

The South Dakota

PIPE CHATTER



DECEMBER 2025

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- Project Management Classes with Kirk Alter
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The Official Publication of the South Dakota Association of Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors

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The South Dakota

Pipe Chatter

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www.sdpdhcc.org
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kristie.phcc@midco.net

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Upcoming Events

- Project Management Class - December 16, 2025, Rapid City
- Project Management Class - December 18, 2025, Sioux Falls
- Med Gas Class - January 20-23, 2026, Sioux Falls
- Annual State Convention - February 24-27, 2026, Deadwood

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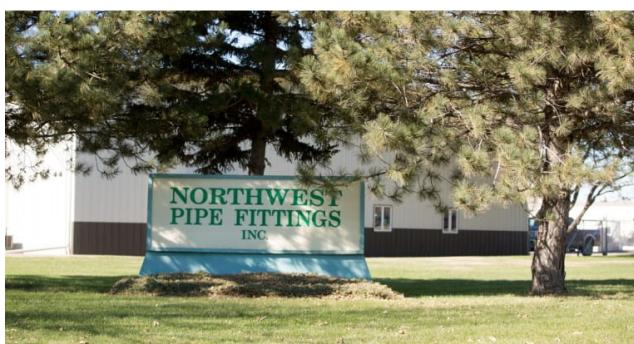
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**SDAPHCC ANNUAL STATE CONVENTION
& PHCC NATIONAL HVAC APPRENTICE CONTEST
FEBRUARY 24-27, 2026
THE LODGE, DEADWOOD, SD**

Tuesday, February 24, 2026

7:00am-8:00am Breakfast
8:00am-11:30am SD HVAC Apprentice Hands-On Competition
11:45am-12:45pm Lunch
1:00pm-5:00pm *New* - Future Leaders Program
6:30pm-8:00pm Welcome Reception & Dinner including SD HVAC Apprentice Hands-On Competition Award, and National HVAC Apprentice Competition Orientation

Wednesday, February 25, 2026

7:00am-8:00am Breakfast
8:00am-11:30am *New* - Future Leaders Program
8:00am-11:30am National HVAC Apprentice Competition
11:45am-12:45pm Lunch
1:00pm-5:00pm Continuing Education
1:00pm-5:00pm SD Plumbing Apprentice Hands-On Competition
1:00pm-5:00pm National HVAC Apprentice Competition
5:30pm-6:30pm Social Hour and Dinner
7:00pm-9:00pm Board Meeting

Thursday, February 26, 2026

7:00am-8:00am Breakfast
8:00am-11:45am Seminars & Annual Meeting
12:00pm-1:30pm Lunch
1:45pm-4:00pm Spouse Event
1:45pm-4:45pm Hands-On Demonstrations and Trainings
5:00pm-5:30pm Vendor Trade Show Meal
5:30pm-5:45pm Awards Presentation
5:45pm-8:00pm Trade Show and Dinner

Friday, February 27

8:00am-9:00am Breakfast
8:00am-11:00am Tear Down

Times are subject to change



ROOM RESERVATIONS

Call 877-393-5634
by January 8 to
reserve your room.
Best sure to ask for
the SDAPHCC room
block and rate (\$99.00)



2026 SDAPHCC ANNUAL STATE CONVENTION

FEBRUARY 24-27, 2026 - THE LODGE, DEADWOOD, SD



New Changes

Hands-On Training

Sustaining SDAPHCC members will be hosting hands-on trainings and demonstrations on Thursday afternoon.

PHCC-National HVAC Apprentice Contest

SDAPHCC is excited to host apprentices from across the country competing in the newly redesigned contest

Future Leaders Program

This pre-convention program provides one day of speakers with content designed to equip new and future leaders.

Same Favorites

Educational Seminars

A variety of speakers will provide informative and useful information to help contractors run successful businesses.

State Apprentice Contest

The top 3 Plumbing & HVAC apprentices will compete for a chance to advance to the National competition.

Trade Show & Silent Auction

A fun and social event featuring Sustaining Members displaying the latest innovation in the industry.

Spouse Event

Taught by Amazing Charcuterie, spouses can attend a relaxing workshop and learn how to craft a fun charcuterie board.

Gun Raffle

Purchase a \$50 raffle ticket for a chance to win one of two unique guns.

