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A large photograph of five tall, cylindrical blue metal grain silos standing in a field of dry, golden-brown crops. The sun is setting behind the silos, creating a bright, multi-pointed starburst effect in the center. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue.

THE BROOKINGS REGISTER • THURSDAY, JANUARY 27, 2022



Lawrence Vander Wal of Bruce named Eminent Leader in Agriculture, Family and Community

By LURA ROTI

For the SDSU College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences and SDSU College of Education and Human Sciences

BROOKINGS – There’s a plaque that hangs on a wall in Lawrence Vander Wal’s home. It displays three words: faith, family and farming.

“That pretty much sums up my life’s priorities,” Vander Wal explained.

Ask his three grown sons, Kent, Dean or Paul, and they will verify. “Dad’s devotion to his family, church, farm and community have given us a guide as we raise our families.”

It should not go unnoticed that his sons listed a fourth priority – community.

Throughout his life, Vander Wal has made time to give back, serving on boards of the First Reformed Church of Volga, Volga Christian School, East Central Irrigation and Brookings County, while also serving as the state chairman of the Farm Bureau’s Young Farmer and Rancher board. Over the years, the family has hosted many 4-H and FFA judging schools, and Vander Wal Yards hosts the South Dakota State University Calf Value Discovery Program.

Recognized for his leadership and service, Vander Wal was named a 2022

Eminent Leader in Agriculture, Family and Community by the SDSU College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences and the SDSU College of Education and Human Sciences. He will be recognized during an honoree banquet Friday, Jan. 28, and his photograph will go up in the Eminent Leader Hall of Fame Gallery, which can be viewed at <https://www.sdstate.edu/eminent-leaders-honorees>. It joins more than 350 portraits of Eminent Leaders.

Vander Wal and his wife, Sally, raised their sons on the same Bruce crop and cattle farm he grew up on. Right after high school, he started farming fulltime with his dad, AJ.

“Lawrence learned from the best, as his father was considered one of the top farmers/cattle feeders in Brookings County,” explained Terry Duffy, First Bank & Trust agribusiness banker.

With a determination to build upon his father’s success, throughout his farming



Lawrence Vander Wal

career, Vander Wal expanded farm acres, crop yields and enhanced cattle feed efficiency.

“When I started, the farm was four quarters of land, and now it is 18. And corn yields were 50 bushels per acre. Today they are 200,” Vander Wal said.

Vander Wal’s decision to forgo college did not stop him from taking every opportunity for continued learning. “We are never done learning in life,” Vander Wal said.

His grandson, Ethan, added, “Grandpa enjoys going to the SDSU Field Day at the research farm every summer. When we are unable to go, he always takes lots of notes to report back to dad and me on what he learned from the seminar.”

Ethan and Vander Wal’s six other grandchildren continue the 4-H and FFA tradition he and Sally started when their sons were young. Many of their grandchildren served in FFA chapter offices. “We have had a camping spot at the State Fair since our oldest started in 4-H,” Vander Wal said. “I enjoyed the parent-child relationship 4-H provided – we got to learn by doing together.”

All of the Vander Wals’ sons are involved in agriculture. Paul owns a seed and chemical business in Milbank. Kent

and Dean farm with Vander Wal. On the farm, Vander Wal enjoys feeding cattle, and he has adapted with the times. He utilizes iPad technology when calculating feed rations. The proximity of Vander Wal Yards to Brookings, as well as Vander Wal’s attention to detail in feeding and care of the farm’s cattle, made the family’s custom feedlot a good fit for the SDSU Calf Value Discovery Program, explained Julie Walker, SDSU Extension beef specialist.

“Lawrence’s attention to detail allows me to entrust beef producers’ cattle into his care, knowing that they will receive excellent animal husbandry,” Walker said.

Each fall, 200-plus calves are enrolled in the program from herds across the state. Data are collected from cattle through harvest. It is then evaluated by Walker and other SDSU specialists, and the results are provided to producers to help them make herd improvements based on research.

