

= South Dakota =

South Dakota (/ ˈsaʊ dʒəkoʊt / ; locally : [ˈsʌʒə dʒəkoʊ]) is a state located in the Midwestern region of the United States . It is named after the Lakota and Dakota Sioux Native American tribes , who comprise a significant portion of the population and historically dominated the entire territory . South Dakota is the 17th most expansive , but the 5th least populous and the 5th least densely populated of the 50 United States . Once the southern portion of the Dakota Territory , South Dakota became a state on November 2 , 1889 , simultaneously with North Dakota . Pierre is the state capital and Sioux Falls , with a population of about 165 @, @ 000 , is South Dakota 's largest city .

South Dakota is bordered by the states of North Dakota , Minnesota , Iowa , Nebraska , Wyoming , and Montana . The state is bisected by the Missouri River , dividing South Dakota into two geographically and socially distinct halves , known to residents as " East River " and " West River " . Eastern South Dakota is home to most of the state 's population , and fertile soil in this area is used to grow a variety of crops . West of the Missouri , ranching is the predominant agricultural activity , and the economy is more dependent on tourism and defense spending . Most of the Native American reservations are located in West River . The Black Hills , a group of low pine @-@ covered mountains sacred to the Sioux , are located in the southwest part of the state . Mount Rushmore , a major tourist destination , is located there . South Dakota experiences a temperate continental climate , with four distinct seasons and precipitation ranging from moderate in the east to semi @-@ arid in the west . The ecology of the state features species typical of a North American grassland biome .

Humans have inhabited the area for several millennia , with the Sioux becoming dominant by the early 19th century . In the late 19th century , European @-@ American settlement intensified after a gold rush in the Black Hills and the construction of railroads from the east . Encroaching miners and settlers triggered a number of Indian wars , ending with the Wounded Knee Massacre in 1890 . Key events in the 20th century included the Dust Bowl and Great Depression , increased federal spending during the 1940s and 50s for agriculture and defense , and an industrialization of agriculture that has much reduced family farming .

While several Democratic senators have represented South Dakota for multiple terms at the federal level , the state government is largely controlled by the Republican Party , whose nominees have carried South Dakota in each of the last 12 presidential elections . Historically dominated by an agricultural economy and a rural lifestyle , South Dakota has recently sought to diversify its economy in areas to attract and retain residents . South Dakota 's history and rural character still strongly influence the culture of the state .

= = Geography = =

South Dakota is situated in the north @-@ central United States , and is considered a part of the Midwest by the U.S. Census Bureau ; it is also part of the Great Plains region . The culture , economy , and geography of western South Dakota have more in common with the West than the Midwest . South Dakota has a total area of 77 @, @ 116 square miles (199 @, @ 730 km²) , making the state the 17th largest in the Union .

Harney Peak , with an elevation of 7 @, @ 242 ft (2 @, @ 207 m) , is the state 's highest point , while the shoreline of Big Stone Lake is the lowest , with an elevation of 966 ft (294 m) . South Dakota is bordered to the north by North Dakota ; to the south by Nebraska ; to the east by Iowa and Minnesota ; and to the west by Wyoming and Montana . The geographical center of the U.S. is 17 miles (27 km) west of Castle Rock in Butte County . The North American continental pole of inaccessibility is located between Allen and Kyle , 1 @, @ 024 mi (1 @, @ 648 km) from the nearest coastline .

The Missouri River is the largest and longest river in the state . Other major South Dakota rivers include the Cheyenne , James , Big Sioux , and White Rivers . Eastern South Dakota has many natural lakes , mostly created by periods of glaciation . Additionally , dams on the Missouri River

create four large reservoirs : Lake Oahe , Lake Sharpe , Lake Francis Case , and Lewis and Clark Lake .

== Regions and geology ==

South Dakota can generally be divided into three regions : eastern South Dakota , western South Dakota , and the Black Hills . The Missouri River serves as a boundary in terms of geographic , social , and political differences between eastern and western South Dakota . The geography of the Black Hills , long considered sacred ground by Native Americans , differs from its surroundings to such an extent that it can be considered separate from the rest of western South Dakota . At times the Black Hills are combined with the rest of western South Dakota , and people often refer to the resulting two regions divided by the Missouri River as West River and East River .

Eastern South Dakota generally features higher precipitation and lower topography than the western part of the state . Smaller geographic regions of this area include the Coteau des Prairies , the Dissected Till Plains , and the James River Valley . The Coteau des Prairies is a plateau bordered on the east by the Minnesota River Valley and on the west by the James River Basin . Further to the west , the James River Basin is mostly low , flat , highly eroded land , following the flow of the James River through South Dakota from north to south . The Dissected Till Plains , an area of rolling hills and fertile soil that covers much of Iowa and Nebraska , extends into the southeastern corner of South Dakota . Layers deposited during the Pleistocene epoch , starting around two million years ago , cover most of eastern South Dakota . These are the youngest rock and sediment layers in the state , and are the product of several successive periods of glaciation which deposited a large amount of rocks and soil , known as till , over the area .

