

WESTERN TRADER

Published by Southern Hills Publishing, P.O. Box 551, Custer, SD 57730 • Phone 605-673-2217 • Email: custerads@gwtc.net

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ISSUE NO. 13

DINING • ARTS • ENTERTAINMENT • EVENTS



PERFORMING AT CHUTE ROOSTER — Brent Morris and the Western Acoustics will take to the stage of the Chute Rooster this Friday, March 29 from 6-9 p.m. The three are one of our area's premier classic country trios, and invite you to come out and "waltz to some Willie and two-step to some Strait." [Submitted Photo]

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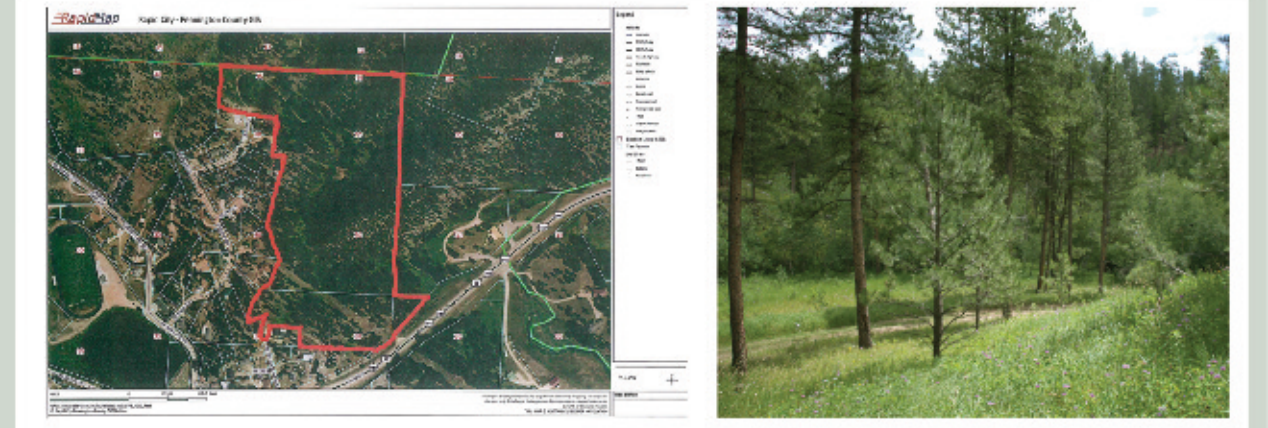
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SHOP THE BLACK HILLS!

More funding, partnerships could boost juvenile diversion services

By Jackie Hendry
South Dakota Public
Broadcasting via South
Dakota News Watch

Editor's note: This is part of a series of stories on children that Jackie Hendry, producer and host of South Dakota Public Broadcasting's "South Dakota Focus" will write for South Dakota News Watch. Each month, she previews the upcoming show.

Just inside the Dahl Arts Center in downtown Rapid City, a large canvas features the painting of an outdoor basketball court behind a chain link fence and barbed wire. An eagle glides in the sky above a fuchsia building.

Flowers bloom in the foreground – each representing a girl serving time at the nearby Juvenile Services Center. They designed the mural, and their vision was brought to vibrant color by young people working to avoid a future behind bars through a juvenile diversion program.

The Just Us Mural Project in Pennington County is one example of diversion programming at work. It offers young people an opportunity to avoid entering a justice system that is increasingly difficult to leave by making amends with the community while also giving them a chance to experiment with more productive outlets for their emotions.

Solving juvenile justice problems early

Not every child who runs afoul of the law belongs in the criminal justice system. Pennington County State's Attorney Lara Roetzel firmly believes this after more than 25 years as a prosecutor.

"Statistics have shown that once a kid goes into the criminal justice system, they usually don't get out of it," said Roetzel. She explained most young people who enter probation struggle to keep out of trouble because "kids are kids."

"What we found is that they're going to continue to have problems on probation – the same kinds of prob-

lems that all kids have," said Roetzel. "They're gonna break curfew. They're going to have trouble going to school, maybe. And once you're on probation, you stay on probation, and then they find themselves getting in more and more trouble."

To be clear, especially serious offenses – like violent crimes or other high level offenses – continue to land juveniles in the court system. However, some first-time offenses and petty crimes might make a young person eligible for diversion programming instead. These programs can include substance abuse counseling, Teen Court and mediation through the Center for Restorative Justice.

"One of the main factors we've identified in indicating a predilection later in life to go to prison is someone that's been in the juvenile system," said Roetzel. "It's so important that we identify kids who are at risk and try to solve problems early."

