

May



# VIEWPOINT

Quarterly Newsletter



## 2025 SDACTE Conference Highlights By: Andy Jensen

Wow! Can you believe it's already May? Where has the school year gone? It feels like just yesterday I was putting the finishing touches on my classroom. I guess the old saying is true: "Time flies when you're having fun!"

I'm excited to share some of the fantastic programming we have planned for you at our annual SDACTE Summer Conference, hosted on the beautiful campus of Mitchell Technical College.

First up: don't miss the First Timers Session on Sunday, July 27, at MTC. This is a great opportunity to learn more about the conference, discover the benefits of SDACTE membership, and explore ways to get involved. Afterward, each division will host a kick-off meet and greet—with locations all around Mitchell. It's the perfect time to connect with educators in your content area and expand your professional network.

Monday, July 28, will be packed with excitement! We'll kick things off with a keynote from the one and only Gerry Brooks—you won't want to miss him! The day will also feature division time, tours, and our State Awards Ceremony, where we'll celebrate outstanding educators including our New Teacher of the Year, Teacher of the Year, Administrator of the Year, and many more.

Tuesday, July 29, brings our always-popular Vendor Show, featuring companies from across the country showcasing tools, resources, and ideas you can take back to your classrooms. Be sure to complete your vendor bingo card for a chance at some great door prizes!

Lunch on Tuesday will include our Annual Business Meeting, where we'll vote on the SDACTE President-Elect, approve the budget, and handle other association business.

We'll close the conference with engaging breakout sessions, a closing session featuring the announcement of the 2026 host school, and drawings for Chase the Ace—plus, there will be sweet treats to enjoy! We hope to see you July 27–29 in Mitchell—home of the World's Only Corn Palace!



Check It Out!



### Direct Live Links Inside this Viewpoint Newsletter

\*Throughout this newsletter you will see blue bolded & underlined text. These links will direct you to important websites & opportunities available for our members!

# SOUTH DAKOTA CTE SUMMER CONFERENCE

## JULY 27-29, 2025 - MITCHELL, SD

### SCHEDULE AT GLANCE

SUN.	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
	10:30 - 6:30 p.m.	AFNR Meetings	Mitchell Technical College
	11:30 - 1:30 p.m.	SDACTE Board Meeting	Mitchell Technical College
	2:00 - 5:00 p.m.	Registration Opens	Mitchell Technical College
	4:00 - 5:00 p.m.	FCCLA Advisor Training	Mitchell Technical College
	5:00 - 5:30 p.m.	First Time Attendee Orientation	Mitchell Technical College
	6:30 - 9:00 p.m.	Ag, Food and Natural Resources Kick-off Social	Davison County Fairgrounds
	6:30 - 8:30 p.m.	Administration Division Kick-off Social	Bradley's
	6:30 - 8:30 p.m.	Business, Management, IT (BMIT) Kick-off Social	Palace City Brewing
	6:30 - 8:30 p.m.	Health Science Division Kick-off Social	Blarney's
	6:30 - 8:30 p.m.	Family and Consumer Science Banquet/ Social	Palace City Brewing
	6:00 - 8:00 p.m.	T&I/Tech Ed Kick-off Social	Blarney's

MON.	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
	7:00 a.m.	Continental Breakfast Served	Mitchell Technical College
	7:00 a.m.	Registration Re-opens	Mitchell Technical College
	8:00 - 10:30 a.m.	Opening Session and Keynote	Mitchell Technical College
	11:30 - 11:50 p.m.	Break-out Sessions	Mitchell Technical College
	12:00 - 1:15 p.m.	Networking Lunch	Mitchell Technical College
	12:45 - 1:15 p.m.	Committee Meetings	Mitchell Technical College
	1:30 - 2:20 p.m.	Break-out Sessions	Mitchell Technical College
	2:30 - 4:30 p.m.	Division Tours or in Depth Divisions Sessions	Mitchell Technical College
	5:30 - 6:30 p.m.	SDACTE Reception	Highland Conference Center
	6:30 - 9:00 p.m.	SDACTE Banquet	Highland Conference Center

