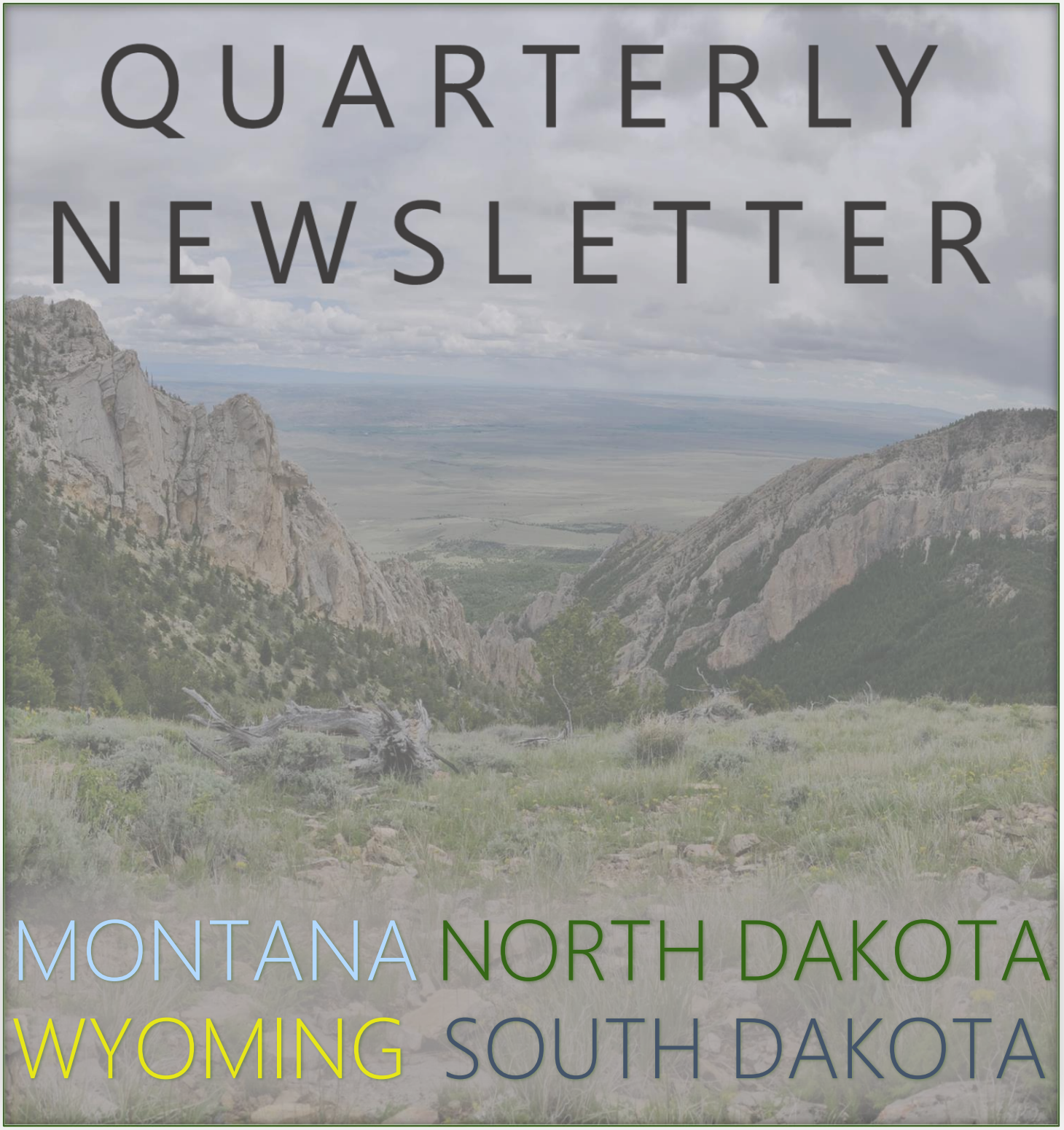
October 2019

American Planning Association
Western Central Chapter

Creating Great Communities for All



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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Written by: ***Jeff Bollman, AICP***

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Minnehaha County Planning & Zoning

Greetings Western Central Chapter Members,

I hope that you all had an enjoyable summer and if you are like me, you are probably not quite ready for snow and shorter days.

Recently, I attended the APA Fall Leadership meetings in Washington, D.C. The opening session featured guest speaker Jeff De Cagna of Foresight First. He discussed 6 things that APA Leaders need to know about foresight. I don't have enough room to discuss all six here, but it was very timely as the WCC Executive Committee is working on updating our Strategic Plan.