The Great Plains cover most of the western two @-@ thirds of South Dakota . West of the Missouri River the landscape becomes more arid and rugged , consisting of rolling hills , plains , ravines , and steep flat @-@ topped hills called buttes . In the south , east of the Black Hills , lie the South Dakota Badlands . Erosion from the Black Hills , marine skeletons which fell to the bottom of a large shallow sea that once covered the area , and volcanic material all contribute to the geology of this area .

The Black Hills are in the southwestern part of South Dakota and extend into Wyoming . This range of low mountains covers 6 @,@ 000 sq mi (16 @,@ 000 km²) , with peaks that rise from 2 @,@ 000 to 4 @,@ 000 feet (600 to 1 @,@ 200 m) above their bases . The Black Hills are the location of Harney Peak (7 @,@ 242 ft or 2 @,@ 207 m above sea level) , the highest point in South Dakota and also the highest point in the United States east of the Rocky Mountains . Two billion @-@ year @-@ old Precambrian formations , the oldest rocks in the state , form the central core of the Black Hills . Formations from the Paleozoic Era form the outer ring of the Black Hills ; these were created between roughly 540 and 250 million years ago . This area features rocks such as limestone , which were deposited here when the area formed the shoreline of an ancient inland sea .

== Ecology ==

Much of South Dakota (except for the Black Hills area) is dominated by a temperate grasslands biome . Although grasses and crops cover most of this region , deciduous trees such as cottonwoods , elms , and willows are common near rivers and in shelter belts . Mammals in this area include bison , deer , pronghorn , coyotes , and prairie dogs . The state bird , the ring @-@ necked pheasant , has adapted well to the area after being introduced from China . Growing populations of bald eagles are spread throughout the state , especially near the Missouri River . Rivers and lakes of the grasslands support populations of walleye , carp , pike , bass , and other species . The Missouri River also contains the pre @-@ historic paddlefish .

Due to a higher elevation and level of precipitation , the Black Hills ecology differs significantly from that of the plains . The mountains are thickly blanketed by various types of pines , including ponderosa and lodgepole pines , as well as spruces . Black Hills mammals include deer , elk (wapiti) , bighorn sheep , mountain goats , pine marten , and mountain lions , while the streams and lakes contain several species of trout .

== Climate ==

South Dakota has a continental climate with four distinct seasons , ranging from cold , dry winters to hot and semi @-@ humid summers . During the summers , the average high temperature throughout the state is often close to 90 ° F (32 ° C) , although it cools to near 60 ° F (16 ° C) at night . It is not unusual for South Dakota to have severe hot , dry spells in the summer with the temperature climbing above 100 ° F (38 ° C) several times a year . Winters are cold with January high temperatures averaging below freezing and low temperatures averaging below 10 ° F (? 12 ° C) in most of the state . The highest recorded temperature is 120 ° F (49 ° C) at Usta on July 15 , 2006 and the lowest recorded temperature is ? 58 ° F (? 50 ° C) at McIntosh on February 17 , 1936 .

Average annual precipitation in South Dakota ranges from semi @-@ arid conditions in the northwestern part of the state (around 15 inches or 380 mm) to semi @-@ humid around the southeast portion of the state (around 25 inches or 640 mm) , although a small area centered on Lead in the Black Hills has the highest precipitation at nearly 30 inches (760 mm) per year .

South Dakota summers bring frequent , sometimes severe , thunderstorms with high winds , thunder , and hail . The eastern part of the state is often considered part of Tornado Alley , and South Dakota experiences an average of 30 tornadoes each year . Severe weather in the form of blizzards and ice storms occurs often during winter .

== National parks and monuments ==

South Dakota contains several sites that are administered by the National Park Service . Two national parks have been established in South Dakota , both located in the southwestern part of the state . Wind Cave National Park , established in 1903 in the Black Hills , contains an extensive cave network as well as a large herd of bison . Badlands National Park was created in 1978 . The park features an eroded , brightly colored landscape surrounded by semi @-@ arid grasslands . Mount Rushmore National Memorial in the Black Hills was established in 1925 . The sculpture of four U.S. Presidents was carved into the mountainside by sculptor Gutzon Borglum .

Other areas managed by the National Park Service include Jewel Cave National Monument near Custer , the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail , the Minuteman Missile National Historic Site , which features a decommissioned nuclear missile silo and a separate missile control area located several miles away , and the Missouri National Recreational River . The Crazy Horse Memorial is a large mountainside sculpture near Mt . Rushmore that is being constructed with private funds . The Mammoth Site near Hot Springs is another privately owned attraction in the Black Hills . A working paleontological dig , the site contains one of the largest concentrations of mammoth remains in the world .

== History ==

Humans have lived in what is today South Dakota for several thousand years , at least . The first inhabitants were Paleoindian hunter @-@ gatherers , and disappeared from the area around 5000 BC . Between 500 AD and 800 AD , a semi @-@ nomadic people known as the Mound Builders lived in central and eastern South Dakota . In the 14th century , the Crow Creek Massacre occurred , in which several hundred men , women , and children were killed near the Missouri River .

