

## First Ever Commissioners Summit Provides Unique Experience

Donnell Preskey | NDACo Government/Public Relations Specialist

For the first time in nearly 40 years, North Dakota County Commissioners had their own day to learn and network as commissioners. In March, 78 County Commissioners from 43 counties attended the first-ever North Dakota County Commissioners Association (NDCCA) Summit.

“The great attendance at the County Commissioners Summit shows the importance of getting folks in the same room to discuss issues and, more importantly, work on solutions,” said NDACo Executive Director Aaron Birst.

Recognizing that other county member associations hold conferences throughout the year, the NDCCA Board of Directors voted to dedicate an event to provide commissioners with the same learning opportunity. The agenda was dedicated to commissioner related topics ranging from resources available to commissioners, transportation funding opportunities, legislative outlook, human resources, finding efficiencies in county government along with discussion on the proposed property tax elimination measure. Almost just as important as the topics was the time for county leaders from across the state to get together to talk about opportunities and challenges.

“Networking is vital to finding solutions to complex problems that counties and local governments are facing across North Dakota. The County Commissioners Summit provided



**Commissioner Hot Topic panelists: Daryl Dukart (retired Dunn County), Joan Hollekim (Mountrail – NDCCA President), Stanley Dick (Cavalier), Shelly Wepler (Ward), Steve Lee (McLean, NDACo Board Past President)**

county commissioners a great opportunity to become “network” leaders,” said NDCCA President Joan Hollekim of Mountrail County.

Birst continued, “County Commissioners play such a critical role in delivering essential services and with all the issues facing county government today, it’s even more important to find out what others are doing to ensure the most effective delivery of those services.”

Other commissioners also found the Summit valuable in both the content offered and networking time with fellow commissioners. Many comments submitted after the Summit focused on the desire to continue the event.

Hollekim added, “I was most pleased with the participation during panel discussions; I believe everyone’s opinion was valued. Just as important, the Summit provided quality education to local leaders on important topics. I heard many positive comments, and many expressed the need to continue with this gathering of county leaders. Because the

Summit was a success, it is the ND County Commissioners Association’s intent to host a summit each year.”

NDCCA gathers at the NDACo Annual Conference every year. In addition, commissioners attend County Day at the Capitol during legislative years. NDACo Executive Director Aaron Birst will be working with staff to determine other value-added opportunities for North Dakota County Officials.

The NDCCA was formed in 1905 to serve and support the interests of North Dakota’s 231 county commissioners. NDCCA and NDACo started holding joint annual meetings in 1986 which are held at the NDACo Annual Conference in October.



### 2024 Annual Conference Theme

Mark your calendars for Oktober 20-22 when the 2024 Annual Conference, a.k.a. Countyfest, will be “brat” to you by NDACo!

That’s right, after decades of holding the event in October, we’re finally getting around to an Oktoberfest theme. Better late than never!

We’ll be rolling out barrels of new ideas to help you get the most out of your conference. More exciting details will be coming your way in future issues of the County Leader Letter and *County News*.

So cinch up your lederhosen and practice pronouncing umlauts for a schön and fröhlich time at the Bismarck Event Center. Bis dann!

## The Integrity of North Dakota Elections

North Dakota counties play a vital role in the administration of elections. The County Auditor upholds North Dakota’s election laws, and elections are conducted securely, accurately, and with integrity. The Office of the Secretary of State will be providing key election information to the readers of *County News* to spread the truth about our election processes and provide insight into our election systems.

This issue highlights the security and testing of election equipment used in all statewide North Dakota elections.

### One Person = One Vote

North Dakota is the only state without voter registration as our robust Voter ID Law requires valid identification to vote. Valid forms of ID include a ND driver’s license, ND non-driver ID, long-term care certificate, tribal ID, or tribal letter.

PollPads, also known as electronic pollbooks, are used to check in voters at polling locations and verify voter ID information against the statewide Central Voter File. The Central Voter



File tracks when a voter has voted in a given election. PollPads are connected through a secure, private network to every other PollPad used in North Dakota’s elections and are tested extensively before each election.

When a voter returns an absentee or mail ballot to the county auditor, the Central Voter File and the PollPads are updated to show that the voter has voted. That voter cannot vote again. Additionally, once a voter checks in at one polling location, within minutes, the PollPads at every other polling location throughout the state are updated to show that the voter has voted. That voter cannot vote again. PollPads, the Central Voter File, and the Voter ID Law prevent voters from voting more than one time per election and ensure that One Person = One Vote.

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## County QUICK FACTS



**Newspapers in ND**

**Total number — 73**

**Weeklies — 63**

**Dailies — 10**

**Official County Newspapers — 50**

*County News is an Associate Member of the ND Newspaper Association and attended the 2024 NDNA Annual Convention*



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## Board Member PROFILE



**WANDA KNUTSON**  
Mercer County Clerk of Court  
Represents Clerks of Court  
on Board of Directors

**What is your favorite thing about being a county clerk?** My favorite thing about being a Clerk of Court is helping people. I enjoy helping people through the court process and shedding some bit of hope on their situation. Every day is new and interesting. Any day you learn something new is a good day.

**Family:** I have been married to my husband, Darwin, for 44 years. We have one son, Aaron (AJ) who is married to Beth, the McLean County Auditor/Treasurer. We have two wonderful grandchildren, Carter (18) and Brooke (14).

**Community involvement:** I am involved in the Stanton Civic Club and WELCA women's church group.

**Favorite movie:** My favorite movie is *Overboard* with Goldie Hawn and Kurt Russell.

**Music:** I enjoy listening to Classic Rock.

**Book:** I just finished *Dark Sky* by C.J. Box

**Something people probably don't know about you:** My husband and I eloped to South Dakota.

**Philosophy of life and/or work:** Don't worry, be happy.

**Favorite quote:** "You cannot do a kindness too soon because you never know how soon it will be too late" by Ralph Waldo Emerson

**Anything else you'd like to add?** In my spare time, I like to garden and read. I enjoy walks in the pastures and woods and preserving our garden produce.



### NDACo Executive Committee

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Robert Wilson (Cass)..... NACo Board  
Joan Hollekim (Mountrail)..... NDCCA President

**NRG Technology Services Staff:**  
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### NDCCA Executive Committee

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## FROM the COUNTIES

### SPRING IS IN THE AIR...I THINK

Spring is in the air! It's planting season, garden season, baseball, track, and golf, and the beginning of lake season. This is an exciting time when we get out of our winter slumber and start getting active outside. I hope everyone has a good and safe spring!

Today I walked into the Auditor's Office, and he was busy prepping ballot applications. That can only mean one thing, campaign ad season. In all seriousness, we could potentially have some big county issues on the ballot this year. I also think we need to reassure everyone that the election process in North Dakota is secure.

Next, we have my favorite NDACo events coming up. Staff from NDACo, NRG, and Board members will be doing the County Tours this summer. This is by far my favorite thing that I have done during my tenure on the NDACo Board. It gives us a chance to listen to you, hear what is working, what isn't working, and get suggestions from you to improve our services for you and the taxpayers. If we are visiting your county this summer, I would love to see packed meeting rooms!

You will also see some information coming to you about the NDACo Annual Conference very soon. This year's conference is scheduled for October 20-22, which is scheduled a



Jayme Tenneson | NDACo President  
Nelson/Griggs County State's Attorney

little later in October than it has been in the past. I hope everyone is able to sneak away to attend. The information presented and the opportunity to network with other county officials is invaluable.

I have had a pet project that I've been working on with the ND State Hospital and the State's Attorneys. We have had a couple meetings this winter to work kinks out with the processes between our organizations. We plan to continue to meet and work together to help alleviate some of the mental health issues in the state.

I hope to see everyone on the County Tours this summer!

## FROM the COMMISSIONERS

### Good Luck Candidates!

With elections around the corner, I want to wish good luck to all the candidates running for office. Contrary to what many believe, I want to ensure you that ND elections are run with integrity. From my experiences as past county auditor, I firmly believe that technology has strengthened ND election processes. Prior to voting tabulation equipment, I remember working into the middle of the night waiting for exhausted election workers to complete the counting of paper ballots by hand. There are many rumors floating around concerning the integrity of elections; contact your county auditor or the ND Secretary of State to get the facts if you have any concerns or questions about elections.

I also want to wish you luck on your upcoming budget session. Although the initiated measure that would prohibit political subdivisions from levying a local property tax did not get enough signatures to be placed on the primary election ballot, it is still uncertain whether it will be on the general election ballot. Local boards will be faced with tough decisions when figuring amounts levied in the 2024 year as this determines the amount of State replacement dollars (no inflationary costs built-in) if the measure would pass. Most political subs do not have the ability to generate other revenue-raising taxes that would cover increased budget costs except those revenues that were generated from the property tax. I am not going to dive into all the ramifications of the measure as the NDACo and other agencies will be keeping us informed on this issue. I



Joan Hollekim | NDCCA President  
Mountrail County Commissioner

personally see cuts in future budgets if this measure passes.

On a more positive note, the March 20th Commissioners Summit was a great success! Thank you to the NDACo Team, distinguished guest speakers, moderators, panelists, and to all that participated. A huge thanks to our generous event sponsors, Sauber Engineering, HDR Engineering, RDO Equipment, Bell Bank, NRG Technology Services, and the Bismarck-Mandan CVB. Every single one of you played a part in making this event memorable. The participation during panel discussions and networking among those present was a true sign of leadership.

Summer tours are approaching. This is by far one of the most satisfying roles of being the NDCCA President. I certainly look forward to this venture and seeing many of your faces. Again, please call me if you have issues that you want to discuss or bring forward.



Aaron Birst, Managing Editor  
Jeff Eslinger, Editor

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## FROM the ASSOCIATION

### Slow Down for Less Stress

Well, the time has come where the snow shovels are put away and the fishing poles and golf clubs are out. I enjoy both for the moments of peace and quiet that they can bring while out in nature (until I shank one into the trees). I also enjoy those activities because I do them with some old and potentially new friends. Casual conversations without the rush of getting to another meeting or typing another County News column for Jeff lets you really have conversations to get to know each other or hear the issues they are talking about.

Which brings me to a couple of experiences I recently had where I wish I would have slowed down my pace to truly make sure I understood

what the others were saying and what I was trying to say. In both cases I spent more time debating and stressing out than I care to admit. Here is the rub: In both cases we were advocating for the same thing!

The problem was we were saying it differently and simply rushed to make our own point instead of taking a step back and truly listening to what we were both trying to say. Maybe this is just me, but I am guessing this has happened to a lot of us.

