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Creation of Secure South Dakota Partnership Kicks Off with Homeland Security Summit in Sioux Falls

PIERRE, S.D. –The first official collaboration between private and public entities encompassing emergency management, health, industry, natural resources, law enforcement, private business and academia in South Dakota has been developed. The Secure South Dakota Partnership was created to foster relationships among sectors in the state with an interest in homeland security. The Partnership hopes to foster an environment that ensures that all of its members and South Dakota's citizens are prepared for, can respond to, and recover from disasters and catastrophic events, should they occur.

Among the Partnership's goals is the expansion of information sharing between public and private organizations, assessment and enhancement of existing capabilities and resource sharing, assessment of vulnerabilities and risk reduction. This will be done through effective communication, public awareness promotion and training for professionals and community members.

Moreover, the organization has recently been incorporated, and it already boasts 350 members. This is due in part to the recent three-day Homeland Security Summit in Sioux Falls, June 15-17. One of the common themes of the conference was partnerships and communication, which is the foundation of the new organization. The planning committee members, feel strongly about the success of the Secure South Dakota Partnership and felt that the conference was an excellent manner in which to kick off the new look and idea for the statewide partnership.

“The Secure South Dakota Partnership found real traction at the Homeland Security Summit,” Bill Anderson, Director of the Government Research Bureau at the University of South and a founding Partnership Board Member said. It's clear that there's tremendous interest in sharing

ideas, collaborating, and building a strong security foundation among South Dakota's first responders, law enforcement, business, government and business sectors.’’

With the conclusion of the inaugural conference, the organization will continue infrastructure and capacity building along with the gathering of more public and private partners this year. In the following years, the Secure South Dakota Partnership hopes to be on the forefront in integrating business resources and emergency response with government planning during a man-made or natural disaster affecting our state systems, businesses and its citizens.

“The Partnership in the beginning creates a common forum for homeland security professionals to share ideas and establish relationships. In the long run, however, the Partnership could prove to be a vital source for resource-sharing, training and statewide security and disaster planning’’ Anderson said.

Dr. Shane Nordyke, Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of South Dakota and a fellow Board Member added, "We hope to build on the success of this year's conference in future years to strengthen partner relationships throughout the state and continue to provide opportunities for members to share information and ideas”.

The founding partners of the Secure South Dakota Partnership are; Hughes-Stanley County Emergency Management, Capital University Center, South Dakota Public Health Association, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Maka Foundation of Lower Brule, South Dakota Department of Health, Glacial Lakes Energy, LLC, Mid –Dakota Rural Water System, Inc., University of South Dakota, South Dakota Department of Agriculture, Sanford Health, Western Area Power Administration, United States Attorney's Office – District of South Dakota and the United States Department of Homeland Security.

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