

BLACK HILLS CORP /SD/
Form PRE 14A
March 02, 2016

UNITED STATES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20549
SCHEDULE 14A

Proxy Statement Pursuant to Section 14(a) of
the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (Amendment No.)

Filed by the Registrant

Filed by a Party other than the Registrant

Check the appropriate box:

- Preliminary Proxy Statement
- Confidential, for Use of the Commission Only (as permitted by Rule 14a-6(e)(2))
- Definitive Proxy Statement
- Definitive Additional Materials
- Soliciting Materials under §240.14a-12

Black Hills Corporation

(Name of Registrant as Specified In Its Charter)

(Name of Person(s) Filing Proxy Statement, if other than the Registrant)

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BLACK HILLS CORPORATION

Notice of 2016
Annual Meeting of Shareholders
and Proxy Statement

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BLACK HILLS CORPORATION

625 Ninth Street
Rapid City, South Dakota 57701

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF SHAREHOLDERS

April 26, 2016

March 17, 2016

Dear Shareholder:

You are invited to attend the annual meeting of shareholders of Black Hills Corporation to be held on Tuesday, April 26, 2016 at 9:30 a.m., local time, at the Dahl Arts Center, 713 Seventh Street, Rapid City, South Dakota. The purpose of our annual meeting is to consider and take action on the following:

1. Election of three directors in Class I: Gary L. Pechota, Mark A. Schober and Thomas J. Zeller.
2. Authorization of an increase in our authorized indebtedness from \$4 billion to \$8 billion.
3. Ratification of Deloitte & Touche LLP to serve as our independent registered public accounting firm for 2016.
4. Adoption of an advisory, non-binding resolution to approve our executive compensation.
5. Any other business that properly comes before the annual meeting.

The enclosed proxy statement discusses these important matters to be considered at this year's meeting. Our common shareholders of record as of February 22, 2016 can vote at the annual meeting.

Your vote is very important. You may vote your shares by telephone, by the Internet or by returning the enclosed proxy. If you own shares of common stock other than the shares shown on the enclosed proxy, you will receive a proxy in a separate envelope for each such holding. Please vote each proxy received. To make sure that your vote is counted if voting by mail, you should allow enough time for the postal service to deliver your proxy before the meeting.

Sincerely,
ROXANN R. BASHAM
Vice President – Governance and Corporate Secretary

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BLACK HILLS CORPORATION

625 Ninth Street
Rapid City, South Dakota 57701

PROXY STATEMENT

A proxy in the accompanying form is solicited by the Board of Directors of Black Hills Corporation, a South Dakota corporation, to be voted at the annual meeting of our shareholders to be held Tuesday, April 26, 2016, and at any adjournment of the annual meeting.

The enclosed form of proxy, when executed and returned, will be voted as set forth in the proxy. Any shareholder signing a proxy has the power to revoke the proxy in writing, addressed to our secretary, or in person at the meeting at any time before the proxy is exercised.

We will bear all costs of the solicitation. In addition to solicitation by mail, our officers and employees may solicit proxies by telephone, fax, or in person. We have retained Georgeson LLC to assist us in the solicitation of proxies at an anticipated cost of \$8,500, plus out-of-pocket expenses. Also, we will, upon request, reimburse brokers or other persons holding stock in their names or in the names of their nominees for reasonable expenses in forwarding proxies and proxy materials to the beneficial owners of stock.

This proxy statement and the accompanying form of proxy are to be first mailed on or about March 17, 2016. Our 2015 annual report to shareholders is being mailed to shareholders with this proxy statement.

VOTING RIGHTS AND PRINCIPAL HOLDERS

Only our shareholders of record at the close of business on February 22, 2016 are entitled to vote at the meeting. Our outstanding voting stock as of the record date consisted of 51,308,595 shares of our common stock.

Each outstanding share of our common stock is entitled to one vote. Cumulative voting is permitted in the election of our Board of Directors. Each share is entitled to three votes, one each for the election of three directors, and the three votes may be cast for a single person or may be distributed among two or three persons.

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COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE ANNUAL MEETING PROCESS

Who is soliciting my proxy?

The Board of Directors of Black Hills Corporation is soliciting your proxy.

Where and when is the annual meeting?

