



2025 NACo

# Western Interstate Region | May 21-23 Conference

Pennington County, S.D.



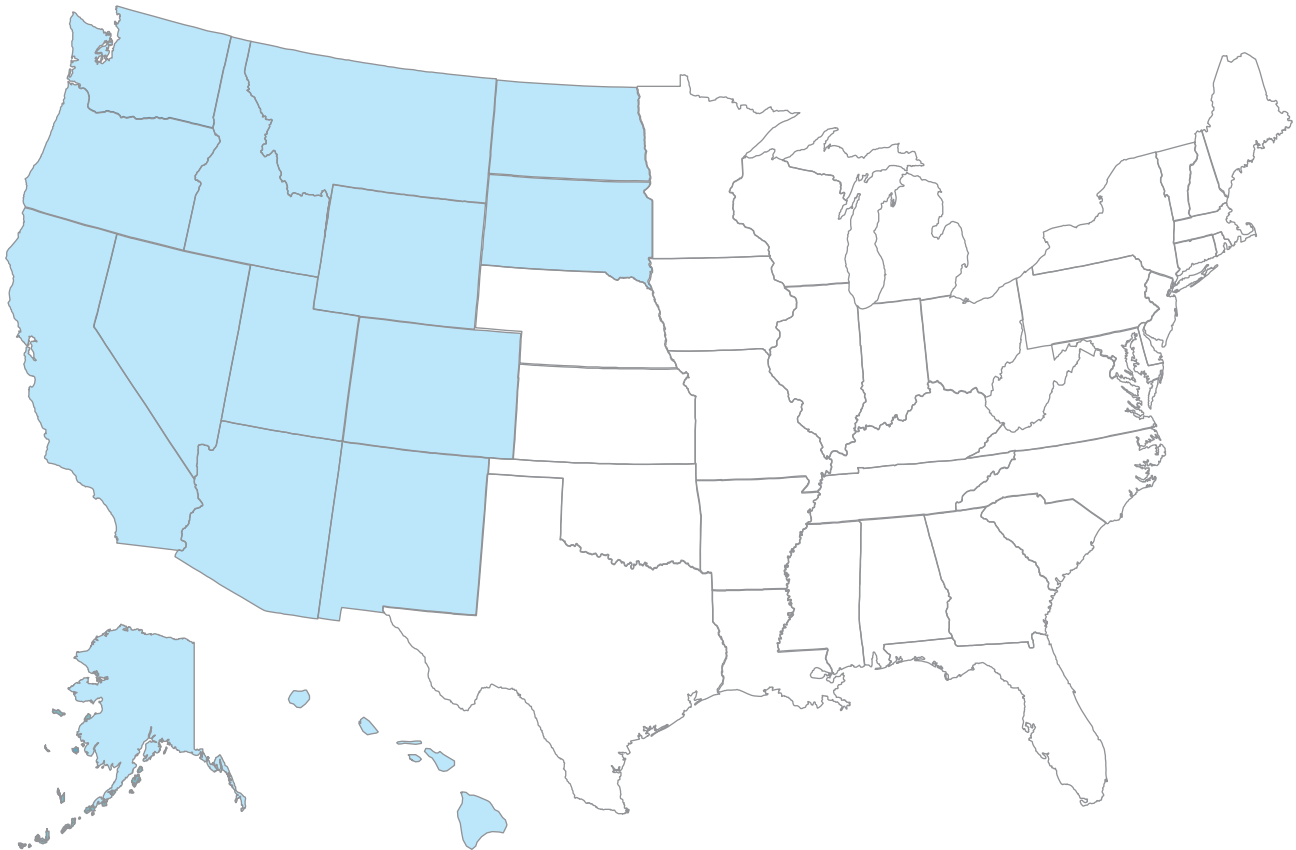
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# About WIR

***The Western Interstate Region (WIR) advocates for public policy issues affecting counties in the West.***

WIR is affiliated with the National Association of Counties and is dedicated to the promotion of Western interests within NACo. These interests include public land issues (use and conservation), community stability and economic development, and the promotion of the traditional Western way of life. Its membership consists of fifteen Western states (Alaska, Hawaii, Wash., Ore., Calif., Idaho, Nev., Ariz., Mont., Wyo., Colo., N.M., Utah, N.D., and S.D. as probationary members), with membership funded through individual state associations.





# Welcome Notes

## Welcome to WIR and Pennington County, S.D.!



**Hon. John Peters**

Supervisor  
Mono County, Calif.  
WIR First Vice-President

On behalf of the WIR Executive team, Board of Directors and staff, I would like to welcome you to the WIR Conference in Pennington County, South Dakota. This year's conference offers many opportunities for you to connect with colleagues, source and share resources and be provided with updates on the issues important to WIR and the Western way of life. I hope you will take time to explore the vast array of activities our host county and state have to offer, including monuments, dramatic landscapes and cultural resources.



