

Welcome To the Jungle
SDRSP State Convention
Downtown Holiday Inn
Sioux Falls
September 28-29, 2021

Tuesday, September 28, 2021:

The day kicked off with a 9:00 pre-convention tour of the Great Plains Zoo and Delbridge Museum of Natural History.

The First General Session:

The afternoon began with President Rhonda Preller calling the 2021 State Convention to order followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

President Preller introduced and welcomed Mayor Paul TenHaken. He was a very strong and enthusiastic supporter of education and educators. He encouraged us to explore and enjoy our two-day stay in Sioux Falls.

The next guest that President Rhonda welcomed was Sioux Falls Superintendent Dr. Jane Stavem. She was an advocate of promoting education as she feels it leaves a legacy that shapes generation after generation.

Cathy Anderson, the Sioux Falls Unit President, warmly welcomed everyone to 2021 State Convention.

Each person in attendance was to say their very favorite jungle animal when their unit was called. Roll Call was taken with the following units present: Aberdeen 2, Black Hills 7, Brookings 0, Huron 0, Madison 6, Milbank 3, Mitchell 1, Northern Hills 2, Phillip 3, Pierre 1, Redfield 1, Sioux Falls 25, Sisseton 0, Vermillion 0, Watertown 4, Winner 1, Yankton 0.

A break was taken for a drawing of five \$50 bills and two gift baskets to be given away.

Zoo Mobile Presentation entitled Wildlife World Tour was given by Katie the Zookeeper. She introduced and explained the habits of a Bearded Dragon, Russian Tortoise, Chinchilla, and a Skunk. It was an excellent and very informative presentation!

A snack break was taken. Followed by five more \$50 bills and two gift baskets given away.

Bill and Cathy Zubke of Watertown shared a video presentation of their tour of Zambia, Africa. Their presentation was very educational and ended on a sweet note as Bill had brought fudge to share with all attendees.

As we had time prior to the next performers on our agenda, six gift baskets and ten \$50 bills were shared with 16 lucky winners.

To conclude our first general session, the Celtic Step Dancers performed. The dancers ranged in age from 6 to 16. They did a fantastic job!

At 4:30, the Unit Reps Leadership Meeting was called to order by President Rhonda Preller. The following Units were in attendance Aberdeen, Black Hills, Milbank, Phillips, Redfield, Sioux Falls and Watertown.

The Units of Madison, Mitchell, Pierre and Winner were at the State Convention but absent from the Leadership Meeting. Many questions and concerns were addressed at this time. Creative ideas were shared for encouraging monthly attendance at the unit meetings.

The Second General Session:

The evening began at 6:00 with Social Hour. Following Social Hour, President Rhonda Preller spearheaded the presentation of awards. Next, was the dinner prayer and a delicious evening meal.

After dinner, our keynote speaker, Robert Prentice was introduced. He is affectionately known as “Mr. Attitude”. His presentation was positive, humorous, enthusiastic, and uplifting.

Wednesday, September 29, 2021:

The Third General Session:

Memorial Service:

At 9:00, the Memorial Service was held.

We honored 56 members lost in 2020 and 2021 by lighting a candle in their memory.

Business Meeting:

At 9:30, the Business Meeting was called to order by President Rhonda.

Secretary’s Report:

The secretary’s minutes were read by President Rhonda Preller due to Amy Ramsey being absent. Al Price made the motion, and it was seconded by Betty Beyer to pass the minutes from the May 2019 Convention. Motion carried with 100% approval.

Treasurer’s Report:

Treasurer Pat Johnson was unable to attend the convention due to illness. In her absence, President Preller passed out her Budget Report for all in attendance to read and study. Carol Miller made the motion to approve the budget and it was seconded by Al Price. Motion carried unanimously.

Rhonda Preller sadly announced that we will need to replace Pat Johnson as State Treasurer as she will be retiring in May 2022.

Scholarship Fund:

President Rhonda announced that the Scholarship Fund of two \$1,000 scholarships has been extended from April to August as nobody has yet to apply. There is additional information about this on the SDRSP website.

Grandparent Essay Contest:

Donna Fischer, Chair of the Grandparent Essay Contest shared that she did not feel comfortable in 2021 conducting the contest due to COVID. However, she does plan to do so in 2022.

Old Business: NONE

New Business:

Executive Director, Gerri Larson, shared handouts of the new South Dakota Retired School Personnel logo choices. A graphic artist from Watertown had designed two choices- option 1 and option 2. Gerri Larson shared that the new logo could be used as a recruiting tool to attract membership to the South Dakota Units. After much discussion, Bob Rose made the motion to vote for either option 1 or option 2. Doug Erickson seconded the motion. A vote was taken. Option1 was the winner.

A request was made by the Redfield Unit to keep the old SDRSP banner. A decision was tabled until a later date.

Past President, Ron Riherd shared that he was going to be in contact with the Unit Presidents for assistance in filling the following positions: President Elect
Treasurer
Membership

Next Bob and Sharon Rose shared legislative information and updates.

Vice-President, Kay Ainslie made the motion to adjourn, and it was seconded by Gretchen Tweet. The Business Meeting of the 2021 Convention was adjourned at 9:50.

During the morning snack break, the ten final \$50 bills were given out.

The Fourth General Session:

State AARP Director Erik Gaikowski was the first guest speaker for the morning. He shared that he had been really looking forward to speaking to us as this was his first in-person appearance since March 2020. He prefers being with the people versus using ZOOM. 50 Plus was the main focus of his convention presentation. He shared that it promotes and advocates a society in which all people live with dignity, purpose, and personal fulfillment.

Our second guest speaker was Michelle Humann from the South Dakota Retirement System in Pierre. She shared that 1974 was the birth of the SD Retirement System. It is a cash flow and debt free program. She ended her presentation by saying, “South Dakota retirees are always going to get every penny of the money back that they put into the South Dakota Retirement System.”

The Convention noon lunch was provided by AARP. During the luncheon, we were able to hear the 2020 Grandparent Essay winner, Jade Wilkens, from Madison read about his grandfather.

To conclude the two-day event, President Rhonda Preller thanked everyone for attending the “Welcome to the Jungle” convention. She invited all units to attend the May 2022 Convention entitled “Let’s Fiesta”.