

the tree-covered peaks of the Black Hills to the wide-open prairie, there are unique and unusual narratives that cannot be found anywhere else in the nation.

Many people around the country might be familiar with famous South Dakota faces like Mount Rushmore or Tom Brokaw, but there are a lot of things about South Dakota most Americans do not know. SDPB decided to start producing *Dakota Life* because they knew there were many compelling stories in the state that were not being told. The program gives viewers a chance to learn more about some of the lesser-known happenings going on in South Dakota.

Original producer Jim Sprecher explains, "As the son of a postman I learned long ago that there is a new story around every bend of the road in South Dakota and someone unique telling it. *Dakota Life* captures those stories and preserves them for future generations to enjoy. South Dakota Public Broadcasting has always taken the everyday stories of everyday people to heart and made them part of our legacy. Several years back we were looking for a new series idea that could showcase the variety of people and their stories found across the landscape of our state. Many of our staff noted the wide variety of people, places and things they encountered when on the road with other productions. *Dakota Life* was born."

During its six seasons on the air, *Dakota Life* has brought viewers hundreds of tales from every corner of South Dakota. "Jewel of the Black Hills" looks at the Homestake Opera House in Lead and how it is being restored to its original glory, after a devastating fire. Other episodes have included features about everything from SuFuDu, the renowned Sioux Falls drum line, to the founding of South Dakota landmark Wall Drug, to the ghost mines of the Black Hills.

The Emmy-nominated "Prairie Days" is a *Dakota Life* special featuring the many summer heritage festivals that take place in South Dakota. The two-part program takes viewers to events that are off the beaten track, including the Rosholt Threshing Bee, Tabor's Czech Days, and the rural Vermillion Dalesburg Midsommar Festival.

Dakota Life may focus on South Dakota, but it has themes that will resonate with people all over the United States. Music lovers will enjoy finding out about Grammy-winner Shawn Colvin's South Dakota connection, while history buffs can hear



from an archeologist who has uncovered evidence of the first humans to come to North America. Many of the features are especially appealing to those in rural areas. Viewers can get an update on the projects the South Dakota Agricultural Experiment stations are working on to enhance our quality of life through agriculture. They can learn about "aquaculture" and the art of fish farming. "Crop Care by Air" gives a plane's eye view of crop spraying techniques.

RFD-TV viewers who enjoy equine programming will also find items of interest on *Dakota Life*, whether it's in a segment that focuses on a breeder

whose miniature horses pull sleds and help children learn to ride or a story about wild horse adoption services.

Dakota Life takes story suggestions from all over the state. From these numerous ideas, producers find the stories that are unique, unexpected, interesting, and timeless. They also try to discover the stories and people that the commercial media tend to overlook.

Michelle Van Maanen hosts the first two seasons of *Dakota Life*. Larry Rohrer, who has long been the "voice" of SDPB through announcements and years with SDPB Radio, hosts the rest of the series.

"The thing I love most about *Dakota Life*," says Rohrer, "is that we explore remarkable, unusual stories that could be happening in your hometown."

Enjoy artist profiles, stories of historical preservation, reports from the great outdoors and much, much more. Tune in to *Dakota Life* on RFD-TV this fall and discover what makes South Dakota and its people so special.

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