Lawmakers approve funding increase for juvenile diversion

Roetzel was one of the proponents of state legislation this year to increase the reimbursement rate for counties who make use of diversion programs.

Senate Bill 47 increased the state's reimbursement from \$250 per child to \$750. The bill was introduced at the request of the Department of Corrections, which has reimbursed counties for successful juvenile diversions for eight years. Kristi Bunkers, the director of juvenile services within the state DOC, told lawmakers more than 12,000 young people have avoided entering the formal justice system for alcohol, drug, tobacco or truancy offenses in that time.

"We know one of the greatest predictors of adult incarceration is juvenile incarceration," Bunkers told the House Judiciary Committee. "This bill aims to prioritize public funds for proven programs that reduce offending and support our next generation rather than putting them on a path towards the adult

criminal justice system."

Lawmakers ultimately approved the increased reimbursement rate.

"When you look at how much money you would spend to incarcerate an adult in a prison, it doesn't even begin to compare," Roetzel said. "If we can do early intervention on a young person and that eventually leads to them not going to prison as an adult? I mean, it's just easy math."

In many cases, young people committing petty offenses or abusing drugs and alcohol require counseling to address the root cause of the behavior. But many families can't afford those services on their own. A shortage of local resources means some counseling services and substance abuse courses are only offered online, which can still be pricey.

"Well, I can't tell a kid, 'Alright, I want you to go through diversion, but I want you to take a class where you're going to learn how to make better choices, and it's going to cost you \$600,'" said Roetzel. "They can't fail just because they didn't have the money to do it. State's attorneys need the financial resources to be able to help kids be successful."

Ripples of Daugaard-era juvenile justice reform

An emphasis on community-based diversion programming began in earnest during the Gov. Dennis Daugaard administration.

In 2011, South Dakota had one of the highest rates of juvenile commitments in the country, in part because young people were put behind bars for low-level offenses. The passage of Senate Bill 73 in 2015 made diversion the default for many misdemeanors and established the financial incentive for counties. However, not all communities have the robust options that Pennington County had already established.

"I think it was very well intended and we've seen some positive effects from what was done with Senate Bill 73," said attorney general Marty Jackley. "But again, there needed to be some additional funding

that didn't come. Some of it's come now."

The same year Daugaard signed Senate Bill 73 into law, the state closed the STAR Academy in Custer that had served as a detention camp for juveniles for decades.

"The state saved so much money when it closed down the Custer boot camp," said Jackley. "Those dollars, instead of going back to the general fund, should have gone back to communities to use for diversion programs."

Instead, additional funding is coming years later through this year's Senate Bill 47. Jackley said that's a good thing, although results may vary county by county.

According to its recently-released annual report, the Pennington County State's Attorney's Office saw 669 young people enter some type of diversion programming in 2023, with 582 (87 percent) successfully completing the program. Based on the state's previous reimbursement rate, that amounted to \$145,500 back to Pennington County. At the recently-approved rate increase from Senate Bill 47, 582 successful juvenile diversions would mean \$436,500 back to the county.

The increase is likely to make a significant difference in more populous counties with higher numbers of youth offenders. Of course, that impact is less in smaller counties.

Jackley previously served as state's attorney for both Jones and Haakon counties—two rural areas that might see a handful of diversion-eligible cases a year.

"Rapid City has invested in a juvenile diversion program," said Jackley. "That's very significant. Some of our smaller counties simply don't have those resources, and so you have to treat those different cases differently."

Mural program had 'shockingly incredible outcomes'

Other diversion programs are supported by grant funding and community partnerships. In addition to more traditional

diversion programs, Pennington County has also partnered with other organizations to offer Jujitsu training, skateboarding and art programs for youth working through diversion.

"People have a hard time understanding how successful they are because they think that we're rewarding young people for their poor behavior, and it's not true," said Kim Morsching, director of diversion for Pennington County. "It's a different way to reach each unique individual."

One of those alternative juvenile diversion programs is the Just Us Mural Project, or JUMP, provided in partnership with the Rapid City Arts Council.

Late last year, the Pennington County State's Attorney's Office was one of five programs in the country to be awarded a \$50,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention to support access to art programming for at-risk young people.

The mural of the basketball court is the third to be created since the grant program began and the first designed by members of the girls unit at the Juvenile Services Center. The two other mural designs feature a similar theme: the struggle between right and wrong or a good path and bad path.

By the end of the grant period, 17 murals will have been created with the input of around 300 young people. The process includes an art therapist to help participants work through emotions that may arise, and an artist-in-residence ensures each child has some input on the finished work.

The grant application came after the success of a previous mural program.

"We had incredible outcomes," Morsching said. "Shockingly incredible outcomes. Like, there were people who never got into trouble again. We never saw their names again."