By 1500 , the Arikara (or Ree) had settled in much of the Missouri River valley . European contact with the area began in 1743 , when the LaVérendrye brothers explored the region . The LaVérendrye group buried a plate near the site of modern @-@ day Pierre , claiming the region for France as part of greater Louisiana. in 1762 the entire region became part of the Spanish Louisiana until 1802 . By the early 19th century , the Sioux had largely replaced the Arikara as the dominant group in the area .

In 1803 , the United States purchased the Louisiana Territory , an area that included most of South

Dakota , from Napoleon Bonaparte , and President Thomas Jefferson organized a group commonly referred to as the " Lewis and Clark Expedition " to explore the newly acquired region . In 1817 , an American fur trading post was set up at present @-@ day Fort Pierre , beginning continuous American settlement of the area . In 1855 , the U.S. Army bought Fort Pierre but abandoned it in 1857 in favor of Fort Randall to the south . Settlement by Americans and Europeans was by this time increasing rapidly , and in 1858 the Yankton Sioux signed the 1858 Treaty , ceding most of present @-@ day eastern South Dakota to the United States .

Land speculators founded two of eastern South Dakota 's largest present @-@ day cities : Sioux Falls in 1856 and Yankton in 1859 . In 1861 , the Dakota Territory was established by the United States government (this initially included North Dakota , South Dakota , and parts of Montana and Wyoming) . Settlement of the area , mostly by people from the eastern United States as well as western and northern Europe , increased rapidly , especially after the completion of an eastern railway link to Yankton in 1873 .

In 1874 , gold was discovered in the Black Hills during a military expedition led by George A. Custer and miners and explorers began illegally entering land promised to the Lakota . Custer 's expedition took place despite the fact that the US had granted the entire western half of present @-@ day South Dakota (West River) to the Sioux in 1868 by the Treaty of Laramie as part of the Great Sioux Reservation . The Sioux declined to grant mining rights or land in the Black Hills , and war broke out after the U.S. failed to stop white miners and settlers from entering the region . Eventually the US defeated the Sioux and broke up the Great Sioux Reservation into five reservations , settling the Lakota in those areas . (In 1980 , the US Supreme Court and Congress ordered payment to the Lakota for the illegal seizure of the Black Hills . The case remains unsettled , as the Lakota refuse to accept the money and instead insist on the return of the land .)

A growing population and political concerns (admitting two states meant having four new senators) caused Dakota Territory to be divided in half and President Benjamin Harrison signed proclamations formally admitting both South Dakota and North Dakota to the union on November 2 , 1889 . Harrison had the papers shuffled to obscure which one was signed first and the order went unrecorded .

On December 29 , 1890 , the Wounded Knee Massacre occurred on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation . Commonly cited as the last major armed conflict between the United States and the Lakota Sioux Nation , the massacre resulted in the deaths of at least 146 Sioux , many of them women and children . 31 U.S. soldiers were also killed in the conflict .

During the 1930s , several economic and climatic conditions combined with disastrous results for South Dakota . A lack of rainfall , extremely high temperatures and inappropriate cultivation techniques produced what was known as the Dust Bowl in South Dakota and several other plains states . Fertile topsoil was blown away in massive dust storms , and several harvests were completely ruined . The experiences of the Dust Bowl , coupled with local bank foreclosures and the general economic effects of the Great Depression , resulted in many South Dakotans leaving the state . The population of South Dakota declined by more than 7 % between 1930 and 1940 .

Economic stability returned with the U.S. entry into World War II in 1941 , when demand for the state 's agricultural and industrial products grew as the nation mobilized for war . In 1944 , the Pick ? Sloan Plan was passed as part of the Flood Control Act of 1944 by the U.S. Congress , resulting in the construction of six large dams on the Missouri River , four of which are at least partially located in South Dakota . Flood control , hydroelectricity , and recreational opportunities such as boating and fishing are provided by the dams and their reservoirs .

In recent decades , South Dakota has been transformed from a state dominated by agriculture to one with a more diversified economy . The tourism industry has grown considerably since the completion of the interstate system in the 1960s , with the Black Hills becoming more important as a destination . The financial service industry began to grow in the state as well , with Citibank moving its credit card operations from New York to Sioux Falls in 1981 , a move that has since been followed by several other financial companies . South Dakota was the first state to eliminate caps on interest rates .

In 2007 , the site of the recently closed Homestake gold mine near Lead was chosen as the

location of a new underground research facility , the Deep Underground Science and Engineering Laboratory . Despite a growing state population and recent economic development , many rural areas have been struggling over the past 50 years with locally declining populations and the emigration of educated young adults to larger South Dakota cities , such as Rapid City or Sioux Falls , or to other states . < Mechanization and consolidation of agriculture has contributed greatly to the declining number of smaller family farms and the resulting economic and demographic challenges facing rural towns .

= = Demographics = =

= = = Population = = =

The United States Census Bureau estimates that the population of South Dakota was 858 @, @ 469 on July 1 , 2015 , a 5 @. @ 44 % increase since the 2010 United States Census .