Unfortunately, stress is an inevitable part of life, but unforced stress is completely avoidable. My take away from all of this is sometimes in life and in particular when dealing with people, slowing things down



Aaron Birst | NDACo Executive Director

can actually speed things up! So, whatever your "slow down" hobby is, keep that in mind the next time you are dealing with a tough situation. I know I will.

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## NDACo Partners with Govify to Reach National Job Seekers

Govify, an HR-software company dedicated to streamlining the hiring process for government agencies, non-profits, and social-impact organizations, is excited to present a special opportunity for North Dakota counties. Govify has offered to partner with NDACo on increasing the reach of North Dakota county jobs posted at [www.ndaco.org/jobs](http://www.ndaco.org/jobs).

### Elevate Your Hiring with Govify's Free 6-Month Pilot

For a limited time, NDACo members



can take advantage of a complimentary 6-month pilot of Govify's revolutionary government job board platform. Govify is committed to enhancing time-to-hire, offering a platform hosting over 8,000 active and hiring jobs.

### Why Govify?

- **Broad Outreach:** Govify's job board engages over 10,000 individuals daily across the nation.
- **Strategic Exposure:** Leverage SEO-optimized postings, targeted advertisements, and social media outreach for maximum visibility.
- **Multi-Platform Presence:** Your job listings will not only feature on Govify's Job Board but also on national Talent Boards like Google Careers and LinkedIn.

Ready to simplify your hiring process and discover exceptional talent? Simply post your job openings at [www.ndaco.org/jobs](http://www.ndaco.org/jobs) and let Govify do the rest. NDACo and Govify look forward to receiving feedback on whether this pilot program will help bring applicants to you from across the country.

### Contact:

To learn more, reach out to Jeff Eslinger ([jeff.eslinger@ndaco.org](mailto:jeff.eslinger@ndaco.org)) or Govify's CEO, Martin Rufo ([martin@govify.us](mailto:martin@govify.us)).

## HR Collaborative Highlights Resilience at 2024 Conference

Nearly 170 North Dakota local government professionals attended the HR Collaborative's April 17-18, 2024, biennial conference in Bismarck to learn about ongoing and emerging human resource trends. This year's conference featured Platinum Sponsors NDPHIT, MetLife, and Brown & Brown and its ever-popular Building Your HR System Series led by Tanya Wieler, Dakota Dynamics Human Resources Consultant for Local Government.

"The HR Collaborative and the NDIRF are so thankful to those who attended and supported this year's event, especially our Technical Assistance Committee who helped select the curriculum and manage the overall conference experience," HR Collaborative Executive Director Joanna Drennen said.

The Technical Assistance Committee is comprised of local government HR professionals and includes NDACo Professional Development Manager Alisha Adolf and Operations Director Genny Dienstmann, and Williams County Administrator Helen Askim.

This year's conference theme was Resilient HR, inspired by its opening keynote speaker Jackie M. Stebbins, lawyer, mother, wife, and autoimmune encephalitis (AE) survivor. Stebbins' presentation walked attendees through her path of "SuRvive, Recover, and Rebuild" as she and her family navigated her AE diagnosis, a rare brain illness in which a person's immune system mistakenly attacks healthy brain cells. The illness, if not promptly diagnosed and treated, can cause irreversible destruction to a person's brain and, in some cases, can be fatal.

Today, Stebbins lives in Bismarck and speaks across the nation about her AE diagnosis and recovery journey. She has penned a book about her experience called *Unwilling: A Journey to Reclaim My Brain* and writes frequent updates on her Unwilling blog available at [www.JMStebbins.com/blog](http://www.JMStebbins.com/blog).



Melanie Carvell was among the speakers at the HR Conference.

Stebbins' presentation set the tone for the conference's remaining presentations which included additional keynotes about how to strengthen wellbeing, resilience, and immunity from physical therapist and worksite wellness consultant Melanie Carvell, and the science of resilience by Tara Feil, PhD, Clinical Psychologist. Feil's presentation reviewed current psychology and neuroscience research on resilience, providing attendees with strategies to further enhance their resilience in the face of adversity.

In between keynote presentations, attendees were given the option to attend one of two breakout tracks. One track offered courses about employee attraction and retention, implementing AI within a modern workplace, and de-escalating and defusing tense conversations and interactions, and the other track was Wieler's Building Your HR System. In her four-session series, Wieler reviewed key HR functions and government public processes, recruitment/selection and compensation and benefits, employee and performance management, and seasonal and part-time employee management and onboarding.

"The HR Collaborative is so incredibly lucky Tanya returned to lead our Building Your HR System series," Drennen said. "She works exclusively with North Dakota local government HR professionals every day, so her knowledge, insight, and experience are directly applicable to our attendees and provides tremendous educational value."

As it has in the past, the conference concluded with its Keeping it Legal panel, which featured NDACo Executive Director Aaron Birst, and reviewed internal investigations, drug testing, and harassment.

A BONUS session was offered during the send-off lunch by Platinum Sponsors NDPHIT, MetLife, and Brown & Brown, featuring its Senior Vice President Randy Johnson who provided information about healthcare trends, employee benefit impacts, and strategies to enhance employee benefit engagement.

"Much of the feedback we've already received from this year's event has been positive, and many attendees shared they are already looking forward to our next event," Drennen said. "We've already started planning for the 2026

conference, and we hope to build on this momentum to make it even bigger and better for the benefit of our state's local government HR professionals."

### Upcoming HR Collaborative Events

The HR Collaborative program, which as of January 2023 is managed by the NDIRF, is hosting a May 15 webinar on youth employment featuring Director of Operations for the Department of Labor and Human Rights Jessica Juma. For more information and to register, visit [www.NDIRF.com/Events](http://www.NDIRF.com/Events).

The program will also host its popular Six-Session Summer Virtual Series set to kick off in June 2025, and has already announced its next in-person conference April 23-24, 2026, in Bismarck.

To stay up to date on all things related to the HR Collaborative, visit [www.NDIRF.com/HR\\_Collaborative/](http://www.NDIRF.com/HR_Collaborative/) and click join now to become a member. Membership is free and open to all North Dakota local government employees.

## Don't Lose Your Work. Keep Your Data Safe.

Amber Schriock, Jake Fricke | NRG Technology Services

We are currently in the Information Age, which started around 1948 when businesses transitioned from traditional industrial practices to prioritize information technology. This era is characterized by rapid technological advancements and unprecedented access to information, allowing us to retrieve data from anywhere in the world within seconds. These developments have fundamentally altered our approach to data storage. Data growth has increased over 20% each year for the last three years. An estimated 328 million terabytes (each terabyte is 1000 gigabytes) are generated daily!

This exponential growth in data underscores the importance of efficient data management and storage strategies. As we continue to produce vast amounts of information, the challenge lies in securely storing and effectively organizing this data to ensure easy access and analysis. The shift from physical filing systems to digital databases marks a significant evolution in how we handle information, emphasizing the need for robust cybersecurity measures and advanced data processing technologies.

Many people today have a computer at home, where we put data on the desktop and forget about it. We also have cell phones or other mobile electronics that store data. There are options to backup to cloud devices, or locally if you are technical enough to set up a NAS (Network-Attached Storage) device. If you don't have one of those options, that information only lives on the original device and if that device breaks, goes missing, or becomes corrupt, all your data is lost.

Governments and businesses generate an abundance of data. As the size of the organization increases, so does the number of computers and users, and, correspondingly, the quantity and locations of stored information.

Desktops are vulnerable to hardware failures, malware attacks, and accidental deletions. If a computer crashes or is compromised, the files saved on the desktop can be lost forever. In contrast, servers often have robust backup systems, ensuring that data can be recovered even after a failure. Files saved on a local desktop lack the advanced security measures implemented on servers, such as firewalls, encryption, and intrusion



detection systems. Making them easy targets for cybercriminals. Sensitive information, if stored on the desktop, could be accessed, and exploited, leading to potential breaches of privacy and confidentiality.

Saving files to the desktop can hinder efficiency and accessibility. Servers and cloud storage allow for centralized file management, making it easier to locate and share documents within an organization. They also enable remote access, allowing employees to work from anywhere. Desktop storage,

however, restricts file access to a single physical location, which can be a significant drawback in today's mobile and interconnected world.

While desktop storage may offer immediate convenience, the long-term dangers and inefficiencies make it a risky choice compared to server and cloud storage. Ensuring important information is securely backed up and accessible in the event of an emergency becomes paramount to running a business.



### How to Type an Umlaut on Your Computer

**ON A PC:** Press hold ALT key and type a number on the number pad (ALT + 0228 = ä)

- ALT 0223 = ß
- ALT 0228 = ä
- ALT 0246 = ö
- ALT 0252 = ü
- ALT 0196 = Ä
- ALT 0214 = Ö
- ALT 0220 = Ü



**ON A MAC:** simply press "option" then click the letter and it will give you an umlaut)  
Try it – don't be a party püper!

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## North Dakota Elections

From page 1

### Election Equipment is Accurate and Secure

North Dakota only uses paper ballots. Ballot tabulators are not connected to the Internet and contain no components for such a connection. The DS200 is the ballot tabulator used at polling locations, and county auditors use a DS450 high-speed ballot tabulator to efficiently tabulate vote-by-mail and absentee ballots.

Every county in North Dakota uses the same election equipment that is tested extensively by accredited election laboratories and certified by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC). Federal certification includes tabulating 1.5 million ballots on the voting machines, a full security audit of the election management software, and penetration testing of the entire system. Once approval is granted at the federal level, the North Dakota Office of the Secretary of State also completes extensive testing to certify election equipment used in North Dakota elections.

County auditors conduct logic and accuracy testing (L&A testing) before and after each election to verify election equipment is accurate and secure. L&A testing is done on every single ballot tabulator used during the

election and includes tabulating a test deck containing hundreds or thousands of ballots, depending on jurisdiction size. The results from the L&A test are verified for 100% accuracy before the equipment is eligible to be used to tabulate voters' ballots.

Logic and accuracy test results are cleared before the equipment is locked and sealed with unique numbered tags for security. Before opening the polls

on Election Day, election officials verify the unique seal numbers and ballot tabulators to ensure they have not been tampered with.

Passwords, encryption, equipment security features, and the process knowledge required to operate equipment, protect North Dakota elections and ensure their accuracy and security. Additionally, County Auditors, Election Boards, and

Canvassing Boards have multiple layers of security and processes separate from the equipment to ensure integrity and accuracy in our state's elections.

In our next segment of *County News*, the Office of the Secretary of State will provide information on certification of election results. To learn more about security and other elections-related topics, visit [vote.nd.gov](http://vote.nd.gov).



