

## Preserving A Way Of Life Through Ag Development

by Governor Dennis Daugaard



In South Dakota, agriculture is more than just a sector of our economy. Its a way of life. Whether its a small family farm, a sizeable cattle ranch or a dairy operation, all forms of agricultural businesses are important to that way

In 2013, the South Dakota Department of Agriculture (SDDA) began offering counties a service called the County Site Analysis Program. This service helps counties use data to identify sites suitable for agriculturerelated development, and to avoid sites which are not suitable.

Ag investments are vital, especially in rural South Dakota, but development must be done responsibly. Because not every new project is a good fit in every location, the program helps county commissioners and landowners determine where projects best

Through the County Site Analysis Program, SDDA looks at local zoning ordinances, locations of roads, utilities and other infrastructure, as well as other local permitting requirements. This information is used to rate property locations on their suitability for things such as manufacturing. commodity processing or livestock-related enterprises.

This program respects local control, because local officials must initiate the process by a formal resolution, requesting SDDA assistance. County commissions, planning and zoning boards, and landowners can use the produced data to make wellinformed decisions. Local leaders use the data in their comprehensive planning efforts; landowners have concrete information outlining options for their

land; and agribusinesses learn where their investments will be welcomed.

Even though the County Site Analysis Program is fairly new, a majority of counties have already expressed interest in participating. Since the programs launch, 49 counties have requested a site analysis, and SDDA has completed analyses in 15 counties.

In addition to this program, local governments may soon have another way to pave the road for economic development. Theres a proposal in the Legislature right now that would revise state law on conditional use permits. Conditional use permits are local zoning exceptions which allow property to be used for specific purposes. Cemeteries, churches, golf courses, gravel pits and livestock barns are some examples of projects that might require this kind of permit.

Under current state law, local governments must have a two-thirds majority to approve conditional use

permits. House Bill 1201 would allow local governments to change that requirement to a majority vote, if they so choose. Like the County Site Analysis Program, this proposal respects local control. It does not mandate that local governments change the current supermajority requirement. It gives the option. This bill could make it easier to start an agribusiness in South Dakota within our counties and municipalities who invite those opportunities.

Agricultures preeminence in our state economy is not something that is inevitable. Local leaders understand this and they know they must be intentional about allowing for opportunities. The County Site Analysis Program and House Bill 1201 seek to broaden those opportunities.

By furthering ag development in our state, well not only be maintaining our number one industry, but well be preserving a way of life.

■ SOUTH DAKOTA STATE NEWS

## Children's Mini-Grant

BROOKINGS, S.D. -SDSU Extension and the Community and Family Extension Leaders (CFEL) are pleased to announce opportunities for helping educational garden projects fund seeds, plants, small garden equipment or other programming materials through Children's

Gardening Mini-grant. The mini-grant opens March 9, 2015.

The grant is offered to any school-age group, K-12, with preference given to after-school and out-ofschool time programs. Participants must

partner with SDSU Extension through a Master Gardener. a county 4-H Youth Program Advisor, FNP EFNEP assistant or other connection. The program must incorporate handson learning experiences for children over a period of 6-12 weeks and include programming related to plant science and nutrition. A brief summary report of the project is also required.

Applications and a complete list of grant

requirements are available at the iGrow Community Development Local Foods page under the publications tab in the resource library on March 9, 2015. Applications are due April 1, 2015.

Deliver or mail the application to the SDSU Extension Regional Center in Sioux Falls, at 2001 E. 8th St., Sioux Falls, SD 57103. Or email the applications to Christina Zdorovtsov.

- See more at: http:// tinyurl.com/koc4h9x

**■ SDSU GROW** 

www.missourivalleyshopper.com

## 'Excellence in Ag' Scholarship

Feed Energy announced that for the fourth consecutive year it is offering two \$2,500 "Excellence in Ag" scholarships to students studying agriculture at a college or university in the Midwest. Interested students can find more information and apply for the scholarship online. The application deadline is April 30.

To be eligible students must meet specific requirements, including attending a college or university in one of the following states: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota or South Dakota. They must have an agriculturerelated major, be a sophomore, junior, senior

or graduate student, and have a 3.0 to 4.0 GPA. The two scholarship recipients will be chosen based on their references, resume and a two-page essay.

We are proud to offer the Scholarship because we believe funding ag education is critical for the future of so many areas of our society," said Joseph P. Riley, executive vice president. "By supporting our students as they develop knowledge in the many different aspects of agriculture, we can indirectly contribute to the larger bio-economy, particularly in the Midwest."

■ SD Ag Connection





**Your Heating & Cooling Specialists** 

Divisions of Electair. Inc.

**Chris Frick** 

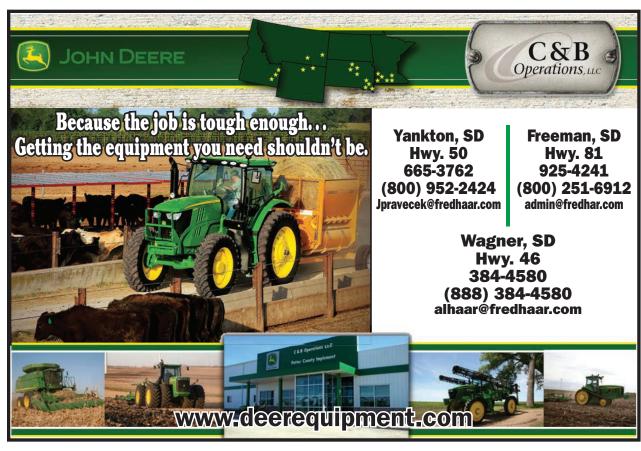
**Doug Dykstra** 

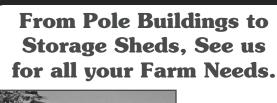
**Residential & Commercial** 

**Electrical Contractors** 

260.8683











2409 Broadway, Yankton · **605-665-9651** 

local farmers work hard to grow and produce the wholesome delicious food we so proudly serve.









