

# County Perspectives

*Economic development in Lincoln and Minnehaha Counties, South Dakota*

## Harrisburg schools implement multi-faceted career education

**A**s the steel rises in the construction of the new Home Builders Academy adjacent to Harrisburg High School, it's easy to focus on that element of career education in our region. In fact, while a new building dedicated to training workers in an understaffed industry is a dramatic step, that's just one of many strategies being used in Harrisburg—and other school districts in our area—to meet both immediate and long term workforce needs.

Around the region, schools are partnering with businesses to help fund training facilities, supply tools and hardware for hands-on learning and on-site internships at businesses that frequently grow into full-time jobs after graduation. Harrisburg has an active mobile health care lab parked at the school for students to explore medical careers, is currently completing plans for an expanded auto repair facility and will open the new Home Builders Academy for the second semester this year—and those are only a few of the career education options at the school.

"The state recognizes 16 general workforce areas that students can focus on," said Dr. Michael Amolins, Harrisburg's



*The Home Builders Academy under construction on the Harrisburg High School campus.*

curriculum director for grades 6-12. "Here in the Harrisburg district, we offer pathways to explore 13 career clusters. Every student, whether college-bound or not, benefits from career and technical education and the opportunity to learn about career choices."

Harrisburg has been keenly aware of the importance of giving its students a jumpstart on career learning for over a decade, according to Travis Lape, Innovative Programs Director for the fast-growing district.

"Self-reflection has brought career education to the fore in Harrisburg," Lape said. "Starting with the integration of credited college coursework for seniors through the construction of Leap High, our alternative secondary school, to internships and job shadowing with college credits, we've focused on providing relevant, engaging and successful career pathways for our students."

The Home Builders Academy is the newest step in that ongoing effort. Through a collaboration with the Sioux Empire Home Builders Care Foundation, Southeast Technical Institute and Affordable Housing Solutions, as well as support from other major industry and community partners, the Harrisburg district will provide access to expert instruction, industry-grade building equipment and tools in a multi-phase program.

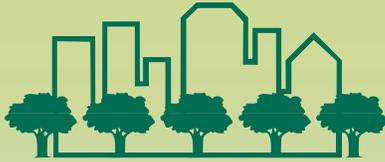
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*Travis Lape, Innovative Programs Director, and Dr. Michael Amolins, Curriculum Director for Grades 6-12 for the Harrisburg school district, in the Harrisburg high school gymnasium.*

*Third Quarter Report, 2019*

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Volume 20, Issue 3

The newsletter of economic development in  
Lincoln & Minnehaha Counties, South Dakota  
is published three times yearly by

LCEDA and MCEDA

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## Multi-faceted career education

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The experience starts with the construction of homes within the new facility now under construction and ends with both on- and off-site training experiences in specialty trades, such as plumbing, electrical, HVAC and drywall. Learners from Harrisburg and other neighboring school districts will be able to develop highly qualified skillsets by working alongside industry experts, earn construction certification credentials through Southeast Technical Institute and ultimately enter the workforce and post-secondary training programs tied to the building trades.

"The Home Builders Academy is a regional resource," Amolins said. "Other schools are participating, along with Southeast Tech, so that students who complete their training here can earn 15 credits plus three certifications. They will be able to demonstrate proficiency and, if they choose, complete an associates degree in just one additional year at STI."

The driving force behind the career and technical education programs at Harrisburg and other schools is the realization that companies are looking for something different today than they were just 20 years ago.

"Companies hiring today need problem solvers," Lape said. "From the earliest grades, we're preparing students to solve problems that haven't arisen, using technology that hasn't been invented, in jobs that don't currently exist. That takes a lot of creative thinking and innovative education."

In Harrisburg and other schools in our region, educators are using that creativity and innovation to keep the workforce pipeline open today and well into the future.



## 2019 Annual Meeting features GOED Deputy Commissioner



Mary Lehecka Nelson

The Lincoln and Minnehaha County Economic Development Associations will hold their combined annual meeting on

**Thursday, November 7** in the Falls Room just off the main lobby of the Holiday Inn City Centre in downtown Sioux Falls. The keynote speaker for this year's annual meeting will be the Deputy Commissioner of the Governor's Office of Economic Development

**Mary Lehecka Nelson**, who will provide a look at Governor Kristi Noem's priorities in economic development.

For over 30 years, Nelson has served the State of South Dakota in the Governor's Office of Economic Development's marketing division. She also chairs the events committees, including the Governor's Economic Development Conference, Buffalo Roundup and the Invitational Pheasant Hunt. Earlier this year, Commissioner Steve Westra named Nelson as the Deputy Commissioner of the GOED. A Pierre native, Mary graduated from Riggs High School and earned a journalism degree from SDSU.

This year's annual meeting will also mark the presentation of the first annual **Partners in Progress Awards** to recognize the communities, companies and individuals who are making a difference in our two-county area. Nominations for the awards are now open, with a deadline of **October 14**. For more information on the **Partners in Progress Awards**, or to make a nomination, please call 605-339-0103 or email [sharmans@siouxfalls.com](mailto:sharmans@siouxfalls.com) and request a nomination form.

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## *Your Future program lets middle school students explore careers*

**M**iddle school students are at a prime age for career exploration, researchers have found. According to the National Science Teachers Association, students ages 11-14 are more open to exploring the world around them and are excited to learn about career fields that they may not have initially considered. The Sioux Falls Development Foundation has recently stepped in to address these eager students with their **Your Future** initiative.