One of the quotables from the presentation that stuck with me and applies to our Strategic Plan (and honestly, many of our jobs) is that we want to *"…leave the system (or place) better than how we found it for the benefit of those that will come after us…"*

In our Strategic Plan update we will be looking at succession planning and other things that the WCC Board can do so that we when we leave the Board, we have left WCC in a better place. Once we have a draft completed, we will share it with you for your review and comment.

I also want to take a minute to welcome Jacob Cote as our new Newsletter Editor! I have confidence that he will provide a great product for the membership and please feel free to contact him with ideas on the newsletter or articles or other items to include. Jacob is also taking over the as our primary Social Media content provider. If you are not following us on Twitter or Instagram, make sure you do so!

Finally, a big thank you to Randy Johnson who is resigning as our Professional Development Officer. Randy has served WCC not only as PDO, but also as a President (back in the day). Thanks Randy for all of your time and effort on behalf of WCC!

The WCC is now looking for an AICP member to fill Randy's spot as the Chapter Professional Development Officer. The PDO helps aspiring Planners with AICP exam prep, as well as AICP members gaining CM credits and providing CM opportunities. If you are interested in learning more, email me at jeff.bollman@me.com and I can give you more details.

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Interested in Contributing? It's easy!

The WCC-APA encourages readers, members, and others to submit articles and columns for publication. Contributing is easy, and the WCC looks forward to sharing your article with the WCC community. How does one contribute, you ask? Here's a few quick tips:

- Contact newsletter editor Jacob Cote at: jacobscote@live.com
- Determine a topic that is applicable to the WCC reader base. Not sure? Ask away!
- Writing goals: a *column* is between 700-1,200 words; An *article* is between 1,200-2,000 words.
- You will be provided with a few simple requirements to include in your submittal, including a short author bio, citations *(if necessary)*, headline, photos, and photo credits.

We look forward to receiving your contribution and sharing it with our planning community!

WCC-APA Welcomes Jacob Cote, Newsletter Editor

Jacob is the new Newsletter Editor for the WCC. He is currently the Development Project Manager for High Plains Architects in Billings, Montana, focusing on the development (or more often *re*-development) of historic buildings for modern use with an emphasis on walkability, affordability, sustainability, and resiliency.

After graduating from Minnesota State University, Mankato with his Bachelor's in Urban and Regional Studies, Jacob spent a year as an AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer with the City of Billings' Planning Division. There, he worked to identify ways in which the City's zoning code could be written to increase access to affordable housing. His efforts were part of the larger Project Re:Code, a re-writing of the City's zoning code to better reflect its own growth goals and objectives.



As the first Newsletter Editor for the Chapter in quite some time (the last official newsletter was published in 2016), Jacob is excited to bring together the stories of the remarkable cities and towns in the WCC region. The son of a born-and-raised North Dakotan, he grew up hearing this region referred to as "God's Country"; this, he cannot—and will not—refute.

Outside of the office, Jacob spends his free time hiking, running, skiing, and reading. Time and weather permitting, he enjoys traveling to as many corners of the region as he can but has hardly scratched the surface—he is always looking for a reason to road trip to a new destination!



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2019 WESTERN PLANNER CONFERENCE SUMMARY

PLANNING OUR PLACES FOR A CHANGING FUTURE

Written by: ***Megan Nelms, AICP***

When: September 8-11
Where: Santa Fe, New Mexico



The 2019 WPR/APA New Mexico Conference, held in Santa Fe, NM had a great turnout, bringing together some 225 planners from New Mexico and western region states. The 4-day program included presentations on best-practices, panel discussions and interactive dialogue on issues facing planners in the west.

Many West Central Chapter members were in attendance, and it was fun to catch up with familiar faces from Wyoming, Montana, South Dakota and North Dakota. The Wyoming team represented (as always) and came away with the victory in the 'Wyoming vs the World' softball game. The winning team in the Scavenger Hunt/Pub Crawl was compromised of WCC members (except for our lone escapee to Colorado, former WCC member Brandon Cammarata).

Our four days in New Mexico were jam packed with sessions on a wide-range of topics, including planning ethics, water resiliency, public engagement, freight planning and much more. One of my favorite sessions was presented by WCC member Matt Ashby, entitled "No Good Deed Goes Unpunished: Trying to do the Right Thing in Spite of Public Opposition."

Matt and fellow presenters discussed lessons learned and best practices on projects they had worked on where they had to deal with outspoken public opponents and negative or biased public feedback. The session included some great discussion with the audience about how planners should utilize the public input process to hold to our planning principles and code of ethics. It was interesting to hear from other attendees on how they dealt with issues such as informal, online public comment or unruly citizens in public comment forums.

