



# ANNUAL REPORT 2020

## 2020: A Year of Success!

- 172 down payment/closing cost loans closed for a total of \$1.17 million, paired with \$25.2 million in partner first mortgages
- 26 first mortgages for a total of \$2.4 million loans
- 170 home improvement projects completed, impacting more than 342 individuals
- 649 individuals in 250 households provided with emergency financial assistance, including food and utilities assistance
- An additional 276 individuals in 175 households under the SDHDA CARES Act Emergency
- 60 business loans closed for \$3.8 million

GROW South Dakota offers multiple counseling sessions including rental counseling, pre-purchase, and post-purchase education. We also offer homebuyer education courses, both online and in-person. Funding for these types of services is made possible by SDHDA, HUD, State Farm, Wells Fargo Housing Foundation, NeighborWorks America, as well as other sources.

## 2020 Annual Report Letter from the Board Chairs

As we reflect on 2020, we have seen many challenges, which board and staff members were able to overcome this year, including meeting via Zoom and creating new processes to work remotely.

Our commitment to the future of South Dakota and the ability of staff and board to adapt to challenges has allowed GROW SD to have another successful year.

Over the years, GROW SD has had a substantial impact on supporting low-income South Dakotans, small businesses, rural communities, and the state as a whole, as indicated in the statistics and information found in this annual report.

As we enter a new year, we will continue to face challenges head-on to continue to provide opportunities for residents of South Dakota. Thank you to all who have been part of GROW SD's success!

*Dan Menking*  
GROW & NESDEC Board Chair

*Debbie Anderson*  
NESDCAP Board Chair

*GROWing sustainable communities through housing, community and economic development.*

104 Ash Street East • Sisseton, SD 57401 • (605) 698-7654 • [www.growsd.org](http://www.growsd.org) • [info@growsd.org](mailto:info@growsd.org)



# HOUSING

*GROW SD aims to help all families enjoy the community-building benefits of homeownership.*

## A LIFE CHANGING EVENT

**“Because of this program, I no longer have to worry about CO2 poisoning. I have adequate heat and no wind blowing through the windows and doors. For the first time, I don’t have to walk to the outhouse and worry about falling. I’m able to take a shower without going to someone else’s house. To say what I have received from the program has been life-changing would be a complete understatement.”**

In 2018, GROW South Dakota’s weatherization team received a call from Ruth Sumpter, a senior resident, in need of assistance with heating her house. When the weatherization team went to her home, they discovered energy inefficiencies, as well as safety concerns. Not only did the heating system need to be addressed, but the previous heating unit was not adequately ventilated; which could cause carbon monoxide poisoning. Other weatherization measures discovered were leaking windows, creating drafting in the house, and no insulation in the attic, walls, or under the floor, which made the house very cold. The stove did not have an exhaust fan, and there was not an indoor bathroom. The homeowner had been using an outhouse as a restroom and would go to friends and neighbors when she needed to shower.



GROW SD was able to transform this living space into a more efficient home by providing insulation to the entire house, and installing new storm windows. GROW SD also replaced the old unvented space heater with a vented space heater, and installed an exhaust fan above the stove. Besides the lifesaving installment of a new heating unit, the most significant improvement, with assistance from the Federal Home Loan Bank Affordable Housing Program (FHLB AHP), was an addition to the house. Ms. Sumpter now has an indoor bathroom with a shower, sink, toilet, and water hookups for a washing machine.

These life-changing modifications were made possible through the Department of Energy Weatherization Assistance Program and the FHLB AHP that are both administered by GROW SD. As noted by Marcia Erickson, GROW SD CEO, “This work is the core mission of GROW SD. We provide needed assistance to households that would not be possible without our dedicated team and our partnering funding sources that support the work we do. It is so rewarding to provide this type of service every day.”



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

*GROW SD supports businesses and communities with job-creating loans and capacity building assistance.*

## Dakota Butcher - 2020 SBA Entrepreneur of the Year

Seeing a business close their doors in a small town is always difficult. When the Clark meat shop closed in 2008, Randy Gruenwald decided he wasn't going to stand by and watch it happen. His professional experience was an excellent fit to revive the business. He worked 15 years as a meat department manager for Nash Finch. Randy also worked as a banker before he purchased the butcher shop.

Karen, Randy's wife, and business partner worked for the previous meat shop owners and brought exceptional customer service skills and experience to their ownership team. Able to capitalize on their professional experience, Randy and Karen have a solid understanding of what it takes to be successful entrepreneurs.



Dakota Butcher partnered with GROW South Dakota for an attractive financing package to purchase the business in October of 2009. They upgraded the majority of the equipment, streamlined efficiencies, and made necessary improvements to enhance the business. Randy was eager to grow the retail side of the business.

Five years later, demand for their product was high, especially from neighboring communities. In 2015, the decision was made to open a second retail location in Watertown, SD. Again, with a financing package from GROW South Dakota, Dakota Butcher renovated and updated a commercial building. The second store has been a huge success, and the community loves the availability of a traditional meat market.