Many legislators attended the pre-Summit reception.



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## Vision Zero Conference Recognizes Leader, Looks to a Safer Future Conference Held April 3-4

The Vision Zero Partner Conference is an annual event to bring together stakeholders from the four Es (education, enforcement, engineering, and emergency medical services), motor vehicle crash victims and survivors, and other advocates of traffic safety.

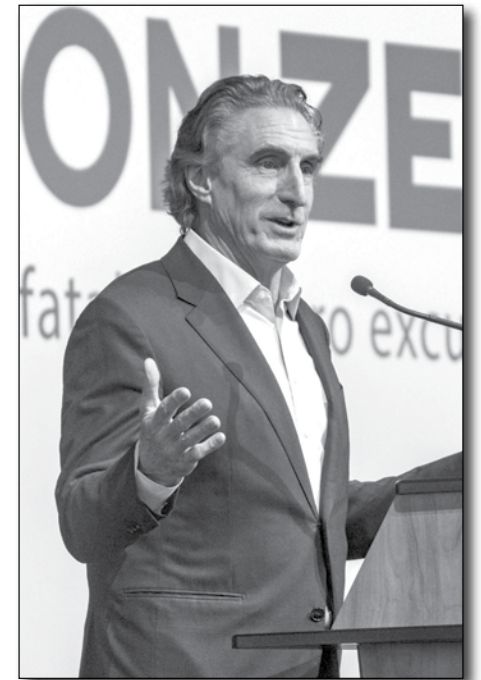
To kick off this year's conference of over 200 attendees, in-person and virtually, Governor Doug Burgum welcomed those in attendance and shared that his passion for saving lives on our roadways was personal to him, originally stemming from a fatal car crash in his community when he was younger.

A few of the sessions to follow over the next two days, included an overview of the emergency response to the tragic

Hatton-Northwood school bus crash that happened last September in Nelson County, an update on North Dakota's oral fluid testing pilot program to help prevent drug-impaired driving, and some examples of best practices to bring the Vision Zero message to your agency or community from people that have done just that.

The addition of breakout groups to this year's conference with the Vision Zero Regional Outreach Coordinators proved to be more than just an outlet for feedback and brainstorming. Since they were by region, they also served as a great opportunity for those in attendance to network with others who are also trying to achieve the same goal.

The Vision Zero Partner Conference also serves as a time to recognize those across the state who are showing outstanding service and dedication to reducing motor vehicle fatalities and serious injuries in North Dakota. The 2025 Vision Zero Partner Conference will be held in Bismarck next spring. Please visit [VisionZero.ND.gov](http://VisionZero.ND.gov) for additional information.



North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum at Vision Zero Partner Conference held at the Bismarck State College National Energy Center of Excellence on April 3, 2024



## Gellner Among National Awardees



L to R: Sophie Shulman, NHTSA Deputy Administrator, Carma Hanson of Safe Kids Grand Forks, Ryan Gellner NDACo Vision Zero Outreach Program Director, Barbara Sauers NHTSA Associate Administrator.

The Award was given at NHTSA's 2024 Lifesavers National Conference on Highway Safety Priorities. The plaque reads: *North Dakota primary seat belt law priority emphasis area team. In recognition of your dedication and success in passing a primary seat belt law for the state of North Dakota.*



Hatton-Northwood School Bus Crash Speaker Panel: Dr. Chris Boe (Altru Health Systems), Brian Twete (Northwood Deaconess Health Center), Sgt. Matthew Johnson (North Dakota Highway Patrol), Sheriff Kurt Schwind (Nelson County Sheriff's Department), Angela Herda (Nelson County Emergency Manager), Sarah Vaith (Michigan Area Ambulance), Patricia Lien (Devils Lake Law Enforcement Center Dispatcher)



Vision Zero Outreach Team: Ryan Gellner (Program Manager - NDACo), Theresa Liebsch (SW Region - Burleigh County Sheriff's Department), Molly Schoen (NW Region - Ward County Highway Department), Kaitlin Atkinson (NE - Grand Forks County Sheriff's Office) Leah Kelm (SE Region - Cass County Highway Department)

# EVERYONE BUCKLED





## Hazard Recognition

By Patrick Engelhart | CEG Safety Specialist

One of the most important things we can do to keep our workplace as safe as possible is to actively work to **recognize hazards**. From law enforcement dealing with the unpredictability of potentially aggressive individuals, to road workers faced with the dangers of traffic, to the office worker dealing with ergonomic issues; hazards are in every workplace and are always present. When we consciously identify hazards in our workplaces, we now have the ability to deal with them effectively.

What exactly do I mean by hazards? A **hazard** is any source of **potential** damage, harm or adverse

health effects on something or someone. Generally speaking, hazards come in two different flavors: conditions and behaviors. A hazardous condition pertains to the physical environment we are working in, things like icy steps or working at heights. A hazardous behavior is not wearing our seatbelt or not using personal protective equipment (PPE).

So, how do we recognize hazards in our workplaces? Some folks, most of us, learn the hard way. We get hurt by something or see or hear of someone getting hurt in a particular situation. That's a hard, but effective, way of learning. Unfortunately, that method

requires someone, somewhere to get hurt. I certainly don't want that. And one of the hardest things to acknowledge about hazard recognition is that we are all products of our education and experience. Individuals perceive hazards differently, which oftentimes leads to hazard recognition being a very personal thing and hard to standardize or quantify for an organization. So, how do we address that and raise our organization's collective ability to recognize and fix potential hazards?

**Here are two things we can do!**

**Number 1:** Your County Risk Manager has access to **inspection checklists** that the County Employer Group has developed for your use! There is an office inspection checklist and a shop inspection checklist. These checklists give you ideas of what to look for in your environment and will help you to identify and fix the things that are going to cause the next injury!

Now, a tool like a checklist is only as good as the effort, education, and experience of the people using it. That's why it is our recommendation that the shop and office inspections be conducted by a group of individuals all working together. This will allow for a range of opinions regarding the severity and probability of hazards, considering various experiences, skills, knowledge, and the like. A multi-disciplinary team composed of managers, line personnel, facility management, and so on, can lead to an effective and productive inspection, allowing your organization to quickly take action to resolve potential problems.

If you need access to these checklist tools, contact the Risk Manager in your county or just shoot me an email at [patrick.engelhart@ndaco.org](mailto:patrick.engelhart@ndaco.org) or give me a call 701-425-0824. If you want, I will come to your location and do the inspection with you! It really is fun for me, and anything that gets me out of the Bismarck office is welcomed (no offense, Aaron!).

**Number 2:** Workers should periodically conduct **safety observations**. What does that mean? Not every county worker has the luxury of working in a fixed location with a semi-controlled environment. A lot of county workers do their work at mobile sites by the side of the road, or at whatever address the call for service takes them. Quickly recognizing hazards in a rapidly changing environment is key to keeping our deputies and highway department workers, and others, safe.

A lot of times this may be referred to as "maintaining situational awareness" or something similar. I will argue that this



is the most important thing we can do. So, how do we make this happen? By emphasizing that there is always time to pause and take a look around before charging forward with the task. When a worker arrives at a new work site, or after a break, or even from time to time while working, it is imperative that they take the time to pause, look around them in all directions, and actively identify hazards.

To note where the traffic is coming from and whether that has changed. To note the weather, the placement of equipment, the barking of dogs. Something as simple as taking 15 seconds every few minutes can help our workers maintain that situational awareness and avoid being injured on the job.

Most often, we see this safety observation technique employed by the institution of the 15-15-50 rule. Every 15 minutes, take 15 seconds and identify the hazards located within 50 feet of you. You can change the time or distance to fit your situation as needed. This is a great technique for managers to encourage their employees to do! And I absolutely guarantee that if taking the time to maintain situational awareness becomes normalized and a routine part of your employee's workday, that not only will your employees work safer, but they will also be more productive and complete higher quality work.

All of us here at the County Employer Group, Mike, Jennifer, and I, care about each and every single one of our outstanding county employees. It is our goal, and fervent hope, that each and every county employee goes home at the end of their workday in the same or better condition than when they came to work. One of the ways we can reach this goal is by taking the time to actively identify hazards in the workplace. If we can ever be of any assistance, please know we are only an email or phone call away.

## TICK TALK Preventing Tickborne Diseases

With the first ticks of the year already being spotted in the state, North Dakota Health and Human Services (HHS) is asking North Dakotans to be aware of ticks and the diseases they carry including Lyme disease, anaplasmosis and Rocky Mountain spotted fever.

Ticks live in grassy, brushy or wooded areas. They can be active when temperatures are above freezing with little to no snow cover. To prevent tick bites, take the following steps:

Avoid wooded and brushy areas with high grass and leaf litter and walk in the center of trails.

Use an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered insect repellent. EPA's search tool can help North Dakotans find the right product.

Check body and clothing for ticks after coming indoors. When doing a body check, search in and around the hair, in and around the ears, under the arms, inside the belly button, around the waist, between the legs and the back of the knees. Be sure to check your child, too.

Check pets daily for ticks and talk to a veterinarian about best tick prevention products.

Keep yards mowed and litter free. Ticks can be found around homes and neighborhoods.

If a tick is spotted on the body and is attached to the skin, prompt removal is important to lower the risk of tickborne disease transmission. Use a fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick and pull upward with steady, even pressure. After removing the tick, thoroughly clean the bite area and dispose of the tick by putting it in alcohol, placing it in a sealed bag/container, wrapping it tightly in tape or flushing it down the toilet.



Contact a health care provider if any of these symptoms appear 30 days or less after a tick bite: rash, fever, fatigue, headache, muscle pain and/or joint swelling and pain.

In 2023, North Dakota Tick Surveillance through HHS recorded 858 American dog ticks, three deer ticks and one lone star tick between April and August. This data is recorded with the help of volunteers across the state. Ticks are submitted for identification and testing from April until November. North Dakotans can also help by sending pictures and location information about ticks they find by emailing [NDTicks@nd.gov](mailto:NDTicks@nd.gov).

Tick identification and surveillance helps HHS identify the types of ticks and tickborne diseases present in North Dakota.

For more information on tick prevention and tickborne diseases, please scan the code below or visit <https://www.hhs.nd.gov/> and search "tickborne."





## Record Crowd Gathers for 2024 Transportation Conference

Nicole Peske | NDDOT Communications Director

The 2024 North Dakota Transportation Conference drew a record 900+ participants to the Bismarck Event Center to take in the latest trends and insights in the transportation sector and strategize.

From safety protocols to administrative efficiencies, from bolstering infrastructure to embracing cutting-edge innovation and technology, the conference covered a broad spectrum of important topics.