**Hon. Gary Drewes**

Commissioner  
Pennington County, S.D.

The Rushmore State welcomes you to the WIR Conference being hosted in Pennington County, South Dakota, the home of Mount Rushmore. We are proud of the great faces and great places you will have an opportunity to visit as you join with colleagues discussing issues of shared importance. The agenda includes discussions of many challenges we face as Western counties. It is continuing education like this conference that brings new ideas to help you govern at the highest level. Your service is appreciated, and I look forward to visiting with you soon.



# Conference Info



The 2025 WIR Conference will take place at the Monument Convention Center in Pennington County, South Dakota. All sessions and events will take place on the first or second floor of the convention center, unless otherwise noted.

## Registration

The conference registration desk is located directly inside the East Concourse of the Monument Convention Center, which is down the Grand Concourse hallway from the Main Lobby. It will be open during the following hours:

**Tuesday** | 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

**Wednesday** | 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

**Thursday** | 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

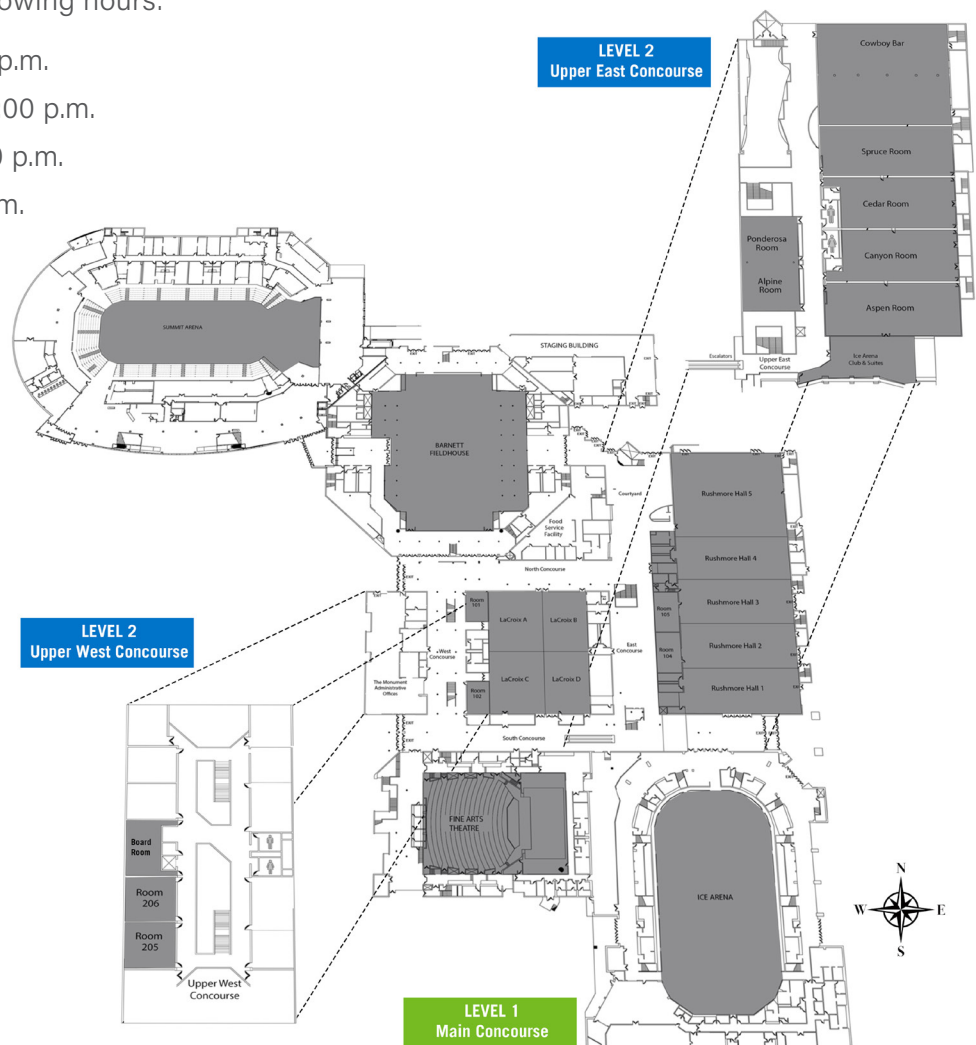
**Friday** | 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

## Wi-Fi

To access the Free Wi-Fi, choose “The Monument-Guest” in your available networks.

## Badges

All conference attendees must register and wear their badges at all times to gain admission to official conference sessions and social events.









# Program Schedule



## Tuesday | May 20

**8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.**

*East Concourse*

### **Pre-Conference Registration**

Stop by registration to grab your conference badge if you plan to join the pre-conference mobile tour.

