$2,500 in scholarships awarded by

- ***East River Electric Power Cooperative***
- ***Rushmore Electric Power Cooperative***
- ***South Dakota Rural Electric Association***

State Champion $1,200
Second Place.....$800
Third Place.....$500

All finalists will receive certificates.

Schedule of Events:

<u>Local conservation district contest</u>:
Must be completed on or before March 6, 2027. Two winners will be eligible to advance to their respective area contest. Contact your local conservation district for contest times and location.

<u>Area contest</u>:
Must be completed on or before March 20, 2027. Two winners will be eligible to advance to the state finals.

<u>State Finals</u>:
A maximum of fourteen speakers, representing the seven Natural Resource Areas, will participate in the state finals. Three scholarship winners will be chosen - first, second and third places. State finals will be held in Pierre, April 3, 2027 at 9:00 a.m. (CDT) in room 414 in the State Capitol.

Point Limits	Explanation of Score Sheet Points
20	Speech adheres to the topic and is appropriate to the subject/topic
20	Speech shows originality
15	Good use of emphasis, voice control
15	Clear enunciation and pronunciation
10	Speaker has poise, shows enthusiasm
5	Thoughts and statements are not contradictory
5	Speech is developed around a logical sequence
5	Logical conclusions are, or can be drawn
5	Personal appearance
100	**Total maximum score**

South Dakota High School Students

Win

$2,500 in Scholarships

Enter the 66th Annual

Resource Conservation Speech Contest

2027 Topic:

"Soil. Where it all begins."

Sponsored by:

Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives of South Dakota

South Dakota Department of Agriculture & Natural Resources

The South Dakota Association of Conservation Districts

Entry Blank

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Age _____ Year in School _____

School you attend _____

Conservation District _____

Parents' Names _____

Phone # _____

Email: _____

Used ONLY for contest-related correspondence – we will never sell or share your email address.

For further information contact:

Your local conservation district. See directory for contact information.
https://apps.sd.gov/ag60consdistdir/

OR

Resource Conservation and Forestry Division
523 E. Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501-3182
Telephone: 605.773.3623

Contest Rules

1. Any student attending high school (public, private, or home-school), grades 9-12, in South Dakota, is eligible to participate.
2. Entries in the conservation district contest must be accompanied by attached entry blank.
3. Two winners from each district contest will be eligible to participate in their respective Natural Resource Area contest.
4. Two winners from each of the seven area speech contests will be eligible to compete at the State Speech Contest.
5. District and area elimination contests must be held on or before the dates listed in the schedule of events (see back page). State Contest date is also listed.
6. East River Electric Power Cooperative, Inc. will pay scholarships to any college, university or accredited vocational technical school in the State of South Dakota chosen and attended full-time by the winners. Dual course credits are not eligible.
7. Scholarships will be held one year after graduation from high school or one year after release from armed forces.
8. Speeches are to be five minutes in length. Each judge will assess a five-point penalty for any speech less than 4 or more than 6 minutes.
9. Speech must be original, although quotes will be permitted; contestant must write his/her own speech.
10. Notes may be used, but any speech read in text will be disqualified.
11. Each speech should incorporate our natural resources – soil, water, animals, plants and air – as applicable to the theme of the speech.
12. Contestants may, but are not required to, introduce themselves. Score is not affected.
13. No person will be admitted or may leave the room while a contestant is speaking.
14. Speaker's time will be kept by two timekeepers using stopwatches. Time is to be announced at the conclusion of each speech.
15. Judges who have knowledge of speaking and/or conservation should be selected. Each judge will be given copies of score sheets, rules and regulations and other pertinent information of the contest.
16. Score sheets will be totaled, and winners announced by contest coordinator.
17. Speakers at district, area, and state contest will draw a number, be introduced and speak in order of the number drawn. After the winners have been selected, speakers will be introduced by name, school and the sponsoring conservation district.
18. All contestants in the state contest must submit one legible copy of their speech at the registration table.
19. Scholarships will be awarded to the top three place winners.
20. The first place winner in the state contest will not be eligible to participate in future contests. Other place winners can continue to participate in future contests until graduation or winning first place.
21. Contestants will not be allowed to submit a video of his or her speech in lieu of appearing in person at the local, area, or state contest.
22. No alternate date will be set for the State Finals except in the event of adverse weather conditions.