



Newsletter
June 2026

Iverson wins 2025 Rural Water Operations Specialist of the Year Award

PIERRE, S.D. (Jan. 13, 2026) — The South Dakota Association of Rural Water Systems (SDARWS) has named Phil Iverson of Clay Rural Water System (CRWS) as the recipient of the 2025 Rural Water Operations Specialist of the Year Award, presented during the SDARWS Annual Technical Conference on January 13, 2026, at the Ramkota Hotel and Convention Center in Pierre, South Dakota.

Iverson has served CRWS for 26 years as a system operator, supporting the operation and maintenance of reservoirs, booster stations, pipelines, valves, and distribution infrastructure. His responsibilities include emergency response, leak repairs, construction assistance, and equipment handling—performed with professionalism and care.

He is widely recognized for responsiveness and a customer-focused approach, including prompt action during a recent waterline strike by a contractor. During flooding in the McCook Lake area, Iverson worked long hours alongside coworkers to help provide safe water service beyond normal duties.

The SDARWS Rural Water Operations Specialist of the Year Award recognizes field professionals who consistently demonstrate technical skill, calm emergency response, dependable service, and strong customer relations.

The SDARWS Annual Technical Conference is the largest rural water conference in South Dakota, hosting more than 650 water operators, managers, and exhibitors over three days in Pierre.



2025 Annual Water Quality Reports

You can review the 2025 Annual Water Reports for Clay Rural Water System, South Union, and Lewis & Clark Regional Water System. You can find them at:

<https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:US:e6284693-afeb-4a31-8744-363449c8ff23>

If you would like a paper copy, please call the office and we can get one out to you.

Director Retires from Board



The Clay Rural Water Board of Directors bids farewell and thank you to Board member, Randy Ronning. Randy has been a representative of District I for the last twelve years.

Jack & Arlene DeVany Scholarship What Rural Water Means to Me Essay Winners

Kade Kessler - SDSU

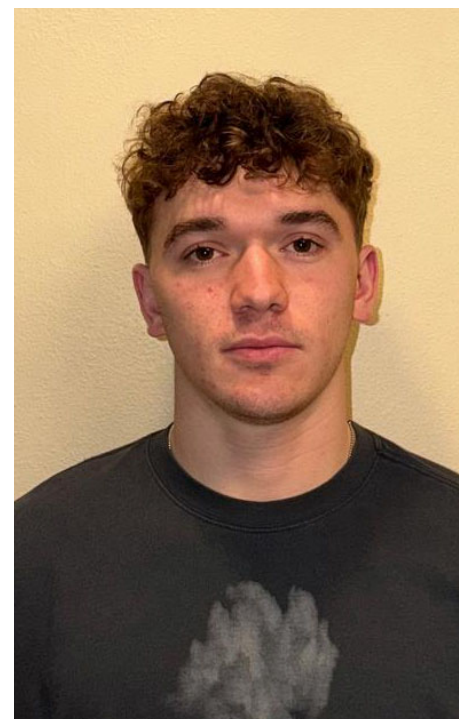
Growing up in southeastern South Dakota, rural living has always just been normal to me. Open fields, long gravel roads, small towns where everyone knows each other, that's my home. One thing I never really thought about as a kid was water. It was just there. But as I've gotten older, I've realized how important rural water systems are to families like mine and to the entire community.

In this part of South Dakota, a lot of families live outside of town, and many depend on agriculture. Reliable rural water makes it possible for homes, farms, and small businesses to function every single day. It supports livestock, crops, and the daily needs of families who choose to live outside larger cities. Without rural water systems, living out here wouldn't be nearly as practical or safe. Clean water protects our health and gives families peace of mind.

New Director Joins CRWS Board



We give a warm welcome to our new District I Director, Dick Ebert. Dick is retired and resides in rural Beresford with his wife of 52 years, Rejeana. Their son, Ryan, and his wife Karen reside in Germany, where Ryan works for the American Red Cross at Ramstein AFB. Dick brings to the board knowledge of Wastewater residuals and at one point was certified as a Wastewater Operator. Dick is an avid outdoorsmen who enjoys pheasant hunting with his 2 year old black lab. He also enjoys outdoor activities such as hunting, trap shooting, sporting clays and fishing. Welcome, Dick!



