

Yankton Thrive ANNUAL REPORT 2021



July 1 - December 31



Board of Directors

Serving on the Yankton Thrive Board of Directors takes time and dedication. Throughout the year, this group of volunteers represents the membership and leads the organization in policy, advocacy, member benefits, and so much more! The Thrive Board of Directors has four categories to help fulfill adequate representation from a variety of business types.

FUNDAMENTAL DIRECTORS

Appointed annually by their respective entities

Amy Leon, *City of Yankton*
Steph Moser, *City of Yankton*
Bridget Benson, *City of Yankton*
Don Kettering, *Yankton County*
Dr. Wayne Kindle, *Yankton School District*
Dr. Marc Long, *Mount Marty University*
Mike Marlow, *Marlow, Woodward & Huff*

FOUNDATIONAL DIRECTORS

Represent entities with 50 or less full-time employees

Blake Carda, *Buhl's Cleaners*
Mandi Gause, *Boston Shoes to Boots*
Ken Kopetsky, *Kopetsky's Ace Hardware*
Molly Nedved, *Mazing Acres*
Peggy Olson, *Slumberland*
Dan Specht, *Vision Real Estate Services*
Brad Woerner, *Stockwell Engineering*

CORNERSTONE DIRECTORS

Top ten investors in the previous capital campaign and/or top ten membership due paying entities

Doug Ekeren, *Avera*
James Grotenhuis, *CorTrust Bank*
Luke McDermott, *Hydro*
Kevin Moe, *fnbo*
Steve Slowey, *Slowey Construction*
Rob Stephenson, *First Dakota National Bank*
Brad Wenande, *Northwestern Energy*

AT-LARGE DIRECTORS

Can represent any Yankton Thrive member

David Lohse, *Astec Industries*
Spot open due to resignation
Barb Rezac, *Mount Marty University*
Jeff Van Meeteren, *State of South Dakota*
Lewis & Clark Rec. Area

A Message from our CEO

● ● ● ● ● ● Nancy Wenande



"The secret of change is to focus all your energy not on fighting the old, but on building the new." This quote from Socrates encompasses what our first six months of Thrive has been, building the new.

As your CEO, it has been my pleasure to work with the former Yankton Area Chamber of Commerce board and Yankton Area Progressive Growth board to create a strong foundation for Yankton Thrive upon which we are building an organization that makes Yankton proud.

There is an enormous amount of rich history with each of the preceding organizations and we should not forget the successes each of them achieved. As we move toward the future, pivoting in a new direction and focusing our efforts on achieving big goals, we shall continue to grow and unite our business community to maximize impact in our four key areas: economic development, tourism, business services, and workforce development.

The Thrive board of directors understands the need for business diversity, workforce diversity and quality of life diversity. While everyone who loves Yankton doesn't love it for the same reasons, there are some common trends we hear when surveying the community. They love our outdoor recreational amenities, cleanliness, ability to work together to accomplish big projects, progressive school and university systems, variety of career options, outstanding healthcare, and positive, welcoming, and friendly demeanor with visitors and newcomers. It is easy to overlook all the great things our community has to offer. In Yankton we have what many communities strive to be. Let's continue to build upon all our assets and problem solve our challenges.

In our first six months, we have initiated a housing study, focused on strategic planning, hired outstanding staff, restructured our membership packages, created the foundation for our YES4! capital campaign, helped businesses - small and large - grow and expand, continued our partnership with SD Tourism, partnered with businesses to grow the workforce, strategized on next steps to create additional housing, and solidified partnerships statewide to help Yankton position itself for continued economic growth. There is more work to do.

As John D. Rockefeller said, "Don't be afraid to give up the good to go for the great." The Yankton community has high expectations for what Yankton Thrive can accomplish. We continue to remind everyone that we are not doing it alone. What we achieve is in partnership with others, collaborations matter, connecting businesses to other businesses matters. We are a conduit to make things happen. Sometimes we are the instigator of projects and sometimes we are the supporters. While we cannot be everything for everyone, we will remain focused on the items outlined in the strategic plan to create the positive impact our community needs.

We thank you for your continued support and encourage you to engage in events and activities that support our member businesses. Take the time to support local when you can because that truly matters. We look forward to another successful year of helping Yankton thrive!

An Exciting New Chapter ...