The annual meeting is at 9:30 a.m., local time, April 26, 2016 at the Dahl Arts Center, 713 Seventh Street, Rapid City, South Dakota.

What am I voting on?

You are voting on:

• Election of three directors in Class I: Gary L. Pechota, Mark A. Schober and Thomas J. Zeller;
• Authorization of an increase in our authorized indebtedness from \$4 billion to \$8 billion;
• Ratification of Deloitte & Touche LLP as our independent registered public accounting firm for 2016; and
• Adoption of an advisory, non-binding resolution to approve our executive compensation.

Who can vote?

Holders of our common stock as of the close of business on the record date, February 22, 2016, can vote at our annual meeting. Each share of our common stock has one vote for Proposals 2, 3 and 4. Cumulative voting is permitted in the election of directors. Each share is entitled to three votes for the election of directors, one each for the election of three directors, and the three votes may be cast for a single person or may be distributed among two or three persons.

How do I vote?

There are three ways to vote by proxy:

- by calling the toll free telephone number on the enclosed proxy;
 - by using the Internet; or
- by returning the enclosed proxy in the envelope provided.

You may be able to vote by telephone or the Internet if your shares are held in the name of a bank or broker. If this is the case, you will need to follow their instructions.

If we receive your signed proxy before the annual meeting, we will vote your shares as you direct. You can specify on your proxy whether your shares should be voted for all, some or none of the nominees for director. You can also specify whether you approve, disapprove or abstain from the other proposals.

If you do not mark any sections, your proxy card will be voted:

- in favor of the election of the directors named in Proposal 1; and
- in favor of Proposals 2, 3 and 4.

Who will count the vote?

Representatives of our transfer agent, Wells Fargo Bank, N.A., will count the votes and serve as judges of the election.

What constitutes a quorum?

Shareholders representing at least 50 percent of our common stock issued and outstanding as of the record date must be present at the annual meeting, either in person or by proxy, for there to be a quorum. Abstentions and broker non-votes are counted as present for establishing a quorum. A broker non-vote occurs when a broker or other nominee holding shares for a beneficial owner does not vote on a particular proposal because the broker or nominee does not have discretionary voting power and has not received instructions from the beneficial owner.

What vote is needed for these proposals to be adopted?

Proposal 1 – Election of Directors. The affirmative vote of a plurality of the votes cast at the meeting is required for the election of directors. This means that the three nominees with the largest number of votes “For” will be elected as directors. A properly executed proxy marked “Withhold authority” with respect to the election of one or more directors will not be voted with respect to the director or directors indicated, although it will be counted for purposes of determining whether a quorum is present.

We have adopted a "plurality plus" guideline for director elections. Pursuant to our Corporate Governance Guidelines, any nominee for director in an uncontested election who receives a greater number of votes "Withheld" from his or her election than votes "For" such election must promptly tender his or her resignation to the Chairman of the Board. The Governance Committee will consider that resignation and will recommend to the Board whether to accept the tendered resignation or reject it based on all relevant factors. The Board will publicly disclose by filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission ("SEC") on Form 8-K its decision and, if applicable, its rationale within 90 days after receipt of the tendered resignation.

Proposal 2 - Authorization of an Increase in our Authorized Indebtedness. The increase in our authorized indebtedness from \$4 billion to \$8 billion will be approved if the votes cast "For" exceed the votes cast "Against." Abstentions and broker non-votes will have no effect on this vote.

Proposal 3 – Ratification of Auditors. The appointment of Deloitte & Touche LLP as our independent registered public accounting firm for 2016 will be ratified if the votes cast “For” exceed the votes cast “Against.” Abstentions will have no effect on such vote.

Proposal 4 – Adoption of an Advisory Non-Binding Resolution to Approve Executive Compensation. The advisory resolution to approve executive compensation (“say on pay”) is non-binding. However, our Board of Directors will consider shareholders to have approved our executive compensation if the number of votes cast “For” the proposal exceeds the number of votes cast “Against” the proposal. Abstentions and broker non-votes will have no effect on such vote.

Is cumulative voting permitted for the election of directors?