Vander Wal said he enjoys working with the specialists.

“If you are not stepping forward, you are stepping backward,” Vander Wal said.

As he looks to the future, Vander Wal said the farm is in good hands. “I am stepping back and letting my sons take over

See VANDER WAL, page 3

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SDSU's Adelaine named vice chair of FCC task force

BROOKINGS – Michael Adelaine, chief information officer emeritus and special adviser to the president at South Dakota State University, is working on his second term on a federal task force to identify the connectivity needs of precision agriculture.

Adelaine has also been selected the task force's vice chair and will work with the chair to create agenda's and advise the various working groups of the task force. The first task force kickoff meeting took place Jan. 13 with more to follow throughout the year.

Adelaine, who retired from SDSU in 2020, was initially appointed to the Federal Communications Commission's Task Force for Reviewing the Connectivity and Technology Needs of Precision Agriculture in December 2019.

In its second term, the task force will continue its work to provide advice and recommendations to the FCC on accelerating the deployment of broadband internet access on unserved agricultural

land to promote precision agriculture. The task force will perform duties and will submit reports consistent with sections 12511(b)(3)(A) and (b)(5) of the 2018 Farm Bill.

These working groups will assist the task force in carrying out its work:

- Mapping and Analyzing Connectivity on Agricultural Lands.
- Examining Current and Future Connectivity Demand for Precision Agriculture.
- Encouraging Adoption of Precision Agriculture and Availability of High-Quality Jobs on Connected Farms.
- Accelerating Broadband Deployment on Unserved Agricultural Lands.

In his first term, Adelaine chaired the



Michael Adelaine

mapping and analyzing connectivity on agricultural lands group, which identified connectivity gaps on agricultural lands.

When appointed in 2019, Adelaine said, "I've traveled the state of South Dakota and know what connectivity looks like and what folks have for bandwidth," he continued. "When you combine that information with being on campus and working with our researchers and SDSU Extension individuals on precision agriculture, I know what's going to be needed. It's all about big data and the need to move it for analysis."

Adelaine said about his new appointment, "I am excited to continue to represent SDSU and work toward improved connectivity that will allow farm and ranch producers to take advantage of new precision agriculture technologies like those being developed at the university."

– From SDSU Marketing &

Felony for brokering unlicensed grain buyers clears Senate

PIERRE (AP) – The South Dakota Senate last Thursday unanimously passed a proposal to make it a felony for anyone who brokers a grain purchase with an unlicensed buyer.

The state requires grain buyers to have a license as part of a way to protect payments for farmers. Authorities have said there is an increase in brokers, who set up the transaction for a commission, and some of them have used unlicensed grain buyers.

"We do need to say that setting up an illegal deal ought to be illegal," Public Utilities Commissioner Chris Nelson told a committee considering the bill last week.

Officials considered requiring brokers to be licensed but settled on making it a class 5 felony as a deterrent. The maximum sentence would be five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

The bill will next head to the House.

VANDER WAL:

Continued from page 2

leadership. It makes me feel good that they are continuing the farm to the fourth generation."

To purchase tickets to attend the 2022 Eminent Leader Banquet held on the campus of SDSU, on Friday, Jan. 28, contact the Office of the Dean of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences at 605-688-4148 or email angela.loftness@sdstate.edu.

SDSU Crops Judging Team receives high honors at two national contests

BROOKINGS – The South Dakota State University Crops Judging Team finished third and fourth at the two national collegiate crops competitions held last fall. The team placed fourth at the Kansas City Royal Contest held on Nov. 16 and third at the National Collegiate Crops Contest held in Ames, Iowa, on Nov. 19.

Collegiate crops competitions consist of three parts: grain grading, seed and plant identification and seed analysis. These components require students to grade grain samples, identify 200 seed and plant samples and analyze seed samples for contaminants,

which they also must identify and classify.