Awards

Celebrate Apprentice Contest winners, Contractor or the Year, Wholesaler of the Year, and Manufacturer's Rep of the Year

SDAPHCC Convention Registration Form for Contractors



2026 SDAPHCC Annual Convention

February 24-27, 2026



Company _____

Contact Name Phone

Email

\$300 - Full Contractor includes: Wednesday Continuing Education & Dinner; plus all events on Thursday and Friday

\$190 - Spouse includes: all events on Wednesday, Thursday, & Friday plus spouse event

\$200 - Future Leaders Program includes: Special seminars and meals on Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday morning

\$450 - Future Leaders Program Plus Full includes; all events and meals Tuesday through Friday

\$100 - Wednesday CE & Dinner includes: Wednesday's continued education session and welcome reception

\$200 - Thursday Only Registration includes: all events and meals on Thursday

\$50 - Trade Show Only Registration includes: Thursday's Trade Show and dinner

*For Spouses-The spouse event will be a Charcuterie Workshop on Thursday. Pre-registration is requested.

Register for Spouse Event? Yes No

To Register - Return completed form along with payment to SDAPHCC Office
707 E 41st St, Ste 220, Sioux Falls, SD 57105 or Kristie.phcc@midco.net

Cancellation Policy - Full refunds will be given to cancellations made by February 3, 2026. Refunds will not be given for no shows or cancellations received after February 3, 2026.

REGISTRATION DEADLINE - JANUARY 31, 2026

SDAPHCC Convention Registration Form for Sustaining Members

2026 Annual Convention, February 24-27, 2026
The Lodge, Deadwood, SD

Company _____

Primary Contact _____ Phone _____

Email _____

Trade Show Display	Price	# needed	Trade Show Subtotal
Trade Show Display - Member - includes one 8 foot table	\$260 plus a silent auction item with \$50 minimum value		
Trade Show Display - Non Member - includes one 8 foot table	\$350 plus a silent auction item with a \$50 minimum value		
Trade Show Subtotal			

List Attendee Names and Select Registration Type	\$225-Full Registration	\$50-Trade Show with Meal	\$0-Trade Show without Meal	Attendee Subtotal
Attendee Subtotal				

Convention Event Sponsorship - Select the item(s) you wish to sponsor								
	Tuesday Breakfast	\$200		Continuing Education	\$450		Thursday Lunch	\$550
	Tuesday Lunch	\$200		Wednesday PM Break	\$250		Thursday PM Break	\$250
	Future Leaders Event	\$400		Wednesday Dinner	\$450		Thursday Dinner	\$550
	Tuesday PM Break	\$100		Thursday Breakfast	\$450		Friday Breakfast	\$450
	Tuesday Dinner	\$300		Thursday Seminar I	\$375		Apprentice Contest	\$500
	Wednesday Breakfast	\$200		Thursday AM Break	\$250		Spouse Event	\$500
	Wednesday AM Break	\$100		Thursday Seminar II	\$375			
	Wednesday Lunch	\$200		Thursday Seminar III	\$375			
Sponsorship Subtotal								



REGISTRATION TOTAL: \$

Payment method: Please invoice Check enclosed payable to SDAPHCC

Please return completed form by January 31, 2026 to:
SDAPHCC, 707 E 41st St, #220, Sioux Falls, SD 57105 Or Email: kristie.phcc@midco.net

SDAPHCC Gun Raffle Ticket Order Form

The SDAPHCC is selling raffle tickets for a chance to win one of the 2 following guns:

- Henry Pump Action .22 Rifle Model H003T
- Browning T-Bolt Sporter .17HMR Rifle

Raffle ticket prices are \$50 each. Only 100 tickets will be sold. The drawing will be held on Thursday, February 26, 2026 during the trade show at the Annual State Convention. The winner need not be present.



To order your ticket(s), complete this form and return it along with your payment by 2/20/26 to the SDAPHCC Office at 707 E 41st St, #220, Sioux Falls, SD 57105.

Name _____ Company _____

Phone _____ # of tickets _____ @ \$50.00 each = _____ Total



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Intro to Project Management

A WORKSHOP FOR CONSTRUCTION PROJECT MANAGERS

December 16, 2025 ♦ 8am-5pm ♦ Hilton Garden Inn, Rapid City, SD

December 18, 2025 ♦ 8am-5pm ♦ Hilton Garden Inn South, Sioux Falls, SD

MORE PROFIT, MORE TIME & MORE PEACE OF MIND

All project managers and field supervisors are loaded with tasks. Often it seems more like juggling and fire-fighting than it does "management." Jumping from one emergency to the next may get the job done, but it is a struggle and there is always the risk of something slipping by that will come back to haunt you later.

So what's the solution? Have a plan and follow its rules! The modern world is built on processes and standards – best practices and procedures that are followed every time to ensure repeatable results. The same is true for our industry; we're just not very good about doing it!

How can you get all this done, especially when you are trying to manage multiple projects? Kirk will show you how - through proper planning, thoughtful execution, checklists, managing with numbers, communication and working as a team.

