



*“It was my understanding in talking with John that he envisioned the endowment fund being used for projects that benefited the greatest number of people possible”, said Jim Lehi.*

## John Deppe’s Lower James RC&D Memorial Fund

The Lower James (LJ) RC&D Council has a recurrent history of providing mini-grants to projects that are natural resource and community sustaining within their seven county area: **Aurora, Davison, Hanson, Hutchinson, Jerauld, Sanborn & Yankton Counties.** From 1992 through 2009, with RC&D Coordinator **John Deppe’s** leadership, 33 mini-grants worth \$29,400 were distributed to projects within the council area. dispersed Monies were raised by the council through grant administration fees & fundraising.

In November 2006, an endowment fund project was started by the LJ RC&D Council, setting aside a minimum of \$500/yr. as an investment. Only interest income from the fund project would be used to provide mini-grants for local projects in the area served by the LJ RC&D Council.

With **Mr. Deppe’s** guidance, the LJ RC&D Council placed their endowment fund project into an endowment fund agreement with the South Dakota Community Foundation on December 8, 2008 to legally establish the “**LJ RC&D Council Fund**”, with the Foundation serving as the fund manager.

### What was it like to work with John on a project?



*John Deppe was an invaluable asset; dedicated, reliable and instrumental in cooperating, coordinating, and collaborating with Turner & Hutchinson County cities as they “birthed” the Southeast Enterprise Facilitation Project (SEFP) in 1996/1997, according to Nancy Larsen, SEFP Facilitator.*



*“John was always interesting to work with because of his different viewpoint about almost all of our projects. We always ended our conversations, though, understanding each other’s viewpoint”, said Jim Lehi, Treasurer, LJ RC&D Council.*

### What did John envision the LJ RC&D endowment fund project to develop into and what was his passion for the project?



*“John shared his passion in a quiet way, in a way that moved people to action. He*

*encouraged our RC&D council to strive for a means to help our counties provide a legacy for their future, a means to sustain projects even if national funding dried up. He drew in the experts to show us how an endowment fund could provide mini-grants for future generations and we, his council, moved this project forward with his assistance and that of his staff, Suzie Lampe. Without their guidance, their passion, their dedication to their careers we would not have been successful”, said Laura Kieser, LJ RC&D Council member (past President).*

RC&D lost a great friend when **John Deppe** passed away on May 27, 2010, at the age of 58 years.

On November 15, 2010 the LJ RC&D Council met, made and passed a motion, to change the name of the “**LJ RC&D Council Fund**” to “**John Deppe’s LJ RC&D Memorial Fund**”.

The LJ RC&D Council would be honored if all Western RC&D councils would work to establish their own RC&D endowment fund as a tribute to **John Deppe**, and to those good RC&D people from your own councils that have gone before you, providing an opportunity to allow their project to live on!