

First District Governing Board Officers

- Pat MaroneyChairman
Miner County Commissioner
- Craig AtkinsVice Chairman
Codington County At-Large
- Ron Smith..... Secretary
Moody County At-Large
- Todd A. Kays.....Executive Director

This publication is financed in part through a grant from the Economic Development Administration.

First District Association of Local Governments

**Phone: (605) 882-5115 or
1-800-981-9092
Fax: (605) 882-5049
Web: www.1stdistrict.org**

Keep in mind...

January 19th
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day—First District Office Closed

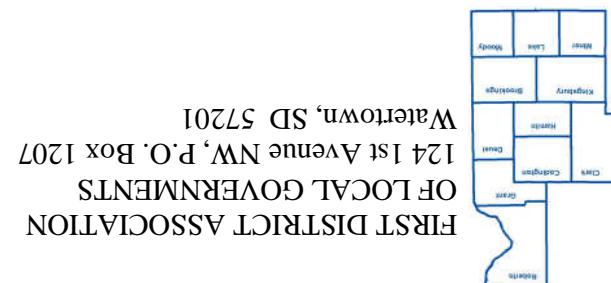
February 16th
Presidents' Day—First District Office Closed

February 26th
First District Governing Body Meeting—Howard, SD



Inside this issue:

Assistance to Firefighters Grants	1
MY THOUGHTS...	
Todd A. Kays, Executive Director	2
Neighborhood Stabilization Program	3
USDA Distance Learning & Telemedicine Grants	4
New Planner—Luke Muller	5
New Assistant Loan Officer—Josh Warne	5
Digital TV Transition	5
Dates	6



FIRST DISTRICT ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS
124 1st Avenue NW, P.O. Box 1207
Watertown, SD 57201

FIRST DISTRICT NEWS

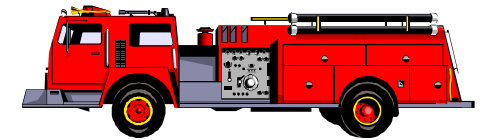
124 1st Avenue NW | P.O. Box 1207 | Watertown, South Dakota 57201-6207

Vol. 30, No. 1 / January 2009

ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTERS AND EMS GRANT PROGRAM

APPLICATION DEADLINE APPROACHING

It is once again time for the federal government to accept applications for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program. The Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) is a competitive grant opportunity for local fire departments and Emergency Medical Service (EMS) organizations that are not affiliated with a hospital. The AFG funds activities such as purchasing firefighting equipment, personal protection equipment, training, firefighting vehicles, and firefighter/first responder safety projects. **The construction of a new fire hall is an ineligible activity.**



The Office for Domestic Preparedness (ODP) has not announced the application deadline or the amount of funding available under the program as of this date. We believe the application deadline will be similar to the 2008 program. We are expecting the ODP will begin taking on-line applications in early March with the application deadline ending in early April.

First District staff will once again be available to assist individual fire departments with their applications at no charge if they come to the First District office. Appointments for application assistance can be made by calling 882-5115 and asking for Ted Haeder or Greg Maag. If departments would like us to come to their community for assistance, they must provide a location having a computer with Internet access. Further, there will be a charge of \$125.00 to help us cover traveling expenses. If more than one department can be assisted at a central location, that charge will be prorated between the departments receiving assistance.

The application and information regarding the program can be viewed via the Internet from the ODP Web site (www.firegrantsupport.com) or the USFA Web site (www.usfa.fema.gov).



MY THOUGHTS. . .

**BY: TODD A. KAYS,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Change, it seems to be the word of the day. Not only at the national level but also here at the First District Association of Local Governments (District). Since the last newsletter both the First District Development Company and the District have experienced changes in staff.

For those of you who do not know me, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Todd Kays and while I have been in the employ of the District for nearly sixteen years, it has only been since December 1, 2008 that I have occupied the Executive Director's chair.

Regarding my background, I am a graduate of the University of South Dakota with an undergraduate degree and graduate degree work in the course areas of Political Science and Public Administration, respectively. During my tenure with the District, I have had extensive experience in assisting communities, counties, and private groups in identifying development limitations and opportunities; building consensus and facilitating policy formulation; statistical analysis; and budgeting activities for future project implementation. Also for the past five years I have served as the Zoning Officer for Codington County. Personally, I have been married for nearly fifteen years. My wife operates a home business and we have three young children.

