

**South Dakota Air National Guard**  
**Public Affairs Office**  
1201 W. Algonquin Street  
Sioux Falls, SD 57104  
605.988.5946  
<http://www.114fw.ang.af.mil/>



May 30, 2012

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## **Air Guard receives national Excellence in Diversity Award**

RENO, Nev. – The South Dakota Air National Guard has been announced as the recipient of the 2011 National Guard Bureau Excellence in Diversity Award. The award is given to just one Air National Guard wing each year by NGB to recognize a unit's outstanding promotion of programs that support a diverse workforce.

The award was presented to Col. Russ Walz, 114th Fighter Wing commander, along with other representatives of the state during the 2012 National Guard Joint Diversity Conference held in Reno, Nev., May 24.

This is the first time a National Guard unit from the state of South Dakota has won the award.

“We’re very proud of this award” said Walz. “It represents the commitment at all levels of the organization to enhance mission effectiveness by building an inclusive and diverse professional workforce.”

As the National Guard experiences demographic shifts, evolving military requirements and increasing budgetary constraints, diversity has become a growing challenge within the National Guard. Understanding and integrating diversity into the mission through leadership training and workshops, the South Dakota Air National Guard has offered their members the tools necessary to stay a vital and diverse workforce.

“Embracing diversity is clearly one of our top priorities,” said Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general of the SDNG. “The 114th Fighter Wing’s selection as the top wing in the nation is a testament to their years of effort focusing on how diversity enhances our organization.”

The award was announced by Phyllis Brantley, chief of the Diversity and Special Emphasis programs at NGB and was presented by Gen. Craig R. McKinley, chief of the National Guard Bureau.

-30-

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:** Please contact Senior Master Sgt. Nancy Ausland at (605) 988-5946 or cell (605) 351-9481, or e-mail [nancy.ausland@ang.af.mil](mailto:nancy.ausland@ang.af.mil).

High resolution photos are available at [www.flickr.com/southdakotanationalguard](http://www.flickr.com/southdakotanationalguard)

Additional stories and information are online at [www.facebook.com/southdakotationalguard](http://www.facebook.com/southdakotationalguard)



The 2011 National Guard Bureau Excellence in Diversity Award was presented to Col. Russ Walz, 114th Fighter Wing commander (fourth from the right) on behalf of all the members of the South Dakota Air National Guard in Reno, Nev., May 24, 2012. This is the first time a National Guard unit from the state of South Dakota has won the award for their outstanding efforts in fostering an environment of diversity in the workplace. (Courtesy photo)(Released)