



South Dakota Newspaper Association

South Dakota Newspaper Services, Inc.

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Nominees sought for 2008 SDNA Eagle Award

The South Dakota Newspaper Association is accepting nominees for the 2008 SDNA Eagle Award.

Established in 2002, this award is given annually to recognize an individual, group or organization that has demonstrated outstanding efforts to protect and enhance openness in government.

"Our nation was founded on the principle of open government," said Tim L. Waltner, chair of the SDNA First Amendment Committee. "Without it, the concept of government of the people, by the people and for the people is nothing but empty words."

The free flow of information between government and the people, commonly referred to as "the people's right to know," is central to the principle of democracy and includes access to government proceedings and records.

The first SDNA Eagle Award was given to the 2001 South Dakota Supreme Court for their efforts helping open the Supreme Court to media cameras starting in August 2001.

Recipients of SDNA Eagle Award also include Mitchell School Board member Rodney Hall (2003), South Dakota States Attorney Larry Long (2004), Yankton County Commissioner Brian Hunhoff (2005) and Codington County State's Attorney Vince Foley (2006). Last year, two awards were given: S.D. Sen. Jason Grant and the staff of the Collegian, the student newspaper at South Dakota State University.

"Each of these recipients has demonstrated a commitment to openness in government which includes taking stands that may be unpopular in some circles," Waltner noted.

"Government that is open allows citizens to participate and instills confidence in both the process and those we elect to act on our behalf," Waltner said.

Any individual, group or organization who had demonstrated commitment to the ideals of open government in South Dakota is eligible to be nominated.

Nominations for the 2008 SDNA Eagle Award should be submitted in writing and sent to: SDNA Eagle Award, South Dakota Newspaper Association, PO Box 8100, Brookings, SD 57006. The deadline for nominations is March 1, 2008.

The award will be made at the 126th annual SDNA Convention, scheduled for April 4-5 in Aberdeen.