



Trump hits friendly territory on trail

NEWS, 5A

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USPS audit finds flaws in South Dakota mail

Molly Wetsch
SOUTH DAKOTA NEWS WATCH

An official report from the Office of the Inspector General for the U.S. Postal Service has brought further clarity to ongoing questions of the organization’s performance in South Dakota, nearly a year after one of the state’s congressional members called it into question.

The 30-page report published Wednesday comes from an audit initiated by U.S. Sen. Mike Rounds in

December. The South Dakota Republican has been frequently critical of the postal service in the past and introduced legislation last month that would prohibit bonuses for high-level postal service staff as long as issues with delivery continue.

News Watch reported in June 2025 that newspaper publishers and others in the state were frustrated with USPS’ mail delivery times, with some saying it hindered their business operations. An analysis of

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Sioux Falls’ POET becomes first to supply U.S. ship with 100% bioethanol

Vanessa Carlson Bender
Sioux Falls Argus Leader | USA TODAY NETWORK

Sioux Falls-based biofuels producer POET has supplied plant-based fuel for what is being called the first U.S. operation to fuel a ship with 100% bioethanol, according to a Sept. 28 news release.

The fueling operation took place in Houston in partnership with one of the world’s largest maritime shipping companies, A.P. Moller-Maersk. The project highlights the potential for U.S.-made bioethanol to become a larger part of the shipping industry’s effort to reduce emissions, according to POET’s press release.

In addition to Maersk providing the vessel, the project involved Kirby Corporation, which helped transport the fuel and support the ship-fueling operation; the Port of Houston, which provided coordination and infrastructure; and the United States Coast Guard, which assisted with regulatory requirements.

The operation builds on Maersk’s previous testing of bioethanol in ships designed to run on more than one type of fuel and illustrates how ethanol could become another lower-emission fuel option for the maritime industry.

“Bioethanol has the potential to contribute meaningfully to the future energy mix for shipping,” said Emma Mazhari, Maersk’s Vice President Energy Markets. “(Bioethanol) can offer another scalable, lower-emission fuel option and greater flexibility in how the maritime industry approaches its transition to lower-carbon fuels. This operation with POET is an important step in exploring how bioethanol can be incorporated into marine-fuel supply chains in the United States.”

POET, described as the world’s largest bioethanol producer and 11th-largest U.S. container exporter, produces more than 3 billion gallons of bioethanol annually at 35 bioprocessing facilities across the country, each with an annual impact of \$200 million on the local economy, according to the organization’s website.

“Seeing American-made bioethanol move from the farm to a container ship in one of the nation’s largest ports is an exciting moment for our industry,” said Jeff Broin, Founder and CEO of POET. “Bioethanol is an abundant, affordable and clean option for the marine sector. It demonstrates what is possible when partners across the value chain work together to open new markets for American agriculture.”

POET said the marine-fuel demonstration could create additional demand for corn-based ethanol by opening a potential new market beyond transportation fuels used on roads.

Since 1987, POET has continued to promote bioethanol use in a variety of applications, including automotive racing, aviation and marine transportation. The company said the successful bunkering

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Sisters Joelle Foley and Carissa Kellar opened Lakeside Coffee Co. at 214 State Ave. E. in Estelline in April. PROVIDED BY LAKESIDE COFFEE CO.

One sister bakes, one makes good coffee

Ashley Opina
Special to the Watertown Public Opinion | USA TODAY NETWORK

Sisters argue. It’s what sisters do. Especially if they work together. Joelle Foley and Carissa Kellar are no different, except they don’t get in trouble when they bicker on the clock— but in reality it’s hard to get in trouble when Foley and Kellar are their own bosses.

The native South Dakota sisters, both in their early 20s, are the proud owners of Lakeside Coffee Co., a relatively new coffee shop in Estelline.

“I love working with my sister because we can communicate entire conversations with one look, argue at 7:03 a.m. and be completely fine by 7:04 a.m., and somehow run a business with absolutely no HR department,” Kellar said. “Joelle tells me what needs to be done, and I pretend I was already planning on doing it. We can roast each other while still having each other’s backs, laugh through the chaos, and somehow always figure things out. We’ve been through enough together that, at this point, nothing really surprises us. And, honestly, who else would I want in the trenches with me when the espresso machine is fighting for its life?”

Foley agreed with Kellar ... somewhat.

“Love is a strong word,” she said. “I love my sister. Working with her? There’s definitely some eye rolling involved. But it works because neither of us stay mad;

we can argue over something at the shop and be together three hours later like it never happened. Carissa knows how to bake, I know how to make good coffee, and that was enough qualification for us to open a business together.”

“That pretty much sums up our business model,” Joelle Foley said. “Carissa can bake. I can make good coffee. Neither of us holds a grudge. Let’s open a storefront.”

On April 11, 2026, Lakeside Coffee Co. opened the doors to its first brick and mortar location — located at 214 State Ave. E. — after running the small business out of a 2022 canned ham trailer for nearly a year.

So far, business has been swell, and the sisters’ choice of permanent location has proved to be a good one.

“Estelline has been a great fit for us,” Foley said. “Being in a small town has given us the chance to really get to know our customers, their names, their orders and exactly who is going to pull up at 6:03 a.m.”

Foley even joked that the sisters worry when a regular of theirs — such as Corey Fugere — is 10 minutes late.

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Tangier Maersk, in collaboration with Sioux Falls-based POET, is shown at the Port of Houston in Texas, where the ship is fueled with 100% bioethanol, a first in the U.S. PROVIDED BY POET

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