TUES.	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
	7:00 a.m.	Continental Breakfast Served	Mitchell Technical College
	8:00 - 2:00 p.m.	Vendor Show	Mitchell Technical College
	8:00 - 11:50 p.m.	Division Sessions and Workshops	Mitchell Technical College
	12:00 - 1:30 p.m.	Business Meeting Lunch	Mitchell Technical College
	1:40 - 3:30 p.m.	Division Sessions and Workshops	Mitchell Technical College
	3:45 - 4:30 p.m.	Closing Session and Drawings	Mitchell Technical College
TUES.	5:30 - 9:00 p.m.	AFNR Division Banquet	Davison County Fairgrounds

WED.	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
	9:00-11:30 a.m.	AFNR Division Meeting	Mitchell Technical College





## Chase the Ace: A Fundraiser for SD CTE Teachers & Students

By: Travis Santistevan

### 💰 What Is It?

"Chase the Ace" is a crowd-favorite fundraiser happening throughout the SDACTE Summer Conference! Here's how it works:

Buy a ticket (or five... no judgment 😊).

Wait for your number to be drawn in one of the many drawings throughout the conference.

Pick a card from the deck—if you get the Ace of Spades, YOU WIN THE JACKPOT!

No ace? No worries! You still walk away with a prize, and the pot keeps growing.

### 💡 Why We Do It

All funds raised go directly to support:

👛 Professional Development Stipends for SD CTE teachers

💡 Student Scholarships across South Dakota

This is CTE teachers supporting CTE teachers—and the students we serve.

### 🎫 When & Where?

Drawings happen throughout the SDACTE Conference. Find your Division President or president elect to grab your tickets and keep your eye on the deck.

Can't find them- look for your SDACTE President-Elect, President, Past-President or Executive Director; we will make sure you get your tickets!

👂 Final Thought...Who knows, you might be the big winner.

## Rookie of the Year

By: Kelly Dunkelburger



It's that time of year when members are encouraged to reflect on their leadership potential and consider stepping into a leadership role within the SDACTE organization. These past three years have flown by. When I was first elected as President-Elect, the end felt far away—but it arrived quickly. Serving on the SDACTE Executive Team has been an incredibly rewarding experience.

Whether you choose to lead your division or take on a role within the broader SDACTE association, you'll be amazed at how quickly the time passes and how much you grow along the way. If you're feeling inspired to take that next step and run for SDACTE President-Elect, please reach out to Andy, Travis, Lenessa, or me for more information.

The main requirement for this position is that you must have previously served as President of your division. If you haven't yet held that role, I encourage you to get involved with your division's leadership team now—so you'll be eligible to serve as SDACTE President-Elect in the future. While a three-year commitment may sound long, it truly goes by in a flash—and the experience and insight you gain are invaluable.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve on the SDACTE Executive Team. I hope you'll consider stepping up to lead and make a difference in our organization.

## Region V Leadership Opportunities

By: Bobbie Jo Donovan



Want to get more involved with Region V? Wonder how you can develop leadership skills and learn more about Region V? Check out these opportunities and apply to serve! Deadlines to apply are quickly approaching.

1. Awards Committee--Looking for members who would like to serve on the Awards Committee from all states and specifically from Arizona, Wyoming, and Colorado. Term begins July 1, 2025.
2. Legislative or Marketing Committee--Looking for members who would like to serve on the Legislative or Marketing Committees. Term begins July 1, 2025. (Apply by June 1, 2025)
3. Region V Legislative Committee Chair--Looking for a member who has served on the Legislative Committee (current or past) and wants to lead this committee. Three year term beginning July 1, 2025.
4. National ACTE Bylaws Committee--Looking for a member who wants to fill a vacant term on this national committee. Vacant term ends June 30, 2026. This person may be eligible for future terms.
5. Policy Committee Members--Looking for two members who could serve three year terms on the Policy Committee beginning July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2028. This application is due June 1. All members are eligible EXCEPT those from the states of Alaska, Colorado, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, or Washington.