Sessions covered safety, infrastructure, mental health, innovation and technology, diversity, equity and inclusion and more. Keynote speaker Jeff Butler spoke on attracting talent and succession planning.

One of the hallmarks of the event was the vibrant roundtable discussions, where experts and enthusiasts shared ideas, debated challenges, and charted the course for a more robust transportation system in North Dakota.

Beyond the insightful sessions, the heart of the conference was the emphasis



Ryan Gellner, NDACo Vision Zero Outreach Program Manager, presented on how to use data.

on networking. Industry professionals from all corners convened, engaged in meaningful conversations and forged collaborations that promise to shape the future of transportation in our region.

Next year's Transportation Conference is scheduled for March 3-5, 2025.

## NDDOT Selects 66 Local Projects for Flexible Transportation Fund

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT) selected 66 local projects in the amount \$84 million to fund through its Flexible Transportation Fund (Flex Fund) program. A complete list of projects can be found at [www.dot.nd.gov/flexfund](http://www.dot.nd.gov/flexfund).

The program provides \$222.5 million to the NDDOT for improvements to transportation infrastructure on and off the state highway system, including within townships, cities, counties, and tribal reservations.

“Investing in our infrastructure is critically important to provide North Dakota citizens with a safe and reliable transportation system,” said Gov. Doug Burgum. “The Flex Fund will allow the state more flexibility to support local, county, and tribal highway projects.”

The Flex Fund was recommended in the governor's executive budget proposal and established by the 68th Legislative Assembly to complement the Federal Aid Highway Program and further support an interconnected transportation system.

“There was a very high interest level among local partners in the initial Flex Fund rollout which highlights the need for transportation funding across the state,” said NDDOT Director Ron Henke. “This program shows the commitment of the state legislature, governor and NDDOT to provide the needed funding to safely move people and goods.”

The NDDOT received 264 applications for the program totaling more than \$674 million in project costs.

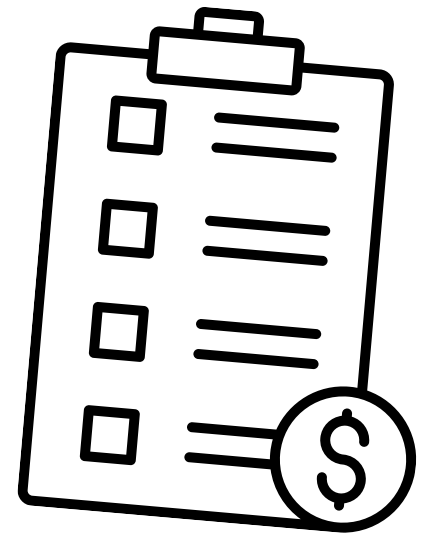
For more information about the Flex Fund visit [www.dot.nd.gov/flexfund](http://www.dot.nd.gov/flexfund).

## New NDACo Grant Assistance Program – Take the Survey

The North Dakota Association of Counties, Moore Engineering and AE2S Nexus/Communications are joining forces in a pilot project to help counties fund infrastructure and other capital project needs. The NDACo Grant Assistance Program is a free program for all North Dakota counties to help identify grant funding opportunities. Through the program AE2S Nexus/Communications will work with the counties to find both state and federal grants that are potential sources of funding that can be used for your infrastructure needs and other projects.

AE2S Nexus/Communications has created a survey to assist in meeting with you (virtually or in-person) to:

- Help you review your project lists and capital improvement plans
- Identify projects that require or would benefit from grant funding
- Research available grants



- Provide you with eligibility requirements and information on how and where to apply

To assist our team we are asking you to complete a short survey to help identify projects and grant needs: TAKE THE SURVEY:

<https://bit.ly/NDACoGrantSurvey>



## NDLTAP Upcoming Events

In addition to the offerings below, NDLTAP customers have access to learning opportunities organized by the Transportation Learning Network (TLN). Upcoming TLN presentations are listed on the TLN website.

### Motor-Grader Operator Training

May 1 - Oct 31, 2024 – Available on Request

### Local Roadway Signing

May 1, 2024 – Minot  
May 8, 2024 – Valley City

### Shoulder Pulling Live Demo

May 9, 2024 – Emmons Co. Shop, 7975 6th Ave SE, Linton

### Skid Steer and Forklift Operations/Safety Training

Sep 10, 2024 – 2958 25th St NE, Harvey ND

### Work Zone Safety for Local Agencies

Sep 11, 2024 – Cass County Hwy Dept., 1201 W Main Ave, West Fargo, ND

Some NDLTAP and TLN presentations are recorded and made available for you. More information about accessing these videos, along with TLN's online self-paced learning modules, is available on the LMS help page.

## North Dakota Public Information Officers Association: Staying Informed, Engaged, and Empowered

In today's fast-paced world, keeping county citizens and stakeholders informed is more critical than ever. The North Dakota Public Information Officers Association (NDPIO) stands ready to be a partner in the success of government agencies' communications efforts across the state. We're an association dedicated to empowering government communicators throughout North Dakota with the resources, training, and connections they need to excel.

NDPIO members gain a significant edge in the ever-changing world of communication. Our monthly training sessions and conferences are led by industry experts who delve into the latest trends and best practices. From learning how Artificial Intelligence (AI) can transform community outreach to crafting winning media engagement strategies, NDPIO is the place government communicators go to grow in their profession.

Healthy communities stay strong when clear and concise communication is at the foundation. Local, state, tribal and federal government agencies in North Dakota are tasked with keeping residents informed about important issues, fostering a sense of connection, and promoting community events and initiatives. NDPIO equips those responsible for communicating these issues with the tools to enhance transparency and trust, drive civic engagement, attract and retain talent and empower economic development.

But NDPIO membership goes far beyond acquiring knowledge. It's about building a strong network of support. NDPIO members connect with colleagues from across North Dakota, fostering a vibrant community to share best practices, exchange ideas, and forge valuable relationships. This collaborative



environment provides a safety net when an agency faces communication challenges, offering diverse perspectives and a springboard for fresh ideas. Brainstorm with colleagues facing similar situations or tap into the expertise of seasoned communicators – that's the power of the NDPIO network.

### Experience the Value Firsthand: Attend the NDPIO Conference

The upcoming NDPIO Annual Training Conference July 15-17, 2024 at the National Energy Center of Excellence on the campus of Bismarck State College in Bismarck is the perfect opportunity to discover the value this association offers firsthand. Attendees will be immersed in informative sessions and networking opportunities, and have access to a wealth of resources. The conference is open to all.

The conference agenda is designed to address the specific needs of government

communicators. Whether grappling with crisis communication or seeking to optimize a social media presence, attendees will leave equipped with actionable strategies and practical insights. The conference includes networking with fellow public information officers, exchanging ideas, and discovering new tools to elevate communication efforts within North Dakota communities.

Membership in NDPIO is an investment in one's professional growth and the NDPIO Annual Training Conference allows attendees to experience the value of this growing association. Visit the NDPIO website at [www.ndpio.org](http://www.ndpio.org) or email [info@ndpio.org](mailto:info@ndpio.org) to learn more and take the first step towards becoming a more informed, engaged, and empowered communicator.

## Vision West ND Announces the 2024 Summit on Behavioral Health in Energy Country

Dickinson, ND – April 3, 2024 – Vision West ND (VWND), a leading consortium dedicated to the sustainable development of Western North Dakota, is proud to announce the upcoming Summit on Behavioral Health in Energy Country, taking place on June 19 and 20, 2024, at the Astoria Hotel & Event Center in Dickinson, ND. This transformative event aims to bring together professionals, community leaders, and advocates to address the pressing behavioral health challenges facing the region.

### The Summit: A Forum for Change

The 2024 Summit on Behavioral Health in Energy Country promises to be a gathering of minds and ideas, focusing on addressing and advancing solutions to behavioral health issues. Over the course of two days, attendees will engage in experiential and clinical storytelling, listen to expert panels, enjoy inspiring keynote addresses, and have numerous networking opportunities.

### Event Highlights

- Day 1: Experiential Storytelling will shine a light on personal and community stories, offering insight into the human side of behavioral health challenges and triumphs.
- Day 2: Clinical Storytelling will focus on the scientific and clinical approaches to behavioral health, highlighting the latest research, strategies, and interventions.

Keynote speakers Gaelin Elmore, a motivational speaker and advocate for change, and Jonah Paquette, Psy.D., a respected psychologist and expert on happiness, will lead a roster of distinguished

speakers and panelists from a wide range of disciplines related to behavioral health.

### Innovative Format for Enhanced Engagement

This year introduces a refreshing format, with all exhibitors located in one expansive room to foster increased engagement and networking among participants. For a registration fee of \$250, exhibitors will enjoy a suite of benefits, including booth space, promotional opportunities, and active participation in the summit's array of activities, emphasizing the collective effort required to confront behavioral health issues effectively.

### Join the Movement

Vision West ND invites organizations, professionals, and community members to be part of this crucial event. Your participation, whether as an attendee, exhibitor, or sponsor, signifies a commitment to building a stronger, healthier community well-prepared to face the complexities of behavioral health.

### About Vision West ND

Vision West ND stands at the forefront of addressing the economic and social challenges of western North Dakota. Through strategic planning and collaboration, VWND tackles the region's most pressing concerns, including economic growth, housing, healthcare, and notably, behavioral health, paving the way for a resilient and thriving community.

For more information about the Summit on Behavioral Health in Energy Country, including registration details and how to become an exhibitor or sponsor, please visit our event website at [www.visionwestnd.com/summit2024](http://www.visionwestnd.com/summit2024).

## Upcoming ILG Courses

**May 13, 2024**

2025 NDPERS: What You Need to Know about Enrollment Options and How to Plan for Implementation

**May 15, 2024**

HR Responsibilities for County Officials - Part 1

**May 16, 2024**

County Budgeting 101 & Mill Levy Essentials

**May 22, 2024**

Basics of Fund Accounting

**May 28, 2024**

Did You Know: The HPC and DVC programs have been helping taxpayers for a long time?

