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# Argus Leader

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ANALYSIS

## Governor hopefuls play sales tax hot potato

**Dominik Dausch**  
Sioux Falls Argus Leader  
USA TODAY NETWORK

There were few revelations to be found in the first major debate for South Dakota's next governor.

But the television event laid bare the contentiousness between the state's conservative leaders vying for job.

Republican candidates for South Dakota governor sparred while jockeying for the voting public's support in a de-

bate hosted by KELOLAND News on Tuesday, March 31, in Sioux Falls.

The gubernatorial hopefuls included:

- incumbent Gov. Larry Rhoden;
- U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson;
- State Speaker of the House Jon Hansen;
- and Aberdeen businessman Toby Doeden.

The roughly one-hour discussion had the Republican contenders address questions largely centered on their approach to taxes, economic policy and

even their thoughts on former Gov. Kristi Noem.

While the participants kept to the rules of the debate, which discouraged personal attacks but allowed rebuttal, their answers at times veered into sniping and direct criticisms of their opponents over providing insight into their own platforms.

Here are the top takeaways from the Republican gubernatorial debate.

See **GOVERNOR**, Page 2A



**A collage of Republican candidates running for South Dakota governor in 2026, including incumbent Gov. Larry Rhoden, U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson, House Speaker Jon Hansen and Aberdeen businessman Toby Doeden.**

ILLUSTRATION BY DOMINIK DAUSCH/ARGUS LEADER



**"Ladybug," made of motorcycle parts, will be part of SculptureWalk Sioux Falls 2026.**  
PROVIDED BY THE CITY OF SIOUX FALLS

## What new sculptures are coming downtown?

**Angela George**  
Sioux Falls Argus Leader  
USA TODAY NETWORK

The Washington Pavilion unveiled to the Sioux Falls City Council the complete list of installations chosen for the 23rd annual SculptureWalk, featuring over 80 pieces that represent nearly 20 states and nearly 60 artists.

If there were a theme this year, there are many insects and road signs, with steel and bronze most prominent.

Sculptures will be installed the first week of May.

### Support for SculptureWalk

The Sioux Falls Area Community Foundation recently announced that SculptureWalk has been included in its latest round of Community Grant Funds, one among 11 other Sioux Falls area nonprofits and causes receiving a total of \$121,000.

And, announced last December, the city's newly adopted Community Partners Program – an effort to reduce spending by \$8 to \$10 million

over the next three years – included SculptureWalk as a mission-aligned organizational area that supports "culture, arts and community programming" needed to promote "cultural vitality and enrichment of public life through accessible programming."

SculptureWalk Sioux Falls was among Levitt at the Falls, Reach Literacy and the Sioux Empire Community Theatre / The Premiere Playhouse, collectively receiving \$350,000.

### Full line-up of the 2026 SculptureWalk outdoor exhibit

Here's a look at all 80 pieces. Work will remain on display for one year and also includes opportunities for informational and virtual tours.

The current installations will be taken down April 11.

- Alicia Jones: Exquisite Trio and Mountain Sentinel
- Reno Carollo: Celestial Jubilation and Joyous Ascension

See **SCULPTURES**, Page 2A

ANALYSIS

## Trump: Victory at hand in Iran war 'very shortly'

**Susan Page**  
USA TODAY

On Day 33 of the war with Iran, President Donald Trump declared victory was at hand. Almost.

In a prime-time address from the White House on April 1, Trump extolled what he called "swift, decisive, overwhelming victories on the battlefield" – victories so decisive he suggested the war would wind down after an additional two or three weeks of military strikes that could "bring them back to the Stone Ages, where they belong."

"We are on track to complete all of America's military objectives shortly, very shortly," he said.

But Trump made it clear that he is prepared to leave a messy and problematic situation behind.

The 19-minute speech included no new details about the war's course and no more than a passing reference to the possibility of negotiated settlement.

But he also didn't mention the possibility of expanding the war by deploying the thousands of U.S. ground forces now being massed in the region. And he recast what had been described as a fundamental goal – to gain control of the highly enriched uranium now buried in Iranian territory – as a step he no longer sees as necessary.

The sites were under "intensive satellite surveillance and control" and U.S. forces could return to the region if Iran tried to retrieve the enriched uranium, he said. (That surveillance has been underway for years, well before the war began.)

Trump even indicated an inclination to leave it to other nations to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, now in an Iranian chokehold that is driving up energy prices.

Countries more dependent than the United States on the oil that is shipped through the passageway should "build up some delayed courage" and "just take it, protect it, use it for yourself," he urged.

Besides, he predicted, the strait will "open up naturally" when the war ends.

See **IRAN WAR**, Page 3A

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