The creation of a merged organization, to later be known as Yankton Thrive, was born out of organic conversations between the executive teams of the Chamber of Commerce and Yankton Area Progressive Growth. As the economy was in a state of flux due to conditions created by Covid-19, the executive teams were brainstorming on how our organizations could better serve our members and the community. While what each organization was doing independently was meeting needs, leadership envisioned a more collaborative structure that over time could create an even greater impact.

As community members, business owners and leaders, governmental entities, and others continued to discuss the pros and cons of a merged organization, it became apparent that Yankton was ready to create a new path. While there are risks with change, leadership felt now was the time to bring our organizations and community together.

CREATION OF THE THRIVE ORGANIZATION & BRANDING



A marketing firm, Fresh Produce, was hired to help discover our new name, logo and brand. We had a strong sense of where the organization was headed and wanted the professional assistance to create a strong brand encompassing how we are a partner in lifting up Yankton. Through several meetings with Fresh Produce and staff and board members, the name Yankton Thrive became the organizational identity of choice. It exudes the positivity and vision we see for Yankton. We as individuals, families, and businesses all want to thrive. Fresh Produce was also instrumental in the creation of our new logo and branding. While there is still more work to be accomplished, we are off to a great start in teaching everyone what Yankton Thrive is and the impact we are creating.



The mission of Yankton Thrive is to provide leadership in fostering efficient growth of the Yankton area economy. This mission serves so many aspects of our community: growth of small and large businesses, growth in workforce, growth in tourism, growth in housing, growth in sales and property tax, and growth in people's vision of what we can be as a community.



**Workforce
Development
Director**

.....
RITA NELSON



**Tourism
Director**

.....
JAY GRAVHOLT



**Business
Services
Director**

.....
BECKY WISWALL



**Finance
Director**

.....
BRIAN STEWARD



**Economic
Development
Director & CEO**

.....
NANCY WENANDE

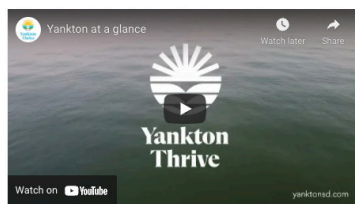


WELCOME TO YANKTON THRIVE

YANKTON THRIVE UNVEILS A NEWLY DESIGNED WEBSITE

A re-designed website was developed as part of the organization's rebranding efforts during Summer 2021. The website was designed by Marketing Specialist, Rajiv Somepalli, with assistance from Growth Zone Association Management Software, and maintains the same domain and URL as the former Chamber of Commerce Website (www.yanktonsd.com). It introduces some notable content additions, including pages related to Economic Development and Workforce Development.

The site contains a wide range of materials including a full member directory, membership login area, package details and registration information, a community events calendar, business and workforce development resources, job listings and an employer job board, member news, an economic development subsite, housing rental and daycare directories, and much more.



Our city on the river is a hub for manufacturing, healthcare, tourism, education, agriculture, finance, and so much more! Browse the following resources to find your perfect career fit in Yankton!



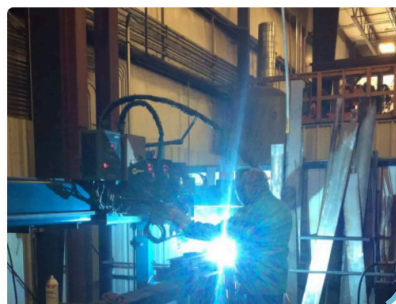
SEARCH JOB
LISTINGS



EMPLOYER
JOB BOARD



WORKFORCE
TRAINING



Events Calendar

SIGN UP FOR THE THRIVE WEEKLY EVENTS CALENDAR [View Other Yankton Community Calendars](#)

Keyword: Category: March Search

Results Found: 104

November 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat

Business Resources



The Yankton area has a wealth of resources and organizations that offer services to help you achieve your vision and increase your odds of long-term business success.

Dakota Resources	+
Planning & Development District III	+
Regional Technical Education Center, Inc. (RTEC)	+

Strong organizations are successful when they are focused on a limited number of items and execute them well. Thrive's potential is unlimited, but there are real limitations with financial resources and staff time, so choosing specific items with the greatest impact is crucial as we strive to meet community needs.

Baton Global was commissioned to assist staff and the board work through the steps to "think big" and develop a plan to drive organizational priorities. Two days of meetings were held at the NFAA Easton Yankton Archery Center which were followed up by a virtual meeting hosted by the directors of Thrive's four primary focus areas: economic development, tourism, business services, and workforce development.