In 2017, with great success coming from the two retail stores, the decision was made to open an additional store in Watertown, SD. This store included their traditional retail meat products; but it also incorporated a restaurant and bar. Dakota Butcher has currently opened its fourth retail location in Madison, SD. In addition to Dakota Butcher retail locations, they also sell their products through coolers set up in 25 different convenient stores and retail locations throughout eastern South Dakota, and along I-29.

Randy was recognized as the 2020 recipient of the SBA Small Business Entrepreneur of the Year during SBA Small Business Week.

GROW SD is proud to have nominated Randy for this award and been a partner in his successful venture.

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

GROW SD leverages affiliations and relationships with national community development organizations to impact South Dakotans.

## Helping Communities See Their Potential

The First Impression Tour can help identify symptoms of racial and economic disparities. Input from the community development coordinators on the tour may help local communities formulate strategies to resolve challenges. It also helps to remove preconceived assumptions when “tourists” observe areas that may or may not reflect such disparities.

In a First Impression Tour, a GROW SD coach recruits and coordinates community development leaders from South Dakota towns to tour their communities and share their reactions with their hosts. The tours are done in a round-robin approach, where all the “Tourists” visit each other’s hometowns.

Broadly, the tours seek opinions on such elements as branding, infrastructure, appearance, business climate, amenities, housing, and tourism.

**Pictured left to right below:** Kimball Economic Development Corporation Executive Director - Anita Holan; GROW South Dakota Chief Operating Officer-Lori Moen; Wessington Springs Area Chamber & Development Corporation Executive Director – Loree Gaikowski; DeSmet Development Corporation Executive Director – Rita Anderson; On Hand Development Corporation Executive Director – Kecia Beranek; Deuel Area Development, Inc Executive Director – Joan Sacrison.



## Adapting How We Do Business to Keep Businesses Going

“Can you hear me? You’re on mute. I can see your screen.” These are the most infamous words while conducting a meeting in 2020. Virtual meeting platforms have become the norm this year, providing the flexibility to conduct business as usual in a safe manner. GROW SD enhanced their technology to keep up with the high demand and continue to service our small businesses and homeowners.

All board and staff meetings, training, and professional development have gone virtual this year.

Business owners served by GROW SD found success with educational opportunities, via virtual connections, throughout the year. Online classes such as an online Quickbooks series generated over 60 participants in a class. Owners appreciate the accessibility of the online classes, and the minimal time it takes away from working at their business.

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## Sidewalk Chalk Fun

Pheasant Valley Courtyard families took part in a fun Sidewalk Chalk Contest. This provided a safe and fun activity for children to enjoy while being outside.



# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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## Regional Roundtable



## HUD Housing Counselors



GROW SD HUD Certified Housing Counselors, left to right: Maureen Nelson, Stephanie Sexton, Brittany Robertson.

## Community Leadership Institute GROTON

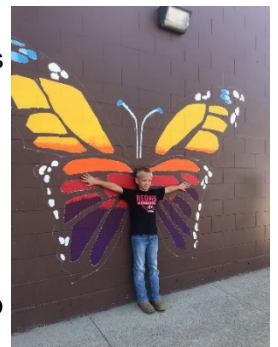
The Groton City Park plans for the 2019 CLI Action Project hit a snag with COVID-19 impacting us in April of 2020. Despite that, the project was able to begin this year. The irrigation installation in the flower circle of the park was completed in June 2020.

The Groton Firemen agreed to coordinate and pay for the two permanent corn hole sets (\$2,100) to be installed on cement pads (\$1,500). The cost of project was \$3,600 with the firemen donating \$2,100. The Disc Golf Course was put on hold. The group is working with the school principal and student council to design the course and design the hole markers for sponsorships. The CLI volunteers are working to have this plan in place by May 2021.

## Butterfly Wall Art

AmeriCorps NCC volunteered to do some work throughout the Sisseton community. One of the projects completed was a butterfly mural on the north side of the GROW South Dakota office.

The butterfly represents change and growth which GROW SD strives to provide to our communities across the state.



## BIG Idea Competition 2020



The 2020 BIG Idea Competition, which invites high school students to submit business ideas, drew 245 entries involving 339 students from 29 schools. The winners of the high school business idea competition earned over \$30,000 in cash and scholarships offered by Northern State University, Presentation College, and the South Dakota School of Mines & Technology. In addition, several other awards were presented.

The BIG Idea Competition aims to promote entrepreneurship, spur creative thinking, and encourage students to start a business. The competition is coordinated by the Aberdeen regional office of the

Small Business Development Center (for which GROW SD is the fiscal sponsor). Sponsors for 2020 included Sanford Health, East River Electric, REED Fund, Dacotah Bank, First Bank and Trust, Northern State University, Presentation College, South Dakota School of Mines & Technology, Aberdeen Development Corporation, GROW SD, McQuillen Creative Group, Northwestern Energy, Angelhaus, South Dakota Agriculture Foundation, CREATE, Midco, 3M, and the Tom and Danielle Aman Foundation.