In the election of directors, you may cumulate your vote. Cumulative voting allows you to allocate among the director nominees, as you see fit, the total number of votes equal to the number of director positions to be filled multiplied by the number of shares you hold. For example, if you own 100 shares of stock, and there are three directors to be elected at the annual meeting, you could allocate 300 “For” votes (three times 100) among as few or as many of the three nominees to be voted on at the annual meeting as you choose.

If you choose to cumulate your votes, you will need to submit a proxy card or a ballot and make an explicit statement of your intent to cumulate your votes, either by indicating in writing on the proxy card or by indicating in writing on your ballot when voting at the annual meeting. If you hold shares beneficially in street name and wish to cumulate votes, you should contact your broker, trustee or nominee.

How will my shares be voted if they are held in a broker's name?

If you hold your shares through an account with a bank or broker, the bank or broker may vote your shares on some matters even if you do not provide voting instructions. Brokerage firms have the authority under the New York Stock Exchange ("NYSE") rules to vote shares on certain matters (such as the ratification of auditors) when their customers do not provide voting instructions. However, on most other matters when the brokerage firm has not received voting instructions from its customers, the brokerage firm cannot vote the shares on that matter and a "broker non-vote" occurs. This means that brokers may not vote your shares on the election of directors, the increase in our authorized indebtedness, and the "say on pay" advisory vote if you have not given your broker specific instructions as to how to vote. Please be sure to give specific voting instructions to your broker so that your vote can be counted.

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What should I do now?

You should vote your shares by telephone, by the Internet or by returning your signed and dated proxy card in the enclosed envelope as soon as possible so that your shares will be represented at the annual meeting.

Who conducts the proxy solicitation and how much will it cost?

We are asking for your proxy for the annual meeting and will pay all the costs of asking for shareholder proxies. We have hired Georgeson LLC to help us send out the proxy materials and ask for proxies. Georgeson LLC's fee for these services is anticipated to be \$8,500, plus out-of-pocket expenses. We can ask for proxies through the mail or by telephone, fax, or in person. We can use our directors, officers and employees to ask for proxies. These people do not receive additional compensation for these services. We will reimburse brokers and other custodians, nominees and fiduciaries for their reasonable out-of-pocket expenses for forwarding solicitation material to the beneficial owners of our common stock.

Can I revoke my proxy?

Yes. You can change your vote in one of four ways at any time before your proxy is used. First, you can enter a new vote by telephone or Internet. Second, you can revoke your proxy by written notice. Third, you can send a later dated proxy changing your vote. Fourth, you can attend the meeting and vote in person.

Who should I call with questions?

If you have questions about the annual meeting, you should call Roxann R. Basham, Vice President – Governance and Corporate Secretary, at (605) 721-1700.

When are the shareholder proposals due for the 2017 annual meeting?

In order to be considered for inclusion in our proxy materials, you must submit proposals for next year's annual meeting in writing to our Corporate Secretary at our executive offices at 625 Ninth Street, Rapid City, South Dakota 57701, on or prior to November 17, 2016.

A shareholder who intends to submit a proposal for consideration, but not for inclusion in our proxy materials, must provide written notice to our Corporate Secretary in accordance with Article I, Section 9 of our Bylaws. In general, our Bylaws provide that the written notice must be delivered not less than 90 days nor more than 120 days prior to the first anniversary date of the immediately preceding annual meeting of shareholders. Our 2016 annual meeting is scheduled for April 26, 2016. Ninety days prior to the first anniversary of this date will be January 26, 2017, and 120 days prior to the first anniversary of this date will be December 27, 2016.

Proposal 1

ELECTION OF DIRECTORS

In accordance with our Bylaws and Article VI of our Articles of Incorporation, members of our Board of Directors are elected to three classes of staggered terms consisting of three years each. At this annual meeting of our shareholders, three directors will be elected to Class I of the Board of Directors to hold office for a term of three years until our annual meeting of shareholders in 2019, and until their respective successors shall be duly elected and qualified in accordance with our Bylaws.

The Board of Directors expresses its thanks to Jack W. Eugster for his service on the Board. Mr. Eugster will resign as a Board member effective at this annual meeting. He served on the Board for 12 years.

