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## Retired Soil Health Specialist Jeff Hemenway Presented with Inaugural Friend of Soil Health Award

SOUTH DAKOTA SOIL HEALTH COALITION (SDSHC), Pierre, S.D. January 24, 2018-The South Dakota Soil Health Coalition (SDSHC) awarded its first ever South Dakota “Friend of Soil Health” award at their second Annual Meeting held January 17, 2018. The recipient was retired Soil Health Specialist Jeff Hemenway who was honored for his decades long work advocating for improvements in soil health and soil health management throughout the state of South Dakota. As the key organizer of the SDSHC’s first Soil Health School he established a means for a holistic learning experience that has proven to make a real impact on all those who take part. Hemenway’s soil health message has convinced countless producers of the need to change how we manage our greatest natural resource, the soil.



Jeff Hemenway “Friend of Soil Health” Award Recipient

The “Friend of Soil Health” award was designed to recognize those who have made a substantial impact in the areas of soil health education and advocacy. Hemenway’s over thirty plus years of experience with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service has made his work in this area meaningful beyond compare.

The Annual Meeting itself was held at Lake Area Technical Institute in Watertown and was extremely well attended with over 200 adult registrants and 250 student attendees. When asked about the meeting location SDSHC Coordinator Cindy Zenk said “Working with Lake Area Technical Institute to host our annual meeting provided an opportunity for the agriculture students to attend and learn about soil health from nationally recognized speakers and our membership to see the amazing school here in Watertown.” Bryan Jorgensen board member and producer from Ideal, SD was extremely impressed with attendance saying “The turnout was way beyond my expectations and the level of enthusiasm in the crowd was awesome. We have momentum and we must stay the course.”



An impressive crowd gathered for the first session Wednesday January 17

The events activities included: speakers Joe Breker of North Dakota and David Brandt of Central Ohio, presentations from local producers Bryan Jorgensen and Dan Forgey, as well as a rainfall simulator demonstration to end the day. Video of all presentations will be available at [www.sdsoilhealthcoalition.org](http://www.sdsoilhealthcoalition.org) in the coming weeks for those interested in viewing them.

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