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Hosting Hunters

Hunters are always inquiring about places to stay, guides, and information about South Dakota. Both rural and urban families can earn extra money and promote South Dakota by hosting these hunters.

South Dakotans interested in hosting hunters should know what is expected of hosts.

CONTACT POINTS

Hosts and hunters can contact each other through the Chamber of Commerce; the Division of Information and Education, Department of Game, Fish, and Parks, Pierre; the Division of Information and Education, Department of Highways, Pierre; and civic and community clubs.

Hosts should state their name, address, and available facilities. Include the number of rooms, number of single and double beds, bath facilities, meals furnished, available guide service, and other information of interest. This information in written form will be more effective and convenient to use. Hunters send their inquiries to these organizations whose job it is to know the communities and areas of interest.

The Department of Game, Fish and Parks and the Department of Highways compile lists of farmers who want to accommodate hunters during the different hunting seasons. These listings are sent to hunters inquiring about places to stay, facilities available, and other hunting information. This list will be more effective if South Dakotans interested in hosting hunters will supply information.

Placing classified ads in large city newspapers and advertising in local and nearby papers are other ways to publicize your facilities. To choose a paper to advertise in, you may want to know that 65% of the non-resident hunters came from the midwestern states in 1959. Most of them came from Wisconsin, followed by Minnesota, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas and Michigan. Twenty-four percent came from Missouri, Texas, Oklahoma, and Tennessee.

The annual state fair exhibit in the Game, Fish and Parks building on the state fairgrounds is another excellent direct contact with the public to answer individual questions and distribute literature. The hunters, as well as those desiring to host hunters, can get very good help at that time.

FACILITIES IMPORTANT TO HUNTERS

Facilities desired will vary among the individual guests but most of them will look for these things.

Single beds with good, firm mattresses.

By Kay Sharp Nelson, Associate Extension Specialist



Plenty of bedding and clean towels.

Modern toilet facilities. The family may have to sacrifice somewhat for the convenience of their guests. Anticipating the time they will leave for hunting and the time they return will make adjustments easier for the family.

A "mud room." Provide a place for hunters to remove their muddy boots and dirty clothes.

Meals. Tell hunters the number of meals to be served and when they are to be served. Hunters often desire two meals a day and a box or sack lunch at noon. Several experienced hosts say that the family meals are considered something special. Nourishing home cooking is greatly appreciated.

Some favorites are home-baked bread and desserts and pheasant sandwiches. Freezer meals make them easier to prepare. Friendly visits around the family table are one of the outstanding pleasures of these guests. Many comment on South Dakota's western hospitality and what it means to them.

Mail. An added service would be to pick up and mail letters.

Transportation. Occasionally hunters, especially those that fly in, need some type of transportation to get to hunting areas, to go on errands, or for nearby sightseeing tours.

Care of Game. Provide a means for hunters to care for game. You may have to assist in cleaning, packaging, and freezing game to take home. If the hunter prefers to do this himself, have equipment and materials available. It may be necessary to charge a small fee for this service.

Locker plant services. Know available services and costs and inform those interested.

Game recipes. Send some favorite game recipes home with your guests. Show pheasant hunters different uses for pheasant feathers to add more interest and value to their catch.

The hunter's dog. Consult the dog's owner as to housing and diet. Much time, patience, and attention have been given these pets, so it is wise to keep this in mind and treat them accordingly.

Conservationists encourage more use of dogs to find wounded game thus reducing cripple losses. The hunter's success is also often greater and more enjoyable.

The hunter with a trailer. A place to park a trailer should have electricity and water available. For such hunters some of the above facilities and services would not be necessary.

Entertainment. Inform the hunters of the possibilities of evening entertainment with the family or in the community. Learn of their interests and offer to include them in your activities.

Other Services. Other goods or services needed may include ammunition, licenses, veterinarian, gunsmith, or other hunting equipment.

HUNTING FACTS

The average hunting party size is four. The average nonresident hunts for 5 days. A large percentage of nonresident hunters return year after year to hunt. It has been reported that 74% of the hunters who have hosts average a take home bag of three birds greater than those hunters who experienced difficulties in finding areas to hunt. This difference may be attributed to nonresidents who make prior arrangements to hunt and stay on private lands or who hunted on leased lands. It can be expected that this figure will continue to grow in the future.

Estimates are that 65% of the nonresident hunters come to South Dakota because of publicity through commercial interests, national sports writers, and outdoor magazines. This publicity is creating greater interest and encouraging more hunters to come to South Dakota.

We can help these people enjoy our state more and

return the following year by becoming familiar with our hunting areas and by giving them directions as to where to hunt. No doubt less posting and more areas permitting hunting would be the principle suggestions offered for improvement of hunting as already 26% of the hunters have difficulty in locating a place to hunt.

Farmers might consider providing guide service for hunters.

License money has been helping to purchase parcels of land labeled "Public Shooting Areas." These areas provide some of the best upland and big game cover in the state and are open to anyone who takes the time to find out where they are located. A publication, "Guides to Public Shooting Areas," is available from wardens' district game offices or the Game, Fish and Parks Department at Pierre. This guide also includes location of stores, cafes, locker plants, and lodging facilities.

The nonresident hunter spent an average of about \$200 during the 1959 hunting season. Present costs are probably close to \$225. In 1962 there were approximately 56,000 nonresident pheasant hunters who spent about \$12½ million within the state.

Hosting our hunters can be a profitable business for the family as well as the community. Many of the facilities and the services rendered the hunter are paid back in more ways than money. Lasting friendships are often made during these visits.

There are many maps, descriptive brochures, and pictures that can be made available to the hunters. The enthusiasm of these people is some of the best publicity South Dakota can find.

Catering to the public requires high standards of cleanliness, neatness, and conduct. Operating public establishments entails a legal liability that should be given serious attention. The operator should see both his lawyer and insurance agent on these matters.

Take inventory of your facilities on your farm and in your home. Discuss this with your family and decide how you, too, can cash in on recreation as a business and at the same time contribute toward South Dakota's second ranking industry—outdoor recreation.