Nominees for director at the annual meeting are Gary L. Pechota, Mark A. Schober and Thomas J. Zeller. All nominees are presently members of our Board of Directors. Mr. Schober was appointed to the Board of Directors in September 2015 and is a nominee for election for the first time. He was identified by a third-party search firm. The proxies will vote your stock for the election of the three nominees for director, unless otherwise instructed. If, at the time of the meeting, any of such nominees are unable to serve in the capacity for which they are nominated or will not serve, events which the Board of Directors does not anticipate, it is the intention of the persons designated as proxies to vote, in their discretion, for such nominees as the Governance Committee may recommend and the Board of Directors may propose to replace those who are unable to serve.

The following information, including principal occupation or employment for the past five or more years and a summary of each individual's experience, qualifications, attributes or skills that have led to the conclusion that each individual should serve as a director in light of our current business and structure, is furnished with respect to each nominee and each of the continuing members of the Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors recommends a vote FOR the election of the following nominees:

Class I –Nominees for Election until 2019 Annual Meeting

Gary L. Pechota, 66, has been a director of the Company since 2007.

President and Chief Executive Officer of DT-TRAK Consulting, Inc., a medical billing services company, since 2007. Retired from 2005 to 2007. Former Chief of Staff of the National Indian Gaming Commission from 2003 to 2005. Previously held executive positions in the cement industry, including serving as chief executive officer of a publicly traded company, and positions in finance and accounting. Currently Director of Insteel Industries, Inc. since 1998. Previously Director of Texas Industries, Inc. from 2009 to 2012.

Mr. Pechota's background in finance and accounting provides the necessary expertise to serve on our Audit Committee. As an enrolled member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, Mr. Pechota supports our Company's interest in promoting diverse perspectives, as well as expertise relating to our business interests on tribal lands. In addition, his experience as an executive leader at several companies, his public company board experience, and his knowledge of mining and extracting minerals and the associated environmental issues strengthens our Board's collective qualifications, skills and experiences.

Mark A. Schober, 60, has been a director of the Company since September 2015.

Retired. Former Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of ALLETE, Inc., a public energy company, from 2006 to 2014. Previously held several accounting positions at ALLETE, including Senior Vice President and Controller.

Mr. Schober has more than 35 years of utility industry experience in various finance and accounting positions of increasing responsibility. His knowledge of the utility and energy industry, combined with his position as chief financial officer of a public company, contributes to our Board's knowledge and understanding of the regulated business model and unique challenges of the geographic and regulatory environment in which we operate. Mr. Schober's extensive background in finance and accounting provides the necessary expertise to serve on our Audit Committee.

Thomas J. Zeller, 68, has been a director of the Company since 1997.

Retired. Former Chief Executive Officer of RESPEC, a technical consulting and services firm with expertise in engineering, information technologies, and water and natural resources specializing in emerging environmental protection protocols, in 2011 and served as President from 1995 to 2011.

Mr. Zeller's industry experience at RESPEC relates to many of our Company's activities concerning technology, engineering and environmental matters. This expertise, in addition to his experience as an executive leader, provides valuable knowledge to our Board and strengthens its collective qualifications, skills and experiences relating to technical aspects of our Company operations and contract relationships. He previously served as our Lead Director of our Board of Directors and is a Past Chair of our Audit Committee.

Class II – Directors with Terms Expiring at 2017 Annual Meeting

David R. Emery, 53, has been a director of the Company since 2004.

Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Black Hills Corporation since January 1, 2016 and Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer from 2005 through 2015. Formerly held various positions with Black Hills Corporation, including President and Chief Executive Officer, President and Chief Operating Officer – Retail Business Segment and Vice President – Fuel Resources. Mr. Emery has 26 years of experience with Black Hills Corporation. Prior to joining us, he served as a petroleum engineer for a large independent oil and gas company.

Mr. Emery is our only employee currently on our Board. With his many years of experience at our Company, he has a deep knowledge and understanding of each of our business units and related industries. As an enrolled member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, Mr. Emery supports our Company's interest in promoting diverse perspectives. He has demonstrated leadership abilities serving as our Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer since 2005. His strategic, operational and industry knowledge and expertise provide the basis for critical leadership on the Board.

Rebecca B. Roberts, 63, has been a director of the Company since 2011.

