



**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
NEWS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 14, 2016
Media Contact: Jody Heemstra, 605.773.4073

**Scholarship Prizes Available for Resource Conservation
Speech Contest Winners**

PIERRE, S.D. – Contestants in the 2017 state finals of the Resource Conservation Speech contest will be eligible to win a total of \$2,300 in college scholarships.

All South Dakota students in grades 9-12 are eligible to compete for \$2,300 in higher education scholarships which are provided by the East River and Rushmore Electric Power Cooperatives and South Dakota Rural Electric Association. Scholarships are awarded to the top three finalists: first place is \$1,100; second place is \$750; and third place is \$450.

The theme for the 2017 contest is "Soil Health: What Will You Leave?"

Contests are coordinated by local conservation districts. Local winners advance to area contests held in seven locations. The top area speakers compete at the state finals in Pierre on Saturday, April 22, 2017.

The contest is sponsored by the South Dakota Department of Agriculture (SDDA), in cooperation with Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of South Dakota, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the South Dakota Association of Conservation Districts.

For more information on the Resource Conservation Speech Contest, contact your local conservation district or call Tiffany Shannon, natural resource specialist for SDDA, at 605.773.3623.

An entry form and complete list of rules can be found online at:
<http://sdda.sd.gov/conservation-forestry/educational-programs/resource-conservation-speech-contest/>

Agriculture is a major contributor to South Dakota's economy, generating \$25.6 billion in annual economic activity and employing over 115,000 South Dakotans. The South Dakota Department of Agriculture's mission is to promote, protect, preserve and improve this industry for today and tomorrow. Visit us online at <http://sdda.sd.gov> or find us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.