The 2021 team members include: Miranda Smidt, agronomy student from Brookings; Aubrey Weishaar, agronomy student from Lemmon; Dalton Howe, agronomy student from Redfield; Jackson Cramer, agronomy student from Warner; and Miguel Mena, agronomy student from Harlan, Iowa. The team is coached by Dr. Brent Turnipseed and assisted by Rachel Geary, plant science master's student from Elk Point, South Dakota, and Johnna Jorgensen, plant science master's student from Mount Vernon, South Dakota.

Individual results from the contests

include:

Kansas City Royal Contest

- Smidt: 10th overall and in grain grading and seed and plant identification, fifth in seed analysis

- Weishaar: 11th overall and in seed analysis, ninth in grain grading and seed and plant identification

- Howe: 12th overall and in seed and plant identification, 11th in grain grading, 13th in seed analysis

Ames Contest

- Smidt: seventh overall, first in seed analysis

See **CROPS**, page 4



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CROPS: Competition, facility tours

Continued from page 3

sis, eighth in seed and plant identification, 10th in grain grading

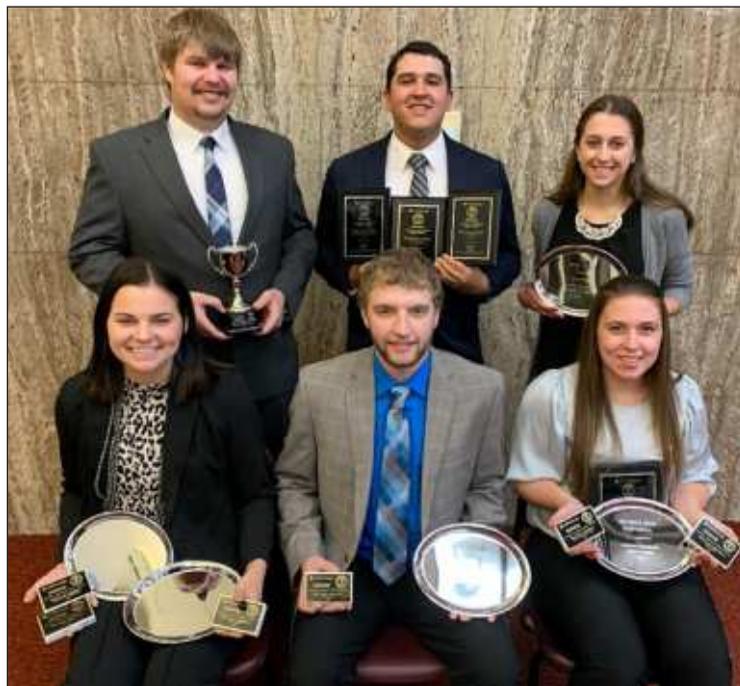
Weishaar: ninth overall, sixth in seed and plant identification, eighth in grain grading and seed analysis

Howe: 12th overall, sixth in grain grading, 11th in seed analysis, 13th in seed and plant identification

In addition to competing, team members had the chance to tour agricultural facilities near Kansas City and Ames.

“My favorite part about being on the crops judging team is that we are all competitive people,” said Smidt. “It pushed me to further my knowledge in areas where I wasn’t as strong suited. Not only that, but then being able to take that competitiveness nationally and even take home first place individually in seed analysis made all the hours of studying worth it.”

The SDSU crops judging team has continually proven the great amount of skill and expertise that lies within the university’s Department of Agronomy, Horticulture and Plant Science on the national level.



Courtesy photo

The SDSU Crops Judging Team finished third and fourth at the two national finals collegiate crops competitions held last fall. Pictured, from left, are: (back row) Jackson Cramer, Miguel Mena and Rachel Geary; (front) Aubrey Weishaar, Dalton Howe and Miranda Smidt.

“Crops judging was more than just about the competition to me,” said Weishaar. “I learned how important it is to grow with my team and to help each other along the way.”

