



**SEN. MIKE ROUNDS**

Earlier this month, the Senate passed the 60th annual National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). This legislation supports our troops and their families, and strengthens our national defense. As a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee and Chairman of the Armed Services Cybersecurity Subcommittee, passing a strong, bipartisan NDAA each year is a priority for Senator Rounds.

This year's NDAA included a number of provisions he offered, including language to address the Air Force's bomber shortfall, which directly supports the B-21 bomber program and Ellsworth Air Force Base. You can find out more about the NDAA on my website.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently gave the greenlight for the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines to be distributed in the U.S. These safe and effective vaccines are now being administered across the country, and we're optimistic that we'll be able to get back to normal soon. Senator Rounds looks forward to receiving the vaccine when it is my turn to do so. Check out a recent weekly column to learn more about why he'll be taking the vaccine.

The House and Senate passed veterans' legislation that included Senator Rounds' bill to end veteran homelessness. This legislation now awaits President Trump's signature to become law. No man or woman who has served our nation should be without a place to call home. The bill seeks to make sure each veteran has the resources needed to find a home.



**REP. DUSTY JOHNSON**

#### **National Defense Authorization Act**

Dusty voted in favor of the National Defense Authorization Act that passed the House and Senate with veto-proof majorities and it includes Dusty's legislation to streamline defense acquisitions. The President issued a statement indicating he would veto the bill in its current form, though it's unclear if he will follow-through on that threat.

#### **Government Funding**

A bill to extend the continuing resolution (CR) by one week passed the House and the Senate by voice vote to extend the deadline to next Friday, December 18th. Talks are getting closer on a government funding bill, though as of 8am Friday morning they have not posted a CR so a short government shutdown is possible.

#### **COVID Relief**

Dusty led the Problem Solvers Caucus group that negotiated the compromise agreement that has been renamed the "908 Coalition." The group released a section by section of the deal, but text is still waiting on liability protections. Any deal struck is likely to be tied to government funding.

#### **Surprise Medical Billing**

The one bit of good news to share is that a bipartisan, bicameral surprise billing agreement was announced, surprise billing has been a priority of Dusty's during his first term and this package will be included in an end of year omnibus bill. Surprise medical billing occurs when a person receives

an unexpectedly high medical bill as a result of being out-of-network. This usually occurs in emergency situations.

This legislation protects patients from unexpected medical bills for out-of-network services. Rather than establish a federal rate setting system, it would allow providers and insurance companies to resolve payments through arbitration.



**MAYOR ALLENDER**

The City observed the third largest November for permits issued in 2020. In November, 403 permits were issued, with a total valuation of \$18,011,483. We are nearing a valuation total of \$260 million for the year.

The City is currently seeking citizen interest for vacancies on multiple committees. A current list of vacancies and an interest application can be found at <https://www.rcgov.org/public-meetings/city-committees.html>

Beginning in January, the City will resume discontinuation of residential and commercial utility services for non-payment of utility bills. This practice was suspended in March due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Citizens who continue to experience a significant financial hardship caused by the COVID-19 pandemic can apply for an exemption on a form available on the City's website: [www.rcgov.org/covid19](http://www.rcgov.org/covid19).

Stay connected to current events and discussions happening at all levels of government.



The Home Rule Charter Committee will be making a recommendation to Council at some point in 2021, but a date has yet to be determined. On May 4, 2020, City Council authorized this committee to be in place for up to one year. More information on Home Rule can be found at [www.rapidcityhomerule.org](http://www.rapidcityhomerule.org).

City Hall will be closed December 25 and January 1. Adjustments to trash collections and Rapid Ride schedules can be found on the City's webpage and Facebook account.



Learn more about C-Lock Inc., a local ag business doing business globally, that got its start at South Dakota Mines - <https://www.sdsmt.edu/News/C-Lock-Sees-Continual-Growth/#.X9IIYdhKi70>

Engineers wanting to earn an advanced degree should consider the new Master of Science degree in Industrial Engineering, focusing on production, manufacturing, and safety. <https://www.sdsmt.edu/News/Mines-Adds-Master-s-Degree-in-Industrial-Engineering/#.X9IJStthKi70>

If you are looking for local hi-tech talent to fill internships, part-time, or full-time positions in your company, sign up to take part in the Spring Career Fair at South Dakota Mines on Tuesday, February 2nd, 2021 from 11am to 4pm MDT. This will be a virtual event. <https://www.sdsmt.edu/Campus-Life/Career-Center/Career-Fair/>



Western Dakota Technical (WDT) College President Ann Bolman, Ed.D., hosted a virtual meeting with West River Legislators on Dec. 11. The session focused on the importance and future of technical education in western South Dakota. Dr. Bolman provided a WDT overview and discussed the benefits of technical education. Nick Wendell, of the South Dakota Board of Technical Education, provided info regarding the four S.D. technical colleges and reviewed state funding recommendations. Legislators provided feedback regarding the types of support/education WDT can offer to help boost economic growth and wage-earning opportunities. The WDT Board of Trustees hosted members of the South Dakota Board of Technical Education on Nov. 18. The meeting was history-making as it was the first meeting between the two leadership groups since the WDT board was formed in July. The state board members who spoke at the meeting included: Dana Dykhouse of Sioux Falls; Bob Faehn of Watertown, and Scott Peterson of Belle Fourche.

invite you to participate with social distancing guidelines and with an option to live stream the event.

#### We need Crackerbarrel volunteers!

Please reach out to Anna Hays at [Anna.Hays@ElevateRapidCity.com](mailto:Anna.Hays@ElevateRapidCity.com) if you're available to volunteer on the following dates:  
Saturday, January 30, 2021, 9-11AM  
Saturday, February 20, 2021, 9-11AM  
Saturday, February 27, 2021, 9-11AM  
Saturday, March 6, 2021, 9-11AM



Elevate will resume its weekly updates of legislative session activity through the GAC Newsletter on January 19, the week after session opens.

Rapid City Crackerbarrels will be returning in 2021! Keeping COVID safety precautions top of mind, we