Attendees will learn the Ten Commandments of Project Management, and how they can help you stop the juggling act and start being a project management professional.

IT'S ALL ABOUT WINNING THE CONSTRUCTION PROJECT GAME!

REGISTRATION IS LIMITED – Registration is limited to just 24 participants. Most companies send multiple attendees to get everyone operating by the same playbook.

This is not a "sit & listen" workshop. Our instructor delivers a lively presentation and active participation in the class is a requirement of attendance.

YOUR INSTRUCTOR:

Industry expert **Kirk Alter** will give attendees the tools they need to use on every project to keep the game running smoothly by providing the field workforce with the equipment, materials and information they need to keep productivity and profits at maximum. Attendees learn the rules of the construction game – and how to play to win it!



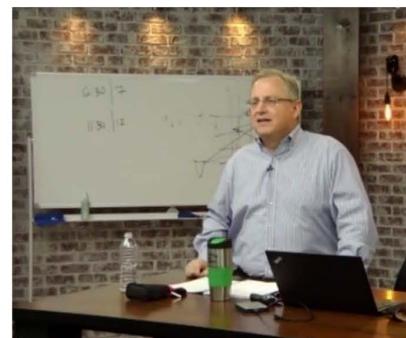
WHO SHOULD ATTEND:

- Project Managers and Asst. PMs/Coordinators
- Superintendents
- Subcontractor Business Owners & Managers
Who Support the PM Process

TOPICS MAY INCLUDE:

Each workshop is tailored to the attendees in the room and what they need to learn to be successful.

- The 10 Commandments of Project Management
- Managing Multiple Projects
- Why Cashflow Matters
- Understanding What's in the Contract
- Knowing When & Why to Say "No"
- Change Orders the Right Way
- What to Do When It Hits the Fan – Managing Change on the Project





Intro to Project Management

A WORKSHOP FOR CONSTRUCTION PROJECT MANAGERS

December 16, 2025 ♦ 8am-5pm ♦ Hilton Garden Inn, Rapid City, SD

OR December 18, 2025 ♦ 8am-5pm ♦ Hilton Garden Inn South, Sioux Falls, SD

REGISTRATION FORM

Registration Includes: A full day of instruction, lunch, plus digital access to all course handouts.

Register by completing this form and returning it to the SDAPHCC Office.

Email: Kristie.phcc@midco.net OR Mail: 707 E 41st St, #220, Sioux Falls, SD 57105

SELECT LOCATION

SOLD OUT

December 16, 2025 – Rapid City, SD

December 18, 2025 – Sioux Falls SD

LIST ATTENDEE AND COMPANY INFORMATION

First Attendee

Second Attendee

Third Attendee

Name: _____

Cell #: _____

E-Mail: _____

Company: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

SELECT PAYMENT AMOUNT AND METHOD

\$470 per person for SDAPHCC Members

\$540 per person for non-members

REGISTRATION TOTAL - _____

Payment enclosed

Please invoice



"I should know this, but I was very surprised to see that we all have the same problems. But we are all coming up with very unique and creative ways to solve those common problems."

That was one of the biggest take-aways for me, was how do I solve the same problems that everyone is having."

— Mark Weaver, Project Manager at COPPERA in Taylor, Texas

The Intro to Project Management Workshop is sponsored by:



SDAPHCC Medical Gas Certification Class

What: Medical Gas Installers Training

When: January 20-23, 2026

Time: 8:00am - 5:00pm each day

Where: Sioux Falls, SD

Tuition: \$1,575 per person (PHCC Member)
\$1,775 per person (non-member)

The class will consist of training in all facets of medical gas pipeline equipment installation for hospitals, office-based occupancies, nursing homes and other health care facilities. A portion of the class will be devoted to learning proper brazing techniques and requirements for working with medical gas equipment and piping.



TO REGISTER: Complete the following form and send with tuition payment to:
SDAPHCC, 707 E 41st St, #220, Sioux Falls, SD 57105
Make checks payable to: SDAPHCC. Registration Deadline: 12/31/25

Registration Form for Medical Gas Training Seminar

Please fill out a separate form for each student.

Please print or type – this information will be used for your permanent records.

Name of Student _____ (nickname if any) _____

Address of Student _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone # Work () _____ Home () _____

Last 4 Numbers of Social Security No. XXX-XX- _____

E-Mail _____

Master Plumber _____ Journeyman _____ Apprentice _____ Yrs experience _____

Field Supervisor _____ Inspector _____ Estimator _____ Other job title _____

In-house hospital personnel (please specify position) _____

Current license No's. (if any) _____ States: _____

Do you currently work on medical gas pipelines? Yes _____ No _____

Are you familiar with NFPA 99? Yes _____ No _____

Name of Employer _____

Address of Company _____

Company Phone # () _____ Fax # () _____

ABOUT THE COURSE

MEDICAL GAS INSTALLERS TRAINING SEMINAR

A Medical gas installation and brazing class is being set up for Sioux Falls, South Dakota, January 20-23, 2026. Classes will run from 8:00 am to about 5:00 pm. Students will need to bring paper and pencils for note taking and highlighters.

