



## Invitational hunt bags big business

BY MARK WATSON  
*Black Hills Pioneer*

PIERRE — People attending Gov. Mike Rounds' Invitational Pheasant Hunt bagged the birds, but the state of South Dakota bagged at least two businesses whose owners pledged they would move to the state.

The annual pheasant hunt, held Friday and Saturday in Pierre attracted between 700-800 people and representatives from approximately 20 firms prospecting South Dakota for business capabilities.

"We're not afraid of people who want to make a profit," said Gov. Mike Rounds. "We feel that, which profit gets invested back into the communities, and gets invested into more employees and gives more opportunities for our young people to stay in South Dakota."

Many times, Rounds said, business owners' profits are

larger than they expect which in turn allows their companies to grow.

"In South Dakota we've said every job is important. A lot of the individuals here my think they are only looking at 15 to 30 jobs per business, but they grow," Rounds said. "Once they get in there, where they once had 30 now they have 60. We have one here in Pierre where two years ago they said 'If we come it will be only 30 jobs.' Right now they provide more than 70 jobs."

The governor said that one of the groups, after tonight, will be coming to an East River community. A second business will be moving to Spearfish in 2010.

Dennis Costello, owner of Environmental Air Systems Inc. said he plans to break ground on Industrial Park property in the spring or summer of

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Ken Hines, president and CEO of Lehman Trikes, leads a group into the field Saturday during the Governor's Pheasant Hunt. *Pioneer* photo by Mark Watson

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2010. Initially he plans to employ approximately 30 people and within three years he plans to employ more than 100 recruiting skilled workers from local colleges.

The pheasant hunt is one of three annual events that allow business owners to serve as ambassadors to those looking to move into the state.

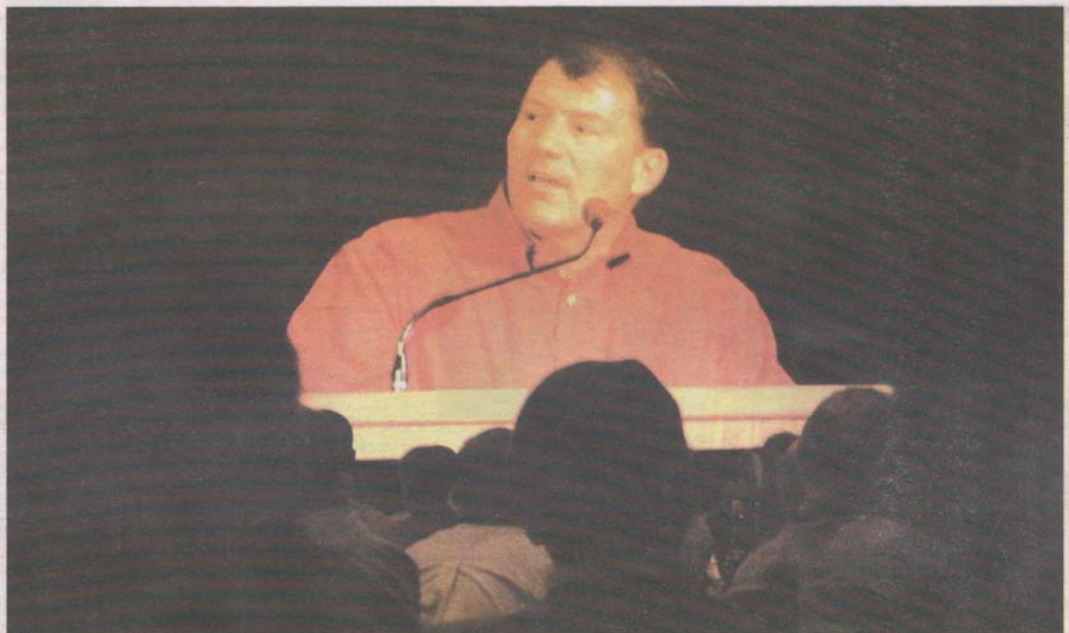
Ken Hines, president and CEO of Lehman Trikes in Spearfish is one of those ambassadors.

"I think it is one of the things that the state does exceptionally well, between the Buffalo Roundup and the pheasant hunt, it really highlights to outsiders what the state is all about, the people are friendly and the state is gorgeous," Hines said. "It is one of the things that helped convince Lehman to stay."

Hines met Costello during the Buffalo Roundup and discussed the capabilities of the workforce and the work ethic.

"I promised to sit down with him when he comes to town to try to coordinate work forces," he said.

Rounds added that many times the guests of the pheasant hunts become strong proponents to attracting new companies.



Attendees of the 2009 Governor's Invitational Pheasant Hunt listen to Gov. Mike Rounds at a Friday night banquet. The annual hunt is an economic development tool for the state. *Pioneer* photo by Mark Watson

"They come in concerned and have questions," Rounds said. "They are here and talk to the people, they like what they see

and say 'this is where I want my family to be.'

"Every year I come in and look at the new friends. Many

of them become business owners here in South Dakota, but one or two years later ... they become an ambassador," he

added. "They are so pleased to come in and be one of the people selling our state to another guest."