**June 05, 2024**

The Donation Dilemma

**June 06, 2024**

HR Responsibilities for County Officials - Part 2

**June 12, 2024**

CEG Monthly Safety Moment: Colors: How Hi-Vis Clothing Can Save Your Life

**June 13, 2024**

Got 15?! Office of State Tax Commissioner Monthly Webinar - JUNE



## May is Mental Health Awareness Month

Here's what two counties are doing:

**Cass County** is offering Mental Health First Aid Training Jun 04, 2024, 8:30 am - 5 pm CDT

Location: Central Cass School District STEM Center - 802 N 5th St, Casselton. NDSU Extension and FirstLink are jointly supporting upcoming training sessions in Adult Mental Health First Aid. Sometimes you need help. Sometimes you are help. This training can provide you with awareness and skills to support the mental and emotional health of oneself, others dealing with stress or working in agriculture, or those supporting the agricultural industry. This training is offered through support from the ND Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Center grant (USDA-NIFA). Health First Aid is a skills-based training course that teaches participants about mental health and substance use issues. It helps you with the skills to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental health concerns (such as depression, substance misuse, or suicidal thinking), such as listening, giving support, and connecting someone with appropriate professional resources. The intent is to develop skills in understanding, support, and referral. This is an evidence-based program.

The **Upper Missouri District Health Unit** (UMDHU) and Williams County will be promoting virtual resources from CredibleMind (<https://umdhuc CredibleMind.com/>) each week in May. CredibleMind is a national online platform that provides evidence-based resources and personal assessments for mental health awareness and information.

The weekly topics will be posted to the UMDHU, Williams County, and CHI St. Alexius Health - Williston Facebook pages. They include:

**Week 1 | May 6 – 10:** Mental Health in the Home: Optimizing your living space and improving mental health and wellbeing

Our home environment plays a huge role in how we feel day-to-day. Whether it's managing stress, finding peace, or supporting each other, our homes are where it all happens.

**Week 2 | May 13 – 17:** Mental Health at School: Tips to help students maintain a positive mindset, manage stress, find balance, and build stronger social connections

In the hustle and bustle of academic life, prioritizing mental wellness at school is essential. Whether you're a student, supporting a student, a teacher, or a staff member, there are a variety of ways to protect and nourish your mental wellbeing.

**Week 3 | May 20 – 24:** Mental Health in the Outdoors: Discover the positive impacts of spending time outside and in nature.

Immersing yourself in the outdoors isn't just a leisurely pastime; it's an investment in mental wellbeing.

**Week 4 | May 27 – 31:** Mental Health in the Workplace

Please send reports and pictures of your county's Mental Health Awareness Month activities to [jeff.eslinger@ndaco.org](mailto:jeff.eslinger@ndaco.org) to be included in a future issue of *County News*.

## Association Groups Meet



ND Weed Control Association celebrated 40 years at their January meeting in Bismarck with many County Weed Officers in attendance.



ND Clerks of District Courts Association met at the capitol May 1-3.



Left to Right: Shaylee Miller, Grand Forks Public Health; Brenda Peterson & Shaylynn Nelson, Sargent County District Health; Britney Horst, Theresa Schmidt, Renae Moch, Bismarck-Burleigh Health; Marcus Lee, Grand Forks Public Health; Allen Anderson, Walsh County Health; Kaitlin Weiss, Western Plains Public Health; Steph Welsh, Cavalier County Public Health; Briana Spellerberg, Sargent County Public Health..

## ND Public Health Pros Attend Preparedness Summit

Representatives from local public health units in North Dakota attended the 2024 NACCHO Preparedness Summit in Cleveland, Ohio, March 25-28th. This year's conference theme, "Public Health, Healthcare, and Emergency Management: Aligning to Address Cascading Challenges," provided opportunity for sectors to come together, align missions, and discover better ways to work as true partners to meet challenges and best respond to public health emergencies. There were more than 2,900 attendees from across the nation registered for this conference.

## Stutsman County Went All-In on National County Government Month

Stutsman County held a “name the plow” contest for a new county truck and a new plow for the City of Jamestown. Winning names were “Scoop Dogg” (orange truck, county) and “Shovel Me Timbers” (yellow plow, city). Medina 5th grade class chose the winning name for the truck and Washington Elementary 5th graders came up with the winning names and won gift certificates to Dairy Queen.



Medina 5th grade class

Jamestown Washington Elementary 5th grade class



Stutsman County also held a “meet-and-greet-and-treat” event with Law Enforcement dubbed “Donuts with Deputies, Popcorn with Police”.





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## BUILT ON COMMUNITY

Embracing a collaborative team approach, Interstate Engineering focuses on building for tomorrow. From projects to career paths, Interstate Engineering knows the best approach to any accomplishment is to collaborate, celebrate success, and grow for tomorrow.



## Garrison Diversion Matching Recreation Grant Program Awards \$657,865

The Garrison Diversion Conservancy District's (Garrison Diversion) Recreation Committee awarded matching recreation grants to 23 projects, totaling \$657,865.

"Our requests for the spring funding session were at an all-time high, and we were able to provide grant funds to a large number of deserving projects both big and small," says committee chairman Larry Kassian. "Garrison Diversion is thrilled to give back to our member counties and help build recreation projects that will reach thousands of people across North Dakota."

The following counties received Matching Recreation Grant funds in the spring of 2024:

- Barnes County – \$50,000 to Valley City Parks & Recreation to update the Valley City Park Playground
- Bottineau County – \$50,000 to Bottineau County for a snow system at Bottineau Winter Park; \$31,141 to the City of Maxbass for the Maxbass Community Park
- Burleigh County - \$50,000 to Bismarck Parks & Recreation District to develop the Municipal Ballpark Master Plan
- Cass County - \$50,000 to the Fargo Park District to develop the Rheault Farm Playground
- Dickey County - \$34,996 to the Dickey County Fair Board to develop the Dickey County Community Recreation facility
- Grand Forks County - \$50,000 to the Grand Forks Park District to develop the Grand Valley Development Park Playground
- LaMoure County – \$9,068 to the Marion Park Board to install an ADA bathroom at the Marion Community Park; \$3,500 to LaMoure County to install a vault toilet at Twin Lakes
- McHenry County - \$9,071 to the Anamoose Park Board to install new swingsets
- McLean County - \$2,356 to the Turtle Lake Park District for new picnic tables at Lake Brekken; \$875 to McLean County for the Sportsmens Centennial Park vault toilet project
- Renville County - \$37,500 to the Mohall Park District for the Mohall Adult Recreation Complex
- Sargent County - \$10,500 to the City of Gwinner to develop Hero's Park
- Stutsman County - \$50,000 to the Medina City Park for a new community recreation center; \$50,000 to the Jamestown Parks & Recreation District for an All Abilities Playground at Nickeus Park
- Traill County - \$15,923 for the City of Reynolds to install a new park gazebo
- Ward County - \$50,000 to the ND State Fair Association for new equipment at the West Park Playground; \$10,875 to the Surrey Park District for a pickleball court at Pony Tracks Park
- Wells County - \$9,372 to Wells County for the addition of a comfort station at the Manfred Park
- Williams County - \$50,000 to the Williston Parks & Recreation District for Phase 3 of the Coyote Clay Target Range; \$5,000 to the Sunset Park District for a Pre-K playground at Grenora Park; \$27,688 to the Williston Parks & Recreation District to enhance the existing frisbee golf course and update the bathrooms at Spring Lake Park

## Is Your County Leaving Money on the Table?

Jen Raab | OMB Communications Director

If your county isn't participating in the state of North Dakota Purchasing Card (P-Card) program, you are leaving money on the table. There are a variety of advantages to being in the program, such as lower processing costs, reduced paperwork, elimination of 1099 reporting, faster delivery, personalized customer service, no annual fees, and the list goes on.

However, THE BIGGEST advantage of participating in the state P-Card program is receiving a rebate, which is percentage-based on total program spent. This ensures each entity - state agencies, the University System and political subdivisions - receives the highest percent rebate possible.

Currently, nearly half of North Dakota counties participate in the state P-Card program. From February 2023 to January 2024, the 25 participating North Dakota counties received \$170,309 in

	February 2022 - January 2023			February 2023 - January 2024			Increase/Decrease Compared to Previous Year		
	Transactions	Amount	Rebate	Transactions	Amount	Rebate	Transactions	Amount	Rebate
ND Association of Counties	1,475	\$ 2,284,492.58	\$ 40,944.30	1,602	\$ 2,396,503.72	\$ 43,266.54	127	\$ 112,011.14	\$ 2,322.24
Adams County				18	\$ 1,965.37	\$ 35.48	18	\$ 1,965.37	\$ 35.48
Billings County				248	\$ 33,185.37	\$ 599.13	248	\$ 33,185.37	\$ 599.13
Bottineau County	1,837	\$ 205,491.90	\$ 3,682.97	2,293	\$ 201,221.42	\$ 3,632.86	456	\$ (4,270.48)	\$ (50.11)
Cavalier County	28	\$ 5,999.36	\$ 107.52	76	\$ 10,322.88	\$ 186.37	48	\$ 4,323.52	\$ 78.85
Dunn County	987	\$ 183,402.09	\$ 3,287.06	955	\$ 186,026.03	\$ 3,358.52	-32	\$ 2,623.94	\$ 71.46
Golden Valley County	131	\$ 11,263.77	\$ 201.88	313	\$ 26,795.85	\$ 483.77	182	\$ 15,532.08	\$ 281.89
Grand Forks County	2,761	\$ 499,229.93	\$ 8,947.55	3,010	\$ 573,953.62	\$ 10,362.17	249	\$ 74,723.69	\$ 1,414.62
Griggs County	229	\$ 19,387.40	\$ 347.47	342	\$ 23,324.76	\$ 421.11	113	\$ 3,937.36	\$ 73.64
McLean County	850	\$ 580,207.90	\$ 10,398.90	849	\$ 435,145.63	\$ 7,856.13	-1	\$ (145,062.27)	\$ (2,542.77)
Morton County	3,098	\$ 1,687,786.98	\$ 30,249.71	3,243	\$ 1,807,502.37	\$ 32,632.70	145	\$ 119,715.39	\$ 2,382.99
Mountrail County	674	\$ 83,640.90	\$ 1,499.07	966	\$ 129,695.58	\$ 2,341.53	292	\$ 46,054.68	\$ 842.46
Pierce County	343	\$ 24,525.93	\$ 439.57	358	\$ 32,527.96	\$ 587.26	15	\$ 8,002.03	\$ 147.69
Ramsey County	3,207	\$ 194,253.76	\$ 3,481.55	3,827	\$ 231,362.27	\$ 4,177.02	620	\$ 37,108.51	\$ 695.47
Ransom County	562	\$ 117,803.72	\$ 2,111.36	760	\$ 166,668.77	\$ 3,009.04	198	\$ 48,865.05	\$ 897.68
Rolette County	2,204	\$ 132,506.95	\$ 2,374.88	1,988	\$ 114,946.55	\$ 2,075.25	-216	\$ (17,560.40)	\$ (299.63)
Rolette County Public Health District	127	\$ 23,318.04	\$ 417.92	179	\$ 31,035.19	\$ 560.31	52	\$ 7,717.15	\$ 142.39
Sioux County	241	\$ 26,963.06	\$ 483.25	230	\$ 18,655.82	\$ 336.81	-11	\$ (8,307.24)	\$ (146.44)
Slope County	437	\$ 41,346.23	\$ 741.04	479	\$ 36,895.46	\$ 666.11	42	\$ (4,450.77)	\$ (74.93)
Steele County	1,639	\$ 554,956.41	\$ 9,946.32	1,641	\$ 356,307.71	\$ 6,432.79	2	\$ (198,648.70)	\$ (3,513.53)
Towner County	331	\$ 34,738.20	\$ 622.60	375	\$ 42,324.69	\$ 764.13	44	\$ 7,586.49	\$ 141.53
Traill County	1,966	\$ 366,182.31	\$ 6,562.98	1,923	\$ 333,217.20	\$ 6,015.91	-43	\$ (32,965.11)	\$ (547.07)
Traill County Economic Development	247	\$ 20,068.46	\$ 359.68	303	\$ 27,692.10	\$ 499.95	56	\$ 7,623.64	\$ 140.27
Ward County	4,220	\$ 1,968,003.54	\$ 35,271.95	4,552	\$ 2,155,835.03	\$ 38,921.50	332	\$ 187,831.49	\$ 3,649.55
Wells County	845	\$ 74,609.85	\$ 1,337.21	663	\$ 60,181.63	\$ 1,086.52	-182	\$ (14,428.22)	\$ (250.69)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28,439</b>	<b>\$ 9,140,179.27</b>	<b>\$ 163,816.74</b>	<b>31,193</b>	<b>\$ 9,433,292.98</b>	<b>\$ 170,308.91</b>	<b>2,754</b>	<b>\$ 293,113.71</b>	<b>\$ 6,492.17</b>