– From SDSU College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences

VanderWal re-elected VP of American Farm Bureau

Scott VanderWal of Volga was re-elected vice president of the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) for another two-year term by delegates at the 2022 AFBF Annual Convention, held in Atlanta.

VanderWal is president of the South Dakota Farm Bureau (SDFB) and a third-generation corn and soybean farmer and cattle feeder.

Zippy Duvall of Georgia was also re-elected president of AFBF. Duvall and VanderWal were first elected in 2016.

Aryel Reed of Brandon competed in the Young Farmer and Rancher (YF&R) Discussion Meet Competition.

Voting delegates who represented SDFB at the policy session included Reid Jensen of Burbank, Roger Hurlbert, Clark, and Janet Hurlbert of Clark.

More information on the South Dakota Farm Bureau can be found at www.sdfbf.org.



Scott VanderWal

– From SDFB

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Laron Krause of Clear Lake named Eminent Leader in Agriculture, Family and Community

By LURA ROTI
For the SDSU College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences and SDSU College of Education and Human Sciences.

BROOKINGS – Growing up, Adam and Brent Krause, often heard their dad, Laron, say, “Make time for what matters.” At 61, the Clear Lake farmer continues to put these words into action.

“A person can always make excuses that they don’t have time to volunteer. But I just think, ‘OK, we better work harder today or get up earlier or work later, so that we have time to do whatever needs to be done – whether it’s for the family, or the community, or the church,’” explained Laron Krause, who together with his now-grown sons, raises crops and partners in a farrow-to-finish hog operation, Supreme Pork.

Over the years, his family, local church and many South Dakota agriculture commodity groups have benefited from the time Krause willingly shared. Krause has served on boards of the United Methodist Church, South Dakota Soybean Association, South Dakota Corn Utilization Council and South Dakota Pork Producers.

Recognized for his leadership and volunteer efforts, Krause was named a

2022 Eminent Leader in Agriculture, Family and Community by the South Dakota State University College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences and the SDSU College of Education and Human Sciences. He will be recognized during an honoree banquet Friday, Jan. 28, and his photograph will go up in the Eminent Leader Hall of Fame Gallery, which can be viewed at <https://www.sdstate.edu/eminant-leaders-honorees>. It joins more than 350 portraits of Eminent Leaders.

Right out of high school, Krause attended Canby Vo-Tech and began farming fulltime with his dad, Edwin, and grandpa, Art, after graduating. Thanks to a 4-H and FFA project, he already owned some sows.

Although the Farm Crisis of the 1980s was not the ideal time, Krause said he had no other career plans.

“I had a passion for agriculture. I really enjoyed it, and there was really nothing else that I wanted to do,” Krause



Laron Krause

said.

Over time, he expanded his farm acres, became a certified seed grower/dealer and, together with some neighbors, started Supreme Pork, a farrow-to-finish hog operation.

“By pooling our resources together there was economy of scale that I could not do alone on my farm,” Krause said.

Supreme Pork also served as a way to add value to the farms’ corn acres. Krause utilizes the manure to improve soil fertility and crop yields.

“You talk about sustainable agriculture, spreading livestock manure is the start of it. My dad and grandpa were doing that back before ‘sustainability’ was a buzz word,” Krause said.

Sustainability of resources has always been on the forefront of Krause’s mind.

“Taking care of soils is important so my boys and grandchildren can use this same soil,” said Krause, who implements variable-rate precision agriculture technology as well as minimal tillage practices to enhance soil health. He has recently started trying out cover crops. “Obviously we need to be profitable. But when raising crops, we need to be thinking many years down the road. It comes down to paying attention to detail.”

Krause credits 4-H and FFA with

teaching him the value in attention to detail. And, as a parent, he values the opportunity the organizations gave him to spend time helping his children with their show hogs.

“Showing pigs was something we all enjoyed and could do together as a family,” he said.

Krause and his wife, Jolene, have three adult children: Tiffany, Adam and Brent.