In this my first Director's newsletter, I would like to bring to the member's attention two current District initiatives. The first relates to the proposed federal economic stimulus plan. While the current state of the economy is distressing, there is potential with the proposed federal economic stimulus plan for District members to realize the possible implementation of projects which will promote economic development and improve the lives of the citizens of the District. In December, the District provided a District-wide list of potential economic development projects to the congressional delegation and the Economic Development Administration. The intent of the list was to not only

identify projects which would assist the members of the District in economic development endeavors but to also demonstrate the need for assistance. It is my understanding that there will be no "earmarks" associated with the proposed stimulus plan; however it has been discussed that projects which are "ready-to-go" may have a better opportunity for funding. While at this time there is no specific information regarding the proposed stimulus plan, the District is in the process of refining the original list. District membership will be receiving a letter requesting additional information regarding potential economic development projects. In order for the District to best serve its membership, please take the opportunity to provide the District with the requested information.

The second initiative is an invitation to "Meet the District". During the year staff will host a meeting in every county within the District where county and municipal officials as well economic development organizations will have an opportunity to meet the staff and find out about the various work activities and services provided by the First District. These meetings will allow the membership to become more familiar with staff while at the same time providing staff with information regarding needs of the membership and potential work activities. The first "Meet the District" meeting will be held in Watertown on January 29, 2009 with our second "Meet the District" event to be in Howard in conjunction with our Governing Body meeting in February.

When developing strategic and comprehensive plans in my past life as the District's Senior Planner my mantra was that communities and counties, like life, are not static and change is inevitable. Further, communities and counties need to acknowledge that change is going to occur and they need to use their collective "freewill" to plan for and accommodate change. Now that my life has recently changed by being so fortunate to be named Executive Director of this prestigious organization, I need to insure that I do the best that I can to practice what I have been preaching all these years. I am very excited about 2009 and the continuation of the First District providing quality technical services to its membership. I also look forward to reacquainting myself with many of you that I have worked with over the years and establishing positive relationships with those of you that I have not yet had the privilege of meeting.

Happy New Year!

**First District Hires
New Planner,
Luke Muller**



Luke Muller joined First District Association of Local Governments as a planner in November. He is from Florence, SD originally and now lives in Watertown. Luke earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Agricultural Education and a Master's Degree in Geography both from South Dakota State University. He has experience working in value-added agriculture with over two years at South Dakota Soybean Processors where he worked as a merchandiser until becoming the Urban Planner for the City of Watertown in January of 2008. He and his wife Stephanie coach various ages of girls' fastpitch softball in Watertown during the warmer seasons and are expecting their first child in April.

As the Planner at First District, Luke assumed the duty of the Codington County Zoning Officer as of January 1st. Under the supervision and tutelage of former Senior Planner and current Executive Director, Todd Kays, he offers guidance and assistance to communities in planning and zoning related matters. Luke also assists communities in creating and updating Comprehensive Land Use Plans and Zoning Ordinances.

**A PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGE
FROM THE FCC**

WHAT IS THE DIGITAL TV (DTV) TRANSITION?

Currently, many over-the-air stations are broadcasting in both analog and digital TV formats. After February 17, 2009, full-power TV stations will broadcast only in digital. The DTV transition will affect those who watch free over-the-air television (through a rooftop antenna or "rabbit ears"). If you watch over-the-air programs on an analog TV, you must take action before February 17th.

**WHAT SHOULD I DO TO BE READY?
YOU HAVE THREE CHOICES:**

- 1) Connect your analog TV to a digital-to-analog converter box, available in stores with a one-time cost of \$40-\$70.
- 2) Buy a digital television (a TV with a built-in digital tuner). You do not need High Definition TV (HDTV) to watch digital broadcast television. You only need a digital TV (or an analog TV connected to a digital-to-analog converter box).
- 3) Subscribe to a paid TV service. If your TV set receives local broadcast stations through a paid provider such as cable or satellite DTV, it is already prepared for the DTV transition.

For More Information: DTV.gov or call 1-888-CALL-FCC.

First District Development Company Hires Assistant Loan Officer



Submitted by Josh Warne

"Today I have the pleasure of introducing myself as the new Assistant Loan Officer at First District Development Company (FDDC). I am looking forward to helping FDDC continue its service to the community of providing small business loans and helping the area grow. It is exciting to begin working at an organization with such a strong history of success!

Outreach and community development have been the focus of my career. I spent the past five years in Phoenix, Arizona providing training and support to individuals with developmental disabilities and the people around them. Although it is a very different industry from financial lending, my goals were the same as they are today. I expect to help people achieve their life long goals and improve the surrounding communities.

I am currently working on a Bachelor of Science in Business Economics at South Dakota State University and expect to graduate in December of 2009. I have a wife, Denia, who works at SDSU, and daughter, Alice, who is nearly 3. I grew up in Lake Preston, so I am proud to have the opportunity to work and live in South Dakota, a place I know we all enjoy.

If you would like to know more, please do not hesitate to call or email me at FDDC. I am grateful to have this opportunity and look forward to the time ahead."