Retired. Former President of Chevron Pipe Line Company, a pipeline company transporting crude oil, refined petroleum products, liquefied petroleum gas, natural gas and chemicals within the United States, from 2006 to 2011. President of Chevron Global Power Generation from 2003 to 2006. Currently Director of Enbridge, Inc. since March 2015 and MSA Safety Inc. since 2013. Previously Director of Enbridge Energy Company, Inc. and Enbridge Energy Management, LLC from 2012 to March 2015.

Ms. Roberts has over 35 years of experience in the energy industry. Her industry experience includes managing pipelines in North America and global pipeline projects; managing a portfolio of power plants in the United States, Asia and the Middle East; and work as a vice president, chemist, scientist and trader in the oil and gas sectors. She has also served on several other public company and non-profit boards in addition to those identified above. Her diversified energy industry experience and service on several public company and non-profit boards provide in-depth business and strategic acumen and diversity that strengthens our Board's collective qualifications, skills and experiences.

John B. Vering, 66, has been a director of the Company since 2005.

Managing Director of Lone Mountain Investments, Inc., oil and gas investments, since 2002. Partner in Vering Feed Yards LLC, a privately owned agricultural company, since 2010. Served as Interim President and General Manager of

Black Hills Exploration and Production, Inc., our oil and gas subsidiary, from 2010 to 2011, pursuant to a consulting agreement, leading a strategic review of our oil and gas assets. Previously held several executive positions in the oil and gas industry.

Mr. Vering currently serves as our Lead Director. He has over 30 years of experience, including executive leadership, in the oil and gas industry. He served for 23 years with Union Pacific Resources Company in several positions, including Vice President of Canadian Operations. He has direct operating experience in oil and gas transportation, marketing, and exploration and production, important business segments for our Company. His knowledge and understanding of the trans-national oil and gas business and his executive leadership experience strengthens our Board's collective qualifications, skills and experiences.

Class III – Directors with Terms Expiring at 2018 Annual Meeting

Michael H. Madison, 67, has been a director since 2012.

Retired. Former President and Chief Executive Officer and a Director of Cleco Corporation, a public utility holding company, from 2005 to 2011, and President and Chief Operating Officer of Cleco Power, LLC, from 2003 to 2005. He was state president, Louisiana-Arkansas with American Electric Power, from 2000 to 2003.

Mr. Madison has more than 40 years of utility industry experience in various positions of increasing responsibility including president, director, vice president of operations and engineering, vice president of engineering and production and vice president of corporate services. His knowledge of all aspects of the electric utility business, combined with his position as president and chief executive officer of a public company make him a valuable member of our Board of Directors and enables him to be an effective Compensation Committee Chair.

Linda K. Massman, 49, has been a director since January 2015.

President and Chief Executive Officer of Clearwater Paper Corporation, a premier supplier of private label tissue to major retailers and a producer of bleached paperboard, since 2013. Previously, she served as Clearwater's President and Chief Operating Officer from 2011 to 2013 and its Chief Financial Officer from 2008 to 2011. Prior to joining Clearwater, she was Group Vice President of Finance and Corporate Planning for SUPERVALU Inc. and a business strategy consultant for Accenture. Currently Director of Clearwater Paper Corporation since 2013.

Ms. Massman has more than 26 years of experience in the fields of finance, corporate planning and business strategy. Her experience, knowledge, skills and expertise acquired as a director, chief executive officer and chief financial officer of a public company provides the in-depth business, financial and strategic acumen and diversity that strengthens our Board's collective qualifications, skills and experiences.

Steven R. Mills, 60, has been a director of the Company since 2011.

Consultant and Advisor, providing accounting and financial consulting and advisory services to clients in the private equity, agribusiness, renewable products and financial services fields since 2013. Mr. Mills was Chief Financial Officer of Amyris, Inc., an integrated renewable products company, from 2012 to 2013. Served as Senior Executive Vice President, Performance and Growth of Archer Daniels Midland Company, a processor, transporter, buyer and marketer of agricultural products from 2010 to 2012, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer from 2008 to 2010, and Senior Vice President Strategic Planning from 2006 to 2008.