After their children left home to pursue degrees at SDSU, and before they became grandparents, the couple also served as foster parents.

Because of the certified seed business and Supreme Pork, Adam and Brent were able to return to the family farm after college. “We go the extra mile and add value to everything instead of farming more acres,” Krause explained.

Krause relies on unbiased research-based information from SDSU to aid him in maximizing on-farm profits.

Over the years he has donated to research advancements, like the SDSU Swine Education and Research Facility.

“Agriculture is ever-evolving, and we need the next great idea that they will share with us to help us make our farm

See **KRAUSE**, page 7



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South Dakota Grassland Coalition to host regenerative agriculture event

PRESHO – The South Dakota Grassland Coalition (SDGC) sees the many challenges that ag producers are currently facing. That’s why they are excited to announce a solutions-focused event in Ft. Pierre, held Feb. 15-17.

Join Joshua and Tara Dukart of Seek First Ranch in western North Dakota along with other area ag producers and professionals who are interested in creating a more profitable agriculture business and a more desirable lifestyle through regenerative and holistic management practices. All family or team members ages 14 and up are encouraged to attend.

The Dukarts teach and speak throughout the U.S. and internationally. The Soil & Water Conservation Society selected Joshua Dukart as its Harold and Kay Scholl Excellence in Conservation Award recipient in 2017. Cattle Business Weekly

presented Joshua Dukart with a Top 10 National Industry Leaders award in 2015, and he was recognized as one of North Dakota’s Top 40 Professionals Under the Age of 40 in 2012.

As educators and practitioners, Joshua and Tara Dukart aspire to not just conserve, but regenerate landscapes and ranching businesses. They believe wealth can be strategically generated in a variety of ways: biologically, financially and socially.

Typically, the three-day session costs \$400 per participant. However, a National Resource Conservation Service partnership allows the SDGC to offer the three-day course to members for just \$150 to include tuition, materials, lunches, and refreshments. If you are not currently a SDGC member, your investment of \$185

See **REGENERATIVE**, page 8

KRAUSE: More sustainable

Continued from page 5

more sustainable and feed the growing population of the world,” Krause said. “I give back to SDSU research because I hope my boys and grandchildren will continue to farm. I hope the last crop I produce, my fields are in better shape

than the first crop I produced.”

To purchase tickets to attend the 2022 Eminent Leader Banquet held on the campus of SDSU, Friday, contact the Office of the Dean of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences at 605-688-4148 or email angela.loftesness@sdstate.edu.



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Think your home value is soaring? Talk to a farmer

By **SCOTT MCFETRIDGE**
Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) – Fourth-generation corn and soybean farmer Jeff Frank doesn't feel rich, but simply based on the skyrocketing value of his land in northwest Iowa, it's an apt way to describe him, even if he laughs at the idea.

He lives in the same nearly century-old house, grows veggies in the family garden and shops at the same grocery store about 15 miles down the road. "We live the same way we have all of our lives," he said.

Still, even if Frank's life hasn't changed, the several hundred acres he owns about 80 miles northwest of Des Moines have suddenly made him worth millions of dollars.

It may come as a surprise to city dwellers excited by their home values that countless farmers like Frank are actually experiencing a real estate boom that makes residential prices pale in comparison. While median existing-home prices rose by 15.8% in the U.S. last year, farmland values went up about double that rate in places like Iowa.

"I'm definitely surprised by the magnitude," said Wendong Zhang, an economist at Iowa State University who oversees an annual farmland value survey.

The rising values, especially in the Midwest, are due to high prices being paid for the key commodity crops of corn and soybeans, plentiful harvests in recent years coupled with low interest rates and optimism the good times will continue.

