

The Great State of South Dakota



History:

From 1700 to 1750, the tribes of the Sioux Nation clashed with the Arikara, Mandan and Omaha for control of eastern Dakota. By the late 1700s, the Sioux Nation dominated the northern Plains.

In 1743, the Verendrye brothers, the first Europeans to see the Black Hills, buried an inscribed lead plate near present-day Fort Pierre, claiming the land for France.

The territory that would become South Dakota was purchased from France and added to the United States in 1803 as part of the Louisiana Purchase. Nine states were eventually organized out of the Louisiana Territory.

The first permanent American settlement was established at Fort Pierre in 1817. White settlement of the territory in the 1800s led to clashes with the Sioux, as some of the land had been granted to the tribe by an earlier treaty.

In 1861, President James Buchanan signed the Organic Act creating the Dakota Territory. Twenty-eight years later, in 1889, the Omnibus Bill or Enabling Act was adopted by Congress which provided for dividing the Dakota Territory into the states of North Dakota and South Dakota and also enabled the two Dakotas, Montana and Washington to formulate constitutions.

The first constitutional convention seeking South Dakota statehood was held in 1883. This was the first time the people of Dakota Territory petitioned Congress for admission to the Union. A second convention was held two years later. In 1889, the third convention led to the final constitutional provisions. The South Dakota Constitution was adopted in 1889 and on November 2 of that year

President Benjamin Harrison signed the document that made South Dakota the thirty-ninth or fortieth state. North Dakota was admitted to the Union on the same day. The President intentionally shuffled the two proclamations and as a result it is not known which he signed first.

Today, two significant parts of South Dakota's economy are fueled by tourism and agriculture. Visitors flock to the state to see Mt. Rushmore, which features 60-foot-tall sculptures of the faces of

Presidents George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln. South Dakota's agriculture



industry has a \$32.1 billion impact on the state's economy each year. With more than 19 million acres of cropland and 23 million acres of pastureland, the state's farmers and ranchers are among our economy's key drivers. South Dakota ranks in the top 10 in the production of 25 agricultural commodities.

Famous South Dakotans include newscaster Tom Brokaw, Senator and Vice President Hubert Humphrey, and NFL kicker Adam Vinatieri.

STUDENT REFERENCE SERIES

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Date of Statehood:
Nov. 2, 1889

Capital: Pierre

Population:
924,669 (2024)

Size:
77,116 square miles

Nickname:
Mount Rushmore State

Motto:
Under God, the People Rule



State Symbols:

State Flag:

The South Dakota flag features the state seal surrounded by a golden blazing sun in a field of sky blue. Letters reading: "South Dakota, The Mount Rushmore State," the official state nickname, are arranged in a circle around the sun.



State Seal

The symbols on the great seal of South Dakota represent the state's commerce, industry, and natural resources.

South Dakota's state motto, "Under God the People Rule," appears at the top of the inner circle, which has a background of sky and hills. In the foreground, a steam ship navigates a river running through agricultural and industrial land.



The outer circle of the seal bears the words, "State of South Dakota" and "Great Seal 1889."

State Slogan: "Great Faces. Great Places."

State Nickname: "The Mount Rushmore State"



Key Resources:

[South Dakota Historical Society](http://SouthDakotaHistoricalSociety.org)

Key Terms:

agriculture
Constitution
Constitutional Convention
economy
Lewis and Clark Expedition
Louisiana Purchase
Sioux Nation
state
territory
tourism

State Song: "Hail, South Dakota"

State Tree: Black Hills spruce

State Animal: Coyote

State Bird: Chinese ring-necked pheasant

State Fish: Walleye

State Mineral Stone: Rose quartz

State Gemstone: Fairburn agate

State Floral Emblem: Pasque with motto "I Lead"

State Soil: Houdek

State Insect: Honeybee

State Fossil: Triceratops

State Sport: Rodeo

State Dessert: Kuchen

State Nosh: Chislic

State Drink: Milk

State Grass: Western Wheat Grass

State Jewelry: Black Hills Gold

State Musical Instrument: Fiddle

State Indigenous Instrument: Traditional Flute

State Bread: Frybread



Did you know?

Working in South Dakota:

If you are under the age of 14, you may not be employed while public school is in session and in no instance after 7:00 p.m.

(SDCL 60-12-2)

If you are under the age of 16, you may not be employed in any occupation dangerous to life, health, or morals.

(SDCL 60-12-3)

Effective January 1, 2026, the state minimum wage increased from \$11.50/hour to \$11.85/hour.

(SDCL 60-11-3.2)