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**Build Dakota success leads to more industry participation and student support,
helping address South Dakota workforce challenges**

PIERRE, S.D. – The seventh cohort of Build Dakota Scholarship Fund students will begin classes this month, helping to fill the gap of essential workforce needs for South Dakota.

In January 2021, Governor Kristi Noem announced an additional \$20 million in continued support of the Build Dakota Scholarship Fund, securing funding for the program for another five years.

“The state’s commitment to the Build Dakota Scholarship is one of the best examples of how government can partner with private business to make real change in our state,” said Governor Noem. “As more and more businesses look to South Dakota to escape overregulation and high taxes, the Build Dakota Scholarship will allow our workforce the chance to train and meet the needs of our growing economy.”

Over 70% of scholars are backed by an industry partner, meaning these students are guaranteed a job upon completing their degree. Industry partners provide a match with scholarship dollars. In return, students commit to working for the industry partner for three years following graduation. With workforce recruitment challenges facing businesses across the state and nation, Build Dakota offers security and stability for businesses who invest in their workforce through the industry partner program.

“As we enter our seventh year of offering Build Dakota Scholarships to young people, I think we have even more momentum than we did when we announced the program,” said Build Dakota Chairman Dana Dykhouse. “This scholarship is moving the needle for South Dakota employers and helping create successful careers for our state’s workforce.”

Each technical college manages their own industry partner program, working with local businesses and economic development organizations to find future employment opportunities for Build Dakota scholars in high-need workforce areas. This cohort is supported by over \$2.6 million in funding from industry partners like Sanford Health, Fiegen Construction, CHS, and many more.

“Our industry partner program has allowed more scholars to be awarded these scholarships, through a match program,” said Deni Amundson, program manager for Build Dakota. “Scholars with an industry partner are guaranteed a job after graduation, and the industry partner has a steady stream of highly trained employees.”

“Year after year, we have a very high level of interest from both students and industry partners wanting to utilize the Build Dakota Scholarship at Southeast Technical College,” said Southeast Technical College President Robert Griggs. “This program has changed the narrative about technical education in our state, and I’m excited to see continued growth and partnerships.”

Click [here](#) to access the complete list of this year's Build Dakota Scholarship winners.

To learn more about the Build Dakota Scholarship and find details on how to become an industry partner, visit BuildDakotaScholarships.com.

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About Build Dakota:

The Build Dakota Scholarship Fund was formed in 2015 through a \$25 million gift from local philanthropist T. Denny Sanford and a matching contribution from the South Dakota Future Fund. The Build Dakota Scholarship Fund exists to fill a critical workforce shortage in high-need career fields where a skills gap exists between available labor and hiring requirements.

The initial \$50 million provided more than 1,900 students with the opportunity to graduate debt-free and enter the workforce in South Dakota. In 2020, an additional \$20 million was invested to keep the program running and supporting students for another five years or more.