She added that young people who had never thought of themselves as an artist were able to see themselves in a new light after

the experience.

That's the level of success she and other partners hope to achieve with JUMP. The Dahl Arts Center has offered opportunities for the young people to stay involved with art by inviting them back for future murals and gifting them art supplies, Morsching said.

"It's like developing a lifetime sport. You're developing a lifelong passion," she said.

By definition, a successful diversion means a young person doesn't enter the criminal justice system. That can make juvenile diversion success stories difficult to quantify. In Morsching's own experience, she learns about success stories by running into parents or former juveniles years after the fact. It's often only then that she learns a program changed a young person's life.

Morsching believes it's important to remember that kids who end up in her office are making decisions based on their own limited experience and still-developing brains. In other words, many are doing the best they can with what they have. Support, accountability and alternative outlets for their emotions can make all the difference in redirecting negative behaviors.

"Until they have a new tool, they're not going to use it," said Morsching. "And that's what diversion provides. We provide that new tool."

How to watch "South Dakota Focus" on SDPB

The next episode of South Dakota Focus airs on Thursday, March 28, at 7 p.m. It can be viewed on SDPB-TV 1, Facebook, YouTube and SD.net

The episode includes:

- A look at how policy approaches to juvenile justice have shifted in recent years

- The story of Huron parents who struggled to find appropriate resources for their son

- How creative diversion programs can help keep young people out of the justice system

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Black Hills



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Black Hills Burger & Bun Tuesday - Saturday 11 am - 2:30pm
Buglin' Bull Restaurant & Sports Bar Sun-Thursday 11am-8 pm Friday-Saturday 11am-9pm
Calamity Jane's Tuesday - Sunday 7am to 9pm
Custer Beacon Wednesday - Saturday 4 pm to close
Custer County Candy Co. Sunday-Monday closed Tuesday-Saturday 11:00 am - 4:00 pm
Custer Deli Mon-Thurs 8 am - 4 pm Friday 8 am 5 pm Sat. 9 am-3 pm Sunday -Closed
Custer's Last Stop Daily 10 am - 3 pm
Custer Wolf Monday-Saturday 11:30 am - 8 pm
Dairy Queen Mon.-Saturday 11am-8 pm Sunday 11am-7 pm
Dakota Broasted Tuesday - Saturday 11 am - 6 pm
Feel Good Cafe (Closed for the Season)
Frontier Bar & Grill Daily 11 am to 9 pm Closed Tuesday
Gold Pan Saloon Sun-Thursday 2pm - close Fri - Saturday 2pm - close
Hjem AM Friday 8am - 11am Saturday & Sunday 8 am - Noon
Horatio's Homemade Ice Cream Wednesday - Saturday 12:30 pm - 7 pm
Laughing Water Restaurant Mon - Fri. 11 am to 4 pm Sat. & Sun. 9am - 4 pm
Maria's Mexican Restaurant Monday - Saturday 6:30 - 10 am, 11 am - 3 pm 4:30 pm - 8:30 pm
Miner's Cup Monday - Saturday 6:30 am - 1:30 pm

Pizza Mill Monday- Saturday 11 am - 8 pm
Skogen Kitchen Tuesday - Saturday 5-8 p.m.
Subway Restaurant Mon-Sat 8 am - 9 pm Sunday 8 am - 8 pm
Hill City EATS
The Alpine Inn Monday - Saturday 11 am - 2:30 pm LUNCH 5 pm - 9:30 pm DINNER
Bumpin' Buffalo Bar & Grill Monday - Sunday 11 am - 9 pm
Caboose Coffee Company Monday - Saturday 7 am - 1 pm Sunday - Closed
Chute Rooster Thursday - Monday 11 am - 9 pm Sunday 10 am - 6 pm
Cream Tuesday - Saturday 10 am - 3:30 pm
Dairy Twist Monday - Saturday 11a.m. - 7 p.m. & Sunday Noon - 7 p.m.
Gold Run Café Sunday - Thursday 8 am - 2 pm Friday - Saturday 10 am - 3:30 pm
Heart of the Hills Exxon Daily 5 am - Midnight
Miner Brewing Company Daily 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Prairie Berry Winery Daily 10 am - 6 pm
Silver Dollar Saloon Monday -Thursday 1pm - 10 pm Fri - Sun Noon - 10 pm
Taqueria Los Camelinas Monday-Friday 4pm-7 pm Saturday 11 am-2 pm
Tin City Saloon Friday-Wednesday 11am - 8 pm