As of 2015 , South Dakota had an estimated population of 858 @, @ 469 , an increase of 44 @, @ 289 , or 5 @. @ 44 % , since the year 2010 . 7 @. @ 3 % of South Dakota 's population was reported as under 5 , 24 % under 18 , and 14 @. @ 3 % were 65 or older . Females made up approximately 50 @. @ 2 % of the population . As of the 2000 census , South Dakota ranked fifth @- @ lowest in the nation in both population and population density .

Of the people residing in South Dakota , 65 @. @ 7 % were born in South Dakota , 31 @. @ 4 % were born in another US state , 0 @. @ 6 % were born in Puerto Rico , U.S. Island areas , or born abroad to American parent (s) , and 2 @. @ 3 % were born in another country .

The center of population of South Dakota is located in Buffalo County , in the unincorporated county seat of Gann Valley .

= = = Race and ethnicity = = =

According to the 2010 Census , the racial composition of the population was :

84 @. @ 7 % White (83 @. @ 8 % non @- @ Hispanic white)

8 @. @ 8 % American Indian and Alaska Native

1 @. @ 2 % African American or black

0 @. @ 9 % Asian American

0 @. @ 1 % from some other race

1 @. @ 8 % of two or more races

Ethnically , 2 @. @ 7 % of South Dakota 's population was of Hispanic , Latino , or Spanish origin (they may be of any race) .

As of 2011 , 25 @. @ 4 % of South Dakota 's population younger than age 1 were minorities , meaning that they had at least one parent who was not non @- @ Hispanic white .

The five largest ancestry groups in South Dakota are German (40 @. @ 7 %) , Norwegian (15 @. @ 3 %) , Irish (10 @. @ 4 %) , Native American (8 @. @ 3 %) , and English (7 @. @ 1 %) . German Americans are the largest ancestry group in most parts of the state , especially in East River (east of the Missouri River) , although there are also large Scandinavian @- @ descended populations in some counties . South Dakota has the nation 's largest population of Hutterites , a communal Anabaptist group which emigrated in 1874 from Europe , primarily from German @- @ speaking areas .

American Indians , largely Lakota , Dakota , and Nakota (Sioux) , are predominant in several counties and comprise 20 per cent of the population in West River . The seven large Indian reservations in the state occupy an area much diminished from their former Great Sioux Reservation of West River , which the US government had once allocated to the Sioux tribes . South Dakota has the third @- @ highest proportion of Native Americans of any state , behind Alaska and New Mexico .

Five of the state 's counties are wholly within the boundaries of sovereign Indian reservations .

Because of the limitations of climate and land , and isolation from urban areas with more employment opportunities , living standards on many South Dakota reservations are often far below the national average ; Ziebach County ranked as the poorest county in the nation in 2009 . The unemployment rate in Fort Thompson , on the Crow Creek Reservation , is 70 % , and 21 % of households lack plumbing or basic kitchen appliances . A 1995 study by the U.S. Census Bureau found that 58 % of homes on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation did not have a telephone . The reservations ' isolation also inhibits their ability to generate revenue from gaming casinos , an avenue that has proved profitable for many tribes closer to urban centers .

== Languages ==

In 1995 the legislature passed a law to make English the " common language " of the state . As of the 2000 census , 1 @. @ 90 % of the population aged 5 or older speak German at home , while 1 @. @ 51 % speak Lakota or Dakota , and 1 @. @ 43 % Spanish . As of 2010 , 93 @. @ 46 % (692 @, @ 504) of South Dakota residents aged 5 and older spoke English as their primary language . 6 @. @ 54 % of the population spoke a language other than English . 2 @. @ 06 % (15 @, @ 292) of the population spoke Spanish , 1 @. @ 39 % (10 @, @ 282) spoke Dakota , and 1 @. @ 37 % (10 @, @ 140) spoke German . Other languages spoken included Vietnamese (0 @. @ 16 %) , Chinese (0 @. @ 12 %) , and Russian (0 @. @ 10 %) .

== Growth and rural flight ==

Over the last several decades , the population in many rural areas has declined in South Dakota , in common with other Great Plains states . The change has been characterized as " rural flight " as family farming has declined . Young people have moved to cities for other employment . This trend has continued in recent years , with 30 of South Dakota 's counties losing population between the 1990 and the 2000 census . During that time , nine counties had a population loss of greater than 10 % , with Harding County , in the northwest corner of the state , losing nearly 19 % of its population . Low birth rates and a lack of younger immigration has caused the median age of many of these counties to increase . In 24 counties , at least 20 % of the population is over the age of 65 , compared with a national rate of 12 @. @ 8 % .

The effect of rural flight has not been spread evenly through South Dakota , however . Although most rural counties and small towns have lost population , the Sioux Falls area , the larger counties along Interstate 29 , the Black Hills , and many Indian reservations have all gained population . As the reservations have exercised more sovereignty , some Sioux have returned to them from urban areas . Lincoln County near Sioux Falls was the seventh fastest @-@ growing county (by percentage) in the United States in 2010 . The growth in these areas has compensated for losses in the rest of the state . South Dakota 's total population continues to increase steadily , albeit at a slower rate than the national average .