total rebate dollars. That is money going right back into those communities.

The state P-Card is a MasterCard through JPMorgan Chase that is

administered by the North Dakota Office of Management and Budget. It can be used with any vendor that accepts MasterCard as a form of payment.

If your county is interested in joining the state P-Card program, please reach out to Renae Heller at 701.328.4936 or rheller@nd.gov to start the process.

## Game and Fish Pays \$762,000 in Property Taxes

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department recently paid more than \$762,000 in taxes to counties in which the department owns or leases land. The 2023 in-lieu-of-tax payments are the same as property taxes paid by private landowners.

The Game and Fish Department manages more than 200,000 acres for wildlife habitat and public hunting in 51 counties. The department does not own or manage any land in Traill or Renville counties.

Following is a list of counties and tax payments received:

COUNTY	TAX DUE
Adams	207.28
Barnes	12,878.16
Benson	5,841.17
Billings	228.02
Bottineau	8,176.40
Bowman	2,420.75
Burke	1,049.17
Burleigh	30,670.96
Cass	8,537.08
Cavalier	16,734.72
Dickey	13,982.92
Divide	2,721.89
Dunn	5,251.05
Eddy	7,195.69
Emmons	8,040.34
Foster	1,040.78
Golden Valley	160.43
Grand Forks	21,588.07

Grant	1,193.55
Griggs	104.53
Hettinger	4,763.66
Kidder	13,596.39
LaMoure	12,744.62
Logan	430.41
McHenry	1,953.29
McIntosh	11,131.18
McKenzie	34,790.67
McLean	131,526.92
Mercer	20,014.83
Morton	25,448.92
Mountrail	6,188.96
Nelson	9,395.85
Oliver	2,668.61
Pembina	12,593.86
Pierce	3,500.01
Ramsey	18,628.77
Ransom	3,029.54
Richland	20,278.14
Rolette	52,621.67
Sargent	20,792.37
Sheridan	96,399.22
Sioux	225
Slope	1,950.75
Stark	5,629.43
Steele	10,930.49
Stutsman	5,956.84
Towner	2,667.57
Walsh	10,879.95
Ward	56.51
Wells	64,986.95
Williams	8,871.68

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## New NDACo Grant Assistance Program – Take the Survey

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This is the same story that is on p. 10, not only because we're very excited about the new program, but also because it's primary focus right now is on infrastructure.

The North Dakota Association of Counties, Moore Engineering and AE2S Nexus/Communications are joining forces in a pilot project to help counties fund infrastructure and other capital project needs. The NDACo Grant Assistance Program is a free program for all North Dakota counties to help identify grant funding opportunities. Through the program AE2S Nexus/Communications will work with the counties to find both state and federal grants that are potential sources of funding that can be used for

your infrastructure needs and other projects.

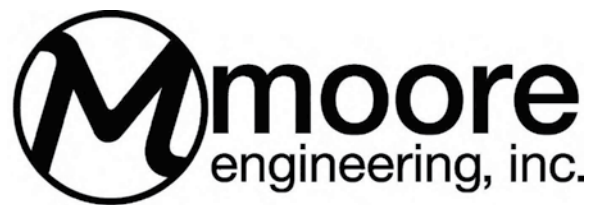
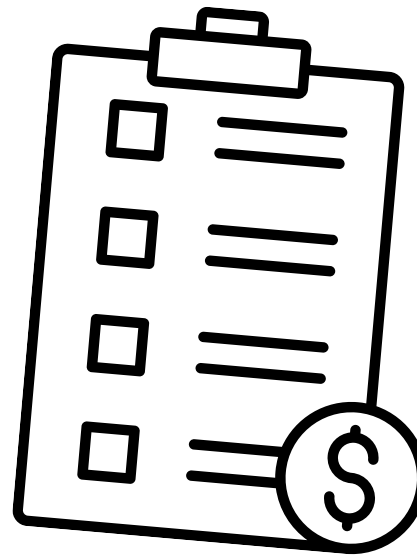
AE2S Nexus/Communications has created a survey to assist in meeting with you (virtually or in-person) to:

- Help you review your project lists and capital improvement plans
- Identify projects that require or would benefit from grant funding
- Research available grants
- Provide you with eligibility requirements and information on how and where to apply

To assist our team we are asking you to complete a short survey to help identify projects and grant needs:

TAKE THE SURVEY:

<https://bit.ly/NDACoGrantSurvey>



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**The North Dakota Livestock Alliance is a non-profit organization led by farmers and ranchers focused on transparency with North Dakota's Counties about:**

- The economic and community benefits to welcoming livestock operations to your county
- What to expect when a livestock operation is proposed in your community
- State and local livestock zoning procedures
- Modern livestock management, barn design and environmental stewardship

**Contact us or invite NDLA to your next County Commission meeting at [ndlivestock.org](http://ndlivestock.org) or 701-712-1488 Follow us on Facebook @LivestockND**

**Walsh** County Commissioners on Tuesday with the clearance of Walsh County State's Attorney Kelley Cole, voted unanimously to approve combining duties of the auditor and treasurer using the county's Home Rule Charter. Cole presented the commission with a resolution, the idea was initiated and backed by Human Resource Director Tanya Wieler. Last week, current Walsh County Auditor Kristi Quibell agreed to become the auditor/treasurer for Walsh County. "We have a deputy auditor position one and two to go along with deputy treasurer position one and two with Kristi (Quibell) overseeing both departments," Wieler said. Cole explained if the plan was dealing with an elected office, which the treasurer position is not, there would be more resolutions and a public meeting. "Since both these positions (auditor and treasurer) are appointed those sorts of things aren't required," she said. It was moved by Kristi Brintnell and seconded by Amy Suda to combine the offices of treasurer and auditor and appoint Quibell as the new Walsh County Auditor/Treasurer, the motion passed unanimously.

- *Walsh County Record*

**Eddy** County commissioners are officially moving forward with a plan to make the Eddy County Auditor and Treasurer positions appointed, rather than elected. The possibility was first brought forth after the county's previous auditor, Patty Williams, unexpectedly resigned late last year, and commissioners have now taken the first step toward making the change. At their meeting on March 5, commissioners unanimously adopted a preliminary resolution explaining their intent to make the auditor and treasurer positions appointed. North Dakota Century Code requires the county to publish their plan for implementation of the change in the county's official newspaper for two weeks. The plan explains the change from elected to appointed, the process moving forward and the county's reasoning for the change. "Currently, the Auditor's and Treasurer's positions are elected," states the plan. "There are no minimum qualifications for any person to run for these positions, other than being a resident of Eddy County at least eighteen (18) years of age. Making these positions appointed will ensure the County has the most qualified people in these roles." The plan adds that making these positions appointed would open the possibility of hiring from outside the county, noting that with Eddy County's population of only 2,000, limiting candidates to just county residents may not ensure the county's finances are in

the best hands. The plan also lays out the county's intention to increase the minimum requirements for a county auditor or treasurer, which would be much greater than just residency and age.

-*New Rockford Transcript*

The **Divide** County Planning and Zoning Commission approved final changes to the zoning ordinance regarding solar energy facilities. The ordinance now goes before the county commission for approval. "I think we all agree that this probably isn't going to be a final version, that it's probably going to get amended at some point, but it's our best swing," board member Jerry King said. "Every time you think we're done, something new comes up, because no one had any inkling that solar would ever show up in far northern North Dakota," board member Jody Gunlock added. Gunlock also commented that creating ordinances like these to protect landowners and counties is a growing issue not just in the U.S. He referenced an article from the United Kingdom about the need for similar ordinances there. "The state and the federal government are just leaving them high and dry, and the counties and townships are stuck with all the money on recovering these things," he said. "It's not just a Divide County problem, it's not even a U.S. or North Dakota problem, it's a worldwide problem." The board also continued discussions on whether to hire a building inspector for the county. Board member Chico Eriksmoen thought it would be better for the county to work with **Williams** County's building inspector instead of hiring its own firm, after talking with State's Attorney Seymour Jordan. "They're willing to come up, it sounds like," Eriksmoen said. Gunlock said that working with Williams County would likely be less expensive, as well. "I'm hoping we'd get a better deal from Williams County than we would from an engineering firm," he said.

