

# Mike Rounds

## Governor of South Dakota



**M.** Michael Rounds was sworn in as South Dakota's 31st governor on January 7, 2003. Mike Rounds is committed to working with South Dakotans to make the state a better place to live, work, and raise a family. He believes South Dakota's children are its most valuable resource and that every child in the state should receive a quality education.

Governor Rounds is encouraging South Dakotans to make healthy choices that lead to longer, healthier lives, and he has initiated an effort in state government to help state employees make healthy choices. He is encouraging every South Dakotan to follow this lead. Working together with legislators, state employees and South Dakotans, Governor Rounds has already:

- Passed a balanced state budget that meets the needs of South Dakota without any tax increases;
- Reduced the structural deficit from \$28 million to \$20 million;
- Created the Homestake Underground Laboratory project;
- Reorganized the South Dakota Department of Education to better embrace the concepts of "No Child Left Behind;"
- Increased state aid for local public schools by more than \$10.2 million in ongoing funding, as well as an additional \$7.3 million in one-time funding;
- Increased state funding for public universities by more than \$7.5 million and for public technical institutes by more than \$1.6 million;
- Created a special program to give sales tax on food relief to individuals within 150 percent of the poverty level;
- Passed a law to regulate pharmacy benefits management companies;
- Passed several bills to provide new benefits to guardsmen and women, veterans and their families;
- Funded many important water projects so that South Dakotans have clean water;
- Created a commission to expedite compliance with the federal Indian Child Welfare Act;
- Designed the 2010 Initiative, a series of specific goals for economic growth and visitor spending in South Dakota;
- Expanded recreational opportunities in South Dakota, including public hunting and campground access and protection of natural resources; and,
- Initiated the Missouri River Summit, a meeting that brought stakeholders together to discuss the management of the Missouri River.

From 1990 to 2000, Republican Mike Rounds was elected to serve South Dakota for five terms in the state Senate and to represent District 24, including Pierre and the surrounding areas. In 1994, he was chosen by his peers to serve as Senate Majority Leader, a post he held for six years. As a senator, Rounds was a leader in:

- Balancing the budget every year;
- Overhauling the state aid to education formula and increasing the state's share of funding from less than 30 percent to more than 50 percent of the general education budget;
- Reducing property taxes by an average of 25 percent for homeowners, farmers, and ranchers;
- Repealing more than 500 rules and mandates affecting local school boards;
- Making major reforms in the South Dakota's workers' compensation plan that helped employers to hire more workers;
- Funding thousands of acres of public hunting land;
- Authorizing and funding the largest four-lane highway construction project since the Interstate Highway System was completed;

- Wiring schools to provide more educational opportunities for all South Dakota students; and
- Selling the State Cement Plant and creating a \$240 million trust from the proceeds so that the state receives a steady annual income of at least \$12 million instead of varying incomes dependent on the cement market.

Mike, the oldest of 11 children, was born in Huron, S.D., and is a lifelong resident of Pierre. He earned a Bachelors of Science degree in political science from South Dakota State University in Brookings and met his wife, Jean, of Lake Preston, while attending the university. The two were married in 1978 and have four children – Christopher and his wife, Lindsay, Brian, Carrie, and John.

Governor Rounds is part owner of Fischer, Rounds & Associates Inc., an insurance and real estate agency with offices in Pierre, Mitchell, Rapid City and Brandon. He has previously served as board president of the Oahe YMCA, vice president of the Home and School Association of St. Joseph School, president of the Pierre-Ft. Pierre Exchange Club and exalted ruler of the Pierre Elks Lodge. He is also a member of St. Peter and Paul Catholic Church of Pierre, the Knights of Columbus, and Ducks Unlimited.

The governor is a licensed pilot with multi-engine and instrument ratings. He enjoys playing racquetball with his buddies and hunting in his spare time with his sons and his lab, Brandy. In the summer, you'll often find him and his family boating and camping on the Missouri River.