I also particularly enjoyed the lunchtime plenary by Allan Affeldt, the southwest developer who has restored many historic hotels in the southwest including the La Posada Hotel in Winslow, Arizona and the Plaza Hotel and Castaneda Hotel in Las Vegas, NM. There were also many fun tours included in the conference, such as Meow Wolf and the Historic Architecture walking tour through the Santa Fe plaza.

Overall, this year's Western Planner was an excellent conference, full of learning and networking with fellow planners dealing with many of the same issues we face here in the WCC. I look forward to seeing many of you next year as we bring Western Planner back to our chapter when WPR partners with NDPA to host the annual conference in Bismarck, ND August 26-28, 2020! See you there!

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2019 MONTANA ASSOCIATION OF PLANNERS CONFERENCE SUMMARY

Written by: ***Jacob Cote***

When: *September 24-26*
Where: *Chico Hot Springs, Chico, Montana*

Planning professionals from across the Treasure State converged on Chico Hot Springs & Spa in Paradise Valley for three days of learning, collaboration, and, when time allowed, pristine relaxation.

Nestled between the north entrance of Yellowstone National Park at Gardiner and the increasingly-popular cities of Bozeman and Livingston, Paradise Valley is trying to strike a balance between increased tourist visitation, traditional ranching activities, and a larger wildlife presence. A Day 1 presentation & panel discussion shone light on the perceived opportunities and concerns from involved conservationists, wildlife researchers, land owners, planners, and DOT officials.

Other Day 1 programming topics included "survival skills for planners" (priceless for those of us new to the field!), the benefits of façade improvement investment, the Yellowstone Gateway, engaged land use planning, and the relationship between public health and planning.

Day 2 included the two planned tours in the bookend cities of Paradise Valley: Gardiner (to the south) and Livingston (north). The Wednesday morning tour of Gardiner brought planners through the newly-designed Gardiner Gateway, the result of several collaborative projects involving FIFTEEN local, state, and federal agencies and organizations working together to improve Yellowstone's North Entrance.



The afternoon tour took conference attendees to Livingston's Food Resource Center to learn how the community's organizations are incorporating local agriculture into the town's food systems.

The new facility is more than a food center; it is a community center, a hub of activity for those in Livingston working to solve local challenges.

After a day of fun tours and programs at Chico, the West Creek Ranch hosted a wonderful dinner for conference attendees—a perfect end to an exciting day!

The final day of the conference covered topics like planner ethics, MDT collaboration efforts, micro-mobility transportation, and watershed land use planning. Planning in gateway communities was covered too, as was a round-table discussion for women in the planning profession.

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2019 WYOPASS CONFERENCE SUMMARY

Written by: ***Megan Nelms, AICP***

When: October 9-11
Where: Gillette College Tech Ed Center, Gillette, Wyoming

WYOPASS held their annual Fall Conference October 9-11th in Gillette, WY. It was the second year of hosting the conference jointly with WYGEO, the state organization of GIS Professionals. Over 60 attendees spent the 3-day conference learning how GIS and planning can work together to create better communities. There were many great presentations on best-practices, planning challenges in Wyoming and interactive dialogue on issues the state faces in the coming years in terms of natural resource management.

Legislative issues have been a highlighted topic in many western states recently, and Wyoming is no exception. We were pleased to welcome Jeremiah Reiman of the Wyoming County Commissioners Association and Dave Fraser from the Wyoming Association of Municipalities. They joined a panel discussion with Sweetwater County Civil Attorney Jon Deleon and Planner Eric Bingham to discuss upcoming planning related legislation. The Panel also gave an update on where topics left off at the end of the last legislative session have gone with interim committees. WYOPASS will be sure to keep an eye on these topics and more as the legislative season ramps up.

Natural Resource management was also a focus at this year's conference. Many planners in the state are working on individual county Natural Resource Management Plans, as money has been allocated by the State to assist counties in development of their plans. GIS also plays a role in this *(next page)*



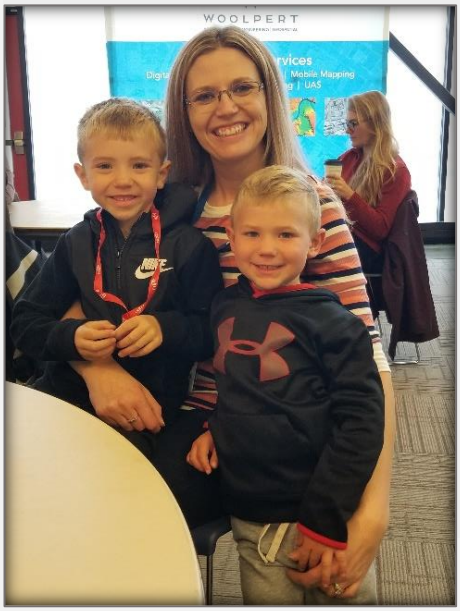
Conference attendees enjoy the opening reception at The Railyard in historic Downtown Gillette.