If you are interested in knowing more about the above opportunities or if you want to apply, please email Dodie Bemis at [bemisd@lakeareatech.edu](mailto:bemisd@lakeareatech.edu) before June 1, 2025.

### Region V VP Elect/VP

Region V VP: Region V is also looking for an experienced member to serve one year as Region V VP Elect then move into a three year term as VP. Term would begin July 1, 2025 and serve through June 30, 2029.

If you are interested in this service position, you will need to apply through the National ACTE website portal. Deadline to apply is June 15, 2025.

If you have any questions about the above openings or the process to apply, contact Craig Statucki ([cstatucki@gmail.com](mailto:cstatucki@gmail.com)) or Dodie Bemis ([bemisd@lakeareatech.edu](mailto:bemisd@lakeareatech.edu)).



## South Dakota CTSO Center Update

By: Katie Paulson

That's a Wrap on State Championships! Celebrating the Achievements of South Dakota's CTSOs - as the final gavel falls on another exciting season of State Championships, we're proud to reflect on the incredible accomplishments of CTSO's across the state.

This spring alone, we:

- Hosted 5,800+ student competitors
- Crowned 640 state champions
- Awarded numerous top honors in various career fields
- Granted multiple scholarships to deserving students
- Partnered with 400 industry leaders who helped make it all possible

While the conferences may be over, the impact of these experiences will last a lifetime. Our CTSOs continue to shape the future of career and technical education by fostering leadership, innovation, and real-world skills. Looking ahead, all six CTSOs will proudly take part in their National Conferences this summer, representing South Dakota on a national stage. We can't wait to see what our students and programs accomplish next! Stay tuned—and thank you for your hard work and dedication as a CTSO Advisor!



# Professional Development Highlights

**SD ACTE**  
Summer Conference  
July 27th - July 30th  
Mitchell, SD

Follow the link below to Register:  
[Register Here!](#)

## Vision Conference Recap By: Jackie Kessler



I attended the ACTE Vision Conference in San Antonio, TX. It was a wonderful learning experience. I was also able to attend the NAAE conference for ag educators held in conjunction with Vision.

I enhanced my CTE expertise while attending hands-on training sessions and listening to industry experts who shared valuable insights into emerging trends and technologies. One industry speaker session I attended was on drones and how important drones are becoming in all CTE areas. Another session I attended was integrating CTE and academic courses and using rubrics to do this.

I attended the State CTE Leadership breakfast on the last day of conference with the SD ACTE officers then finished out conference with a great speaker, Steve Gilliland, his message was inspiring, uplifting and comical. He has written several books, if you have time look him up. His message, "It is what you make it!" left an impact on me. Get up, go to work and make it the best day possible. We all know as teachers it is hard but "It is what we make it!"

This was by far one of the best professional developments I have attended. Thank you to South Dakota ACTE for the stipend to allow me to attend Vision. I highly encourage all members to apply for the stipend and attend this conference next year in Nashville, TN.

## National Policy Seminar By: Fawn Wilde



Being a first-time attendee at the ACTE National Policy Seminar was an incredibly fulfilling experience as I gained a broader and stronger understanding of the entire legislative process, particularly with federal grant funding, such as with Perkins V.

Our South Dakota CTE team was diligent about focusing on our priorities and being clear about expressing the positive impact CTE has on South Dakota's education and workforce development. There are so many robust stories from school districts throughout the state highlighting the success of CTE in South Dakota, which made it quite easy to share our story, especially regarding the importance and impact of Perkins funding, as well as other grant and fund sources.

The entire experience was worthwhile and provided me with an enhanced understanding of the bigger picture of my profession, as well as how changes at the federal level can greatly impact the states. If you have the opportunity to apply for the NPS Stipend, take it! It was truly one of the best professional experiences I've had in my position as the Director of the Western Statewide CTE Consortium.

