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# PRESS RELEASE

## Swiftel Center awarded the George S. Mickelson Great Service Award at the South Dakota Governor's Conference on Tourism

*Awarded by South Dakota Governor Kristi Noem and the South Dakota Department of Tourism*



Brookings, S.D. (01/22/2019) – Midwest hospitality at its best; that's the philosophy at the Swiftel Center. That motto has rung true as the Swiftel Center has been awarded the 2018 George S. Mickelson Great Service Award. The award was presented to members of the Swiftel Center staff by South Dakota Governor Kristi Noem and South Dakota Secretary of Tourism Jim Hagen at the 2019 Governor's Conference on Tourism.

The George S. Mickelson Award was presented to members of the Swiftel Center staff at the 2019 South Dakota Governor's Conference on Tourism.

PHOTO (from left to right): South Dakota Governor Kristi Noem; Ashley Biggar, Swiftel Center Event Manager; Kristina Lankow, Swiftel Center Sales & Marketing Manager; and South Dakota Secretary of Tourism Jim Hagen.

"The Swiftel Center is taking a unique look at motivating and educating their staff to provide high levels of customer service," said Governor Kristi Noem.

"Whether a full-time or part-time employee, they are demonstrating what people-first service looks like and are seeing the benefits of their excellence."

Team members– including all Swiftel Center full-time and part time staff – are encouraged to continuously consider the four basic needs of any guest: to feel welcome, to feel important, to be

understood, and to be safe and comfortable. The staff at the Swiftel Center strives to provide excellence customer service that upholds these four needs.

“We are honored to be recognized by the Governor of South Dakota for the George S. Mickelson Great Service Award,” said Tom Richter, Executive Director, Swiftel Center. “The Swiftel Center Team takes great pride in consistently putting service first for our customers and patrons.”

At the Swiftel Center, each department hosts an annual training to introduce part-time staff to new hospitality materials and review policies and procedures. The Swiftel Center also provides yearly training to motivate and teach new customer service skills.

“Every staff member can provide a moment of impact for our clients, whether it is opening a door, setting up a table, serving a meal, or just offering a friendly welcome,” said Kristina Lankow, Sales & Marketing Manager, Swiftel Center. “We always need to be on top of our game. The George S. Mickelson Great Service Award is a major honor for our facility and will motivate us to continuously demonstrate our commitment to our guests to always be our best.”

To collect feedback from customers, patrons, guests and clients, the Swiftel Center sends a client satisfaction survey. Employee Appreciation Parties provide an opportunity to recognize staff achievements, while “high-five” cards are used to let staff members know when they are doing an awesome job.

"We are committed to provide the very best experience for every guest who enters our doors," said Ashley Biggar, Event Manager. "Our team is nothing short of amazing. Feedback from both our staff and guests is not only heard but is used to take action to make our events better and better. We look forward to utilizing our current training to continue to provide 'Midwest Hospitality at its Best'."

To view the official South Dakota Department of Tourism press release and download high-resolution images, visit [www.travelsouthdakota.com/newsroom/press-releases/tourism-news-releases/Tourism-Industry-Professionals-Honored-by-Governor-Noem](http://www.travelsouthdakota.com/newsroom/press-releases/tourism-news-releases/Tourism-Industry-Professionals-Honored-by-Governor-Noem).

#### **GEORGE S. MICKELSON GREAT SERVICE AWARD**

The George S. Mickelson Great Service Award honors businesses or organizations that have done an exemplary job of exceeding visitors’ expectations in customer service. It marks the culmination of a yearly hospitality program that involves hospitality training, customer comment cards, an employee recognition program, and an application for the Great Service Star designation.

To learn more about the award and view a list of recipients, visit <https://sdvisit.com/tourism-awards/2017-george-s-mickelson-great-service-awards>.

For more information on the Swiftel Center, visit [www.swiftelcenter.com](http://www.swiftelcenter.com), call (605) 692-7539 or follow us at [www.facebook.com/swiftelcenter](http://www.facebook.com/swiftelcenter).



**About the Swiftel Center**

The Swiftel Center is a gathering place for cultural, recreational and educational events. With a 30,000 square foot arena, state-of-the-art banquet rooms, conference rooms and in-house catering, the Swiftel Center is an international award-winning venue of excellence and one of South Dakota's premiere event centers.

**About VenuWorks**

VenuWorks provides customized management and consulting solutions for arenas, stadiums, theatres and convention centers throughout the country with services that include operations, catering, and concessions along with the booking and marketing of sports and entertainment events.

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