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Baker Hired as South Dakota Arts Council Director

PIERRE, S.D. – Department of Tourism Secretary James Hagen announced today the selection of Patrick Baker as the next executive director of the South Dakota Arts Council (SDAC).

Baker has served as communications officer for the Department of Human Services (DHS) since 2012 and has an extensive professional background in communications and journalism. He holds an undergraduate degree from South Dakota State University and is a recent graduate of the Governor's Leadership Development Program.

"We are very excited to welcome Patrick to the Arts Council and the Department of Tourism team," said Secretary Hagen. "The arts play such a vital role in attracting visitors to the state and contributing to a quality of life for South Dakotans that is second to none. Patrick understands that relationship and has a commitment to the arts that uniquely qualifies him for the position."

A Pierre native, Baker and his family returned to his hometown four years ago after several years in Minneapolis, where he was employed by Jacobs Management Corporation as senior editor of FLW Outdoors. His current duties at DHS include information management, strategic planning and website management.

Baker has a life-long interest in the arts, is an enthusiastic arts patron and continues to be an active musician. He and wife Jen are part of a core group of musicians in the local band, Houdek.

Baker replaces out-going SDAC Director Michael Pangburn, who will retire Feb. 8, 2016, after 18 years with the agency, the last seven as its executive director. Baker's first official day with the Arts Council will be Feb. 9.

An office of the South Dakota Department of Tourism, the South Dakota Arts Council's mission is to provide grants and services to artists, arts organizations and schools across the state, with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts and the state of South Dakota.

The South Dakota Department of Tourism is comprised of Tourism and the Arts Council. The Department is led by Secretary James D. Hagen.

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Media Note: A photo of Patrick Baker can be found here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/ehfdqm97j7f87n8/1-16PatrickBaker.jpg?dl=0>