

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Reminder

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2009 Arbor Day Essay Contest Announced

(Pierre, SD) --- The 2009 Arbor Day Essay contest is providing South Dakota fifth and sixth grade classrooms an opportunity to demonstrate their writing talents by writing essays or poems on the importance of Arbor Day and tree planting.

Information on the 2009 Arbor Day Essay Contest is now available. South Dakota teachers and students are urged to write or call their local Conservation District employee for contest details and rules as soon as possible. The deadline for submission of completed essays to conservation districts for local competition is **March 20, 2009**. Awards for the state winners will be presented on or around South Dakota's Arbor Day, which traditionally falls on the **last Friday in April, or April 24, 2009**.

Students will be competing for local and statewide recognition as well as cash prizes provided by McDonald's. Cash awards at the state level are: \$100 for first place, \$75 for second, and \$50 for third. An additional \$150 will be donated in the name of the first place winner to his or her school for the purchase of supplies or equipment. The first place winner will also receive an attractive, lined jacket courtesy of McDonald's. All participants in the contest will receive a McDonald's certificate for a free dessert item, and a packet of tree seeds with instructions for growing and caring for their own tree seedlings.

The central theme of the essays should pertain to the importance of Arbor Day and tree planting. Students are encouraged to write from personal experience and to remember that originality and effectiveness are major factors in judging. Essays should be limited to no more than 250 words and may be typed or hand written.

To receive complete contest information on the 2009 Arbor Day Essay Contest, fifth and sixth grade students or teachers should contact Fall River Conservation District, or Chris Johnson South Dakota Department of Agriculture, Resource Conservation & Forestry Division, 605-773-3623 or 1-800-228-5254 (South Dakota calls only).