*Stipends  
Available!*

## Interested in Seeking Professional Development Opportunities?

Stipends are available through our great State association. 1 floating stipend and 2 summer conference stipends are available! Don't let these stipends go unused! Best Practices and Post-Secondary Summit opportunities as well! Reach out to a board member for details!

# Highlights & Updates



## National Policy Seminar By: Sarah Colombe

It has been over 20 years since I last visited Washington, D.C., and while the city itself has changed, the legislative process remains much the same. When our team arrived, uncertainty was in the air — Congress had yet to approve a federal budget.

The South Dakota Career and Technical Education (CTE) team focused on two key priorities during our visit. First, we emphasized the importance of maintaining strong federal funding for secondary CTE programs. Our second priority was to highlight the importance of strengthening the alignment between education and workforce development systems.

This partnership is crucial in creating a direct pipeline of skilled, trained workers to meet the needs of our communities. Over the past three years, \$18.6 million has been dedicated to CTE-specific enhancements and expansions in South Dakota, a clear reflection of this vital connection.

While in D.C., we had the opportunity to meet with a member of Representative Dusty Johnson's staff. During this brief but meaningful meeting, each team member shared stories about how South Dakota students are gaining essential industry skills through CTE programs.

I highly encourage others to apply for the travel stipend and experience this opportunity to advocate for CTE firsthand. Your voice — and your story — truly matter!

## Administration Division Update By: Dr. Sara Vande Kamp



As the school year winds down, I want to send a big congratulations to each of you for making it through another impactful year of great work in CTE! Whether you're wrapping up final projects, celebrating student successes, or just counting down the days until summer break—you've earned it. Thank you for the heart and hustle you pour into this work!

With summer just around the corner, it's officially time to turn our attention to the SDACTE Summer Conference in Mitchell—and this is your friendly reminder to get registered and book your hotel if you haven't already. Trust me, you'll want to be part of the action.

Already planning to attend? Invite someone to join you! Maybe it's a new CTE teacher, a counselor who wants to learn more, or a teammate who's never experienced the SDACTE magic. We've got a great lineup for first-time attendees, and this is a perfect chance to mentor, connect, and grow your local CTE network.

We're starting things off right this year with a rooftop Admin Division social at Bradley's Pub & Grille in downtown Mitchell—right next to the World's Only Corn Palace! It's the perfect way to unwind, reconnect, and enjoy a South Dakota summer evening with colleagues from across the state. Let's hope for great weather and even better company!

Here's to finishing the school year strong—and seeing each other soon in Mitchell for another unforgettable summer conference!

## CTE IN ACTION



Tracy Kern serving as the Region V Awards Chair.

Awards Banquet with the Rancho High School Culinary Program students, who catered our meal, complete with mocktails.



*Region V  
State of the State Address*

Scan QR Code to view  
President Andy Jensen's  
Message from the  
Region V Conference!



**Wrapping Up a Year of Impact and Looking Ahead to Summer CTE Conference****By: Alysha Kientopf**

As we approach the end of another incredible school year, I want to take a moment, on behalf of the South Dakota Association of Agriculture Educators, to congratulate each of you on the outstanding work happening across your programs. It's been a year filled with powerful examples of premier leadership, personal growth, and career success. Whether in the classroom, the shop, or in the field, your efforts have made lasting impacts on your students and communities.

Now, as the final bells ring and the pace begins to shift, I encourage you to take time to reflect on all you've accomplished and the lives you've touched. You've helped shape the future of agriculture and technical education in meaningful ways.

Looking ahead, we are incredibly excited to welcome you to the 2025 South Dakota CTE Conference in Mitchell, SD, this summer! This year's conference is packed with exciting opportunities—be sure to check your email for updates on the extended workshop from Mudhole Custom Tackle, hands-on tours, and a wide range of professional learning sessions.

Even more, this event is a valuable time to connect and recharge with colleagues from across South Dakota, not just Ag teachers, but CTE educators of all backgrounds. There's nothing quite like gathering with those who share your passion for education and career readiness.