Campbell County Commissioner Mark A. Christensen gives the awards dinner plenary speech.

(cont. from last page) as natural resource database management, mapping and other technologies can aide counties in creating better plans.

Plenary speaker, Campbell County Commissioner Mark A. Christensen gave an excellent presentation about planning in Wyoming and the challenges he has faced as a policy maker. With increasing pushback from the public across the State and the new realm of social media, the struggle for public officials to combat and address false information has become a key issue.



WYOPASS Treasurer Megan Nelms with two up-and-coming planners and conference helpers.

Mark discussed how municipalities and counties in Wyoming must work together to find the balance between private property rights and property values while simultaneously building an ecosystem that supports new businesses and economic diversification. Mark gave examples of how Gillette and Campbell County have addressed some of these issues, from public listening sessions to utilizing innovative zoning applications and streamlined permitting processes and regulations.

WYOPASS also presented their 2019 state planning awards at the conference. Planner of the Year went to Joy Hill of Park County. New Planner of the Year went to Sarah Hutchins of Carbon County. Planning Commissioner of the Year was awarded to two Planning Commissioners, Bob Jordan and Todd Hildebrand of the Campbell County Planning Commission. Finally, the City of Laramie's North 4th Street Redevelopment Project was awarded the 2019 Wyoming Planning Project of the Year.



WYOPASS President Sid Fox welcomes attendees at the opening session.

Overall, this year's WYOPASS conference was full of learning and networking with fellow planners from around the state. We look forward to our Spring conference in Riverton, with dates to be announced soon!



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2019 SOUTH DAKOTA PLANNERS ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE SUMMARY

Written by: ***David A. Heinold, AICP Candidate***

When: October 16-17
Where: Switfel Center, Brookings, South Dakota



The South Dakota Planners Association hosted their annual conference October 16-17, bringing together planners, administrators, planning commissioners, and consultants for an opportunity to learn from each other in different areas of the state. Barry Dunn, President of South Dakota State University, Keith Corbett, Mayor of Brookings, and Mike Bartley, Brookings County Commission Chair presented some cooperative efforts across each governmental entity are providing value to the public.

The presentation began with an explanation of the quarterly strategic meetings that are held with the City, County, and School leaders. The theme of the presentation dealt with open and honest communication and relationships among key stakeholders.



For example, SDSU goes to the City as well as the County with plans and questions for projects. The Brookings Area Transportation Authority SafeRides program is one example of the City, County, and Schools working together financially to fund a needed service to students and area residents.

The keynote address was followed by two breakout sessions on planner and developer relations as well as an interactive group discussion on growth management strategies. The growth management session began with a presentation on the Density Zoning Ordinance in Minnehaha County and focused on providing county planners with strategies to keep it rural in their jurisdiction while managing housing density as well as economic development.

Scott Harmstead, SRF Consulting Group, provided a review of a few recent land development regulation projects SRF worked on around the region.

Scott explained the process currently being developed for the City of Fargo, North Dakota in coordination with Lisa Wise Consulting, Inc. using a more in-depth analysis of the existing land development codes. The presentation ended with a group activity identifying successes in development regulations, challenges in the regulations, and how to move forward in addressing some of these issues. SDPA members and conference attendees are grateful for Scott travelling from Bismarck, North Dakota for his presentation as well as attendance at the 2019 SDPA Annual Conference.





The first general session was followed by two more breakout sessions on creating a Community Improvement District and regulating Accessory Dwelling Units on the west side of the state. The Powder House Pass Community Improvement District is a 1,000-acre subdivision plat for a future development community in Lawrence County. The advantage of a CID Plan is that it enables us to "think like a community, not just what's going to be in front of my house", Kevin Smith, AICP.



Jeremiah Bergstrom, South Dakota State University Instructor of Landscape Architecture, presented on a history of watershed management and several case studies of community-based water resources management. Jeremiah explained the need to deal with stormwater runoff at the source for effective management strategies and allow the landscape to function as it was designed to do prior to development practices. He discussed that we need to know our watershed partners as well as what's connected versus disconnected water infrastructure.

The presentation included a discussion about precipitation patterns in South Dakota, which tended to be wetter in the past year. The best way to take on watershed issues is to find the person who has the respect to listen and be listened to by the larger group. Jeremiah was very thoughtful in his approach to educating and engaging the conference attendees about stormwater management best practices in various climate contexts.