**12:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.**

*South Concourse*

### **Pre-Conference Offsite Mobile Tour: Badlands National Park**

**This tour will load and depart from the South Concourse entrance to the convention center. Buses will begin loading at 11:45 a.m. and depart at 12:00 p.m.**

Join us for an immersive mobile tour through the breathtaking landscapes of Badlands National Park, where dramatic rock formations, sprawling prairies and the nation's largest undistributed grass prairie converge. This guided journey will showcase not only the region's stunning natural beauty, but also the powerful collaboration between local leaders and federal partners dedicated to preserving and enhancing these lands.

This mobile tour is open to all attendees, and we anticipate being able to accommodate everyone. However, space is available on a first-come, first-serve basis, so we encourage you to arrive early to secure your spot. Boxed lunches will be provided.

**6:00 p.m.**

### **Dinner on Your Own**

Take time to explore the local flavors of Pennington County and enjoy dinner at your leisure. Whether you prefer a casual bite or a sit-down experience, the region offers a variety of dining options showcasing South Dakota's hospitality and cuisine.



*Scan here to see local dining options.*



## Wednesday | May 21

**8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.**

*East Concourse*

### **Registration & Event Sponsor Resource Fair**

Pick up your conference badge and visit the sponsor exhibit tables to discover a wide range of innovative products, services and county resources.

**8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.**

*Rushmore 1 & 2*

### **WIR Board of Directors Meeting**

The WIR Board of Directors will convene to hear a federal policy update, review the region's finances and consider any necessary actions related to ongoing initiatives and events. The Board includes county officials from across the West, as well as executive directors of western state associations of counties, who serve as ex officio members. This meeting provides an opportunity for WIR leadership to collaborate on key issues affecting public lands counties and guide the organization's strategic direction. All WIR Board members and other interested individuals are encouraged to attend.

**11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.**

### **Lunch on Your Own**

#### **Concurrent Mobile Tours**

**These tours are first-come, first-serve, with capacity limitations for each based on communication with our hosts. Thank you for your understanding. All buses will begin loading at 1:15 p.m. and depart at 1:30 p.m.**

**1:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.**

*South Concourse*

### **Mobile Tour 1: Pennington County Care Campus**

Attendees will tour the Pennington County Care Campus to learn about a partnership-driven model that expands access to mental health and crisis services through coordinated care across county agencies, community organizations, and private partners. The visit includes the Pennington County Jail and the IGNITE initiative, which supports inmate rehabilitation through education and life skills. The tour will highlight how culturally responsive programming – especially for Native American populations – is integrated into both jail and community-based services, offering a replicable model for counties seeking collaborative, culturally-informed behavioral health solutions.

**1:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.**

*South Concourse*

### **Mobile Tour 2: Agriculture Research and Production Farm**

Attendees will travel to the South Dakota State University West River Research Farm to gain hands-on experience into cutting-edge research, practices and partnerships shaping the future of Western agriculture. This mobile tour will feature on-the-ground demonstrations of drought-resilient crops, conservation techniques and precision agriculture technologies, followed by a panel discussion with agriculture industry leaders on building collaborative solutions to support farmers and ranchers across the West.

**1:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.**

*South Concourse*

### **Mobile Tour 3: Custer State Park**

Join us for a tour of Custer State Park to learn about cooperative state and local land management practices. This tour will cover topics such as species management, wildland fire mitigation, response and recovery, trail maintenance and balancing the multiple uses of public lands. Attendees will be accompanied throughout the tour by Custer State Park staff, who will provide valuable insights into recent challenges and opportunities the park has encountered.

**6:30 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.**

*Diamond Spur  
Events Center  
Mount Rushmore  
National Memorial*

### **NACo Board of Directors and WIR Board of Directors Reception (invitation only)**

Reception is open to the WIR Board and NACo Board members. **Buses will board from the Monument Convention Center, South Concourse entrance at 6:00 P.M. and depart promptly at 6:15 P.M.** Buses will return from Mt. Rushmore and drop off at the Monument Convention Center, South Concourse entrance by 10:00 p.m.

## Thursday | May 22

**8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.**

*East Concourse*

### **Registration and Event Sponsor Resource Fair**

Pick up your conference badge and visit the sponsor exhibit tables to discover a wide range of innovative products, services and county resources.

**8:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.**

*Rushmore 1 & 2*

### **General Session**

All conference attendees are invited to join the general session, featuring keynotes from federal and state officials. Topics will include public land management, intergovernmental cooperation, and energy and housing policy in the West.

### **Concurrent Workshops**

**10:15 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.**

*LaCroix B*

### **Energy in the West**

This workshop explores the evolving energy landscape across Western states, examining the intersection of traditional and renewable energy development with public lands management. Speakers will address the opportunities and challenges facing counties as we navigate energy transitions while balancing economic development, environmental stewardship and community needs.