Mr. Mills has more than 35 years of experience in the fields of accounting, corporate finance, strategic planning, and mergers and acquisitions. His extensive background in finance and accounting provides financial and strategic acumen to strengthen our Board's collective qualifications, skills and experience, and provides the necessary expertise to serve as Chair of our Audit Committee.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Corporate Governance Guidelines. Our Board of Directors has adopted corporate governance guidelines titled “Corporate Governance Guidelines of the Board of Directors,” which guide the operation of our Board and assist the Board in fulfilling its obligations to shareholders and other constituencies. The guidelines lay the foundation for the Board’s responsibilities, operations, leadership, organization and committee matters. The Governance Committee reviews the guidelines annually, and the guidelines may be amended at any time, upon recommendation by the Governance Committee and approval of the Board. These guidelines can be found in the “Governance” section of our website (www.blackhillscorp.com/investor-relations/corporate-governance).

Board Independence. In accordance with New York Stock Exchange rules, the Board of Directors through its Governance Committee affirmatively determines the independence of each director and director nominee in accordance with guidelines it has adopted, which include all elements of independence set forth in the NYSE listing standards. These guidelines are contained in our Policy for Director Independence, which can be found in the “Governance” section of our website (www.blackhillscorp.com/investor-relations/corporate-governance). Based on these standards, the Governance Committee determined that each of the following non-employee directors is independent and has no relationship with us, except as a director and shareholder:

Jack W. Eugster	Rebecca B. Roberts
Michael H. Madison	Mark A. Schober
Linda K. Massman	John B. Vering
Steven R. Mills	Thomas J. Zeller
Gary L. Pechota	

In addition, based on such standards, the Governance Committee determined that Mr. Emery is not independent because he is our Chairman and Chief Executive Officer (“CEO”).

Board Leadership Structure. Mr. Emery has served as our Chairman of the Board and CEO since 2005 and has been a member of our Board since 2004. Mr. Emery provides strategic, operational, and technical expertise and context for the matters considered by our Board. After considering alternative board leadership structures, our Board chose to retain the ability to balance an independent Board structure with the designation of an independent Lead Director and to appoint as Chairman a CEO-Director with knowledge of and experience in the operations of our Company. At this time, our Board believes that having a single person serve as Chairman and CEO provides unified and responsible leadership for our Company and in conjunction with the Lead Director provides the proper balance to ensure the Board receives the information, experience and direction it needs to effectively govern.

Our Board has and continues to value a high degree of Board independence. As a result, our corporate governance structure and practices promote a strong, independent Board and include several independent oversight mechanisms. Only independent directors serve on our Audit, Compensation and Governance Committees. Our Board believes these practices ensure that experienced and independent directors will continue to effectively oversee management and critical issues related to financial and operating plans, long-range strategic issues, enterprise risk and corporate integrity. All of our Board committees may seek legal, financial or other expert advice from a source independent of management.

Our Board annually appoints an independent Lead Director. John B. Vering was appointed Lead Director effective March 1, 2016. Thomas J. Zeller served as our Lead Director from 2010 through February 2016. The responsibilities of Lead Director, as provided in the Board’s Governance Guidelines, are to chair executive sessions of the independent directors and communicate the Board’s annual evaluation of the CEO. The Lead Director, together with the independent directors, establishes the agenda for executive sessions, which are held at each regular Board meeting. The Lead Director serves as a liaison between the independent members of the Board and the CEO and discusses, to the extent appropriate, matters raised by the independent directors in executive session. The Lead Director also

consults with the Chairman regarding meeting agendas and presides over regular meetings of the Board in the absence of the Chairman. This leadership structure provides consistent and effective oversight of our management and our Company.

Risk Oversight. Our Board oversees an enterprise approach to risk management that supports our operational and strategic objectives. The Corporate Governance Guidelines of our Board of Directors provide that the Board will review major risks facing our Company and the options for risk mitigation presented by management. Our Board delegates oversight of certain risk considerations to its committees within each of their respective areas of responsibility; however, the full Board monitors

risk relating to strategic planning and execution, as well as executive succession. Financial risk oversight falls within the purview of our Audit Committee. Our Compensation Committee oversees compensation and benefit plan risks. Each committee reports to the full Board.

