

Flavor - Recipes
 Home Journal
 KOTA Web Cam
 SD Legislature
 Livestock Auction
 Stock Show
 SturgisRallyDaily.com
 Sturgis Street Blog
 Snow Report

COMMUNITY
 Newspapers in Ed
 In Good Company
 Calendar
 Meetings
 Our Towns -
 Relocation Guide
 Discussion Forum

CLASSIFIEDS
 Transportation
 Employment
 Real Estate
 Merchandise
 Personals
 Announcements
 Top Services

Robert
Told I are was closed.
b - Aug 3/25 buried dead
deep - number of groups
in SD

John Berheim, South Dakota's Homeland Security director, said people who cross U.S. borders from C Mexico - or come in by boat - could bring in deadly weapons that may go undetected.

"We have folks sneaking in there from other countries," Berheim said. "We can't catch full-grown people shoulder-fired missiles are smaller than that. It could take down a plane easily. It's not an impossibility.

A major characteristic of a rural state such as South Dakota is its role in agriculture and the food supply officials say could be the target of terrorists who cross U.S. borders.

Berheim said introduction of diseases into the agriculture industry is a concern.

"Whether it is cattle production, or things associated with cattle, like big dairy farms and turkey farms we raise these animals or birds and sell them for food, we need to look at all these things," he said. "Terrorists decide at some point to introduce some sort of disease."

He said this sort of terrorist act might seem subtle "because it wouldn't give them the big splash they are looking for. But it would have a big impact on South Dakota's economy."

South Dakota before and after 9/11

Home-grown terrorism landed on Grode's agenda more than a decade ago with the Oklahoma City bombing.

"The job I had was to contact all of the militia leaders and all the anti-government people in North and South Dakota and try to convince them to work with us and stop the next bombing, because why should we let our own people?" Grode said.

Timothy McVeigh, convicted of the bombing, had links to South Dakota.

"We call Highway 212 the Timothy McVeigh memorial highway because he would drive it all the time between militia compounds in eastern Montana to Tigerton Dells, Wis., which is the Posse Comitatus homeland base, referring to the white supremacist group. "He was always going back and forth, and that's why he used a phony ID from Redfield, S.D."

Grode said McVeigh merely drove through the town, picked out an address and got a driver's license.

After McVeigh was executed in June of 2001 "we were kind of back to normal" - until Sept. 11.

"Once that happened, the priorities of the FBI everywhere became, catch the terrorists and stop the next one," Grode said.

Kevin Thom, director of the South Dakota Division of Criminal Investigation, said the agency is more on intelligence gathering and analysis than it was before 9/11.

And one of the most dramatic changes has been the relationship between DCI and the private sector.

"We interact more with utilities, medical facilities, financial institutions and agriculture industry because of their vulnerabilities," he said. "We've raised our level of awareness of each other."

In the forensics area, DCI analysts whose usual duties include investigation of Internet child pornography and computer-related crimes are available for analysis on terrorism-related activity as well, Thom said.

Regional training exercises involving law enforcement, first responders and public-health officials base on emergencies and disasters have been going on for years. But since 9/11, some are focused on Homeland Security-type threats.

One exercise earlier this year involved the shooting down of a civilian airliner with a shoulder-mounted missile years ago at Mount Rushmore there was a "dirty-bomb" exercise scenario - the first collaboration of its kind between the National Park Service and local jurisdictions.

What everyday people can do

Grode and Berheim say that the last thing they want is for people to be fearful. That's not warranted, they said.

"You hate to have citizens get scared," Grode said.

But people are paying attention. And this is one of those times when a state like South Dakota with a small population...