

THE STURGIS NEWS

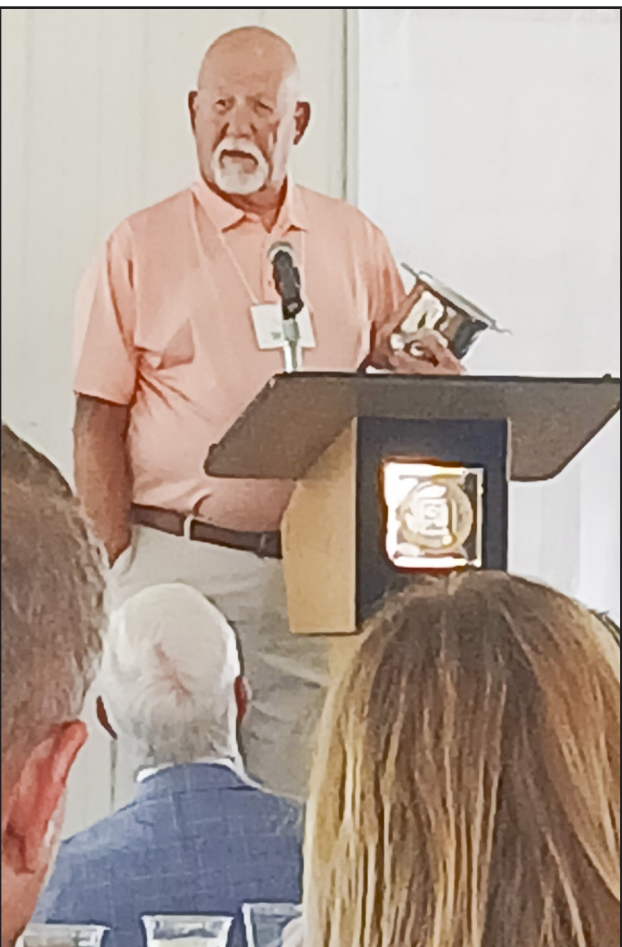
Delivering
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Sturgis
and
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Sturgis Is GRADD's "City Of The Year"



At a Wednesday, September 10, luncheon, the City of Sturgis was named the 2025 Green River Area Development Community of Year.

Since 2008, GRADD has recognized one of its seven counties or 27 cities as Community of the Year. This award honors a community that demonstrates collaboration and innovation to improve the quality of life for its residents.

Mayor Billy Adams accepted the silver loving cup on behalf of the both the city council and the community. The award was announced by Mayor Randy Greenwell whose community won the award last year. The City of Sturgis' win comes after the community struggled financially and in 2023 faced the possibility of dissolution.

In 2023, Sturgis faced what many believed was its end. Bankruptcy. Dissolution. Financial ruin. A city once known for its decades-old motorcycle rally was suddenly on the brink of disap-

pearing altogether. The mayor and city council had resigned. The word used to describe Sturgis was simple: lost.

But today, Sturgis is found again. And it stands as a powerful example of what can happen when people believe—not only in themselves, but in their community and what it can and should be.

With new leadership—Mayor Billy Adams, a newly formed city council, and Union County Judge Executive Adam O’Nan—Sturgis chose not to give in to despair. Instead, they rolled up their sleeves, put the past behind them, and got to work with one shared goal: saving their city.

Compliance with the Department of Local Government was one of the most urgent challenges. Sturgis was far from it. But through discipline and determination, the city’s leadership brought Sturgis back into full compliance—a milestone that not only restored credibility but gave the city a fresh start.

And compliance was not the finish line. It was just a checkpoint. From there, Sturgis turned its focus to rebuilding and growth. One of the community’s most pressing needs—improving water quality and affordability—is now being addressed in bold ways. Last year with the help of Judge Executive O’Nan, the city secured a \$2 million grant from the Delta Regional Authority to upgrade its wastewater treatment plant. In addition, another \$2 million-plus in grant funding is now dedicated to replacing and improving water lines, ensuring residents have access to reliable, high-quality water.

From the brink of dissolution to the path of revitalization, Sturgis has shown what true community leadership and resilience can achieve. For its courage, commitment, and vision for a stronger future, the City of Sturgis is the well-deserving recipient of the 2025 Community of the Year Award.



STURGIS MAYOR BILLY Adams is pictured above left as he accepted the Green River Area Development District award naming the City of Sturgis as the "Community of the Year" last Wednesday. In the bottom picture, left to right, are City Attorney Vickie Davis, council members Hunter Davis, John Deibler, Theresa Greer, Mayor Adams, City Clerk Sandra Germane, and council members Charles Garnett, Dennis Odom, and Allan Collins, who were in attendance for presentation of the award.

