Question #1 Example: Making a statewide impact, Jeff Broin CEO of POET:

In 1987 the Broin family purchased a bankrupt ethanol plant in Scotland, SD. The plant was not operating, but through hard work and expertise learned on their own farm-scale ethanol plant, they turned it into a profitable business and led the new charge for turning farm commodities into energy. That first 1 million-gallon plant was the seed for what today is a company with 1.75 billion gallons of ethanol production capacity and the world’s largest ethanol producer.

POET CEO Jeff Broin led the growth of not only a company, but an entire industry that brought prosperity to rural America and promises a future of more of the same. In South Dakota, POET is responsible for major contributions in direct spending, employment and production as well as economic activity created in other sectors. The economic contributions of POET and others in the ethanol industry are clear, particularly in the Ag sector, where success has followed the growth of ethanol. POET has been the driving force in raising public awareness of ethanol through the media and in government, and Jeff was instrumental in forming Growth Energy, a Washington, DC-based organization that advocates on behalf of the entire ethanol industry. POET is not done.

Additionally, Jeff and his family are strong supporters of charitable causes including Volunteers of America, Children’s Home Society and Ag groups such as 4-H, FFA and more. Broin’s Seeds of Change Foundation works in Africa to teach thousands of people how to improve their crops and livestock so they can better feed themselves and generate income from their operations. The Broin family has, through their foundation, adopted a girls’ school in Kenya and led numerous visits and capital projects to improve the futures for young women. He is also a strong supporter of South Dakota universities.

Question #2 Example: Innovation and Leadership, Stephanie Sandlin Herseth:

When Stephanie was in High School, she took part in Girls State, an American Legion program that teaches girls about state and local government. She was elected Girls State governor in 1988. The next year, she served as the valedictorian on her 1989 class. Stephanie was the first woman elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from South Dakota and the youngest woman serving in Congress from 2004-2010. She specialized in policy pertaining to agriculture, renewable energy, rural economic development, veterans and tribal affairs. Stephanie is a bridge builder and worked with other SD leaders to keep Ellsworth Air Force Base in SD. She found opportunities for bipartisan cooperation during her time in Congress.

Question #3 Example: Achievement in chosen field: N.E. Hansen

Once the natural sod of the prairie had been turned by the plow, it was nearly impossible to get native grasses reestablished. This helped lead to the dust bowl of the 1930’s but grasses introduced by Hansen and in particularly crested wheatgrass which readily grew, not only saved western topsoil from erosion but provided pasture for our cattle and sheep industries.

Hansen also introduced through importation and through his own developmental research a number of trees which have had a great impact. We grow in our groves and shelterbelts, caragana, purple leaf sand cherry, Siberian crab apples, Mongolian apricots, and Siberian elms, and Harbin pears.
His experimental work was beyond field crops and windbreak trees, but he developed a number of rose varieties some of which are still popular today. He also worked with other flowers, grapes, vegetables, and fruits. In his first trip to Russia in 1897 he discovered a red fleshed apple which has led to the development of the red fleshed apples we find today.

He did extensive work with stone fruits and his introductions include the Nanking cherry, Hansen's bush cherry, and a number of plum varieties which are still highly prized. He worked with strawberries, raspberries, and was a great breeder and hybridizer of roses. Several varieties he developed are still prized today. He seems to have been larger than life. His life's work has extended down through generations since his death. Surely each of us who has been raised in rural South Dakota and the Northern Plains have been touched in some way by this man's work.

References Letters (3) only but do provide three. Letters are best provided from those individuals that have been involved with the nominee to tell a story of excellence.

Examples of Supporting Documents (5) only but do provide five. Supporting documents are best with a variety of published articles including newspaper and magazines with photos when possible. One video is also encouraged if available. Please do not include additional reference letters for supporting documents.