Contractor employees need to be journeyman level, or active in an apprentice program for at least four years. Estimators, construction company officials and hospital employees who will not be installing medical gas systems, and building officialsinspectors, are welcome into the class with the four year requirement waived.

As many of you are aware, NFPA has mandated brazing qualifications since 1993. NFPA 99 now mandates that all installers meet the requirements of the A.S.S.E. series 6010, 32-hour course. In addition, many major design firms now mandate compliance with the ANSI/A.S.S.E. 6000 series in their specifications. As of July 2016 the federal government has mandated compliance with the 2012 edition of NFPA 99.

Class will consist of training in all facets of medical gas pipeline equipment installation for hospitals, office-based occupancies, nursing homes and other health care facilities. A portion of the class will be devoted to learning proper brazing techniques and requirements for working with medical gas equipment and piping. The textbook for the class will be the 2018 edition of NFPA 99 and will be provided, as well as other learning aids.

Students will also be required to successfully complete a written examination as well as a brazing practical in which you be required to braze vertical and horizontal full-penetration joints on 1-½" tubing and the brazing coupons will be tested by a Certified Welding Inspector at an independent laboratory.

Class fees will include the use of turbo torches and acetylene. Each student will need to bring 4' of 1-½" L tubing (not cleaned) and 6 to 8 1-½" wrought couplings with stops, as well as 1 lb of silver solder.

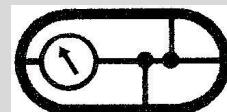
Class space is limited.

ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR



Bill McCormick has more than 27 years experience in design, testing, verification, troubleshooting and repair of all components in medical gas systems, including air compressors and vacuum pumps. He is a ASSE 6050 credentialed medical gas instructor and has been teaching classes for more than 10 years.

CONDUCTED BY



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Unlock Success with PHCC Visionary Peer Groups



**PLUMBING-HEATING-COOLING
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Embrace the Adventure of Business Ownership

Venturing into business ownership is both a colossal challenge and a rewarding adventure. At PHCC, we recognize that while no one can know everything, the key to thriving lies in our willingness to learn from and mentor one another.

Introducing Visionary Peer Groups

Join a vibrant community where shared wisdom and mutual support pave the way to success. Our Visionary Peer Groups are designed for business owners who are eager to navigate their challenges collaboratively.

What is a Visionary Peer Group?

A Visionary Peer Group is a collective of business owners who meet regularly to share operational and planning ideas, functioning as a "board of advisors" for each member. With a focus on specific goals, financial management, process improvement, and industry benchmarks, this group will help you stay committed to your vision through accountability and shared insights.

Why Join a Visionary Peer Group?

- **Collective Wisdom:** Benefit from the combined experience and insights of like-minded peers. Tackle challenges and brainstorm solutions together for mutual growth and prosperity.
- **Expert Facilitation:** A seasoned business coach guides our groups, eager to share knowledge and enhance your learning journey with invaluable support and advice.
- **Commitment to Success:** Discover that the secret to success lies not in hidden strategies but in commitment, implementation, and accountability. Our community empowers members to focus on these foundations.
- **Achieving Goals Together:** Gain encouragement and the tools needed to refine your business, making it more rewarding while reaching your goals alongside fellow business owners.

Benefits of a Visionary Peer Group:

1. A clearer understanding of the owner's roles and responsibilities
2. Access to a seasoned "board of trustees"
3. Leverage the experience and skills of others
4. Accountability from peers on actionable tasks
5. Networking opportunities with like-minded individuals
6. Ideas for business development and strategic planning
7. Time-saving tips and financial insights
8. Education on industry standards and innovative technology
9. A valuable support network and camaraderie
10. Sharing of best practices
11. Perspectives from other business owners (supportive and constructive)
12. Motivation to implement necessary changes

Join us in creating a supportive environment designed to elevate your business to new heights!

For more information and to become a member, contact us at Dobkin@naphcc.org or 916-835-5013.

Visionary Peer Groups FAQ's

Here are the answers to all your questions about how the peer groups will operate:

Who should participate in the PHCC Visionary Peer Group?

The PHCC Performance Groups have been created to support business owners or decision makers specializing in residential and light commercial service for Plumbing, Heating and air Conditioning.