While the entire plan was not completed at the end of 2021, a strong foundation has been created and continues to evolve. Some of the areas of emphasis are highlighted below.

Thrive Strategic Planning: Areas of Emphasis

Economic Development

- Retain primary employers
- Facilitate primary employer expansions
- Foster business recruitment to compliment or enhance existing Yankton businesses
- Develop comprehensive community housing solutions
- Utilize partnerships to implement housing solutions
- Facilitate conversations with legislators and state agencies regarding legislation and funding programs
- With the assistance of National Community Development Services (NCDS), implement YES4! Capital Campaign

Workforce Development

- Attract and recruit new people to Yankton
- Retain current workforce
- Market to and recruit students from local colleges, universities, and tech schools
- Partner with regional high schools to educate students and parents on career paths in Yankton
- Identify skills for evolving workforce opportunities
- Utilize partnerships to expand training programs with workforce skills for future growth
- Advocate for childcare solutions
- Advocate for increased transportation options
- Create a welcoming and thriving community

Business Services

- Retain and grow memberships
- Develop and implement leadership programs
- Develop and implement entrepreneur programs
- Facilitate member and community networking events to create a welcoming community
- Promote, advocate and educate

Tourism

- Market Yankton as a potential tourism destination outside of the local market through strong branding
- Support current and potential events that drive visitors in the non-peak season
- Lead efforts to utilize existing facilities during the non-peak season
- Enhance visitor experiences through quality materials and strong communication with key stake holders
- Advocate for travel industry issues
- Communicate travel industry impact to elected bodies, stakeholders and community



YES! Campaigns

The Yankton Economic Success (YES!) community campaigns have been a success since their introduction in 2007. These 5-year campaigns are the catalyst for financing the “Big Ideas” people envision will move Yankton forward. The current YES4! Campaign has a fundraising goal of \$3.2 million to primarily support workforce and housing initiatives.

Every campaign has a few key areas of focus. YES3! focused on People, Jobs, and Place. Successful projects and investments included development of Westbrook Estates, significant growth in workforce development initiatives, support for Mount Marty University’s Ruth Donohoe/First Dakota Fieldhouse, investing in the Boys & Girls Club, participation in the Huether Family Aquatic Center funding, and support for business development and growth.



Everyone is keenly aware of the housing and workforce shortages, which brings to mind the paradox, “what comes first, the chicken or the egg?”. While many in the community are working diligently on addressing both shortages, we need to formulate plans to do more and do it quicker in order to support the growth opportunities the Yankton business community is experiencing.



That is why we will need your support for YES4!. We want to do more, but plans can get stifled without adequate funding. We are excited about the opportunity to develop more housing partnerships and grow the marketing and recruitment efforts which draw families to Yankton.

PROUD
YES 4!
SUPPORTER

In order to continue to grow, Yankton Thrive must remain innovative and flexible in our outreach efforts. What worked 5 years ago, may not work today. The campaign planning gave us ample opportunity to hear from community members regarding topics that are important to them. We listened and created a plan that supports the overall economy of Yankton. Please join us in celebrating the successes of Yankton and contributing to the successes yet to come.



Tourism

An Evolving Approach Leads To Record Numbers



South Dakota was the first state to be declared fully recovered from the pandemic with regards to getting tourism back up and running. As the 2021 year progressed and COVID-19 restrictions loosened, the South Dakota tourism department transitioned from their original “Great Places are Waiting” messaging to a more active message of rediscovery with the “Go Great Places” campaign. The state set records in visitor spending and total visitation in 2021. South Dakota had 13.8 million visitors in 2021 and those visitors spent \$4.6 billion – both are more than 30% increases over 2020 and record numbers for the state.



One of the biggest drivers of tourism was the resurgence of commercial flying. The state of South Dakota had nearly 850,000 airport arrivals in 2021.

Yankton Thrive’s Tourism department utilized a co-operative advertising strategy with the state of South Dakota in 2021. This co-op campaign included the following advertising mediums: Google Ad search, social media posts and videos, digital display (banner and panel ads that you see on websites), email marketing and online travel advertising (Expedia, Travelocity, etc.), & traditional advertising (radio, print, TV).