But they're a mixed blessing. They're enriching farmers who already have a lot of land, but making it much harder for small operators or younger farmers starting out to get land unless



Joseph L. Murphy/Iowa Soybean Association via AP

This 2018 photo shows Jeff Frank on his farm near Auburn, Iowa. Frank doesn't feel rich, but simply based on the skyrocketing value of his land in northwest Iowa, it's an apt way to describe him, even if he laughs at the idea.

they happen to inherit it.

Most purchases are by operations that see the value of larger scale, seizing the chance to buy nearby land.

"If you miss this opportunity, you may not get another chance," Zhang said, describing the current mood.

As for consumers, higher land costs typically don't affect grocery prices.

Historically, farmland values rise and fall, but in the past couple decades they have mostly risen, and in the past year they have risen a lot – 33% in Frank's part of the state and 29% throughout Iowa, one of the nation's top agricultural states. Agricultural prices also have soared elsewhere in the Midwest and have climbed in most other parts of the country,

too.

Federal Reserve Banks in Chicago and Kansas City reported double-digit increases in Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana, Missouri and Nebraska.

In Iowa, average farmland has risen from \$7,559 an acre in 2020 to \$9,751 an acre in 2021.

Nationally, farmland was up an average of 7% but that doesn't include the last half of 2021, when prices really took off in many areas.

Farmland prices have even climbed in California despite concerns about persistent drought. In 2021, the average prices of \$10,900 an acre was up 9% from 2020.

The land purchases augment an existing national trend of more agricultural production coming from ever-larger farms.

Dan Sumner, an agricultural economist at the University of California-Davis, credits some of the rising value in switching to higher-value crops, such as replacing alfalfa with nut trees.

Overall, though, Sumner said farmers are feeling good about their future.

"It reflects confidence in the economics of agriculture," he said.

The upswing follows tumultuous years of trade wars, market breakdowns due to the coronavirus pandemic and drought in much of the West.

For individual farmers, the biggest benefit of rising values is that they can borrow money at better rates for annual needs like seed and fertilizer and longer-term investments like tractors

and even more land.

The high prices have prompted plenty of people to buy and sell land, leading to a record of \$765 million in agricultural land sales last year overseen by Farmers National Company, one of the nation's largest landowner services companies.

Randy Dickhut, a Farmers National real estate broker in Omaha, Nebraska, said a more typical year would see about \$500 million in sales.

"It's been very busy," Dickhut said. "It's certainly easy to sell."

But Holly Rippon-Butler, who runs a dairy with her parents in upstate New York, called the farmland prices increases "just nuts."

"The hard reality is, buying land is almost impossible unless you have some preexisting source of generational family wealth," said Rippon-Butler, who works with the National Young Farmers Coalition, an organization that among other priorities advocates for policy changes and public funding that would enable more people to have access to land.

Given high land prices, Rippon-Butler said beginning farmers she encounters typically work as little as a quarter-acre of land and see 20 acres as a relatively large operation. Many farmers also rent land, and as values rise, so do rental rates.

Frank, the farmer in northwest Iowa, said that even though he's technically wealthier now, it hard for him to expand his holdings as he prepares to pass along the property to the next generation.

"I have a son who farms with me and of course he'd like to expand but buying farmland right now is a big undertaking," he said. "Even for a small farm you're talking about millions of dollars."

REGENERARTIVE:

Continued from page 7

will also include a one-year membership to the SDGC. Because they see tremendous value in all members of an operation participating, the cost for each additional family or business member is reduced to \$50.

The event will be held at Drifters Grill in Ft. Pierre, from 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m. each day, Feb. 15-17. Doors open at 9 a.m., and seating is limited. Contact Dan Rasmussen to reserve spots: 605-685-3315 or the33ranch@gmail.com.

Additional information available at sdgrass.org and SeekFirstRanch.com.

– From SDGC

SDSU Extension to host virtual BeefUP course

BROOKINGS – South Dakota State University Extension will present BeefUP, a six-week, self-paced virtual course starting Feb. 1. BeefUP will encompass a systems approach of calving distribution and management strategies that have an impact on profitability and improve future returns.