### GROW SD Supports State Homeless Count

In January 2020, GROW SD assisted the South Dakota Housing Development Authority in conducting the statewide Homeless Count. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development requires states to do the count to help determine need and funding. GROW SD assisted with the count for the fourth year by enlisting volunteers from all 17 NESDCAP counties.

The 2020 results were:

- Statewide: 1058 homeless individuals--812 in shelters and 246 unsheltered. Of those, 215 were children under age 18, 699 were Native American, 265 were white, and 65 were black, 42 were veterans.
- NESDCAP counties: 39 total--32 in shelters and 7 unsheltered.

GROW SD will be assisting with the count in 2021

### Wolf Creek Career & Technical Education School

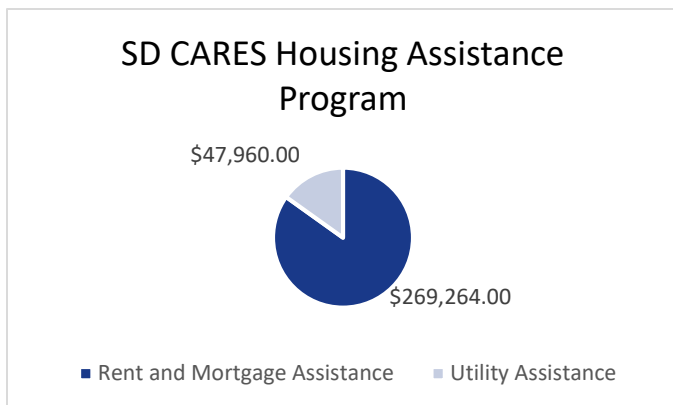
GROW SD worked with the New Markets Tax Credit Program and participated with the school district on the construction of the Wolf Creek Career & Technical Education High School in Pine Ridge, South Dakota.



# COVID-19 Emergency Services

## SD CARES Housing Assistance

GROW SD partnered with South Dakota Housing Development Authority and provided assistance through the SD CARES Housing Assistance Program.



GROW SD assisted 276 individuals in 175 households with emergency rent/mortgage or utilities, totaling \$317,224.

## CSBG CARES Emergency Assistance Program

GROW South Dakota was provided CSBG CARES Act Emergency Funds in which the Agency was able to assist 274 individuals in 95 households with \$67,001.

These funds will continue in the next year to help those affected by COVID-19 either through loss of job, furloughed temporarily, or they or their family contracted COVID-19 and it affected their income.

## Food Boxes

GROW South Dakota distributed 8,279 pounds of food to 24 senior households this year through the SD Food Box Program.



The Aberdeen Area Community Foundation supported the COVID-19 Relief efforts with a grant to support clients in Brown County with financial assistance. Pictured is Marcia Erickson, GROW CEO and Heath Johnson, AACF Chair.

## Quotes from individuals and families receiving CARES ACT Emergency Assistance

*"This is the best news I have received in a long time! You guys (GROW South Dakota) are a true blessing."*

*"Thanks for your unexpected but pleasant assistance. The hospital would not admit him so he is at the farm with his son in a camper for the next few days. I know this will be most difficult for the family because they have not had hands on (care) in the last 5/6 years. So I know this will be difficult for them. I just wanted to say thank you."*

## From the Desks of the CEOs



Lori Finnesand

GROW South Dakota remained steadfast and open for business helping customers through a turbulent 2020. COVID-19 taught us how to navigate in new ways and continue to thrive despite the economic and health pandemic. The staff at GROW South Dakota have continued to be problem solvers and resilient while persistent in providing essential services throughout South Dakota.

Our commitment to the future of South Dakota was uninterrupted and we continued to have another successful year in pursuing our vision of “GROWing sustainable communities through housing, community and economic development.”

Even through economic turmoil, we’re happy to share this 2020 annual report as a snapshot of triumphs.



Marcia Erickson

Throughout you’ll find stories and information about the impact the GROW SD organizations— Northeast South Dakota Community Action Program (NESDCAP, founded 1966), Northeast South Dakota Economic Corporation (NESDEC, 1978), and GROW South Dakota (2007)—have had in northeastern South Dakota and across the state. We’re especially pleased to be able to illustrate the numbers with success stories about families and businesses positively impacted by our programs and services.

Cumulatively, over more than half a century, GROW SD has had substantial impact in supporting low-income South Dakotans, small businesses, rural communities, and the state as a whole.

As we enter a new year, we’ll face new challenges, but GROW SD will be there every step of the way ensuring growth and opportunity for residents of South Dakota. Thank you to all who have been part of GROW SD’s success!

### NESDCAP BOARD MEETING



*NESDCAP Board of Directors Conducting November’s Board Meeting*