-*Crosby Journal*

Amazon is set to expand its operations with the opening of a new distribution center in the Five Diamonds Industrial Park near the **Dunn** and **Stark** County line. The e-commerce giant will lease a warehouse on the site and commence operations in the fall of 2024. Cody Buehner, a Dunn County Commissioner, provided insights into the development process and outlined the basic operation model. Packages will be delivered on trucks to the warehouse, then sorted and dispatched on smaller vans to households within a 50-mile radius. Despite limited information on why Amazon chose this specific location,

Buehner confirmed that the center would serve both Dunn and Stark counties, emphasizing the operation's logistical reach. He also highlighted the expected positive economic impact on the region. "It's going to be great, bringing in more workforce and providing another service to the taxpayers," he said. JoAnn Marsh, another Dunn County Commissioner, detailed the procedural aspects. Amazon applied for a conditional use permit, a necessity for its operational blueprint in the industrial zone. Initially, the center aims to employ around 20 part-time and a few full-time individuals, with potential expansion in the future. Five Diamond Fund Managers currently has three large-scale developments in southwestern North Dakota. Buehner and Marsh touched on the anticipated benefits of Amazon's investment, emphasizing employment growth and service expansion. Yet, regional experiences, like those in Dickinson and Bemidji, where USPS workers decry overwork and pressure to prioritize Amazon parcels, paint a complex picture of logistics and service delivery in the area.

-*The Dickinson Press*

For the better part of the past two years, the **Walsh** County Commission has been attempting to tackle the issue of a new or renovated jail at the Walsh County Law Enforcement Center in Grafton. Walsh County Sheriff Ron Jurgens says the old jail was built nearly 50 years ago in 1975 and has developed several plumbing problems over the years. He said the state has basically mandated that something has to be done. "The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation is our licensing agency and they come in every year and do an inspection on our jail," Jurgens said. "They've been working with us for about the past five years about some of the plumbing issues in our jail and we've been written up for those issues. The only reason at this point that they've been allowing us to remain open is that we are working on planning for the future and maybe building a new facility." According to Jurgens, the Walsh County Commission and his department have been searching for a range of solutions. Those solutions have included renovating the current jail located within the Walsh County Law Enforcement Center or using an existing building within Walsh County and renovating it. "We've looked at the vacant Wells Fargo Bank Building, we've looked at the State School (Life Skills and Transition Center) and other facilities and by the time we looked at the cost of renovating those buildings, the most cost-effective option is to build a new facility." Jurgens said they

have looked at various sites for a new building and the most feasible location is the area between the current Walsh County Administration Building and the Walsh County Courthouse at 638 Cooper Avenue. Jurgens said the current jail is almost at capacity on a daily basis. He said in addition to that, the current jail does not house female prisoners, because they don't have the space needed for them. "So, we really need to study what the needs are in Walsh County and where do we go from here and come up with a plan," he said. Jurgens said that after the completion of a needs study and space assessment with a company in Wisconsin, it was determined that the best plan of action is to upgrade from a 16-bed facility to a 48-bed facility. "That seems like a huge jump from our current 16 beds, but if we're going to properly classify our prisoners and have the space to hold prisoners in Walsh County now and in the future, that's the size they recommend us to build," he said. In the case of female prisoners who are charged with crimes in Walsh County, the ability to house them in the new jail would be a cost savings in the long run. Jurgens said that as it stands right now, female prisoners are transferred as far away as Williston, depending on where there is available space.

-*Valley News and Views*

The Napoleon City Council agreed to enter into a contract with the **Logan** County Sheriff's Department for policing of the city of Napoleon. During the regular council meeting on Monday, April 1, with all council members were present: Mayor Todd Moos, along with the council, Rich Bjerklie, Bob Humann, Arron Marquart, John Wald, Rod Kleppe and Clark Haas, approved the agreement. Moos presented the contracted policing option by stating the conversation about policing, "got blown out of proportion," during last month's meeting. He said the quote they are looking at this month is the quote they were originally presented, with contracting services at \$3,400/ month and \$40,800/year. Moos said they can enter into a one-year contract and revisit after that. He also said a committee of Sheriff Andrew Bartholomaeus, the council's police committee, along with one Logan County Commissioner, will be formed to keep in contact for the services being offered.

-*Napoleon Homestead*



Starr Klemetsrud, Director of the Lake Region Law Enforcement Center, Lieutenant Brock Charette, and Captain Dan Kraft, LEC Corrections

## Brock Charette Awarded NDCCA Correctional Officer of the Year

**National Correctional Officer Week is May 5 – 11**

Brock Charette, a Lieutenant with the Lake Region Law Enforcement Center (LRLEC) has been awarded Correctional Officer of the Year by the ND Correctional Center Administrators Association for 2024.

LRLEC stated that Brock is a natural born leader who is given respect without demanding it. When he needs to train or give constructive criticism to his reporting staff, he remains professional and up front. He has a gift of bringing staff together and improving morale by the simple yet important thing he does. Brock has been the recipient of two life saver awards for his quick action in two separate suicide attempts (June 21, 2023 and July 16, 2023). The inmates that were injured received fast, appropriate medical intervention under Brock's leadership. NDACo joins the corrections community in congratulating Brock for this award, and we thank him for his tremendous service to LRLEC and the community.

## Jennifer May, RN, Williams County Correctional Center Receives Civilian Employee of the Year Award

The American Jail Association (AJA) announced that the AJA Awards Committee has selected Jennifer May, RN of the Williams County Correctional Center, as the recipient of the 2024 Civilian Employee of the Year Award.

Each year, AJA gives this coveted award to an individual who gives exceptional support to jail personnel. They are considered the go-to person when anyone has a question and are indispensable to the facility and staff.

Jennifer's passion has always been addiction and mental health. She started working at Williams County Correctional Center (WCCC) in 2015 and found "home." Jennifer was the first medical professional to be employed by WCCC and built the medical department from the ground up, developing policies, procedures, charting, and standing orders. She has also partnered with the local college in Williston to mentor student nurses through clinicals and preceptorships at WCCC.

Jennifer is the biggest advocate for her patients and in 2017, went all the way to



the national level of the Ryan White Program to advocate for a patient diagnosed with HIV. She was successful in bringing the Ryan White Program into WCCC to meet medical needs of this inmate with others to follow.

Jennifer has worked countless hours on and off the clock to bring care

into WCCC for the inmates. Recently, she has worked with her local human service center to bring counseling, peer support, and medication management to inmates with addiction/mental health issues with a goal of stopping the revolving door. This year, Jennifer accepted an offer from the local "F5 Project" to sit on their advisory committee to help recovering addicts succeed in society.

Jennifer has a passion and a drive to help the people of her community and thrives on watching them succeed. She is married to Shad May and has three children, Elizabeth, Bruce, and Dale.

This award will be presented at AJA's 43rd Annual Conference & Jail Expo on Tuesday, May 21, 2024, during the annual Awards Banquet.

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## Instructions On Using the New Supreme Court Public Portal

The Supreme Court conducted training on their new public portal March 28. Those who missed it can find the recording at the site below. The PowerPoint slides are posted, as well as answers to the chat questions.

Posted on the linked page is also a step-by-step video on filing a new case. A written Guide to E-filing and a Guide to Registration will be posted.

Upon go live, new web pages will be posted with more information on the new system.

State's Attorney offices with certain network setups may not be able to connect to e-filing in the new Supreme Court public portal. If anyone from



those offices needs to file until the issue is fixed, please email filings to [supclerkofcourt@ndcourts.gov](mailto:supclerkofcourt@ndcourts.gov). It will be updated when the issue is resolved.

<https://www.ndcourts.gov/supreme-court/filing>

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## ND Council of the Arts Update on Placemaking Projects

*Arts Across the Prairie (AAP)* is a first of its kind, statewide Creative Placemaking program, developed by North Dakota Council of the Arts (NDCA). Eight large-scale art installations will be created that reflect the unique history, landscape, and cultural heritage as defined by Stakeholder Groups in each of these regions. All eight artworks will be placed in decidedly rural locations. (Rural = no buildings, no people!) The art installations will reference and represent the natural setting, as well as the cultural and economic history of each region.

The RFP process has been completed in Regions 1, 2, 4, and 6 with artists selected and installation plans in development. Region 8 begins with this Request for Qualifications announcement.

Each of the eight installations will be selected through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process which includes two phases with separate application deadlines. The first phase is a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) from artists and/or creative teams. During the second phase, the top three candidates will be asked to submit proposals.

**The Region 6 Selection Committee** has announced large-scale sculptor James Culleton was selected to create an art installation to represent the Region 6 project titled – “Flyways, Byways, & Waterways.” Culleton is a Canadian contemporary multimedia artist and designer based in Winnipeg, Manitoba. He specializes in drawing, painting and large scale sculpture.

After receiving more than 35 initial applications from artists and creative teams, the committee, consisting of stakeholders, community members, and artists, conducted two rounds of reviews and online interviews. Finalists submitted proposals complete with concept renderings/drawings and estimated budgets. The installation will be located on a plot of land on the border of Stutsman and Logan Counties, near Gackle, ND.

**The Region 2 Selection Committee** for *Arts Across the Prairie: Placemaking in Rural North Dakota* has announced large-scale sculptors and design team Alan and Nicole Milligan of The Milligan Studio were selected to create an art installation to represent the Region 2 project titled – “Living Waters, Painted Skies.” After receiving more than 38 initial applications

### arts across the prairie Placemaking in Rural ND

from artists and creative teams, the committee – consisting of stakeholders, community members, and artists, conducted two rounds of reviews and online interviews. The installation will be located at Heartland Bison Ranch near Rugby in Pierce County.

Alan and Nicole Milligan presented several renderings to the Selection Committee. While a design has not been finalized, the committee was drawn to imagery inspired by water, natural lines, and other earthly elements. In their proposal for Region 2, Alan and Nicole wrote, “we offer a joyous and welcoming sculptural installation of feather form and sky colors in steel and shatter-resistant glass. This monumental sculpture is a celebration of life lived amidst Living Waters and Painted Skies.”

The Milligans explained, “This design takes the form of a glacier-scaled feather, a reminder of the waterfowl that migrate to the nearby Prairie Potholes, the geological anomaly formed by the glaciers themselves. If you look closely, the top of this ‘feather’ is an abstract of a dream-filled cloud sky. Slightly underneath is the same image in a lighter shade, designed to read as a reflection of the sky, just as clouds themselves are reflected in water. This unique design invites all to stand underneath its welcoming horizon and become drenched in color and light as they look across the vast vista and imagine a time before.”

As for the next steps of the project, Alan and Nicole will make an extended site visit, tentatively planned for March 2024, to take photographs and paint (in oil and glass) a series of images exploring the landscape to provide them with some options in preparation for fabrication. Also during the visit, the public will be invited to a community gathering where they can meet the artists, ask questions, and learn more about the project. *Details to follow.*

Region 2 stakeholders met over the course of almost two years and discussed the area’s culture, history, and unique geographical formations. In seeking a location to best represent the cultural heritage and distinct landscapes of Region 2, the Stakeholders were repeatedly drawn to sites with “prairie potholes” - a unique northern Midwest feature created by the shifting and moving of glaciers that once covered the region. In north central North Dakota, the prairie potholes have become vital havens and habitats for a wide variety of freshwater and migratory life, supporting more than 50% of North America’s waterfowl. Ultimately, the Stakeholder group selected a swath of land containing two such prairie potholes, located at the Heartland Bison Ranch.