The course will highlight three collaborator herds and their diverse management strategies on maintaining a defined calving distribution. Content will discuss drivers that have historically affected sale-barn premiums based on calf uniformity, and a final video will provide a research update of cur-

rent factors impacting calf prices across South Dakota sale barns.

Participants will also have the opportunity to examine their own calving distributions.

"Cows that calve on time are the No. 1 predictor that cattle within that operation fit the managerial program," said Olivia Amundson, SDSU Extension cow/calf field specialist. "Furthermore, calf crops, uniform in size and age, have market advantages and exceed returns over calves that lack uniformity in both age and weight. Management decisions made prior to the first calf hitting the ground can have significant

impact on the following breeding and calving season."

Registration is \$100 and those interested can register on the SDSU Extension Events page at extension.sdstate.edu until Jan. 31. Completion of the course provides participants with the additional opportunity to attend a two-day ranch tour showcasing successful operations in regard to calving distribution.

For more information, contact Amundson, SDSU Extension cow/calf field specialist, at Olivia.Amundson@sdstate.edu or (605) 782-3290.

– From SDSU Extension

USDA invests \$2M in risk management education for historically underserved, small-scale producers

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is investing up to \$2 million in cooperative agreements this year for risk management education and training programs that support historically underserved producers, small-scale farmers, and conservation practices. USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) is investing in organizations, such as nonprofit organizations, universities, and county cooperative extension offices, to develop training and education tools to help producers learn how to effectively manage long-term risks and challenges.

"Agriculture is an inherently risky business, and a strong farm safety net is key to sustaining and ensuring the success of American producers," said RMA Administrator Marcia Bunger. "We're committed to improving access to crop insurance, and our partnerships with organizations help us reach communities that have historically lacked access to training and resources. We want to make sure all producers know and understand how to manage risk and what options are available to them."

RMA works with partners to assist

producers, especially historically underserved, farmers and ranchers, in effectively managing long-term risks and challenges. RMA re-established its support of risk management education in 2021, investing nearly \$1 million in nine risk management education projects. From 2002 to 2018, RMA provided annual funding for risk management education projects, supporting more than \$126 million worth of projects in historically underserved communities.

How to apply

Interested organizations must apply by 5:59 pm Eastern Time on March 11 through the Results Verification System at rvs.umn.edu. To learn more, view the notice of funding opportunity on grants.gov.

A broad range of risk management training activities are eligible for funding consideration, including training on federal crop insurance options, record keeping, financial management, non-insurance-based risk management tools, and natural disaster preparedness among others. Partners can also train farmers at all levels on risk management options

that help secure local food systems.

This selection process is competitive, and RMA will prioritize projects focused on underserved, organic, and specialty crop producers. Additionally, organizations providing training related to climate change, wildfire response, local foods, and urban ag will also be given stronger consideration.

More information

Federal crop insurance helps farmers and ranchers manage risks that are part of agriculture, such as adverse weather and market fluctuations, strengthening the rural economy, especially after disasters.

Crop insurance is sold and delivered solely through private crop insurance agents. A list of crop insurance agents is available at all USDA Service Centers and online at the RMA Agent Locator. Learn more about crop insurance and the modern farm safety net at www.rma.usda.gov.

Today's announcement builds on other USDA efforts to ensure equity in program delivery. In 2021, USDA's Farm Service Agency invested \$4.7 million to

establish 56 partnerships to provide outreach and technical assistance to historically underserved farmers and ranchers, and USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service announced its plans to invest \$50 million in cooperative agreements for a similar effort.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit www.usda.gov.