Three Forks Bar, Grille & Casino Daily 11 am - 7 pm
Turtle Town Sunday-Thursday 10am 4 pm Friday-Saturday 9am-5 pm
Twisted PineTasting Room Tues-Thurs Noon-5pm Fri-Saturday Noon-7pm
Hermosa EATS
Corner Pantry Deli Daily 6 a.m. to 8 p.m.
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Your Restaurant Here Monday- Saturday 4am - 9pm
Lintz Bros. Pizza Thursday - Monday 3 pm - 9 pm
Hermosa Senior Citizens Center Monday - Thursday Noon to close
79 Lounge Daily 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Keystone EATS
Eno's Pizza & Pub Mon-Thurs 11am -9pm Friday-Sunday 11am-10 pm
Keystone Country Store Daily 7 am to 9 pm
Turtle Town Monday-Saturday 10 am until 6 pm Sunday 10 am until 5 pm
Xanterra@ Mt. Rushmore Daily 8 am - 9 pm
Carver's Cafe @ Mt. Rushmore 8 am - 4:30 pm

Hot Springs EATS
American Legion Monday - Saturday 10am - close
Dairy Queen Daily 10:30 am - 9 pm
Mornin' Sunshine Monday-Saturday 7am-2 pm Sunday 7am -1pm
Pizza Hut Monday - Saturday 11 am - 9 pm
Silk Road Experience Thursday-Saturday 3pm-7pm
Sick-N-Twisted Thursday - Monday 11 am - 8 pm
Southern Hills Diner & Bakery Thursday-Monday 8am- 2pm closed Tuesday & Wednesday
Southern Hills Golf Course Daily 7 am - 8 pm
Springs Coffee Kiosk Mon-Fri 5:30am-4:30pm Saturday 5:30am - 2pm Sunday 5:30am - Noon
Taco John's Monday - Saturday 7 a.m. to 9 pm Sunday 8 am - 8 pm
The Berm (Food Truck) Wednesday - Saturday 11:30am - 6pm
Two Cows Creamery & Bistro Mon-Thurs 11am-8pm Fri & Sat 11am-9pm Sunday 11am-7pm
Heaven Scent Bakery Wednesday - Monday 10am - 5pm
Wandering Bison Coffee Mon,Tues, Thurs 7am-3pm Fri & Saturday 3pm-6 pm Sunday 8am-3pm
Winner's Circle Sunday-Thursday 10am-8:45pm Friday & Saturday 10am-9:45pm
To list a business here call Kate 605-440-1248

Edgemont EATS
Igloo Bar Daily 9 am - 12 am Friday & Saturday 9am - 2 am
Khantong Thai Cuisine Monday-Wednesday- Friday 11 am - 4:30 pm
The Hat Creek Grill Friday & Saturday Noon - 10 pm
Victory Steakhouse & Lounge 11 am - 9 pm Tuesday - Saturday
Yesway Monday-Saturday 6 am - 9 pm Sunday 8 am -9am
Yesway #1174 Daily - Open 24 hours
Newcastle EATS
Boopa's Tuesday - Friday 7am - 2 pm Saturday 7am - 10 am
Donna's Main St. Diner Daily 6 am - 2 pm
Kaffee Klatsch Mon-Wed 5:30 - 12:30pm Tues,Thurs, Fri. 5:30 - 1pm Saturday 6:30am-10:30am
Cambria Coffee & Decker's Market Monday-Friday 7am-5 pm Saturday 7am-2pm Sunday 8 am - Noon
Decker's Market - Deli Monday - Saturday 7 am - 8 pm Sunday 8 am - 7 pm
Hot Stuff Pizza Daily 5 am - 6 pm
Taco John's Daily 11 am - 10 pm
Hannah's Heavenly Treats Tuesday - Friday 7 am - 2 pm Saturday 7- 10
Howdy Bakery Thursday, Friday, Saturday 8am-6pm Sat. 9am - 4pm
Hi-16 Cafe Thursday - Sunday 7 am - 9 pm

Isabella's Sunday - Wednesday 11 am - 8 pm Thursday - Saturday 11 am - 9 pm
Perkins Tavern Monday - Wednesday 11 am - 8 pm Thursday - Sunday 7 am - 9 pm
Pizza Barn Monday - Thursday 4 pm - 9 pm Friday & Saturday 4 pm - 10 pm
Uncle Vito's Tuesday - Friday 7 am - 2 pm Saturday 7 am - 10 am
Pringle EATS
The Hitchrail Bar & Restaurant Tuesday - Sunday 11 am - 8 pm
Rapid City EATS
Shipwreck's Bar & Grill Monday - Wednesday 11 am - 8 pm
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Black Hills Diner Tuesday-Saturday 7 am - 2 pm

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