== Religion ==

The largest denominations by number of adherents in 2010 were the Roman Catholic Church with 148 @, @ 883 members ; the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) with 112 @, @ 649 members ; and the United Methodist Church (UMC) with 36 @, @ 020 members . (Both the ELCA and UMC are specific denominations within the broader terms ' Lutheran ' and ' Methodist ' , respectively .) The results of a 2001 survey , in which South Dakotans were asked to identify their religion , include :

- Christian (86 %)
- Protestant (54 %)
- Lutheran (27 %)
- Methodist (13 %)
- Baptist (4 %)

Presbyterian (4 %)
Other Protestant (6 %)
Roman Catholic (25 %)
Non @-@ denominational Christian (7 %)
Not religious (8 %)
Other religions (3 %)
Refused to answer (2 %)

= = Economy = =

The current @-@ dollar gross state product of South Dakota was US \$ 39 @.@ 8 billion as of 2010 , the fifth smallest total state output in the US . The per capita personal income was \$ 38 @,@ 865 in 2010 , ranked 25th in the U.S. , and 12 @.@ 5 % of the population was below the poverty line in 2008 . CNBC 's list of " Top States for Business for 2010 " has recognized South Dakota as the seventh best state in the nation . In July 2011 , the state 's unemployment rate was 4 @.@ 7 % .

The service industry is the largest economic contributor in South Dakota . This sector includes the retail , finance , and health care industries . Citibank , which was the largest bank holding company in the United States at one time , established national banking operations in South Dakota in 1981 to take advantage of favorable banking regulations . Government spending is another important segment of the state 's economy , providing over ten percent of the gross state product . Ellsworth Air Force Base , near Rapid City , is the second @-@ largest single employer in the state .

Agriculture has historically been a key component of the South Dakota economy . Although other industries have expanded rapidly in recent decades , agricultural production is still very important to the state 's economy , especially in rural areas . The five most valuable agricultural products in South Dakota are cattle , corn (maize) , soybeans , wheat , and hogs . Agriculture @-@ related industries such as meat packing and ethanol production also have a considerable economic impact on the state . South Dakota is the sixth leading ethanol @-@ producing state in the nation .

Another important sector in South Dakota 's economy is tourism . Many travel to view the attractions of the state , particularly those in the Black Hills region , such as historic Deadwood , Mount Rushmore , and the nearby state and national parks . One of the largest tourist events in the state is the annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally . The five @-@ day event drew over 460 @,@ 000 attendees in 2013 ; significant considering the state has a total population of 850 @,@ 000 . In 2006 , tourism provided an estimated 33 @,@ 000 jobs in the state and contributed over two billion dollars to the economy of South Dakota .

= = Transportation = =

South Dakota has 83 @,@ 609 miles (134 @,@ 556 km) of highways , roads , and streets , along with 679 miles (1 @,@ 093 km) of interstate highways . Two major interstates pass through South Dakota : Interstate 90 , which runs east and west through the southern half of the state ; and Interstate 29 , running north and south in the eastern portion of the state . The I @-@ 29 corridor features generally higher rates of population and economic growth than areas in eastern South Dakota that are further from the interstate .

Also located in the state are the shorter Interstates 190 , a spur into central Rapid City , and 229 , a loop around southern and eastern Sioux Falls . Several major U.S. highways pass through the state . U.S. routes 12 , 14 , 16 , 18 and 212 travel east and west , while U.S. routes 81 , 83 , 85 and 281 run north and south . South Dakota and Montana are the only states sharing a land border which is not traversed by a paved road .

South Dakota contains two National Scenic Byways . The Peter Norbeck National Scenic Byway is located in the Black Hills , while the Native American Scenic Byway runs along the Missouri River in the north @-@ central part of the state . Other scenic byways include the Badlands Loop Scenic Byway , the Spearfish Canyon Scenic Byway , and the Wildlife Loop Road Scenic Byway .

Railroads have played an important role in South Dakota transportation since the mid @-@ 19th

century . Some 4 @, @ 420 miles (7 @, @ 110 km) of railroad track were built in South Dakota during the late 19th century and early 20th century , but only 1 @, @ 839 miles (2 @, @ 960 km) are active . BNSF Railway is currently the largest railroad in South Dakota ; the Rapid City , Pierre and Eastern Railroad (formerly the Dakota , Minnesota and Eastern) is the state 's other major carrier . Rail transportation in the state is confined only to freight , however , as South Dakota is one of the few states without any Amtrak service .

South Dakota 's largest commercial airports in terms of passenger traffic are the Sioux Falls Regional Airport and Rapid City Regional Airport . Delta Air Lines , Frontier Airlines , and Allegiant Airlines , as well as commuter airlines using the brand affiliation with major airlines serve the two largest airports . Several other cities in the state also have commercial air service : Aberdeen Regional Airport , Huron Regional Airport , Pierre Regional Airport , and Watertown Regional Airport , some of which is subsidized by the Essential Air Service program .

= = Government and politics = =

= = = Government = = =

Like that of other U.S. states , the structure of the government of South Dakota follows the same separation of powers as the federal government , with executive , legislative , and judicial branches . The structure of the state government is laid out in the Constitution of South Dakota , the highest law in the state . The constitution may be amended either by a majority vote of both houses of the legislature , or by voter initiative .