Our Board reviews any material changes in our key enterprise risk management ("ERM") issues, including cyber security, with management at each quarterly Board meeting in conjunction with the presentation of quarterly financial results. In so doing, our Board seeks to ensure appropriate risk mitigation strategies are implemented by management on an ongoing basis. Operational and strategic plan presentations by management to our Board include consideration of the challenges and risks to our business. Our Board and management actively engage in discussions of these topics and utilize outside consultants as needed. Our Board oversees the assessment of our strategic plan risks as part of our strategic planning process. In addition, our Board periodically receives safety performance, environmental, legal and compliance reports.

Our Audit Committee oversees management's strategy and performance relative to our significant financial risks. In consultation with management, the independent auditors and the internal auditors, the Audit Committee discusses our risk assessment, risk management and credit policies and reviews significant financial risk exposures along with steps management has taken to monitor, mitigate and report such exposures. At least twice a year, our Chief Risk Officer provides a Risk and Credit Report to the Audit Committee. We adopted a Credit Policy that establishes guidelines, controls and limits to manage and mitigate credit risk within established risk tolerances.

Our Compensation Committee adopted an executive compensation philosophy that provides the foundation for our executive compensation program. The executive compensation philosophy states that the executive pay program should be market-based and maintain an appropriate and competitive balance between fixed and variable pay elements, short-term and long-term compensation and cash and stock-based compensation. The Compensation Committee establishes company-specific performance goals with potential incentive payouts for our executive officers to motivate and reward performance, consistent with our long-term success. The target compensation for our senior officers is heavily weighted in favor of long-term incentives, aligning performance incentives with long-term results for our shareholders. Our Compensation Committee also sets minimum performance thresholds and maximum payouts in the incentive programs and maintains the discretion to reduce awards if excessive risk is taken. Stock ownership guidelines established for all of our officers require our executives to hold 100 percent of all shares awarded to them (net of share withholding for taxes and, in the case of cashless stock option exercises, net of the exercise price and withholding for taxes) until the established stock ownership guidelines are achieved. Our Compensation Committee also instituted "clawback" provisions in our incentive plans, which may require an executive to return incentives received, if the Compensation Committee determines, in its discretion, that the executive engaged in specified misconduct or wrongdoing or in the event of certain financial restatements.

Our management is responsible for day-to-day risk management and operates under an ERM program that addresses strategic, operational, financial and compliance risks. The ERM program includes practices to identify risks, assesses the impact and probability of occurrence, and develops action plans to prevent the occurrence or mitigate the impact of the risk. The ERM program includes regular reporting to our senior management team and includes monitoring and testing by Risk Management, Compliance and Internal Audit groups. The overall ERM program is reviewed with the Board of Directors on a regular basis.

We believe this division of risk management responsibilities described above is an effective approach for addressing the risks facing our Company.

Director Nominees. The Governance Committee uses a variety of methods for identifying and evaluating nominees for director. The Governance Committee regularly assesses the appropriate size of the Board and whether any vacancies on the Board are expected due to retirement or otherwise. In the event vacancies are anticipated, or otherwise arise, the Governance Committee considers various potential candidates for director. Board candidates are

considered based upon various criteria, including diverse business, administrative and professional skills or experiences; an understanding of relevant industries, technologies and markets; financial literacy; independence status; the ability and willingness to contribute time and special competence to Board activities; personal integrity and independent judgment; and a commitment to enhancing shareholder value. The Governance Committee considers these and other factors as it deems appropriate, given the needs of the Board and us. Our goal is a balanced and diverse Board, with members whose skills, background and experience are complementary and, together, cover the spectrum of areas that impact our business. The Governance Committee considers candidates for Board membership suggested by a variety of sources, including current or past Board members, the use of third-party executive search firms, members of management and shareholders. Any shareholder may make recommendations for consideration by the Governance Committee for membership on the Board by sending a written statement of the qualifications of the recommended individual to the Corporate Secretary. There are no differences in the manner by which the Committee evaluates director candidates recommended by shareholders from those recommended by other sources.

Shareholders who intend to nominate persons for election to the Board of Directors must provide timely written notice of the nomination in accordance with Article I, Section 9 of our Bylaws. Generally, our Corporate Secretary must receive the written notice at our executive offices at 625 Ninth Street, Rapid City, South Dakota, 57701, not less than 90 days nor more than 120 days