

2009 Western Planner Conference Highlights

Debbie Ehlers, WP Editor, Casper Wyoming

More than 150 planners, planning commissioners, engineers, and other officials attended the 2009 Western Planner Conference, September 8-11, in Spearfish, South Dakota. The South Dakota Planners Association (SDPA) hosted the conference, which drew participants from several states and offered many excellent sessions with 38.5 possible AICP CM Credits. Planners who attended every session could earn 14.5 AICP CM credits.

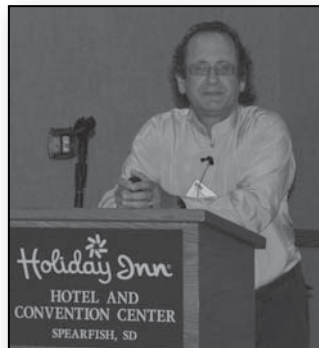
Conference Co-Chairs **Amber Vogt** and **Jayna Watson** worked very hard to pull off the top-notch conference. For the opening reception, Pennington County Planners set up a "Planners' Jeopardy" game, which tested participants' planning knowledge and AICP Exam information, along with other trivia. Several brave Western Planners participated, while others enjoyed watching the competition. Several members of the SDPA also helped make the conference a huge success. **Nance Orsbon** volunteered to help with the registration booth, which was a great help to everyone.

Planners were officially welcomed to the conference by Spearfish Mayor **Jerry Krambeck**, South Dakota Planners Association (SDPA) President **Neil Putnam**, and Western Planning Resources (WPR) President **Katie Guthrie**. Each shared their enthusiasm for the conference setting and the professional gathering with lots of perks. Many Western Planners look forward to seeing one another each conference to catch up and share "war stories."

Keynote Speaker **Rick Harrison**, an accomplished neighborhood designer who has spent his career exploring new technologies—challenging the status quo, and advocating for quality economical, ecological, sustainable, and profitable neighborhood solutions—shared some thought-provoking design theories and ideas. Much of his presentation centered around his recently released book, *Prefurbia: Reinventing the Suburbs: From Disdainable to Sustainable*. The Western Central Chapter (WCC) of the APA sponsored Rick's session, designed to have planners walk away with a variety of new methods and techniques that serve to create a more sustainable future.



Left to right: Jayna Watson, Neil Putnam, and Amber Vogt.



Rick Harrison

The conference offered nearly 30 interesting sessions on such topics as wind energy, ethics, transportation, census, land trusts, tax increment financing, water, and wastewater. For a complete session list and brief descriptions, please visit the 2009 Conference page of the WPR Web Site <www.westernplanner.org>.

Perks and highlights included a visit to the High Plains Western Heritage Center with entertainment by Butch Samuelson on the piano, mobile tours, and a Planners' Jam after the *Wyoming versus the World* softball game.

Prior to the annual Western Planner awards presentation at the High Plains Western Heritage Center, WP founder **Stan Steadman** gave an overview of the 30-year history of *The Western Planner*, complete with a video about the *Lester Award*. Stan described how a few dedicated individuals supported the journal in the beginning. He is pleased that the journal he started 30 years ago is still going strong and making a difference for planners in the West.

The beautiful Black Hills provided a pristine background for the *Wyoming Versus the World* annual softball game. As usual, the World Team played very well, but the Wyoming Team won by a point or two. After the game, a barbecue in the city park, and a quick trip to the Historic Fish Hatchery, several attendees headed to Flanagan's Irish Pub for the first annual Planners' Jam.

Stan Steadman and **Ben Orsbon** treated the audience to a rendition of "Ballad of the Buffalo Commons."



The Wyoming Softball Team

Several fun and interesting items were offered for silent auction to raise money for the WPR Endowment Fund. The fund, established in 2004, provides a permanent source of revenue for the future of the WP. Black Hills Gold earrings, several unique handmade items, and some western trinkets, donated by WPR Board members, went home with some of the attendees. Thanks to WPR Board Representative from Nebraska **Bob Kuzelka** for coordinating the silent auction.