The Governor of South Dakota occupies the executive branch of the state government . The current governor is Dennis Daugaard , a Republican from Garretson . The state constitution gives the governor the power to either sign into law or veto bills passed by the state legislature , to serve as commander @-@ in @-@ chief of the South Dakota National Guard , to appoint a cabinet , and to commute criminal sentences or to pardon those convicted of crimes . The governor serves for a four @-@ year term , and may not serve more than two consecutive terms .

The state legislature is made up of two bodies , the Senate , which has 35 members , and the House of Representatives , with 70 members . South Dakota is divided into 35 legislative districts , with voters electing two representatives and one senator per district . The legislature meets for an annual session which begins on the second Tuesday in January and lasts for 30 days ; it also meets if a special session is called by the governor .

The judicial branch is made up of several levels . The state supreme court , with four justices and a chief justice , is the highest court in the state . Below the supreme court are the circuit courts ; 41 circuit judges serve in seven judicial circuits in the state . Below the circuit courts are the magistrate courts , which deal with more minor criminal and civil actions .

= = = State taxes = = =

As of 2005 , South Dakota has the lowest per capita total state tax rate in the United States . The state does not levy personal or corporate income taxes , inheritance taxes , or taxes on intangible personal property . The state sales tax rate is 4 percent , but has been voted to 4 @. @ 5 , which will come into effect 1 June 2016 . Various localities have local levies so that in some areas the rate is 6 percent . The state sales tax does not apply to sales to Indians on Indian reservations , but many reservations have a compact with the state . Businesses on the reservation collect the tax and the state refunds to the Indian Tribes the percentage of sales tax collections relating to the ratio of Indian population to total population in the county or area affected . Ad valorem property taxes are local taxes and are a large source of funding for school systems , counties , municipalities and other local government units . The South Dakota Special Tax Division regulates some taxes including cigarette and alcohol @-@ related taxes .

== Federal representation ==

South Dakota is represented at the federal level by Senator John Thune , Senator Mike Rounds , and Representative Kristi Noem . All three are Republicans . South Dakota is one of seven states with only one seat in the US House of Representatives . In United States presidential elections , South Dakota is allotted three of 538 votes in the Electoral College . As in all other states except Maine and neighboring Nebraska , South Dakota 's electoral votes are granted in a winner @-@ take @-@ all system .

== Politics ==

South Dakota politics are generally dominated by the Republican Party . Since statehood , Republicans have carried the state 's electoral votes in all but five presidential elections : 1896 , 1912 (By Theodore Roosevelt 's Progressive Party) , 1932 , 1936 and 1964 . Only Alaska has been carried fewer times by Democrat presidential candidates . Not even George McGovern , the Democratic nominee in 1972 as well as a native South Dakotan , was able to carry the state . Additionally , a Democrat has not won the governorship since 1974 . As of 2016 , Republicans hold a 15 % voter registration advantage over Democrats and hold large majorities in both the state House of Representatives and Senate .

Despite the state 's general Republican and conservative leanings , Democrats have found success in various statewide elections , most notably in those involving South Dakota 's congressional representatives in Washington . American Indians have been becoming more active in state and county electoral politics . In the 2002 election , American Indian voting carried Tim Johnson as the Democratic candidate by a margin of 532 votes . Until his electoral defeat in 2004 , Senator Tom Daschle was the Senate minority leader (and briefly its majority leader during Democratic control of the Senate in 2001 ? 02) .

In 2012 , South Dakota voted for Republican nominee Mitt Romney over Democratic President Barack Obama by a margin of 18 % . In 2014 , incumbent Republican Governor Dennis Daugaard won a second term against Democrat Susan Wismer , incumbent Republican Kristi Noem defeated Democrat Corinna Robinson for South Dakota 's at @-@ large seat in the US House , and former Governor Mike Rounds , a Republican , defeated Democrat Rick Weiland and former Senator Larry Pressler for the US Senate seat being vacated by retiring Democrat Tim Johnson .

Contemporary political issues in South Dakota include the costs and benefits of the state lottery , South Dakota 's relatively low rankings in education spending (particularly teacher pay) , and recent legislative and electoral attempts to ban abortion in the state .

== Culture ==

South Dakota 's culture reflects the state 's American Indian , rural , Western , and European roots . A number of annual events celebrating the state 's ethnic and historical heritage take place around the state , such as Days of ' 76 in Deadwood , Czech Days in Tabor , and the annual St. Patrick 's Day and Cinco de Mayo festivities in Sioux Falls . The various tribes hold many annual pow wows at their reservations throughout the state , to which non @-@ Native Americans are sometimes invited . Custer State Park holds an annual Buffalo Roundup , in which volunteers on horseback gather the park 's herd of around 1 @, @ 500 bison .

Black Elk (Lakota) was a medicine man and heyokha , whose life spanned the transition to reservations . His accounts of the 19th @-@ century Indian Wars and Ghost Dance movement , and his deep thoughts on personal visions and Native American religion , form the basis of the book Black Elk Speaks , first published in 1932 . (Among several editions , a premier annotated edition was published in 2008 .) Paul Goble , an award @-@ winning children 's book author and illustrator , has been based in the Black Hills since 1977 .