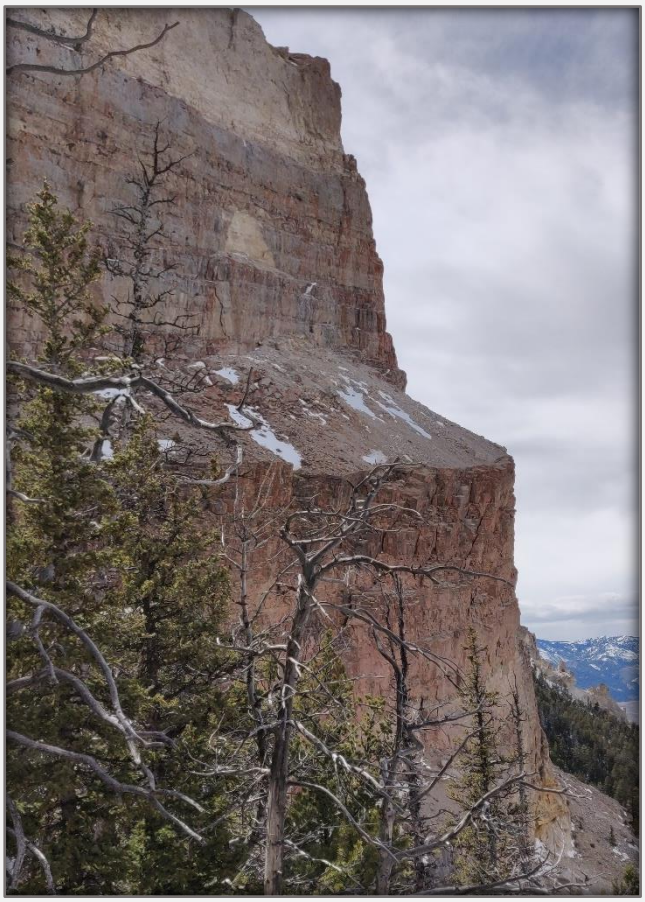
One of the major highlights of the SDPA Business Meeting was the decision to forgo the annual fall conference next year in exchange for a pending agreement with the North Dakota Planning Association and Western Planner Conference that will be held August 26-28, 2020, Mandan-Bismark, North Dakota. Another related decision was to offer up to $5,000 (up to $150 each application) in conference support to attend the Western Planner Conference next year. In lieu of not hosting a fall conference next year, SDPA will host a special one-day training workshop in Oacoma, SD during the spring months to be built by the membership.

The group finished the meeting with a discussion on such legislative items as the Conditional Use Permit kickback for CAFO development, Wind Energy regulations, and Road Maintenance jurisdictional issues on old platted right-of-ways. The SDPA board will be working on a strategy for future conferences as well as developing an application process for conference support and AICP-related expenses. The whole group finished off day 1 of the conference with dinner, drinks, and a good ole' fashioned friendly game of Planners' Jeopardy filled with all sorts of state history and planning-related questions!

The second day of the conference began with the popular legal duo of Jack Hieb and Zach Peterson from Watertown, South Dakota who have been involved in many planning and zoning related cases over the course of their respective law careers. Jack started off the discussion with a reminder that challenging the decision doesn't work, so the opponents are beginning to challenge the decisionmaker or process that involves the conference attendees who administer their local zoning regulations. The focus of the presentation was on the difference between adjudicating and legislating procedures. Jack and Zach dedicated much of their time towards providing discussion answers on meeting procedures, ex parte communication issues, and recent changes in state law.

The second day finished off with two separate group tours: rural and urban. The urban tour group visited a few key privately-funded facilities such as the Children's Museum of South Dakota, Dana J. Dykhouse football stadium, Sanford-Jackrabbit indoor training facility, and the Dakota Nature Park among other notable sites along the tour route in the City of Brookings. The rural tour group visited a dairy concentrated animal feeding operation and a wind tower farm in rural Brookings County.





Newsletter Information

This newsletter is published by the Western Central Chapter (WCC) of the American Planning Association on a quarterly basis. Circulation is to the APA members of the WCC. The WCC Executive Committee welcomes submissions of original articles, editorial letters, project profiles, planners on the move items, calendar items, and any other information of interest to both professional and citizen planners. Submissions should be made to:

Jacob Cote, Newsletter Editor
Email: jacobscote@live.com

WCC Disclaimer

The views expressed in the articles published on the website or in the newsletter are those of the authors. They do not necessarily represent the views or opinions of the Western Central Chapter of the American Planning Association. Any questions or comments may be directed to the President of the WCC.