LOCAL TOURISM IN 2021 - BY THE NUMBERS



BBB Taxable Sales ~ \$57.7 Million

↑ 23.4% Increase from 2020



Lodging Taxable Sales ~ \$8 Million

↑ 23.7% Increase from 2020



Tourism Taxable Sales ~ \$10 Million

↑ 31.1% Increase from 2020

Website Stats: visityanktonsd.com



10.2 Million Impressions



824,829 User Interactions

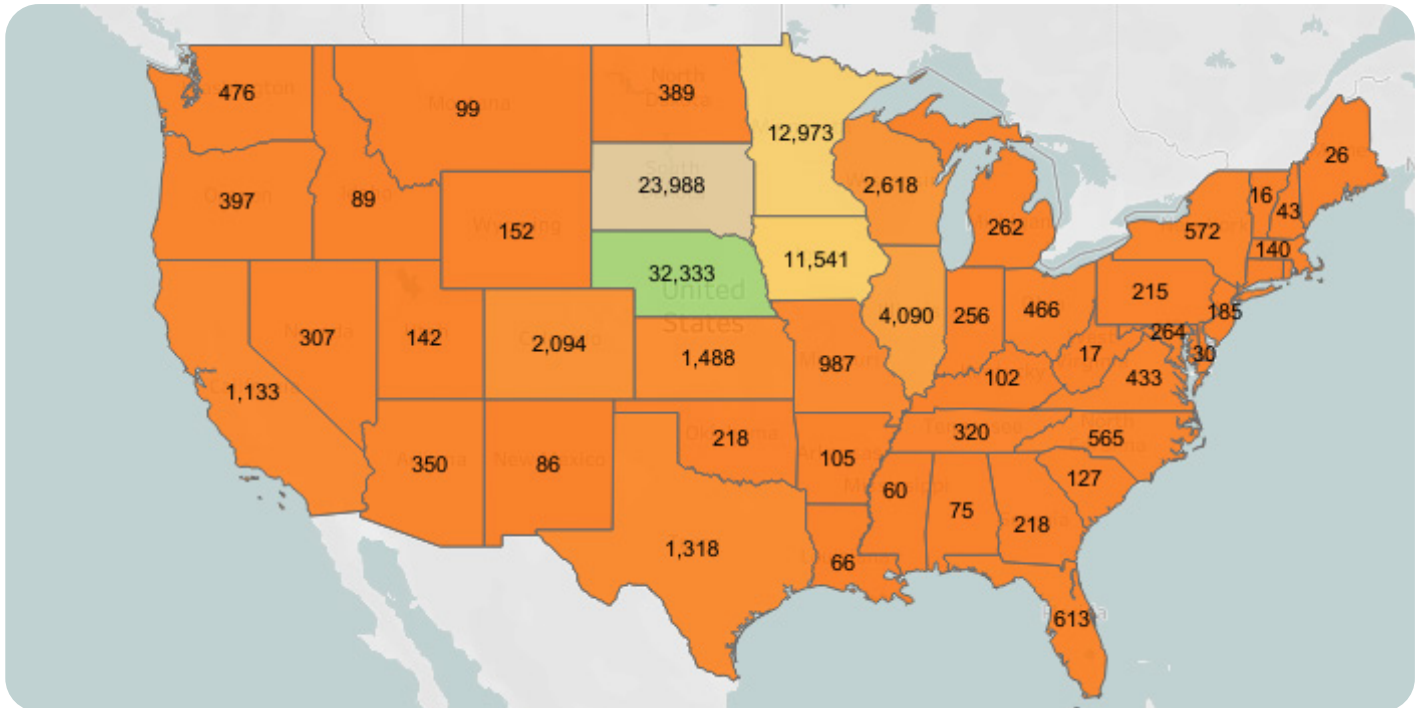


6,215 User Transactions

TOTAL WEBSITE SESSIONS (BY LOCATION)