Sturgis Council Discusses Finances, Water Issues

The Sturgis City Council met in regular session on Wednesday, September 10 with Mayor Billy Adams presiding and all council members in attendance. Also present were City Clerk Sandra Germane and City Attorney Vickie Davis.

Prior to conducting the business meeting, Mayor Adams announced the City of Sturgis, earlier in the day, had been recognized by the "City of the Year" by the Green River Area Development District (GRADD).

Following the approval of minutes from two meetings held in August, council members spent just over an hour discussing several topics.

As the council was reviewing the monthly financial report, Mayor Adams discussed an invoice received from Berry, Kington, Utley which is preparing financial information for the city in order for audits to be prepared by the city's auditing firm. The mayor noted the invoice, in the amount of some \$27,000, resulted from a software issue with United Systems, who provides the accounting software for the city. According to Mayor Adams and the city clerk, when balances at the end of one fiscal year were forwarded to the beginning of the next fiscal year, numbers changed. It took several hours for that problem to be rectified. Mayor Adams told members he

intends to meet with United Systems representatives concerning the issue, the costs accrued by the city, and a \$5,000 invoice from United Systems for their part in making corrections to the software glitch.

A balance sheet for the city's accounts shows each with a positive balance; however, it is important to understand those balances fluctuate throughout the month as revenues are received and disbursements are expended.

Codes Enforcement Officer Greg Warmack told council members that three of six properties slated for demolition will be taken down at no cost to the city. According to Warmack, three property owners have agreed to pay for demolition of dilapidated structures. "That will save the city some money," Warmack said. No timeline was set for that demolition; however, Warmack stated he would continue to be in contact with those property owners.

The monthly report presented to the council from Union County Sheriff Jason Thomas showed sheriff's department personnel spent 46.5 on-call hours in the City of Sturgis. That time does not include patrol hours by sheriff's department officers. Mayor Adams said he is "very satisfied with police protection in the city. A local police department is not

sustainable," Mayor Adams said.

Water loss continues to be a problem for the council. According to the August report, the city's water loss for the month was just over 48%. Mayor Adams reported two leaks – one on 13th Street and the other at the intersection of Ninth Street and Main Street – have been repaired. Still, almost half of the water purchased by the city from the Union County Water District is unbillable because of leaks.

Mayor Adams reported city officials would be meeting with Tim Troutman on September 11. Troutman is a grant writer, and officials will discuss plans to seek grant funding to begin steps to reopen the city's water treatment plant. There is no up-front fee for Troutman's services, according to Mayor Adams. That meeting was held on September 11.

In emphasizing the importance of that funding, Mayor Adams said, "We have to have the water plant. This is vitally crucial for the citizens of Sturgis."

City officials are also making plans to begin replacement of water meters throughout the city. According to the mayor, officials will consider both radio read and manual read meters. "We feel we are losing money because of faulty meters," Mayor Adams said. He added,

"The city will likely have to borrow money to pay for meters, and a meter charge would be added to customers' water bills."

That brought a response from council member John Deibler, who voiced his opposition to adding any further charges to local water bills.

Water meter acquisition is only in the planning stages, and there are no immediate plans for any discussion of a meter charge.

The mayor also presented each council member with a revised personnel policy handbook and asked each member to review those changes so the handbook can be discussed at a future meeting. Mayor Adams noted he would like to see any policy changes take effect on January 1, 2026.

The mayor reported the restroom at the city have been vandalized, and as a result, the restrooms have been closed. A "porta-potty" has been placed at the park, and last Wednesday, council members voted keep the restrooms closed because of that vandalism.

The council also approved providing up to \$3,000 in funding to host a fireworks at the Union County Fairgrounds on Friday, July 3, 2026. According to Mayor Adams, he has been approached by several corporate sponsors who have indicated their willingness

to also help with funding the display, which is estimated at a cost of \$8,000. The council also emphasized it is important for city residents to know that fireworks displays within 200 feet of structures are illegal.

The monthly fire report showed members of the Sturgis Volunteer Fire Department responded to nine fire calls and 21 medical calls in August. Two new members – Ryan Acker and Jeff Paris – have been added to the department. Both are EMT certified. That gives the department a total of nine members who are either emergency medical technicians or emergency medical responders.

There department has a 25 member active roster, and members had six training hours as a department in August.

There will be a public hearing today (Wednesday, September 17) at 6:00 P.M. to hear comments concerning the proposed tax rate. That hearing will be held at the Sturgis Senior Citizen Center. At the conclusion of that hearing, members will hold a called meeting to approve the 2025 tax rate.

No further business came before the council, and the meeting adjourned at 5:15 P.M.

The next regular meeting of Sturgis City Council will be Wednesday, October 8, 4:00 P.M.