**10:15 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.**

*LaCroix D*

### **NEPA 101 for County Commissioners**

During this introductory training session, provided by the Shipley Group, county leaders seeking a solid foundation of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and its role in local governance will receive an overview of NEPA. The session will provide an accessible overview of NEPA's history, purpose and key procedural requirements, along with practical guidance on how counties can effectively engage in the NEPA process and why consistent training in NEPA can produce positive outcomes. Considering recent regulatory developments, including the withdrawal of the CEQ regulations, the session will address the current landscape of NEPA and what shifting federal guidance means for counties on the ground.



**10:15 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.**

*Room 205*

### **NACo Board Orientation**

New NACo Board members will receive comprehensive orientation on their roles, responsibilities and the organization's strategic priorities.

**12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.**

*Rushmore 1 & 2*

### **All-Conference Luncheon**

## **Concurrent Workshops**

**1:45 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.**

*LaCroix B*

### **Addressing Housing Challenges Utilizing Public Lands**

This session examines innovative approaches for unlocking the potential of public lands to help solve the housing affordability crisis facing Western communities. Panelists will discuss policy tools, real-world case studies and best practices for developing workforce and affordable housing solutions – while successfully navigating the challenges of federal land use regulations. Discover how local, state and federal partnerships are working together to create housing solutions that balance community needs with responsible land stewardship.

**1:45 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.**

*LaCroix D*

### **NEPA 201: Cross-Jurisdictional Co-Learning: If You Do NEPA Together, You Should Learn NEPA Together**

Join us for a discussion on the benefits of cross-jurisdictional NEPA training programs as a catalyst for stronger collaboration and compliance across state and county levels. Drawing on firsthand experience from recent training efforts with counties in Wyoming, this panel will explore how intentional NEPA co-learning strengthens inter-agency partnerships, builds relationships and improves environmental review processes. Panelists will share behind-the-scenes insights from the training sessions, highlight stories of success and discuss the long-term impacts on NEPA compliance and regional project management.

**1:45 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.**

*Aspen*

**NACo Board of Directors Meeting**

The NACo Board of Directors will meet to discuss the association's strategic priorities and guide its policy direction on behalf of America's 3,069 counties. Board members will receive updates on federal advocacy, programs and initiatives.

**4:15 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.**

*Alpine*

**Public Lands Trust Fund Trustees Meeting  
(Open only to trustees)**

This meeting will include a review of NACo's Public Lands Trust Fund, which helps support the PILT Fly-In and county involvement in national organizations focused on public lands policy. Participation is limited to designated trustees.

**6:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.**

*Crazy Horse Memorial*

**All Conference Dinner & Reception**

Join fellow conference attendees for an evening of networking and celebration at the iconic Crazy Horse Memorial. This special event offers a unique opportunity to experience Native American culture while connecting with colleagues from across the Western region in one of South Dakota's most significant cultural landmarks.

**Buses will load at 5:30 p.m. at the South Concourse entrance and depart at 6:00 p.m. Buses will start to load at 8:45 p.m. for the return trip to the Monument Convention Center.**

## Friday | May 23

**8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.**

*East Concourse*

### **Registration**

Stop by to ask NACo staff a question or recycle your conference badge as you head out of town.

**8:00 a.m. - 8:45 a.m.**

*Rushmore 1 & 2*

### **WIR Annual Business Meeting**

WIR members will participate in the annual business meeting to elect officers, review organizational priorities, consider changes to the WIR bylaws and approve the upcoming year's agenda for the Western Interstate Region.

**9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.**

*LaCroix D*

### **Intergovernmental Forum on Public Lands**

This Forest Management 101 Intergovernmental Forum, presented by the National Center for Public Lands Counties, offers county officials and local stakeholders a foundational overview of the key issues, partnerships and policy tools shaping forest management and wildfire preparedness in the Black Hills region. Designed for both those new to these topics or those seeking to strengthen their knowledge, this forum brings together seasoned perspectives from Pennington County, the South Dakota State Senate, the state foresters' offices of South Dakota and Wyoming, South Dakota Wildland Fire and the timber industry.

**11:30 a.m.**

### **Conference Concludes**

Thank you for joining us!



# SAVE THE DATES

Upcoming NACo Conferences

## 2025 NACo Annual Conference & Exposition

July 11-14

City and County of Philadelphia, Pa.



## 2025 NACo Fall Board of Directors Meeting

December 4-6

Wise County, Texas



## 2026 NACo Legislative Conference

February 21-24

Washington, D.C.



## 2026 Western Interstate Region Conference

May 5-8

Maui County, Hawai'i



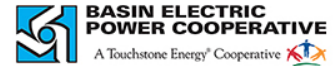
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