Scholarship Winners Cont.

For me personally, rural water represents opportunity. Because of strong infrastructure in southeastern South Dakota, I've been able to grow up in a rural community while still having the resources to pursue higher education. As I work toward earning my degree and building a career in aviation, I understand how important dependable systems are. Just like pilots rely on precise systems to operate safely, rural communities rely on dependable water systems to support everyday life.

Rural water may not always be visible, but it plays a major role in keeping southeastern South Dakota strong. It supports families like mine and ensures that rural communities can continue to thrive for generations to come.

Lydia Anderson - Vermillion HS

Water is essential to live, but not everyone is fortunate enough to have access to clean, safe, drinking water. My family and I, however, are fortunate to have access to clean, safe water because of the Clay Rural Water System.

The expansion of water to rural families in South Dakota is fairly recent. Rural residents of Clay County began receiving water in October of 1980. My family, particularly my mom and grandparents, have been positively impacted by this expansion. My grandparents grew up going to a well, pumping water, and carrying buckets of water back home to use. In the 1970's, my mom only had well water on her family farm. She remembers her parents periodically having to test the water to make sure it was safe to drink. She also recalls rust in the water which ruined laundry. As a result of the expansion of rural water in South Dakota, my grandparent's farm now has access to clean, safe water through the Mid-Dakota Rural Water System.

When my parents purchased the land to build our home, there was only an old well on the property. During the building process, my parents contacted Clay Rural Water System and they were able to run a water line so we could have access to clean, safe, and reliable water. The water we get from Clay Rural Water allows my family and I to wash our dishes, take clean showers, wash our laundry, and hydrate our puppy, chickens, cats, and ourselves.

The water provided by the Clay Rural Water System is clean, free of dangerous chemicals, and, in my opinion, tastes very good. I am thankful and grateful to the Clay Rural Water System for providing my family and I with clean, reliable, and delicious water.



Scholarship Winners Cont.

Anna Morohl - Centerville HS

Our water sustains life, grows our crops, cleans us, and supports our communities. Rural water is essential. The diverse ways that it is used is what really makes it special. To me, rural water is life and health. I remember turning on the faucet as a child and never questioning whether the water was safe. It wasn't until I learned about the dangers or relying on untreated well water that I realized how privileged I was.

Rural water systems make sure that the water is clean, has the proper amounts of minerals, and is sustainable. This allows citizens to drink water and use it they want without a second thought. As a future nutrition and dietetics major, I understand the importance of clean water. In the past, many people who lived in rural areas relied on well water. But, well water has many risks associated with it. It is known to contain various microorganisms, chemicals from fertilizer runoff, heavy metals and more. These can cause serious illnesses that can damage the health of residents of entire rural communities. On the other side, added minerals can help aid health. It often goes unrecognized how much purified water improves nutrition, especially with the minerals that we need.



Rural water systems reach the people of rural America to make sure that they are able to live healthier lives. As I pursue a degree in nutrition and dietetics, I carry with me a deep respect for the systems that make health possible, especially the people that make sure water is accessible to all. Rural water systems are more than underground pipes, it is the foundation of every thriving community.

2026 CRWS Annual Meeting

On April 27, 2026, the Clay Rural Water Board and Staff hosted their annual meeting. The year's setup was a drive-through style. We had 106 members come through the line for a \$15 water credit, sack lunch with freshly smoked pulled pork sandwiches, the 2025 financials and a chance to win a cash door prize. We had 9 lucky members win the cash door prizes. The CRWS team served 200 meals, and we thank everyone who drove out to visit during that cold, windy day!

CRWS
Clay Rural Water System, Inc.
2026 Annual Meeting Report



"Your local water supplier must comply with regulations set forth by the Safe Drinking Water Act. This requires your utility to monitor and treat for almost 100 different parameters in the water delivered to your tap. As a result, drinking water is the most regulated and controlled substance you can ingest – more than any food, drug or beverage."
American Water Works Association