We can't wait to see you in Mitchell. Until then, enjoy a well-earned break and thank you for your dedication to our profession!

**BMIT Division Update****By: Kristi Dancsisin**

As summer approaches, business, marketing, and information technology educators are gearing up for an exciting and enriching conference. This year's event promises a perfect mix of professional development, networking, and fun. Attendees can look forward to inspiring speakers, including the team from Next Gen Personal Finance, who will provide valuable insights into teaching financial literacy in today's world. For those interested in cutting-edge technology, a VR presentation will showcase innovative ways to engage students in the classroom.

In addition to the dynamic presentations, there will be a division-specific get-together, offering a chance to connect with peers, share best practices, and build lasting professional relationships. A meaningful tour of downtown Mitchell will provide a local flavor, giving attendees a well-rounded experience.

Business, marketing, and IT educators won't want to miss our annual business meeting, where important updates on CTSOs (Career and Technical Student Organizations) will be discussed.

Another highlight of the conference will be our keynote speaker, Principal Gerry Brooks, known for his hilarious and uplifting messages. If you haven't seen his videos, be sure to check them out before the conference!

It's shaping up to be a fantastic event—see you there!

# Updates & CTE Learn



## CTE IN ACTION



Bobbie Jo Donovan recognized as being on the Region V Policy committee.

Alex Toupal honored as the Region V Innovative Program Winner from South Dakota.



## CTE Learn Author Opportunity

Consider becoming a CTE Learn author! As subject matter experts both in content and student instruction, other career and technical educators can benefit from the experience and knowledge possessed by you. To get ideas about possible course topics, please review the course offerings in CTE Learn. Once you have a topic in mind, contact Gary Meers, course facilitator CTE Learn ([garym@maxknowledge.com](mailto:garym@maxknowledge.com)) to discuss topic ideas and answer any questions about the authoring process.

SDACTE

*Empowering educators with leadership and resources necessary to cultivate a highly skilled and competitive workforce.*

## SDACTE Summer Conference By: Laureen Mehlert



Calling All T&I/Tech Ed Professionals!

Are you passionate about career and technical education? Do you want to help shape the future of our field in South Dakota? The SDACTE Trade & Industry/Technology Education Division is looking for leaders like YOU to step up and make a difference!

We are currently seeking candidates for the following division officer positions:

- President
- President-Elect
- Secretary

This is your opportunity to:

- Make an impact on T&I/Tech Ed across the state
- Grow your leadership skills and professional network
- Represent your peers and help guide the future of the division
- Collaborate with fellow educators, administrators, and industry partners

Whether you are a seasoned educator or just starting out, your voice matters - and leadership starts with taking that first step. If you have ever had ideas to share, improvements to suggest, or energy to contribute, now is the time to act!

Get Involved – Starting at the SDACTE Summer Conference!

What better place to connect and learn more than the 2025 SDACTE Summer Conference? This is not only a chance to attend powerful sessions, meet other CTE educators, and get inspired, but a chance to move our division forward.

Not sure if you are ready? We believe in growing leaders!

If you have questions or are considering a role but want to learn more, please reach out to Laureen Mehlert, current Division President, or Travis Santistevan, current President-Elect for the State Association—we would love to talk to you. You do not have to be an expert to lead - just committed, curious, and ready to collaborate.

Together, we can keep T&I/Tech Ed strong in South Dakota.

As always, if you need anything, please reach out!



# Division President Reports

## FCS Division Update By: Anne Pankratz



As we wrap up another school year, I want to take a moment to celebrate with each of you. Whether you're just starting your journey as a Family and Consumer Sciences teacher or a seasoned veteran, you're making a real difference in the lives of your students—and I applaud you for your continued passion and dedication.

A big shoutout to those of you advising CTSOs. Your students' accomplishments reflect the time, energy, and heart you put into your programs. You're helping build strong, capable leaders for the future.