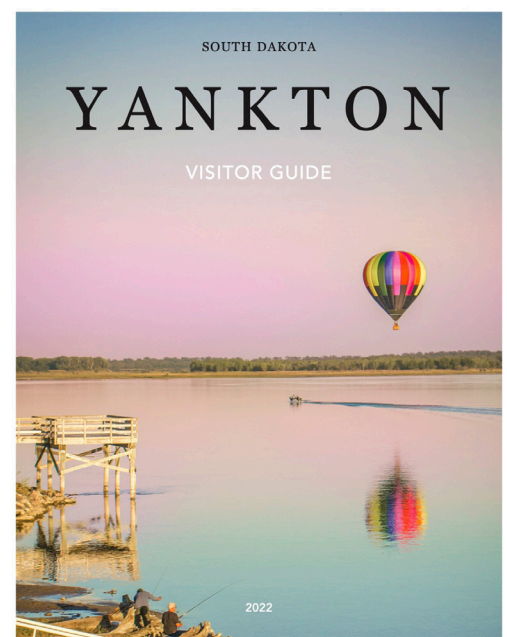


The visityanktonsd.com website was marketed to a broad audience across the United States in 2021. As anticipated, the majority of the site's sessions were from South Dakota (23,988), along with neighboring states such as Nebraska (32,333), Minnesota (12,973) and Iowa (11,541). There were also a significant amount of sessions from metropolitan areas with high population densities (Denver, Houston, Milwaukee, Phoenix, Los Angeles).



The 2021-2022 edition of our Yankton Visitor Guide was well-received, with only a few copies remaining from our 15,000 physical copy allocation. These guides, which are also available to read online, are a great tool for visitors and new residents alike. They provide information about local attractions, outdoor recreation, dining establishments, and other entertainment options.

The latest version has recently been finalized and copies will be available, soon. The 2022-2023 Visitor Guide shown here will maintain a similar format to previous guides, with fun new additions including two featured couples who recently moved to Yankton, a basic services page (healthcare, police, etc.), a more detailed city and lake map as well as a special trail guide section with descriptions, and several QR codes for people to easily interact with the places shown in the guide.





Workforce Development

CHART YOUR CAREER PROVIDES A BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS

The Chart Your Career program concluded in 2021 and was directly responsible for the creation of more than 100 Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA) in our region. The program was initially made possible in 2019 through a \$205,000 Community Development Block grant from Governor Dugaard. This grant provided scholarships to help reduce financial barriers for students interested in exploring health care careers by providing them with a textbook rental, required labs or immunizations, rental laptop, and quiet places to study with WIFI access. The program was made possible through the coordination and efforts of Workforce Development Director, Rita Nelson, and Avera Education & Staffing Solutions, along with numerous regional health care partners.



Chart Your Career has been very beneficial to students who are interested in health care and medical careers, as it has provided them a low cost opportunity to get a better idea of what these careers will involve, while also bolstering their resume with a CNA certification. The program has provided valuable experiences and insights to students, giving confidence to many who were interested in nursing and healthcare, but unsure whether it was the right fit.

While the program started and primarily took place in Yankton, it was expanded in 2021 to include additional regional high school camps. These camps, which took place in Yankton, Mitchell, and Huron, were supported through a grant from Advantage South Dakota via Northwestern Energy. The regional success of this program has provided optimism that it has the potential for successful replication and expansion across the state of South Dakota. We are excited to see the future programs of study that are developed from the Chart Your Career blueprint.



We had a great time collaborating with local businesses during Yankton Manufacturing Week 2021. Many of the week's events were focused on networking with students from YHS, MMU and USD with the goal of spreading awareness about manufacturing careers to the future workforce. Over 200 YHS students participated in manufacturing themed trivia games (developed by the Department of Labor & Regulation), and had a chance to connect with local employers. A few local manufacturers also participated in interviews and PSAs throughout the week with local media, along with a socially-distanced version of the Manufacturing Olympics. Congratulations to the 2021 Olympic champions - TruXedo Team #2!

An **emphasis** on being an **inclusive** & **welcoming** community for **everyone**



2021 was a year of continued growth & progress for Connecting Cultures. Building off the foundation of its newly created 2020 strategic action plan, Connecting Cultures was involved in the organization of area events which focused on creating an inclusive environment and embracing people of all backgrounds. A welcoming community is paramount to healthy business growth and workforce development, and our Workforce Development Director, Rita Nelson, has been heavily involved with the organization since its inception a few years back. Here are some of the organization's highlights from the previous year:

Connecting Cultures participated in Welcoming America's, #WelcomingWeek for the second year running with a series of exciting local events. The week-long festivities started with an official proclamation from the Yankton City Commission and included a Market at the Meridian cultural celebration, welcome sign sidewalk paintings, and a special Welcoming Wednesday event at a Mount Marty University Men's Soccer game.

Latin Grammy Award winning duo, The Lucky Band, held a live concert during a summer Kids in the Park & Connecting Cultures collaboration. The performed material was a tribute to the duo's newly released children's picture book, Paletero Man, focused on the strength of community.



The organization continued to hold monthly Zoom organizational meetings which were open to all who wanted to attend. Additionally, a virtual book club was created at the start of 2021 - a relaxed, informal group focused on discussion about different cultures.