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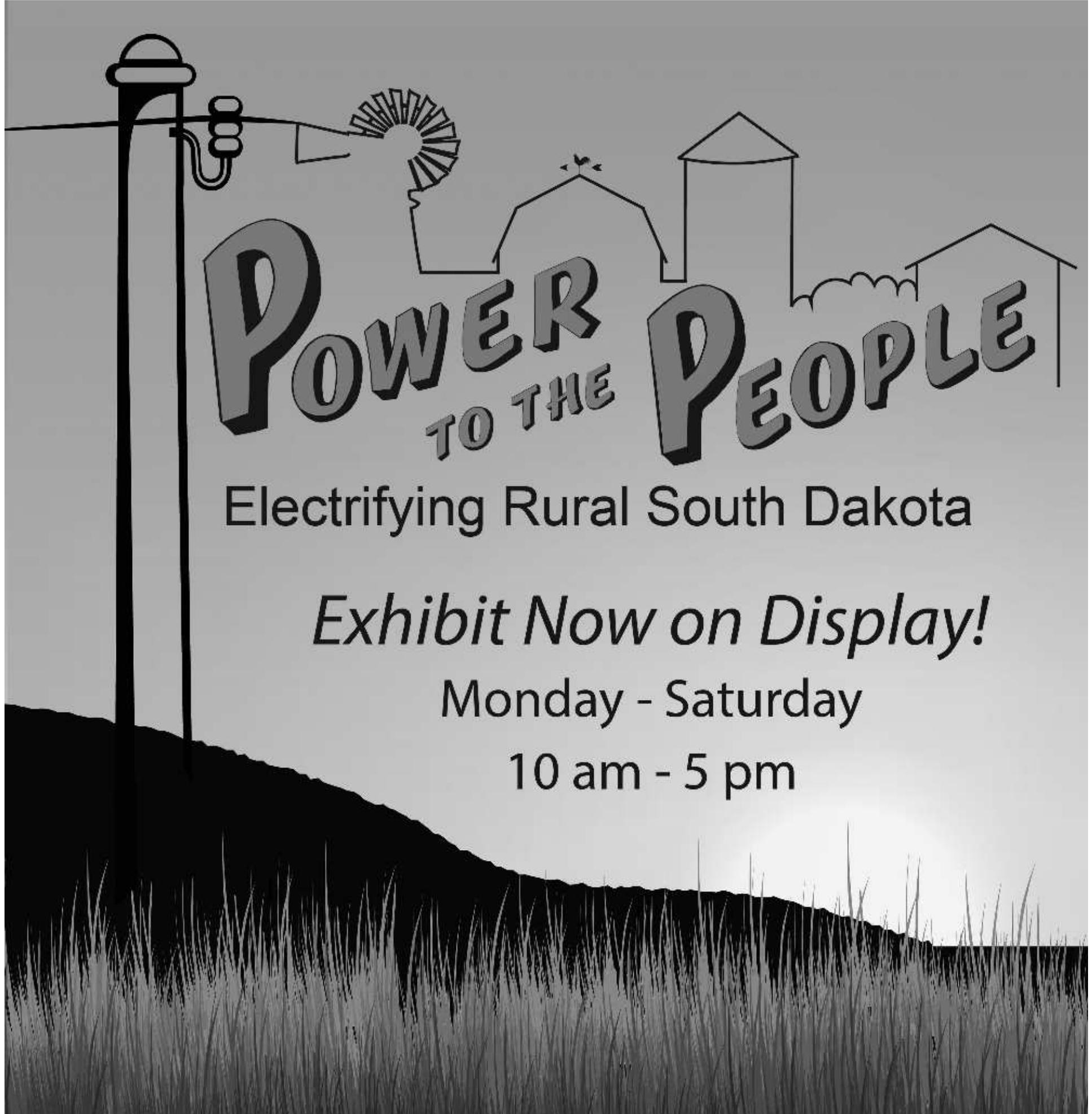
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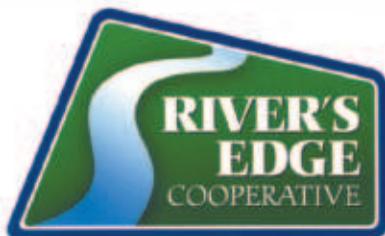
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