What happens with shared information from the group calls?

All information shared in this group will remain confidential! Each participant will sign a non-disclosure agreement intended to build trust and confidence in sharing business information. It also ensures honest and factual information and feedback are shared.

How are the groups determined?

The final selection of participants in the group will be based on how you respond with the information needed to join the group. The action steps for this process are as follows:

Fill out the questionnaire and return to Dobkin@naphcc.org by December 31, 2025 to be considered for the first PHCC Performance Peer Group. Submit your 2026 goals no later than December 31, 2025.

How many people are in each group?

From experience, we have discovered the size of each Peer Group should not exceed fifteen members. This gives all members an opportunity to participate.

When will the first peer group start?

The first PHCC Visionary Peer Group will start in January 2026 via Zoom.

How long and how often does the peer group meet?

The group will meet monthly via a zoom link for 1- 1 1/2 hours.



What will I get from the Visionary Peer Group?

Participating in this peer group will provide additional resources to effectively and timely solve management challenges through networking and peer support.

Why is this process effective?

Here is what makes this process so valuable:

- The group Facilitator is a business coach
- Peer group exchange, support and accountability
- Structured meetings designed to create results
- Peer group review and feedback on each other's businesses and markets

What is the cost to participate in a PHCC Performance Group?

The monthly cost is \$179, which includes facilitation fees, pre-meeting communication, education, meeting agendas and follow-up summaries from each meeting as well as occasional, limited coaching support when needed. This is a subscription and can be ended by notifying PHCC.

Visionary Peer Groups FAQ's continued

Will the group ever meet in person?

In person meetings would be determined by the specific participants along with the facilitator. If the group requests, time can be scheduled to meet at CONNECT each year. An additional fee may apply to cover the facilitator's time and expenses.

What are the requirements of participation in a Performance Group?

Here are our rules of engagement:

- During the meeting, your camera and your mic need to be on.
- Attendance – Be present and engaged. Treat this as a priority.
- Timeliness – Meetings will start and end on time.
- Preparation – Review agenda topics ahead of time.
- Respect, trust and sharing of information are crucial.
- Participation - Be prepared to share ideas, ask questions, and offer suggestions.
- Active listening is essential.
- Confidentiality is mandatory.
- Focus on the opportunity to gain experience and grow.
- Maintain a kind and courteous attitude.
- Email and cell phone information will be shared between members of the group to promote support within the group outside the scheduled meetings.
- Most importantly, please enjoy the experience.



How will I know I have been accepted into the group?

You will receive an email from your facilitator with the details of your assigned group and the first meeting date, time and link.

Am I still responsible for the monthly fee if I am unable to attend the meeting that month?

If you remain in the group, the monthly fee is not waived.

What if I don't sync with the group that I am in?

You should discuss your experience with your facilitator; there may be other options available.

How much time does it take for a peer group to really be effective?

This depends on your personality and commitment.



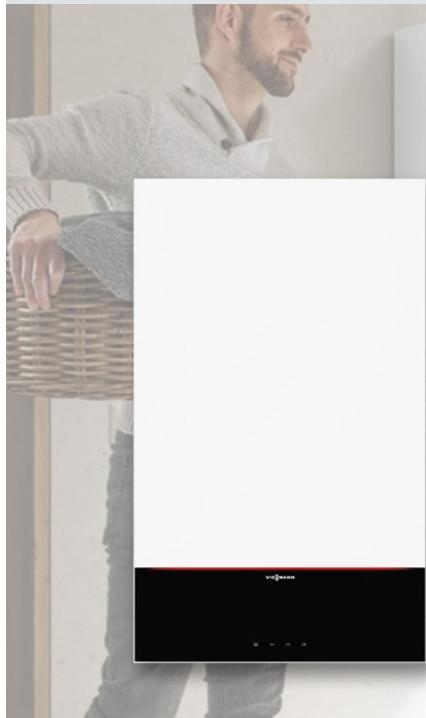
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36" Doorway**

**Lambda Pro Plus
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With O2 Trim Standard**

Save 20% on Pre-Apprentice Plumbing or HVACR

PHCC Academy is running a holiday special for the online Pre-Apprentice Plumbing and Pre-Apprentice HVACR classes. Members can save 20% on these courses until December 26.

Pre-Apprentice Plumbing

The Plumbing Pre-Apprentice online educational course is an affordable introductory course designed to help entry-level plumbing workers be productive as technicians, and assist in determining an appropriate career training path. The course offers an in-depth introduction into plumbing definitions and principles, customer service and soft skills, safety, science and math, plumbing systems and products, and troubleshooting fixtures and gas.