Connecting Cultures partnered with the Yankton Community Library to put on a salsa tasting event during National Hispanic Heritage Month. Special guests demonstrated how to make salsa from different countries, while sharing information about their origins.

Our Welcoming Wednesday networking events were introduced to give area newcomers a place to connect with Yankton residents and learn more about our community. The free-of-charge events were held at local venues of interest such as Ben's Brew Station, the Riverfront Rooftop Brewery, and the Mead Cultural Education Center. Area newcomers were able to learn the ins and outs of Yankton from various long-time residents and community leaders in a laid back setting and environment. Fun activities such as brewery tours and access to the Dakota Territorial Museum were also offered during the gatherings. Stay tuned for more of these events in 2022!





Business Services

As of December 31, 2021, Yankton Thrive had 508 active memberships. One of the biggest ways we support new and existing Yankton Thrive members and offer membership value is through our Ribbon Cuttings. These events celebrate and bring awareness to the organizations and businesses that join the Yankton Thrive network. Additionally, they offer value to existing members through business relocation and expansion ribbon cuttings, which are streamed on Facebook Live.

2021 THRIVE RIBBON CUTTINGS

February 26 - **Backspace Brewing Co.**
April 17 - **Cornerstone Jewelry Design**
May 6 - **Bro Brgr Bar**
May 21 - **The Boat House - Yankton**
May 22 - **Born Learning Trail**
May 29 - **Huether Family Aquatic Center**
June 7 - **Lewis and Clark Veterinary Clinic**
June 15 - **The Device Doctor**
June 17 - **Gavins Point Recreational Center**
June 22 - **Cheers Pizza Plus**
July 1 - **Scott Luken Sculpture Studio & Gallery**
August 3 - **Lewis & Clark Rec. Area Bike Trail**
August 11 - **Riverfront Broadcasting**
August 27 - **Mojo's Deck & Dayhuff Enterprises**
September 2 - **Ben's Brew Station**
September 16 - **Kevin's Plumbing Service**
October 1- **Our Little Rascals Boutique**
November 13 - **Yankton Curling Club**
December 14 - **Hy-Vee Fast & Fresh Convenience Store**



YANKTON THRIVE Membership Packages

ALL THRIVE MEMBERS RECEIVE THESE PRIMARY BENEFITS

- Enhanced directory listing on Thrive website
- Member pricing on training and event tickets
- Member to member discounts
- Participation in Yankton Thrive Bucks program
- Direct business referrals
- Thrive member window cling
- Social media promotion of events and activities
- Use of Welcome Center conference room
- Eligibility in Thrive print publications
- Access to mailing list spreadsheet of physical addresses (not available to non-members)
- Access to online marketing tools
- Opportunity to serve on committees and task forces
- New member/expansion ribbon cuttings
- Brochures in Welcome Center
- Open invitation to all Thrive networking events

Additional A La Carte Membership Perks are available through the purchase of upgraded membership packages. Learn more at yanktonsd.com/membership-levels.

The groundwork was set up in 2021 for the implementation of our new Yankton Thrive Bucks Gift Card Program. The program, which is available to any Thrive member, allows the purchase of gift cards that can be used at participating businesses. These "Bucks" serve as a great gift for any occasion, offering the recipient a wide range of options where the gift can be used! Visit yanktonsd.com/yankton-thrive-bucks to learn more about the program and purchase gift cards.



E-MAIL DISTRIBUTION OF WEEKLY NEWSLETTER & EVENT CALENDAR



Graphic Design Specialist, Micayla Erdahl, has been creating a Weekly Newsletter and Weekly Event Calendar to help the community stay informed about Thrive member news and events. Anyone can sign up to receive these deliverables via e-mail for free (sent on Monday and Wednesday respectively), by filling out a form on our website. Simply scan the included QR codes in order to access both sign-up forms!



Economic Development

Economic development leads traditionally come in the form of an RFI (Request for Information) from The Governor's Office of Economic Development (GOED). This partnership on project leads is instrumental as most companies who look to come to SD start the process with GOED.

While Covid-19 has had a detrimental effect in many areas the last year, South Dakota has benefited with its stance to remain open for business while others decided to shut down. Yankton in 2019 received only 6 RFI's from GOED. The number ballooned to 17 in 2020 and grew to 23 for 2021.

