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Rhoden presents lean state budget for FY27

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PIERRE — Gov. Larry Rhoden’s first budget address as governor is in the books. And it was a “straightforward” budget without many surprises, as multiple lawmakers told the Argus Leader. Rhoden presented his recommended budget Dec. 2 for South Dakota’s fis-

cal year 2027 at the State Capitol Building. The Republican governor asked lawmakers to budget \$7.44 billion in state fiscal year 2027, up from the \$7.28 billion recommended by former Gov. Kristi Noem for FY2026. FY2027 is split between about 34% state funds, 42% federal funds and 23% funds marked as “other.” Rhoden is also leaving about \$14 million for lawmakers to divvy up during

the upcoming Legislative Session in January. And an additional 135 full-time staff have been recommended for the next fiscal year, up from a budgeted 14,095 in FY 2026. But Rhoden, who is only serving a partial term as governor after having taken over the reins from Noem last January and now faces reelection in 2026, is taking on the state’s fiscal goals and ambitions amid slim revenue projections and realities.

“I won’t sugarcoat it: Revenues have been pretty flat – only rising slightly,” Rhoden told lawmakers during his address. “But we have to keep the context in mind. We’re coming off some of the strongest years in our state’s history – or in any state’s history. Our economic growth may have slowed, but we’re comparing that to the fastest growth that South Dakota has ever seen.”

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‘Leaning Tower of Zip’ didn’t stop land vision

Sioux Falls celebrating 20th anniversary of demo that gave way to Cherapa Place
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For the week of Dec. 1-5, Cherapa Place in downtown Sioux Falls is celebrating and looking back 20 years at a notorious event that marked the start of the urban development along the Big Sioux River greenway, quite literally, with a “BOOM.” Cherapa’s predecessor, the 202-foot historic Zip Feed mill tower, was considered the tallest building in South Dakota at the time and was about to depart the Sioux Falls skyline to make room for new development that would set the precedent of the city’s rapid growth. But the mill tower that served the community from 1957 to 2000 was not going down without a fight in what was supposed to be the “Big Boom.” Instead, at 12:55 p.m. on Dec. 3, 2005, the tower remained, but at an angle, refusing to collapse entirely, which caught the attention of local news outlets and news outlets around the world. After three weeks of Plan B, a large wrecking ball, the tower was no more. In its place, the thriving, 275,000-square-foot urban development and commercial space that is Cherapa Place would come to fruition. Today, the same East Bank riverfront that once held a rat- and pigeon-filled concrete silo is a bustling mixed-use campus. And Dec. 1-5, Cherapa Place businesses are celebrating the tower’s legendary “Big Boom” with special events, deals and a look back at the moment that changed downtown.

‘A lot to celebrate’

Cherapa Place, now a campus of offices, restaurants, retailers, housing and community spaces, helped ignite a renaissance of economic and community growth and development. “There’s a lot to celebrate in what the Zip demolition allowed to happen on the East Bank of downtown,” said Jeff Scherschligt, CEO of family developer Pendar Properties in a Dec. 1 press release. “When you look at it today, I think we’ve fulfilled the community’s vision and now we look to the community to support all the activity that’s occurring here.” The development includes 275,000



The bottom portion of the Zip Feed Tower collapses during the attempted demolition of the building on Dec. 3, 2005. ARGUS LEADER FILE PHOTO

square feet of office space, 233 timber-style apartments, 11 luxury condos, a modern fitness studio, courtyards, gathering areas and event spaces, multiple local retailers and restaurants. **The day the tower wouldn’t fall** In the weeks leading up to the widely advertised implosion, about 25,000 raffle tickets were sold for a chance to push the detonation button at the demolition. “There were special parties at places. A lot of businesses ran fundraisers right there where people would

pay for the best views, and that kind of stuff,” Scherschligt said. The funds raised, about \$150,000, went toward the National Multiple Sclerosis Society’s Dakota chapter. Jed Huisman, a Garretson finance officer who has multiple sclerosis, got to push the button, but to him, the occasion meant more - a public announcement of his own diagnosis of MS. “I had already told my employer and family. But when it came out I was going to push the button, it became public

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Nearly 300 rifles will be up for auction

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His first to own was a 1950s Harrington & Richardson .22 LR rifle. Nearly half a century and 300 firearms later, the Gebauer family is ready to share their patriarch’s hunting legacy. A rare Winchester collection owned by the late Bruce Gebauer, of Sioux Falls, will go up for auction on Dec. 6. He died in 2022 at 64 years old. His wife, Rhonda Gebauer of Sioux Falls, and son, 23-year-old Jacob Gebauer of Canton, say “it’s time to move on” and find a new home for Bruce’s incredible collection, which also includes Ruger Red Labels and more than 80 iconic Winchester Model 70s, the “Rifleman’s Rifle” Bruce sought after most of all. Bruce and his son bonded over hunting and antiquing for rifles. They often visited the Garretson Gun Club, hunted in Iowa and would conduct auctions for collections like his own. But his Winchesters were unrivaled. Bruce scoured pawn shops and estate sales, “making deals” for a few Model 94 lever-action deer rifles or Winchester memorabilia and tools. The last gun he ever bought was a rare Model 70 in a caliber he had never found before. He was a “finder” like that, Jacob says, and now the honor is his to carry on. Jacob says of the 300 rifles his father treasured, he’ll keep a few of the special ones. At the live auction, 274 will be for sale, including an assortment of Harrington & Richardson and Ruger handguns, shotguns and rifles. Yvette VanDerBrink, of VanDerBrink Auction, hosts the event. She says many of the rifles have never even been fired. Nearly all are in “excellent condition,” she says. “It will be a bittersweet day,” VanDerBrink says.

If You Go

A live, onsite bidding for the Bruce Gebauer Winchester Collection will be 9:30 a.m. Dec. 6 at VanDerBrink Auctions in Hardwick, Minn. Online bidding will be available as well. A restored 1965 Oldsmobile 98 Cutlass Convertible will also be for sale, all proceeds of that going to Hope Haven in Rock Valley, Iowa, a non-profit that provides community services to children and adults with behavior disorders, disabilities and mental illnesses. An open house preview will be 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Dec. 5.

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