During this six-module course, participants will learn what is required to pursue a career in the plumbing industry, as well as key skills and techniques to help them succeed. Students must complete the 6-module course in 4 months (120 days).

Pre-Apprentice HVACR

The HVACR Pre-Apprentice online educational course is an affordable introductory course designed to help entry-level HVACR workers be productive as technicians, and assist in determining an appropriate career training path. The course offers an in-depth introduction into HVACR definitions & principles, customer service & soft skills, safety, science & math, HVACR systems & products, and troubleshooting fixtures & gas.

During this seven-module course, participants will learn what is required to pursue a career in the HVACR industry, as well as key skills and techniques to help them succeed. Students must complete the 7-module course in 4 months (120 days).

These courses offer an easy way to introduce the plumbing or HVACR to potential apprentice candidates at an affordable price. Visit the PHCC Academy at <https://phccacademy.org/courses/> to enroll.



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Email: SDPlumbing@state.sd.us
Website: <https://dlr.sd.gov/plumbing/default.aspx>

Next Commission Meeting:
January 15, 2026, 10:00 am

Mandy Nielsen, Program Director
Carol Ames, Secretary
Jennifer Anderson, Secretary

Commission Members

Jonathan Kist, President
Plumber Member, Pierre, SD

Jeffrey Leuning, Vice-President
Public Member, Ethan, SD

Duane Levanen,
Plumbing Contractor Member, Bryant, SD

James Bailey,
State Health Dept Rep, Sioux Falls, SD

Brian Cooper,
Public Member, Sioux Falls, SD

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- ◆ One Full Convention Registration
- ◆ One Trade Show Booth
- ◆ Recognition as Bronze Golf

For more information or to sign up as a sponsor, please contact the SDAPHCC Office at 605-271-7255 or email kristie.phcc@midco.net

Longest-Ever U.S. Government Shutdown Ends



By Mark Valentini, Vice President of Legislative Affairs

Over the weekend of November 8-9, the U.S. Senate remained on Capitol Hill to hash out a deal to end the government shutdown, securing enough Democratic support for it to pass on Sunday evening, November 9 on a 60-40 vote. It went to the House where it passed on a mostly partisan basis.

The main details of the agreement are as follows:

- A three-bill "minibus" is attached to the Continuing Resolution (CR) will fully fund Congressional operations, in addition to the Departments of Agriculture and Veterans Affairs.
- The CR will fund the rest of government at FY25 levels until Jan. 30, 2026.
- Senate Majority Leader John Thune (R-SD) has promised Senate Democrats a vote in December on extending the Affordable Care Act tax credits, which are set to expire at the end of this year.
- Government employees laid off during the shutdown will be re-hired and given backpay. Furthermore, there will be no further reductions in government payroll until at least Jan. 30, 2026.

While Senator Thune has promised a vote on health care tax credits, House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) has made no promises to hold a similar vote in the House. President Trump was anxious for a deal and signed off on it within hours of its passage, ending the longest U.S. government shutdown in history at 43 days.

The agreement has divided Congressional Democrats, who were hoping to use the shutdown as leverage to secure an extension of ACA healthcare tax credits. House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY) urged his caucus to oppose the deal, though enough moderate Democrats joined with Republicans to pass it regardless.

The deal will keep government funded through the holidays into the new year, alleviating concerns about air travel during the holidays as the Federal Aviation Administration was expected to cancel up to 20% of flights at the forty busiest U.S. airports.



However, the Jan. 30 deadline leaves open the possibility Democrats may force another shutdown should they not get the concessions they want out of Republicans on healthcare or otherwise perceive that Republicans have not upheld their end of the bargain.

Under the current CR, veterans and low income families will continue to receive benefits through FY26, and with expected passage of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) military operations will continue unabated: therefore, a subsequent shutdown would be partial though without a funding vehicle for the FAA we could expect a repeat of flight delays that plagued U.S. air travel prior to Thanksgiving.

The pressure to act to resolve a subsequent shutdown may come down on Republicans as health care costs for millions of Americans are expected to rise substantially, especially for those Republicans who vote to continue with expected cuts to ACA tax credits and other health care subsidies in the run-up to midterm elections this November.

PHCC will continue to monitor this situation and provide updates.

Uplift Your Employees by Promoting Back Injury Prevention

Lifting objects is a necessary part of many jobs. However, it's easy for employees to develop bad habits that can harm their backs and put them out of commission. Back injuries are one of the leading causes of disability for workers.¹ Injuries can develop over time from long-term repetitive activity or result from a single mishap.¹

Management's Role in Back Injury Prevention

Your role as a business owner is essential in promoting back injury prevention at work. Encourage safe lifting techniques with these actions:

- **Create a Workplace Policy** – This may include guidelines on proper lifting practices, supervision, team assistance, and using appropriate tools.
- **Conduct a Hazard Assessment** – Identify lifting risks and work with employees to address them.
- **Host Regular Safety Meetings and Training** – Discuss safe lifting practices on a frequent basis.
- **Provide Lifting Aids** – Offer tools like adjustable carts and hoists for heavy items.