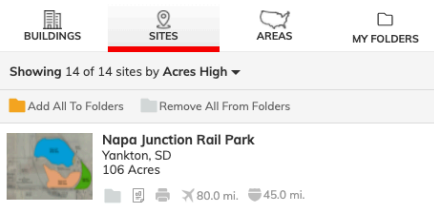


Thrive's focus has been on supporting our existing business partners rather

than recruiting new businesses to town, so we responded with interest to only 3 of the RFI's. The focus of those companies is asphalt manufacturing, bitcoin mining and renewable fuel processing.

With sites ready to be developed or buildings that only require buildout, the ideal site is waiting for you in Yankton, SD!

VIEW YANKTON AREA OPPORTUNITY ZONES



Lead generation for primary job businesses also occurs organically from businesses researching South Dakota. Our website has a page dedicated to showcasing local properties and buildings available. Two strong leads came to Thrive in 2021 outside of GOED's process and we are still working with these companies to bring their projects to fruition. Thrive occasionally receives calls from smaller businesses looking to expand or relocate to Yankton. If we have a location to refer them to, we will assist as we can, but traditionally refer them directly to real estate companies who are better positioned with knowledge of open commercial sites.

YANKTON AREA COMMUNITY HOUSING UPDATE



CITY OF
YANKTON

- \$44.8 million in permits
- 331 total permits (of which 115 were housing units well above the 10-year average of 63 units)
 - 31 single-family permits
 - 6 duplex permits
 - 72 apartment unit permits



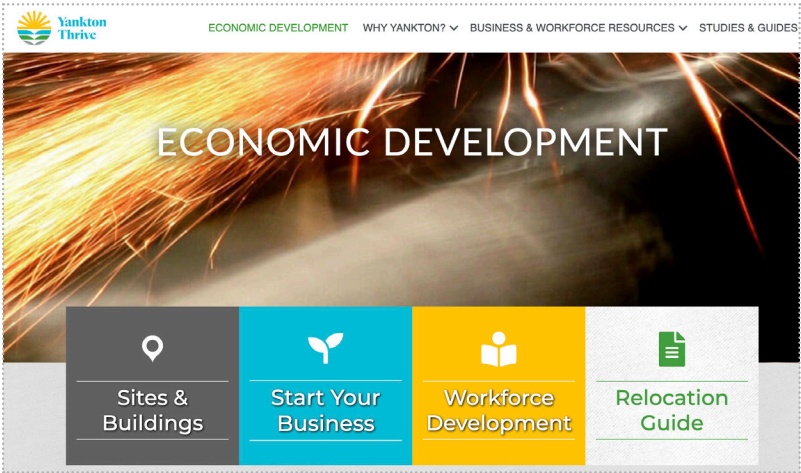
YANKTON
COUNTY

- \$176.3 million in real estate sales (48% increase)
- \$16.9 million was in single family home development (almost a 100% increase)
- 133 permits (40% increase)

The re-designed Yankton Thrive website includes an Economic Development subsite, which contains much of the same content that was housed on the former YAPG website such as:

- Available Sites and Buildings
- Business Development Resources
- Workforce Development Materials
- Relocation Guide
- Financial Incentive & Taxation Information
- Local Studies & Guides
- Moving to Yankton FAQ

yanktonsd.com/economic-development



Yankton Thrive held its first “Topics at 12” luncheon in the Fall of 2021. Formerly referred to as the “State of the Community,” this annual event series has served to inform our members about notable community updates. The keynote speakers for the 2021 edition were Yankton School District Superintendent (YSD), Dr. Wayne Kindle, and Mount Marty University (MMU) President, Dr. Marcus Long. Both speakers highlighted their respective organizations’ high enrollment figures compared to previous years. Additional points of emphasis included a discussion about average teacher salaries and benefits at YSD (which are higher than the state average), and the successes of MMU varsity football’s inaugural season.

South Dakota’s EDPA Continues to See Positive Growth

The state’s Economic Development Professionals Association (EDPA) is continuing to grow and evolve in its first two years. The mission of the EDPA is to champion the growth and diversification of South Dakota’s economy through professional development, networking and advocacy. Lobbying efforts through EDPA are important for Yankton since we do not independently hire a lobbyist like many other class A cities. The communication between the ED professionals in South Dakota helps foster an environment of collaboration and comradery. Our membership in EDPA allows Nancy Wenande to be on the forefront of economic and legislative issues as they develop, since she serves as Treasurer and is a member of the association’s executive committee.





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