

GRIT TO GO FURTHER

PIERRE | FEB. 24-26, 2026 | RAMKOTA CONFERENCE CENTER

FEBRUARY 24

4:30-6:30 P.M.

REGISTRATION IS OPEN NETWORKING SOCIAL

Appetizers
Cash Bar with Drink Tickets
Acoustic Performer - Matt Gauger
Vendor Booth Display & Giant Vision Display

FEBRUARY 25

7 A.M.

REGISTRATION, BREAKFAST, VENDOR BOOTHS OPEN

8:30 A.M.

WELCOME

GOED Commissioner Bill Even

9 A.M.

Keynote- Joel Sylvester

THE NEW SOUTH DAKOTA FRONTIER: WHY THE FUTURE OF WORK IS ROOTED AT HOME Fueling growth with remote work in South Dakota

Technology has fundamentally redefined the landscape of talent. Organizations aren't just filling positions; they are able to build a community where distance is irrelevant. Leveraging AI and remote innovation, ensures the next great team member and leader in your company never has to choose between a world-class career and the South Dakota home they love.

Joel Sylvester of Five Star Solutions shares real-world stories and strategies for navigating AI-driven hiring, training, and engagement for today's workplace. Walk away with practical tips and renewed motivation to support employment across all demographics for your organization.

10 A.M.

NETWORKING BREAK & VENDOR BOOTHS OPEN

10:30 A.M.

BREAKOUT ONE

CLICKING INTO PLACE: ALIGNING SKILLS AND CAREERS WITH REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP

This session explores how Registered Apprenticeships align education, skills, and careers to create effective workforce pathways. Attendees will learn from three impactful apprenticeship models—a bachelor's degree pathway, a traditional construction trade, and a community-based program supporting small businesses—highlighting apprenticeship as a flexible, low-cost option that strengthens retention and delivers value for employers.

MARKETING SMARTER: THE MODERN TOOLKIT FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Discover essential marketing strategies tailored for Economic Development Organizations and learn how to leverage AI to extend your small team's capabilities. We will demonstrate practical tools that streamline content creation and automate daily tasks, helping you maximize your impact without increasing your budget.

NEW ENERGY GENERATION - PERMITTING, POLICY, AND PRODUCTION

Powering today's modern world requires an increasing amount of energy. South Dakota is uniquely poised to generate new energy from a variety of sources. This panel features elected officials, power providers, and industrial users discussing innovative opportunities to propel South Dakota into the future.

11:30 A.M.

BREAKOUT TWO

FOUNDATIONS FOR PROSPERITY: THE FORCES RESHAPING SOUTH DAKOTA (AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT THEM)

South Dakota, like most of the United States, has entered a period of consequential change. Population aging, workforce shortages, shifting migration patterns, extreme weather risk, and rapid technological change are beginning to collide—reshaping local economies, communities, and institutions in ways that traditional growth metrics miss. In this session, **Bradley Schurman** unpacks the core forces redefining prosperity in South Dakota. He introduces a new systems-based framework for understanding what resilience really looks like at the state and local level. The focus isn't on abstract trends, but on concrete choices—how leaders can strengthen population renewal, prepare for automation, build social cohesion, and design for long-term durability. Participants will leave with a clearer map of the risks ahead, the opportunities that are hiding in plain sight, and the practical moves that can turn demographic realities into a competitive advantage.

PARTNERING WITH GOED: TOOLS, TIPS, AND TRUTHS

Finding the right pathway to a successful project.

STRENGTHENING TRANSATLANTIC PARTNERSHIPS: TRADE, AGRICULTURE, AND REGIONAL COLLABORATION

This distinguished panel of elected Irish officials will explore the impact of trade missions and the power of cross-regional collaboration in advancing economic development, particularly within the agricultural and food sectors. The discussion will highlight the growing partnership between South Dakota and the island of Ireland, the role of government and trade agencies in fostering investment, and opportunities for companies seeking to establish or expand their footprint across our regions.

12:30 P.M.

GIANT VISION AWARDS & LUNCHEON

1:30 P.M.