Launched in May 2019 at Brandon Valley Intermediate School, Dell Rapids Middle School, and St. Mary School, this 90-minute program connected nearly 300 students across three separate school districts to careers in the skilled trades and professional areas of advanced manufacturing, engineering and general construction industries. Students practiced their skills in proportions and chemistry while experimenting with materials such as sand, cement, water and admixtures to create concrete. The materials were generously donated by Gage Brothers Concrete Products, Inc.

The **Your Future** program is designed to present job industries that are poised for growth and to help students understand the different pathways and career opportunities. Led by Denise Guzzetta and Sara Gillis of the Sioux Falls Development Foundation, the program includes interactive discussion about educational pathways and real-world applications in industries like advanced manufacturing, construction and engineering.

"**Your Future** aligns exposure to growing industries with curriculum that the students are already learning in their science and math classrooms, and the middle school initiative is just the beginning of this program," Guzzetta explains. "Students will expand their awareness of high-needs job industries through the middle school program, and they'll then apply this



*Students from Brandon Valley Intermediate School combine materials to study construction aggregates during the Your Future program.*

learning as seek job-shadowing experiences and internships as part of Your Future's high school programming. Ultimately, we intend for the Your Future program to change the narrative when it comes to the diverse paths into the workplace."

This fall's expanded offerings as part of the **Your Future** initiative include a lesson on mineral classification and a material's interactivity with chemicals—vital for success in the construction and engineering fields, as well as lessons in life science and computer science. Over ten school districts in the region have shown an interest in bringing the **Your Future** program to their middle school students, marking more than a 230 percent increase in the impact of this initiative.

To connect your students to this program, contact [sarag@siouxfalls.com](mailto:sarag@siouxfalls.com) or call 605-339-0103.

## **Gold Shovel Golf Classic held at Bakker Crossing**



*The 2019 LCEDA-MCEDA Gold Shovel Golf Classic winning team, comprised of Rod Wolforth, Don Snyders, Jacob Snyders and Bryce Kindt, all from Garretson.*

**T**he fifth annual LCEDA-MCEDA Gold Shovel Golf Classic was held on August 20 at Bakker Crossing golf course in Lincoln County. The 2019 event featured 88 golfers in 22 teams competing for prizes and the tourney's ceremonial first place awards. The team of Rod Wolforth, Bryce Kindt, Don Snyders and Jacob Snyders shot the lowest score for the day.

Corporate sponsorship supports the annual appreciation event, which celebrates regional economic development in Lincoln and Minnehaha Counties. This year's enthusiastic team of sponsors, including Dakota Business Finance, DGR Engineering, Ernst Capital Group, First Bank and Trust, Hagen Wilka Archer, Infrastructure Design Group, Sayre Associates, SDN Communications, SiouxFalls.Business, Ryan Tysdal-Van Buskirk Companies and Xcel Energy, all of which were sponsors of a hole. This year's pin prize sponsors included Security National Bank, ISG Engineering and DGR Engineering.

Special thanks to this year's sponsors for their support of the LCEDA-MCEDA economic development goals and to all the teams that turned out to make it a great day for the fifth annual event.

Team and event photos from this year's Gold Shovel Classic are posted on the LCEDA-MCEDA Facebook page.

## Shining a spotlight on our outstanding partners

**W**e're excited about this year's LCEDA-MCEDA annual meeting, scheduled for **November 7** at the Holiday Inn City Centre. Our combined annual meeting is always a celebration of our partnership and another year of success, but this year we're expanding that partnership focus. Governor's Office of Economic Development Deputy Commissioner Mary Lehecka Nelson, a longtime veteran of GOED and an extremely experienced economic development communicator, will give our keynote address and we'll be honoring some outstanding collaborators with our first annual **Partners in Progress Awards**.

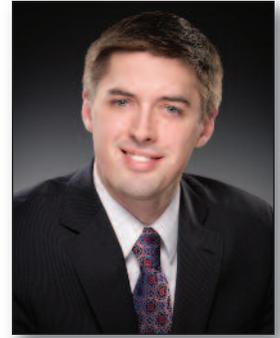
Nominations are now open for you to help us recognize those communities, individuals and companies that are making a difference, this year and every year, in growing our economy and making our communities better places to live and work. Nominating is easy—we have a convenient form we're sending out that provides simple guidelines for each award. We don't need a lot of details, just your reasons for nominating this person, hometown or business for this year's award.

We see so many examples of good community development partners that the decision-making process will be difficult.

That's why we're determined to add this recognition to our annual meeting each year—to give you a chance to help shine a spotlight on the people, companies and communities that are setting the standard for building our region and advancing progress.

For more information on the **Partners in Progress Awards**, or to make a nomination, please call 605-339-0103 or email [sharmans@siouxfalls.com](mailto:sharmans@siouxfalls.com) and request a nomination form. Share the news with your friends and social media contacts and help us identify this year's winners. We're counting on your involvement and participation to get the word out about these awards—and get your nominee into contention right away. **Deadline for nomination is October 14**, so don't delay!

The top three nominees will be invited to our 2019 annual meeting and the awards will be presented then. We hope to see you on November 7 to help us congratulate the first winners of the **Partners in Progress Awards**.



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# GROWTH AT A GLANCE

Governor Kristi Noem has named September 30-October 4, 2019 as the annual **South Dakota Manufacturing Week**. The Governor's Office of Economic Development, along with local partners and companies across the state, celebrate the significance of South Dakota's manufacturing companies to the growth of our state.

## Manufacturing in the Sioux Falls Metro Area Region:

**265** Manufacturing Firms in the MSA

Nearly **1/3**

of state-wide manufacturing jobs are located in the Metro Area

Manufacturing represents approximately **9%** of all jobs in the region

**14,200** Manufacturing Employees

\$**654.5** million in payroll each year



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