The WPR Board **sincerely thanks** all the Conference Sponsors. **Platinum Sponsors** were Ulteig Engineering, the City of Spearfish, Western Central Chapter of APA, and the South Dakota Planners' Association. **Gold Sponsors** included businesses Wharf Resources, WLC Engineering, Kadrmass Lee & Jackson, Winnelson of Rapid City, and Orenco Systems. Additional **Gold Sponsors** were the South Dakota Planning Districts of South Eastern Council of Governments (SECOG),



The World Softball Team

Black Hills Council of Local Governments, Northeast Council of Governments, First District Association of Local Governments, and the Planning and Development District III.

Silver Sponsors were RDG Planning & Design, Homestake Mining Company, Consensus Inc., Fugro Horizons, FourFront Design, Great Plains Chapter American Society of Landscape Architects (GPALSA), MainStreet GIS, Schreier Engineering, Ayres Associates, Brosz Engineering, Stan Steadman, and Safeway. **Garnet Sponsors** were cetec Engineering, HDR, NJS Engineering, Siegel Planning Services, Ponderosa Land Surveys, Century 21 Spearfish-Belle Fourche Realty, and Arleth & Associates.

Thanks to everyone who helped make the conference a wonderful success!

Make plans now to join Western Planners in Vancouver, Washington, August 10-13, when the Planning Association of Washington (PAW) will host the 2010 conference. The 2010 Conference Committee has already put in many hours to make the 2010 Conference a memorable experience with lots of professional benefits. 🐼

Thanks from the SD Planners Association President

Neil Putnam, Mitchell, South Dakota

On behalf of the South Dakota Planners Association (SDPA), I want express our gratitude to Western Planning Resources (WPR) for the pleasure and opportunity to host the 2009 Western Planner Conference held in Spearfish, South Dakota. SDPA was very pleased with the turnout and the positive feedback. The timely and helpful material presented and the exceptional presenters, along with the networking opportunities resulted in a successful conference. There are many who deserve recognition for their contribution to the conference, and I cannot adequately list them all. However, I would be remiss in not mentioning the following.

The Black Hills planners did a superb job of arranging the accommodations and logistical details that provided comfort, leisure, and visual experiences for the attendees. Our local co-chairs—**Jayna Watson**, City of Spearfish, and **Amber Vogt**, Lawrence County—went the extra mile, and we appreciate

their leadership in conference planning and operation. **Lili Momeyer**, Custer County, was responsible for the delicious meals. The Pennington County Planners facilitated the “Planners’ Jeopardy,” which provided a relaxing yet competitive break from the sessions. The City of Spearfish and Lawrence County were generous supporters of this event, and we thank them for their hospitality and staff support.

I also want to thank **Sam Trebilcock**, SD PDO and SDPA Vice-President, and **Pepper McClenahan**, WCC PDO, for their assistance registering conference sessions for AICP Certification Maintenance. We were pleased to provide many AICP credits. The **Western Central Chapter of APA** provided a generous contribution and sponsorship of our keynote presenter, **Rick Harrison**. All our presenters did a fabulous job in providing insights, updates, techniques, and suggestions to enhance our professional activities. My sincere thanks go out to all who presented and for taking the time to interact with the attendees.

Additionally, we were fortunate for the sponsors and vendors that contributed to the conference. Please review the sponsor list in the Conference Highlights article. **Rick Laughlin**, of HDR Engineering in Sioux Falls, deserves a big thank you for his efforts in coordinating the sponsorships.

The WPR Board provided suggestions and feedback throughout the conference planning process and SDPA hopes their expectations were met. SDPA wishes WPR continued success. SDPA also wishes the best for a successful 2010 WPR Conference in Vancouver, Washington, to be hosted by the Planning Association of Washington.

Finally, I want to thank personally the SDPA conference committee and membership for their dedication and support of this endeavor. I am proud to be affiliated with such an ambitious bunch that is committed to sound land use planning and to providing professional development opportunities to promote the best in land use planning. SDPA was pleased to showcase our state. South Dakotans are very proud of our majestic and diverse landscape and our rich western history, so consider this your invitation to again “Head for the Hills” and explore the land of infinite variety, South Dakota. 🐼



Planners’ Jeopardy at the 2009 Conference Opening Reception.