Tips for Safe Lifting

Leading by example can create a safer workplace. Consider reviewing these lifting tips with your team:

- Ensure there's adequate space and a clear path around you.
- Test the weight of each object and ask for help if it's too heavy.
- Bend your knees and use your legs to lift, not your lower back.
- Keep the load close to your body.
- Avoid twisting or stretching while carrying a load.
- Use tools like dollies or hoists for heavier loads.

Beyond the Workplace

Prioritizing back health doesn't stop at work. Remind your employees to practice these techniques at home, where lifting tasks can also take a toll. Reach out to your local Federated Insurance® marketing representative today for more risk management information. Federated® clients can access mySHIELD® for additional industry-specific resources.

1. OSHA. *Back Disorders and Injuries*. <https://www.osha.gov/otm/section-7-ergonomics/chapter-1>. Accessed September 30, 2025.

This article is for general information and risk prevention only and should not be considered legal or other expert advice. The recommendations herein may help reduce, but are not guaranteed to eliminate, any or all risk of loss. The information herein may be subject to, and is not a substitute for, any laws or regulations that may apply. Some of the services referenced herein may be provided by third parties wholly independent of Federated. Federated provides access to these services with the understanding that neither Federated nor its employees provide legal or other expert advice. All products and services not available in all states. Qualified counsel should be sought with questions specific to your circumstances and applicable laws.



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Regulatory Report



By Chuck White, VP of Regulatory Affairs

Water Efficiency Showing Increased Popularity

A recent study from [Realtor.com](#) indicates that water efficiency is becoming a marketing draw. The report lists many rising features advertised by homeowners when listing their home for sale. The study shows the item leading this year are ads that specifically call out WaterSense fixtures; these types of ads have increased by almost 290%.

These homes are set to use at least 20% less water and lower utility costs. Listings that include them are on the higher end, with a median price of about \$628,000. More information on WaterSense and rated products is available [here](#).

Residential Gas Furnace and Commercial Water Heater Ruling Issued

A three-member D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals panel has ruled against the Petitioners in a lawsuit challenging efficiency standards for residential gas furnaces and commercial gas water heaters. The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) had issued separate rules for these products, each of which had the same effect of raising the efficiency of these products to condensing only products (95% efficiency levels).

In the Opinion for the Court, Judge Wilkins agrees that DOE was within its authority to establish this rule and that any issues related to venting the products were not a feature that provided utility to consumers. In dissent, Judge Rao takes DOE to task for the same reasons that industry had supplied and disagreed with the majority decision on the benefit that using existing venting provides to consumers.

PHCC has long maintained that certain retrofit installations would either require costly vent modifications or be faced with switching to an alternate fuel source, i.e. electric heat. Petitioners have 45 days to appeal to the full D.C Circuit Court or 90 days to appeal to the Supreme Court. Should there be no further appeal, implementation of the new standards for commercial gas water heaters would happen in Oct 2026 and standards for residential gas furnaces would happen in Dec 2028.

EPA Proposes Reconsideration of Technology Transition Rule

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has proposed a reconsideration of the [Technology Transition Rule \(TT rule\)](#). The TT rule is the driving force behind the transition to lower GWP refrigerants, like A2L's. EPA has heard concerns for several sectors that are affected by this rule, some of which, like intermodal carriers or industrial process equipment, aren't typically handled by PHCC members. The last change proposed in the rule would likely benefit PHCC members and their distribution partners, EPA proposed eliminating the short sell through period for split air conditioning systems.

As originally proposed, HFC systems that were made or imported prior to Jan 1, 2025, would have to have been installed and operating by Dec 31, 2025. The EPA proposal would eliminate the end of this sell period, allowing complying HFC systems to be sold until stock is depleted.

PHCC supports this provision as a means to eliminate stranded inventory and possible destruction of finished goods that simply expired on the shelf. While the rule is not final at this time, PHCC recommends that EPA proceed with the elimination of the limitation on the sell through period.

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Special Offer

SDAPHCC members receive 20% discount on AGC of SD safety training programs.

Visit www.sdagc.org for a list of programs.