While we are on the topic of celebrating, don't forget to vote for this year's FCS Division Awards! The link has been sent out, so take a few minutes to recognize the incredible educators around us who inspire greatness every day in their classrooms.

Here is a quick highlight from earlier this spring: I had the opportunity to attend the Region V Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada, from April 30 through May 3, and it was a fantastic experience! If you've never participated, I highly encourage you to consider going in the future. It's smaller than Vision, but it has that hometown feel, with engaging speakers and workshops that get you thinking about incorporating fresh ideas into your classroom. It was the perfect balance of professional development and inspiration!

Looking ahead to summer, be sure to register for the SDACTE Summer Conference in Mitchell this July! We have an exciting conference planned that will leave you feeling refreshed and motivated for the upcoming school year. I recently sent out an email with all the details, so check your inbox, and please reach out if you have any questions. One exciting update: This year, the banquet is included with your registration, so no extra fee! Join us to celebrate our award winners, honor years of membership, and gather tools and ideas to kick off the year with confidence.

As we close the school year, please remember you are a bright light in your school community. Thank you for the energy, creativity, and heart you pour into your work daily. Be sure to carve out some time to rest and recharge this summer; we will see you in July, ready to kick off another great year!

## CONGRATULATIONS Upcoming CTE Graduates!

Enjoy this treat, & don't miss this **SWEET** opportunity—CTE high school grads can apply for our CTE Advantage, a \$500 tuition discount per semester (\$1,000 per year)!



Scan for more  
information &  
apply today!

Questions? Contact Admissions at  
(605) 718-2565 or [Admissions@wdt.edu](mailto:Admissions@wdt.edu)

WESTERN  
DAKOTA  
TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Start your journey this Fall!

## CTE IN ACTION



Region V Committee chairs, including Coleen Keffler, Sturgis and Dodie Bemis, Watertown representing South Dakota.





# Awards and Recognition

## SDACTE Excellence Award Winners By: Beverly Rieck



It is the time of the year to be thinking about the awards that our SDACTE organization awards to fellow members. I know that each division may handle making a decision of nominees in a different manner. However it is done, each division may have a nominee in each of the categories. It is highly suggested that the nominee complete the application since they will best be able to address the questions found on the application.

Here is a list of the Excellence Award categories:

- Administrator of the Year
- Postsecondary Professional of the Year
- New Teacher of the Year
- Carl Perkins Community Service Award
- Teacher of the Year
- Counseling & Career Development of the Year
- Teacher Educator of the Year
- Lifetime Achievement Award

As a candidate in a category for a division, you will log into the ACTE Awards Portal website, go to ACTE Excellence categories, the person submitting the application will be able to view the guidelines for each award and then you are able to login to complete the application. The applications to complete will be under the year 2027.

There are also two awards given at our state level only. They include

- Friend of CTE
- Award of Merit

Those applications are found on the SDACTE website.

The deadline for submission is July 1 and the winners will be announced at our SDACTE conference to be held in Mitchell on July 27-29. Please feel free to contact me or your respective division awards chairperson if you have any further questions or if we can be of assistance as you work through this.



## Achieve 100 By: Lenessa Keehn



Congratulations to the following South Dakota CTE programs for earning the Achieve 100 recognition:

- Alcester-Hudson High School
- Bridgewater-Emery School District
- Chester Area School District
- Crowley's Ridge Educational Service Cooperative CTE
- Gregory High School
- Oxford High School
- Parker High School
- Philip High School
- Curious to know how your school can earn this recognition?
  - Award winners will also be recognized in an issue of ACTE's award winning publication, [Techniques](#) and during ACTE's annual [National Policy Seminar](#).
  - Fill out the online application on the [ACTE Awards Portal](#) by listing all the names and member numbers of your institution's CTE faculty members. All faculty members must be active ACTE members as of Dec. 31.
  - The deadline to complete an application is Feb. 1. For additional information, please contact [kdiemer@acteonline.org](mailto:kdiemer@acteonline.org) or call 800-826-9972.