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WATERTOWN PUBLIC OPINION

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2025 | THEPUBLICOPINION.COM

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Doeden, Hansen move up in governor's poll



Going clockwise: Toby Doeden, Jon Hansen, Dusty Johnson, Larry Rhoden. PROVIDED BY THE CANDIDATES

Rhoden still expected to seek Republican nomination

Kevin Killough
SOUTH DAKOTA NEWS WATCH

PIERRE – U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson and Gov. Larry Rhoden are effectively tied atop the race for the Republican nomination for governor, while Toby Doeden and Rep. Jon Hansen have surged in popularity over the past six months, according to a scientific poll of registered GOP voters co-sponsored by South Dakota News Watch.

Of those voters surveyed, 28% would support Johnson and 27% would vote for Rhoden. The margin of error was no more than 4.5 percentage points, meaning they are statistically tied. Rhoden has not officially announced his bid for governor, but he is anticipated to seek the Republican nomination.

The statewide survey, co-sponsored by the Chiesman Center for Democracy at the University of South Dakota, showed Doeden, an Aberdeen businessman, taking 15% of the vote. Hansen, speaker of the South Dakota House, was the choice for 10% of those polled. About 21% were undecided.

“I think that there’s a race that’s going to happen. That’s the big picture,” said Julia Hellwege, director of the Chiesman Center and USD associate professor in political science.

Mason-Dixon Polling and Strategy conducted the

poll of 502 registered Republican voters Oct. 16-20 using random selections from a telephone-matched state voter registration list that included both landline and cellphone numbers.

Changes since April

The poll shows that there are clearly two front-runners in the four-way race with Johnson and Rhoden, but Doeden and Hansen have gained support. An April poll by News Watch and Chiesman showed 4% of Republican voters would vote for Doeden and 2% for Hansen. Johnson polled at 28% and Rhoden 27% at the time, the same level of support as this month’s poll.

“When Washington is dysfunctional and politicians don’t seem to be getting the job done, a guy with a business background starts to get an appeal,” Brad Coker said of Toby Doeden.

Since then, Attorney General Marty Jackley, who had polled at 18%, dropped out of the governor’s race to run for U.S. House. Doeden announced his campaign in May and has since spent heavily on television and social media ads.

If none of the candidates receives 35% of the vote,

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The campus of Lake Area Technical College in Watertown. PROVIDED BY LAKE AREA TECHNICAL COLLEGE

South Dakota tech schools continue to grow

Makenzie Huber
SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

South Dakota’s four technical colleges continue to see increased enrollment in both full-time and dual credit programs, according to the 2025 fall enrollment report.

The state Board of Technical Education reviewed the report during its online meeting on Thursday.

Total enrollment increased 367 over last year, or 5%, with 7,774 students enrolled either as full-time or dual credit students (high-schoolers can take dual

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When should you turn your heat on this fall?

Chris Mueller
Sioux Falls Argus Leader | USA TODAY NETWORK

It’s impossible to deny any longer that the weather outside is getting colder.

The temperature has already dropped below freezing in eastern South Dakota at times this fall and, before long, even more frigid weather will undoubtedly arrive. The forecast in the Sioux Falls area over the next week includes highs in the 50s and lows in the 30s and 40s, according to the National Weather Service.

With colder-than-normal conditions predicted this winter across the upper Midwest, including South Dakota, it’s once again time to decide: When is it cold enough to turn on the heat?

Here’s what experts have to say about it.

When should I turn on my heat in the fall?

Many heating and cooling businesses generally recommend turning on the heat when the indoor temperature falls to the mid-60s, though they also say no two houses are the same and, in the end, it’s

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Volume 139 | No. 215
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