Laura Ingalls Wilder , whose semi @-@ autobiographical books are based on her experiences as a child and young adult on the frontier , is one of South Dakota 's best @-@ known writers . She drew

from her life growing up on a homestead near De Smet as the basis for five of her novels : By the Shores of Silver Lake , The Long Winter , Little Town on the Prairie , These Happy Golden Years , and The First Four Years . These gained renewed popularity in the United States when Little House on the Prairie was adapted and produced as a television series in the . Wilder 's daughter , Rose Wilder Lane , who became a well @-@ known writer in her own right , was born near De Smet in 1886 .

South Dakota has also produced several notable artists . Harvey Dunn grew up on a homestead near Manchester in the late 19th century . While Dunn worked most of his career as a commercial illustrator , his most famous works showed various scenes of frontier life ; he completed these near the end of his career . Oscar Howe (Crow) was born on the Crow Creek Indian Reservation and won fame for his watercolor paintings . Howe was one of the first Native American painters to adopt techniques and style heavily influenced by the mid @-@ 20th century abstraction movement , rather than relying on traditional Native American styles . Terry Redlin , originally from Watertown , is an accomplished painter of rural and wildlife scenes . Many of Redlin 's works are on display at the Redlin Art Center in Watertown .

= = Cities and towns = =

Sioux Falls is the largest city in South Dakota , with a 2010 population of 153 @,@ 888 , and a metropolitan area population of 238 @,@ 122 . The city , founded in 1856 , is located in the southeast corner of the state . Retail , finance , and healthcare have assumed greater importance in Sioux Falls , where the economy was originally centered on agri @-@ business and quarrying .

Rapid City , with a 2010 population of 67 @,@ 956 , and a metropolitan area population of 124 @,@ 766 , is the second @-@ largest city in the state . It is located on the eastern edge of the Black Hills , and was founded in 1876 . Rapid City 's economy is largely based on tourism and defense spending , because of the close proximity of many tourist attractions in the Black Hills and Ellsworth Air Force Base .

The next eight largest cities in the state , in order of descending 2010 population , are Aberdeen (26 @,@ 091) , Brookings (22 @,@ 056) , Watertown (21 @,@ 482) , Mitchell (15 @,@ 254) , Yankton (14 @,@ 454) , Pierre (13 @,@ 646) , Huron (12 @,@ 592) , and Vermillion (10 @,@ 571) . Pierre is the state capital , and Brookings and Vermillion are the locations of the state 's two largest universities (South Dakota State University and University of South Dakota , respectively) . With a population of about 14 @,@ 000 , Pierre is the second smallest state capital in the United States . Of the ten largest cities in the state , only Rapid City is located west of the Missouri River .

= = Media = =

South Dakota 's first newspaper , the Dakota Democrat , began publishing in Yankton in 1858 . Today , the largest newspaper in the state is the Sioux Falls Argus Leader , with a Sunday circulation of 63 @,@ 701 and a weekday circulation of 44 @,@ 334 . The Rapid City Journal , with a Sunday circulation of 32 @,@ 638 and a weekday circulation of 27 @,@ 827 , is South Dakota 's second largest newspaper . The next four largest newspapers in the state are the Aberdeen American News , the Watertown Public Opinion , the Huron Plainsman , and the Brookings Register . In 1981 , Tim Giago founded the Lakota Times as a newspaper for the local American Indian community on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation . The newspaper , now published in New York and known as Indian Country Today , is currently available in every state in the country . The Sioux City Journal also covers parts of South Dakota .

There are currently nine television stations broadcasting in South Dakota ; South Dakota Public Television broadcasts from a number of locations around the state , while the other stations broadcast from either Sioux Falls or Rapid City . The two largest television media markets in South Dakota are Sioux Falls @-@ Mitchell , with a viewership of 246 @,@ 020 , and Rapid City , with a viewership of 91 @,@ 070 . The two markets rank as 114th and 177th largest in the United States , respectively . The first television station in the state , KELO @-@ TV , began airing in Sioux Falls in

1953 . Among KELO 's early programs was Captain 11 , an afternoon children 's program . Captain 11 ran from 1955 until 1996 , making it the longest continuously running children 's television program in the nation .

A number of South Dakotans are famous for their work in the fields of television and publishing . Former NBC Nightly News anchor and author Tom Brokaw is from Webster and Yankton , USA Today founder Al Neuharth was from Eureka and Alpena , gameshow host Bob Barker spent much of his childhood in Mission , and entertainment news hosts Pat O 'Brien and Mary Hart are both from Sioux Falls .

