



STUDY: WATER SUPPLIES NOT MEETING DEMAND



BART PFANKUCH PHOTOS, SOUTH DAKOTA NEWS WATCH

Sand bars not normally seen on Pactola Reservoir in the Black Hills of South Dakota were visible in April 2025 due to unusually low water levels.



Water levels in this major source of drinking water for Rapid City were so low this spring that city leaders implemented water-use restrictions weeks earlier than normal and the state delayed installation of public boat docks.

BART PFANKUCH
South Dakota News Watch

PACTOLA RESERVOIR — Water levels in this major source of drinking water for Rapid City were so low this spring that city leaders implemented water-use restrictions weeks earlier than normal and the state delayed installation of public boat docks.

Lingering drought conditions and low levels of inflow from sources that feed the Pennington County reservoir were the main culprits for the water shortage.

While heavy and consistent rains in July and August have bolstered water levels in Pactola, the spring shortage was a cautionary sign for officials who monitor water availability and for city residents who rely on the water.

Now, in another concerning development, a new in-depth federal hydrology study of the entire Black Hills region indicates that some of the aquifers that supply water to this growing region of western South Dakota are not keeping up with demand.

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Tickets on sale now for Aug. 14 gala to help trafficking victims

JOURNAL STAFF

Tickets are on sale now for Esthers Rising's fourth annual Hope Givers Gala on Aug. 14. This event raises awareness and funds to help youth affected by sex trafficking.

The Hope Givers Gala will be at 5 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 14, at Pine Haven Event Venue in Rapid City. Esthers Rising is a faith-based nonprofit in the Black Hills that provides restorative care to adolescents who are at risk for or have experienced sexual exploitation and/or sex trafficking.

The Hope Givers Gala will begin with a social hour, followed by a program designed to educate, inspire and unite the community in support of youth who are affected by sex trafficking. Tickets are \$50 per person and can be purchased at estersrisingministry.com/hope-givers-gala.

The gala will include dinner by Lori Kirk, plus a live auction and online silent auction featuring items and experiences donated by local businesses.

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More tribal recruits moving though law enforcement academy

JOHN HULT
South Dakota Searchlight

Efforts to bolster the number of officers policing tribal lands for tribal agencies in South Dakota have begun to pay off, public safety officials say.

The state's next basic law enforcement certification class, which begins on Aug. 18 in Pierre, includes nine tribal recruits from the Yankton, Oglala, Sisseton-Wahpeton and Rosebud tribes.

The certification course is 13 weeks long, and the state typically has three classes a year. Since May 2024, the state has certified 13 tribal graduates.

Former Gov. Kristi Noem, now head of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, drew attention — as well as heavy criticism and bans from her home state's tribal lands — to the need for law enforcement in tribal communities in 2024.

Noem repeatedly said Mexican drug cartels had infiltrated the state's reservations, and claimed that some tribal leaders benefited from the gangs' presence. She also drew the ire of tribal officials for saying Native American children have no hope for lack of parenting.

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