Offer good through end of 2025



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December 10, 2025

Registration Deadline for Project Management Classes

December 12, 2025

Written Testing for Apprentice Contest

December 16, 2025

Project Management Class, Rapid City Hilton Garden Inn

December 18, 2025

Project Management Class Sioux Falls Hilton Garden Inn South

December 31, 2025

Registration Deadline for Sioux Falls Med Gas Class

December 31, 2025

Membership Renewals Due

January 8, 2026

Convention Hotel Reservation Deadline

January 20-23, 2026

Med Gas Class, Sioux Falls

January 31, 2026

Convention Registration Deadline

February 24, 2026

SD HVAC Apprentice Hands-On Competition
The Lodge, Deadwood, SD

February 25-27, 2026

SD Annual State Convention, SD Plumbing
Apprentice Hands-On Competition
and PHCC-National HVAC Apprentice
Hands-On Competition
The Lodge, Deadwood, SD

From the Executive's Desk



By Kristie Brunick

Winter has definitely arrived and the snow blower has already seen a few outings. Slowly, I'm getting back into the habit of warming up my vehicle, wearing boots, grabbing my gloves and searching for the ever elusive ice scraper.

What a Year

At the end of the year, it's fun to take a look back and note all that happened. This year, was certainly full of activity, both new and ongoing.

- January and February were busy with state legislative activity resulting in the passing of an updated plumbing code.
- At the beginning of the year, we also held a Backflow Class and a Medical Gas Class.
- In February, we hosted our Annual Convention at Grand Falls Casino with nearly 175 attendees.
- March was the month of continuing education with 16 in-person classes plus one virtual class.
- In April, the association helped with the SD Skills USA Competition at Mitchell Technical College.
- PHCC National held its Legislative Conference Washington, DC during the month of May Brett Kaltvedt and myself were able to attend and visited the offices of our national lawmakers.
- On a rainy and hot day in June we held out East River Golf Tournament at Grand Falls Casino, which was followed by our Summer Board Meeting.
- In July, I was able to attend the National AEC Spectrum Conference where I learned from other local and state execs from across the country.
- On another warm day, we held our West River Golf Tournament in September at Elkhorn Ridge in Spearfish.
- October was especially full with the Board Trip to Texas which included our Fall Board Meeting and PHCC National's Connect Convention in Grand Rapids.
- To wrap up the year, we will be hosting 2 Project Management Classes in December.
- Lastly, we launched a new journeyman test prep course, donated \$2,000 from golf proceeds to the Scholarship Foundation, added 36% more apprentices to the apprenticeship program and participated in workforce development events.

All of this is possible due to our great membership! Thank you to our Board of Directors who serve with dedication and passion for the industry. Thank you to all of our Contractor Members for your continuous involvement in the association. And thank you to our Sponsors and Sustaining Members who generously support the association. By joining together, you are able to make a meaningful impact.

We are truly blessed to enjoy an active association and I look forward to all the new opportunities in the year to come.

Convention Registration

I'm excited to include the registration information in this issue. We have lots of new changes, so please be sure to check out pages 5-9 and plan to attend.

Executive's Message continued

Seeking Future Leaders Program Speakers and One Afternoon Hands-On Host

For Sustaining Members, we are still in need of a few speakers for our Future Leaders Program. We are open to a variety of topics but some ideas may include, financial basics, marketing basics, time management, how to delegate, etc. The time slots are only 45 minutes. Please contact me if you or someone in your company would be a good candidate.

We also have one half-afternoon spot open for a hands-on demonstration/training at the convention on Thursday, February 26. Please contact me if you would like to claim the spot. Assignments are made on a first come, first serve basis.

Apprentice Contest

I'm excited to report that we will have 41 Plumbing and 6 HVAC apprentices take the written test for our Annual Apprentice Contest on December 12.

Annual Sponsorships Available

For Sustaining Members, there is still time to secure an annual sponsorship. As a major sponsor, you can bundle your association activity in one simple payment and be recognized for your support all year long. For more information, see page 22.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

During this holiday season, I wish all the best to you, your family and your business. I hope you are able to enjoy gatherings with family, and friends while celebrating the hope, peace, and joy of Christmas.



2026 Plumbing Continuing Education Classes Schedule

Watch your mail and future PipeChatter issues for registration information!

Aberdeen - March 16

Brookings - March 3

Huron - March 23

Mitchell - March 12

Mobridge - March 17

North Sioux City - March 9

Pierre - March 18

Rapid City - March 5 (Last name A-K)

Rapid City - March 24 (Last name L-Z)

Sioux Falls - March 5 (Last name A-G)

Sioux Falls - March 10 (Last name H-M)

Sioux Falls - March 19 (Last name N-Z)

Spearfish - March 3

Watertown - March 17

Winner - March 19

Yankton - March 16 (*tentative*)



South Dakota Association of Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors

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