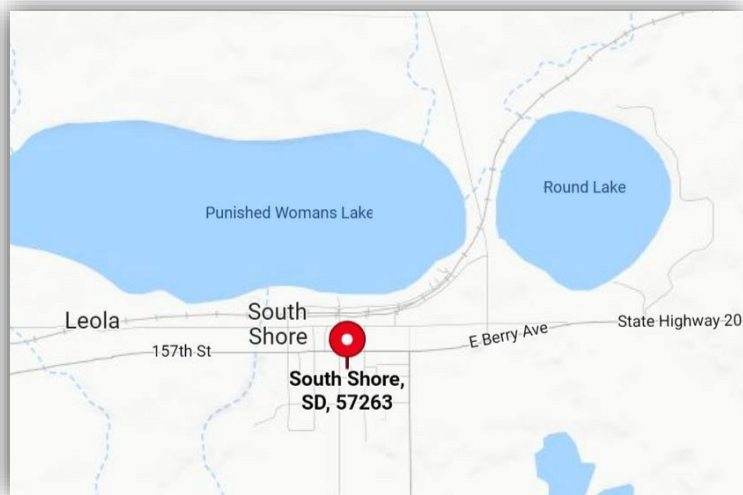


Town of South Shore, South Dakota

(Come take a break at Punished Woman's Lake)



Location: Located in Northeast South Dakota a few miles East of Interstate 29 on Highway 20

Population - 189 (2 Hispanic or Latino)

Median Household Income - \$42,500

Region and Funder - HHS/OCS 2022-2023

Author & Date: Hope Block, 11/30/2023

Services Provided – Complying with terms of Rural Development loans, training the new finance officer, preparing financial reports, developing personnel policies and procedures, updating municipal ordinances, coordinating a community outreach meeting to discuss water improvements and funding, facilitate construction for a water improvement project.

BACKGROUND

The Town of South Shore requested assistance from Midwest Assistance Program, Inc. (MAP) after experiencing staff turnover within the municipality. South Shore needed assistance in training the new finance officer. South Shore also needed assistance in beginning some necessary water infrastructure improvements and explaining to the residents the importance of having access to safe drinking water.

THE CHALLENGE

South Shore residents use three different water sources: municipal well water, rural water, and private wells/sand points. The municipal water system had deteriorated mainly due to funding issues caused by the fact that only a portion of the city residents use municipal water. The amount received for water payments was not enough to maintain the municipal water system. The town board was having a difficult time getting the community to agree to implement surcharges to begin the necessary water improvement project for South Shore to have the ability to continue to provide safe drinking water to its residents.

The governing body is responsible for providing residents access to safe drinking water.

THE APPROACH & SOLUTION

MAP Staff met with the new Finance Officer to discuss the role and duties of the position. MAP Staff suggested using the city ordinances as a resource in being transparent with the public regarding the rules and regulations that govern the position. This led to the realization that the city did not have updated ordinances. MAP Staff educated the Finance Officer in how to utilize the excel budget document provided by the South Dakota department of Legislative Audit for municipal use. MAP Staff also explained the ordinances and timeline outlined by South Dakota Codified Law that dictate the due dates of financial

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reports. This allowed the City of South Shore to be able to comply with the terms of their Rural Development loans by completing annual financial reports and budgets.

In addition to using South Dakota Codified Law, MAP Staff assisted the Finance Officer on using the sample ordinances on the South Dakota Municipal League website and guided the Finance Officer on what ordinances may be of importance for South Shore to adopt. MAP Staff also assisted in the creating of the job description for the finance officer to help with the delegation of duties.

MAP Staff then began meeting with the governing body to discuss the importance of having safe drinking water. MAP Staff began by conducting a source water assessment to identify and evaluate the potential water sources and the pros and cons of each. MAP Staff used the source water assessment at a public outreach meeting to assist in explaining to the public the reason for the need for the water project, how it will be funded, and the possible rate and surcharge restructure that could occur if the town expands its water infrastructure to supply the entire town with water. MAP Staff stressed the fact to the governing body that they are responsible for providing residents access to safe drinking water and assisted the board in explaining to the residents the reasons why the water improvements were necessary for the health and success of the community. MAP Staff proposed applying for funding that would be a 1.875% loan of \$449,000 with over a million dollars in grant money to help fund the project. The public was receptive to the proposal.

THE IMPACT

MAP Staff attended numerous governing board meetings, talked extensively, and listened to the needs of the community to find opportunities to put MAP's skills to work! Assistance provided to develop personnel policies for utility staff, update the municipal ordinances to comply with the South Dakota Codified Laws, and finance officer training will improve the financial and managerial sustainability of the system.

Facilitating water improvement projects will provide operational sustainability of the system and improve



the public health of South Shore’s residents ensuring that everyone has access to safe drinking water. South Shore’s governing body expresses immense satisfaction with the assistance provided by MAP Staff. MAP Staff will continue to assist South Shore with completing their lead service line inventory, and the future of their utility is looking bright!