NETWORKING BREAK (DESSERT TABLE)/VENDOR BOOTHS OPEN

2 P.M.

BREAKOUT THREE

WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIPS IN ACTION

This session highlights successful workforce partnerships between the Department of Labor and Regulation (DLR), the Department of Corrections

(DOC), and South Dakota's technical colleges. A panel of representatives and students will share their experiences and outcomes from these partnerships.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN NORTH AMERICA

Join South Dakota Trade and a panel of Government experts as they discuss how businesses can navigate cross-border relationships, identify new market opportunities, and strengthen partnerships across North America.

YOUR DIGITAL HQ: UNLOCKING THE NEW GOED WEBSITE

Explore the new GOED website and the robust suite of resources built specifically to support EDOs and partners. This session covers the site's development process and provides a roadmap for accessing critical data, incentives, and marketing assets to fuel your community's growth.

3 P.M.

BREAKOUT FOUR

ENGAGING OUR FUTURE WORKFORCE

While South Dakota's youth engagement in the workforce is higher than the national average, strategically engaging with young adults in our state is essential to building a stronger workforce. In this session, attendees will learn of resources and creative methods to connect with tomorrow's workforce.

PARTNERING WITH GOED: TOOLS, TIPS, & TRUTHS

Finding the right pathway to a successful project.

POWER RURAL SOUTH DAKOTA THROUGH AGRICULTURE

Agriculture is more than a legacy industry—it is a cornerstone of rural economic development, infrastructure planning, and community sustainability. This fireside chat explores how supporting beginning and retiring farmers strengthens South Dakota's rural communities and creates long-term opportunity for economic developers, utility partners, and policymakers.

4-5 P.M.

BREAK

5-6 P.M.

SOCIAL

Appetizers & Cash Bar with Drink Tickets

6 P.M.

BANQUET & AWARDS

GRIT TO GO FURTHER

FEBRUARY 26

7 A.M.

BREAKFAST & VENDOR BOOTHS OPEN

8:30 A.M.

GOED Commissioner Bill Even

STATE OF THE GOED ADDRESS

9:30 A.M.

BREAKOUT SESSION FIVE

CREATIVE WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS: SOLVING WORKFORCE CHALLENGES THROUGH COLLABORATION AND INNOVATION

Today's workforce challenges extend beyond hiring. From talent development and retention to mentorship and workforce stability, businesses need solutions that are flexible, collaborative, and community driven. This session explores how the Department of Labor & Regulation partners with employers, chambers, economic development organizations, and community partners to identify workforce needs and develop creative, practical solutions. Hear examples of collaboration and leave with ideas you can apply in your own community.

THE FRONT DOOR TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

How tourism halo affect positively impacts South Dakota's image and our economic development efforts.

HANDS-ON WITH LASSO

Join this interactive working session to learn how to confidently upload and manage property listings using Lasso. Bring your laptop and property data as we walk through the upload process, explore key features, and share best practices for organizing and optimizing listings. With real-time support and a collaborative environment, you'll leave with live listings and a stronger understanding of how to make Lasso work for you.

BROADBAND TODAY

Join the Broadband team to learn more about where broadband is headed in South Dakota.

10:15 A.M.

NETWORKING BREAK & VENDOR BOOTHS OPEN

10:30 A.M.

Keynote - Frank Kelly

THE US ECONOMIC, FINANCIAL, AND POLITICAL OUTLOOK 2026 TO 2027

The years 2026 and 2027 are shaping up to be pivotal for the United States as fiscal pressures, political change with the upcoming US midterm elections, and global uncertainty continue to intensify. Frank Kelly provides a concise macro-overview of the global and domestic economic, financial, and political landscape. He gives a vivid explanation of what we can expect with the upcoming elections, the risks of the growing federal deficit, and Congress' battle over historic budget concerns – while the Federal Reserve goes through major leadership transitions in 2026.

Frank also explores how geopolitical tensions and shifting trade relationships with China, India, Latin America, the European Union, and the Middle East are influencing markets, supply chains, and energy dynamics – and how it will impact you. The session concludes with insights on broader economic forces such as labor trends, technological innovation, and demographic shifts, equipping attendees with a practical perspective to navigate the challenges and opportunities ahead.

11:40 A.M.

CLOSING

CONFERENCE ATTIRE: BUSINESS CASUAL

GRIT TO GO FURTHER