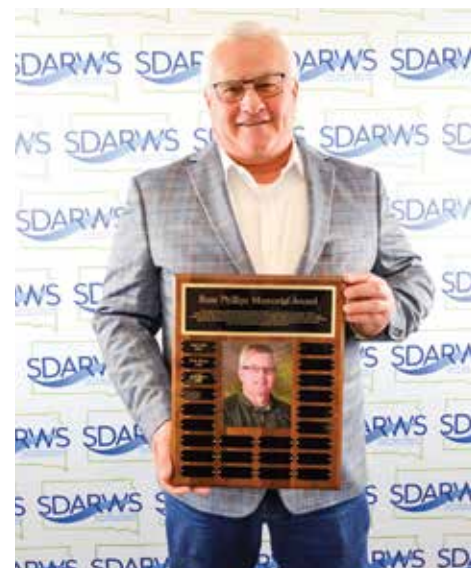
ROD KAPPES RECEIVES RUSS PHILLIPS MEMORIAL AWARD

The South Dakota Association of Rural Water Systems (SDARWS) has presented the Russ Phillips Memorial Award to Rod Kappes of BDM Rural Water System during the SDARWS Annual Technical Conference on January 13, 2026, at the Ramkota Hotel and Convention Center in Pierre, South Dakota.

The Russ Phillips Memorial Award honors the legacy of Russ Phillips, whose 24 years of service with the Tripp County Water Users District reflected deep expertise, dedication, and a lasting commitment to water stewardship. The award recognizes an individual whose career demonstrates exceptional leadership, professionalism, and unwavering service to rural water.

Kappes was recognized for a remarkable career with BDM Rural Water System and for demonstrating the type of steady leadership and commitment that defines the spirit of this award.

The SDARWS Annual Technical Conference is the largest rural water conference in South Dakota, hosting more than 650 water operators, managers, and exhibitors over three days in Pierre.





BDM 46th ANNUAL MEETING

MONDAY, MARCH 30, 2026

**Britton Event Center
1203 3rd Street , Britton, SD**

**SUPPER WILL BE
SERVED AT 6:00 PM
WITH BUSINESS
MEETING TO
FOLLOW.**

**Cash prize
drawings will
be held!**

*Note: Only BDM members are
eligible to enter the drawings.*

**SINCE THE INCUMBENTS WERE THE
ONLY CANDIDATES TO SUBMIT
PETITIONS FOR THE DIRECTOR
POSITIONS IN DISTRICTS TWO AND
FIVE, NO ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD.**

**Financial and operations
reports will be available.**

**Supper will be served
following the meeting.**



RURAL WATER SYSTEM
 PO Box 49
 Britton, SD 57430
 www.bdmruralwater.com
 605-448-5417

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WATER MATTERS

WATERSHEDS



WHAT IS A WATERSHED?

A watershed is the area of land where all of the water that is under it or drains off of it goes into the same place. A drop of rain that falls anywhere inside a watershed should eventually end up at the outlet.

HOW BIG ARE WATERSHEDS?

Watershed size depends on the water body that your are interested in. A puddle in a field may have a watershed of only a hundred square feet or less. By contrast, the watershed of the Mississippi River encompasses roughly 1,200,000 square miles!

WHY ARE WATERSHEDS IMPORTANT?

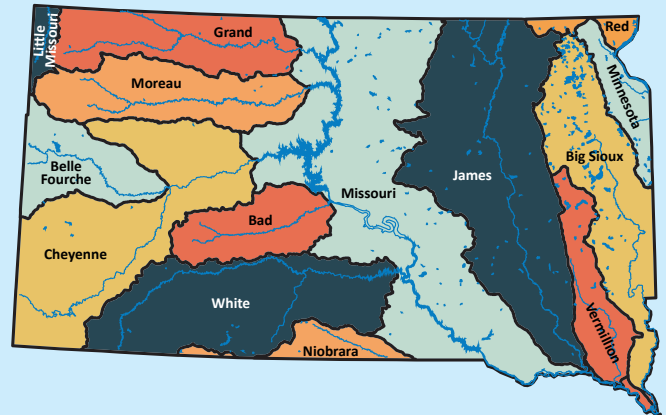
First, all the water in a watershed eventually ends up at the same place. As such, anything that might move with the water (like pollution) will travel with it. Second, everybody lives in a watershed, and almost everybody lives downstream from somebody else. So, what we do on our land will have an impact on our neighbors.

John Wesley Powell, a 19th-century geographer, put it best when he said that a watershed is:

“that area of land, a bounded hydrologic system, within which all living things are inextricably linked by their common water course and where, as humans settled, simple logic demanded that they become part of a community.”

SOUTH DAKOTA WATERSHEDS

To best manage and protect the waters of the State, the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources has divided South Dakota into fourteen (14) watersheds. All but one are part of the Missouri River/Mississippi River system, which outlets into



the Gulf of Mexico. The Red River in the far northeast flows north into Hudson Bay.

To learn more about watersheds and efforts underway to protect them, check out the following websites, or call the East Dakota Water Development District at the number listed below.



usgs.gov/water-science-school/science/watersheds-and-drainage-basins



danr.sd.gov/Conservation/WatershedProtection/default.aspx



www.epa.gov/hwp

BACK PAGE CONTENT PROVIDED BY:



132B Airport Avenue
 Brookings, SD 57006
 605-688-6741
 eastdakota.org