= = Education = =

As of 2006 , South Dakota has a total primary and secondary school enrollment of 136 @, @ 872 , with 120 @, @ 278 of these students being educated in the public school system . There are 703 public schools in 168 school districts , giving South Dakota the highest number of schools per capita in the United States . The current high school graduation rate is 89 @. @ 9 % , and the average ACT score is 21 @. @ 8 , slightly above the national average of 21 @. @ 1 . 89 @. @ 8 % of the adult population has earned at least a high school diploma , and 25 @. @ 8 % has earned a bachelor 's degree or higher . South Dakota 's 2008 average public school teacher salary of \$ 36 @, @ 674 , compared to a national average of \$ 52 @, @ 308 , was the lowest in the nation . In 2007 South Dakota passed legislation modeled after Montana 's Indian Education for All Act (1999) , mandating education about Native American tribal history , culture , and heritage in all the schools , from pre @-@ school through college , in an effort to increase knowledge and appreciation about Indian culture among all residents of the state , as well as to reinforce Indian students ' understanding of their own cultures ' contributions .

The South Dakota Board of Regents , whose members are appointed by the governor , controls the six public universities in the state . South Dakota State University (SDSU) , in Brookings , is the largest university in the state , with an enrollment of 12 @, @ 831 . The University of South Dakota (USD) , in Vermillion , is the state 's oldest university , and has South Dakota 's only law school and medical school . South Dakota also has several private universities , the largest of which is Augustana College in Sioux Falls .

= = Sports and recreation = =

= = = Organized sports = = =

Because of its low population , South Dakota does not host any major league professional sports franchises . The state does have a number of minor league and independent league teams , all of which play in either Sioux Falls or Rapid City . Sioux Falls is currently home to four teams : the Sioux Falls Canaries (baseball) , the Sioux Falls Skyforce (basketball) , the Sioux Falls Stampede (hockey) , and the Sioux Falls Storm (arena football) . The Canaries play in the American Association , and their home field is Sioux Falls Stadium . The Skyforce play in the NBA D @-@ League , and are affiliated with the NBA 's Miami Heat . They play at the Sanford Pentagon . The Stampede and Storm share the Denny Sanford Premier Center . The Stampede play in the USHL , and the Storm play in the IFL . Rapid City has a hockey team named the Rapid City Rush , who play in the ECHL . The Rush began their inaugural season in 2008 at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center .

Universities in South Dakota host a variety of sports programs . For many years , South Dakota was one of the only states in the country without a NCAA Division I football or basketball team . However , several years ago SDSU decided to move their teams from Division II to Division I , a move that has since been followed by the University of South Dakota . Other universities in the state compete at the NCAA 's Division II or III levels , or in the NAIA .

Famous South Dakota athletes include Billy Mills , Mike Miller , Mark Ellis , Becky Hammon , Brock Lesnar , Chad Greenway , and Adam Vinatieri . Mills is from the town of Pine Ridge and competed

at the 1964 Summer Olympic Games in Tokyo , becoming the only American to win a gold medal in the 10 @,@ 000 @-@ meter event . Miller , of Mitchell , is a two @-@ time NBA champion who played college basketball at the University of Florida , leading them to the 2000 NCAA Championship game his sophomore year , and won the 2001 NBA rookie of the year award . Ellis , of Rapid City , played for the University of Florida and four MLB teams before retiring in 2015 . Hammon , of Rapid City , played for the WNBA 's New York Liberty and San Antonio Silver Stars before becoming an assistant coach for the NBA 's San Antonio Spurs in 2014 . Lesnar , of Webster , is a former heavy @-@ weight champion in the UFC and WWE . Vinatieri is an NFL placekicker who grew up in Rapid City and attended SDSU .

= = = Recreation = = =

Fishing and hunting are both popular outdoor activities in South Dakota . Fishing contributes over \$ 224 million to South Dakota 's economy , and hunting contributes over \$ 303 million . In 2007 , over 275 @,@ 000 hunting licences and 175 @,@ 000 fishing licences were sold in the state ; around half of the hunting licences and over two @-@ thirds of the fishing licences were purchased by South Dakotans . Popular species of game include pheasants , white @-@ tailed deer , mule deer , and turkeys , as well as waterfowl such as Canada geese , snow geese , and mallards . Targets of anglers include walleye in the eastern glacial lakes and Missouri River reservoirs , Chinook salmon in Lake Oahe , and trout in the Black Hills .

Other sports , such as cycling and running , are also popular in the state . In 1991 , the state opened the George S. Mickelson Trail , a 109 @-@ mile (175 km) rail trail in the Black Hills . Besides being used by cyclists , the trail is also the site of a portion of the annual Mount Rushmore marathon ; the marathon 's entire course is at an elevation of over 4 @,@ 000 feet (1 @,@ 200 m) . Other events in the state include the Tour de Kota , a 478 @-@ mile (769 km) , six @-@ day cycling event that covers much of eastern and central South Dakota , and the annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally , which draws hundreds of thousands of participants from around the United States .

= = State symbols = =

Some of South Dakota 's official state symbols include :

State bird : Ring @-@ necked pheasant

State flower : American pasque flower

State tree : Black Hills spruce

State nicknames : Mount Rushmore State (official) , Coyote state & Sunshine state (both unofficial)

State motto : " Under God , the people rule "

State slogan : " Great Faces . Great Places . "

State mineral : Rose quartz

State insect : Honey bee ? *Apis mellifera* L.

State animal : Coyote

State fish : Walleye

State gemstone : Fairburn agate

State song : " Hail , South Dakota ! "