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EDITORS/NEWS DIRECTORS: Please consider the following column from Gov. Dennis Daugaard. For an audio recording of the Governor's weekly column, visit news.sd.gov/media.aspx and click on "Audio" under "Governor Dennis Daugaard."

South Dakota Works

A column by Gov. Dennis Daugaard:

In South Dakota we have the third lowest unemployment rate in the nation. This is a source of pride, but it's also a double-edged sword. Because so few South Dakotans are unemployed, we have a shortage of qualified workers to fill job openings. We lack skilled workers in accounting, engineering, information technology, health care, manufacturing trades and elsewhere.

Workforce development is not a new challenge for South Dakota, and it's an issue that states across the nation face. In recent years, we have been working to identify the components of an effective workforce system and develop strategies to meet employer needs.

Thanks to the insights gained from conversations with business, education and government leaders at regional workforce summits, we concluded that a new job site software program was necessary. After careful research and evaluation of available technologies, the Department of Labor and Regulation launched a new virtual one-stop system, SDWORKS, last month.

Our old software was not as able to quantify workforce needs. The old system used job titles and only represented the employers who chose to use the system to list jobs. This hampered our ability to make informed policy decisions. The new software searches the internet to "scrape" job listings from other South Dakota employer sites. We are no longer limited to data listed only by employers who use our system. The system also details both job titles and needed skills, allowing any user easily to identify skill supply and demand information in real-time. We can now view, at any given time, everything from the most in-demand skills for job listings to the education level of current job seekers to occupational wage data.

This intuitive, state-of-the-art technology has created an exceptional customer service experience. By helping job seekers and businesses, it's a win-win.

[Southdakotaworks.org](https://southdakotaworks.org) was designed to be a job seeker's number one resource for finding the perfect career in South Dakota. The virtual one-stop system offers a more comprehensive list of job openings, a more robust resume builder and a better internal messaging system. The Department of Labor and Regulation also offers education opportunities and personalized job advisors.

SDWORKS is the state's largest and most comprehensive jobs board, so there is no need to reinvent the wheel at a local level. New tools allow employers to create job listings based on actual skills and experiences, competencies, and preferences. This allows job seekers and employers to make better matches using the same terminology. Qualified applicants can also be viewed and contacted faster in this system.

Filling workforce gaps is not an easy task, and it's not something that can be solved immediately. It's going to take continued dedication from people of all sectors over a long period of time. Still, the new SDWORKS program is a giant step forward. Whether you're an employer or a job seeker, give it a try, at [Southdakotaworks.org](https://southdakotaworks.org).