#### Region 8 - Rugged and Unforgettable; Fifth AAP Installation

Numerous locations were researched to best represent the cultural heritage

and distinct landscapes of Region 8, with nine sites seriously considered. Ultimately, the Stakeholders chose a site located along Old Hwy 10, west of Medora, with the rugged beauty of its open spaces highlighted by green and golden fields, sweeping vistas of prairie grasslands, and the eroded buttes of the North Dakota badlands. The City of Beach, ND will facilitate the fifth statewide *Arts Across the Prairie* project.

#### Rugged and Unforgettable

*The vision is for a permanent large-scale art installation, and the finalist’s proposals should reflect their affection for and attention to place. Rural communities/residents will be living with the artwork for a long time, perhaps generations. The selection process for this project will also require the finalist’s ability to teach and share with others in order to train future North Dakota artists in the outdoor installation process.*

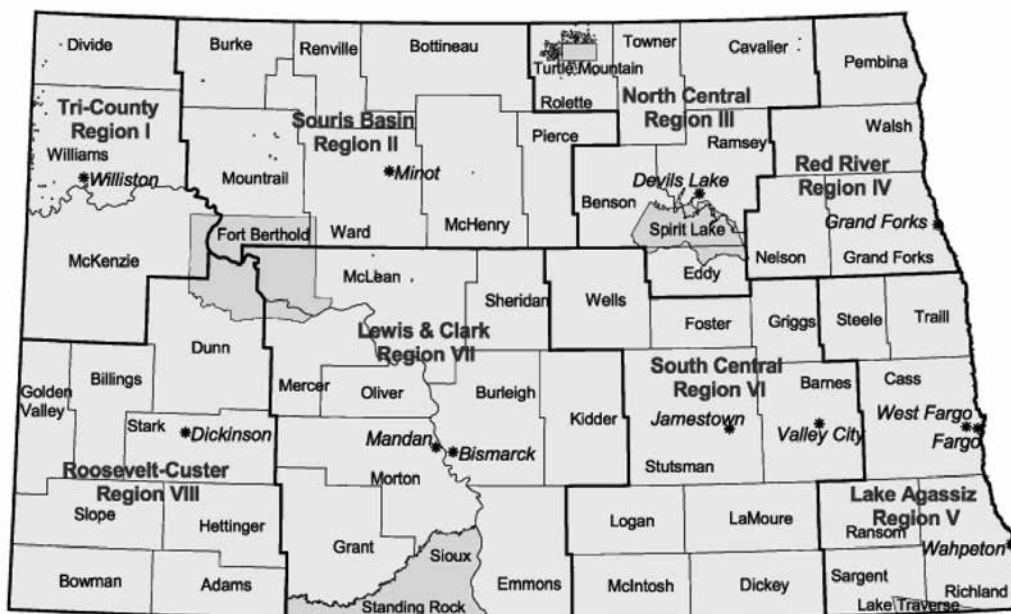
#### Who we are looking for:

An artist or creative team may apply; the total fee for the project will not alter. **You must be an established artist, with experience** in large-scale outdoor installations, public art, placemaking or placekeeping, community work, and teaching.

The initial submission of materials and artist applications deadline is Friday, May 31, 2024. From the submitted applications, only three finalists will be selected to submit project proposals. The Selection Committee will announce the artist/creative team for the Region 8 - **Rugged and Unforgettable**, *Arts Across the Prairie* project in early August 2024.

#### The goals of *Arts Across the Prairie* are to:

- **Foster** creative cross-county networking and regional collaboration
- **Promote** tourism for in- and out-of-state visitors
- **Stimulate** economic development and activity in rural areas of North Dakota
- **Build** stronger arts communities across the state
- **Invest** in North Dakota’s creative sector with professional training and support to heighten visibility
- **Bolster** NDCA’s role as a rural development partner
- **Celebrate** the cultural heritage of rural areas



## ND Department of Water Resources Launches Interactive Aquifer Map

BISMARCK, ND - The North Dakota Department of Water Resources (DWR) has launched an interactive map of the potential for managed aquifer recharge (MAR) across the state. (info at: [//www.dwr.nd.gov/pdfs/managed\\_aquifer\\_recharge\\_fact\\_sheet.pdf](https://www.dwr.nd.gov/pdfs/managed_aquifer_recharge_fact_sheet.pdf))

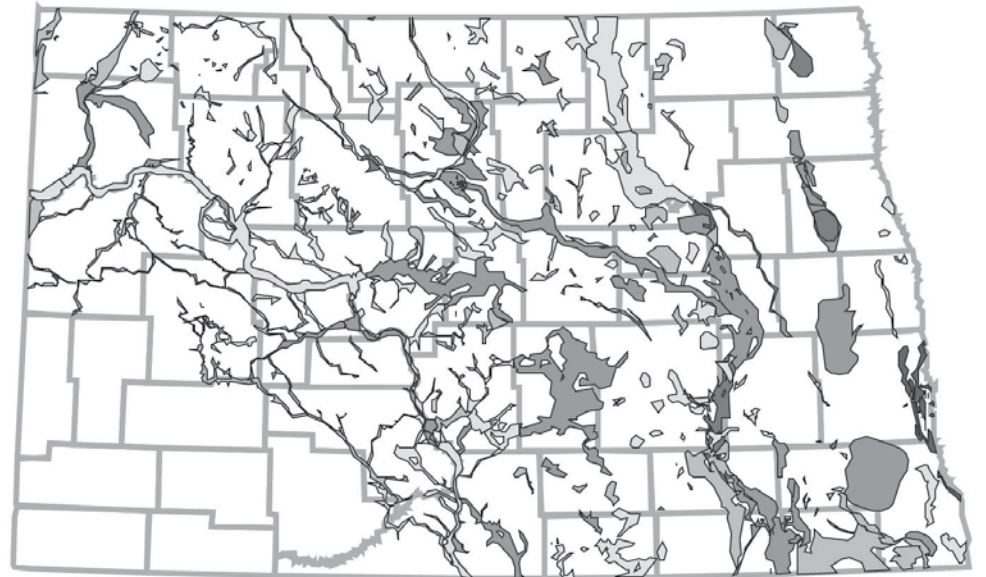
The map, available at [mar.dwr.nd.gov](https://mar.dwr.nd.gov), provides users with information on the feasibility to capture a portion of excess or abundant surface water flows to store in an aquifer for later use either through well injection or surface infiltration. Much like surface water reservoirs that augment variable river and stream flow conditions, MAR allows aquifers to be used as underground reservoirs.

“Given the growth and progression of water development in North Dakota, many of the state’s groundwater systems are now approaching full appropriation,” Andrea Travnicek, director of the Department of Water Resources said. “As many of North

Dakota’s major groundwater systems approach sustainable limits, it will become increasingly difficult to approve additional appropriation without some form of augmentation such as MAR.”

The department completed a statewide assessment of MAR this year. The purpose was to evaluate the feasibility and use of MAR in North Dakota’s glacial drift aquifers to extend and enhance their resiliency. The online map ranks each aquifer in a five-tier structure, from poor potential to excellent. The map also allows users to find further information regarding the extent of the aquifer as well as its water quality represented by total dissolved solids (TDS). This will serve as an important step in North Dakota’s ability to strategically locate and utilize MAR in the future, according to the DWR.

The DWR will use the data to develop recommendations of future MAR projects in North Dakota. The



department will consider the overall need for recharge, hydrologic conditions, source water suitability, water quality, environmental impacts, regulations, costs and stakeholders when determining which aquifers for the proposed pilot projects.

“The report provides the foundation for a second phase of MAR assessment in North Dakota,” North Dakota State Engineer John Paczkowski said. “More specifically, future efforts could include scenario modeling of MAR practices to

address growing agricultural, industrial, and residential water needs.”

MAR has previously been used or tested in several instances and at multiple locations in North Dakota. Most notably, beginning in 1932, Valley City recharged Sheyenne River water into an abandoned gravel pit overlying a surficial aquifer where a hand dug municipal well was located. That effective design is still in operation today, with no major changes to the original concept.

## Property Tax Credit Application Closes With 138,000 Households

Mary Steurer | North Dakota Monitor

“About 138,000 North Dakota households applied for up to \$500 off their residential property taxes by the Monday night deadline,” Tax Commissioner Brian Kroshus said.

“It was finished with a rush of applications coming in right at the end,” he said.

Lawmakers created the program in 2023 to provide blanket property tax relief for homeowners across the state.

The office doesn’t have solid numbers on how many North Dakotans qualified, but Kroshus previously estimated the figure to be roughly 150,000 households. Most residents who own and occupy homes in North Dakota were eligible to apply.

In the coming months, the Office of State Tax Commissioner will communicate with North Dakota county governments with information about which property owners in their communities applied.

“They’ll each receive their own dataset, if you will,” Kroshus said. “They’ll be assisting in vetting the applications, as well.”

Homeowners who provided an email address with their applications can expect to receive notice this summer that their application was approved.

The agency will also be implementing a “lookup tool” that will allow people to



North Dakota Tax Commissioner  
Brian Kroshus

monitor the status of their applications online. It’ll be a few months before that’s ready, though, Kroshus said.

The Office of State Tax Commissioner began accepting applications for the credit in January. Originally, applications were expected to close March 31, but the agency postponed the deadline to Monday, April 1 to give residents more time to apply.

Approved applicants will receive a discount on their 2024 property tax bills.

The office advertised the program through the mail, as well as media

interviews and advertisements, Kroshus said.

The Legislature set aside \$100 million for the so-called primary residence credit in North Dakota’s 2023-2025 state budget. Since the credit is funded by the state, it won’t affect local property tax collections.

The program is one of several cuts to income and property taxes adopted by the Legislature during the 2023 session.

The package, estimated at roughly \$515 million, also expanded an existing

property tax credit for elderly and disabled homeowners. That program, called the homestead credit, was formerly only available to North Dakotans with annual incomes of \$42,000 or less. Lawmakers in 2023 raised that ceiling to \$70,000.

Other North Dakota tax relief programs include assistance for disabled veterans, low-income renters and owners of farm residences. Visit the Office of State Tax Commissioner’s website for more information at [www.tax.nd.gov](https://www.tax.nd.gov).

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## The Selective Service System Seeks Board Members in All Counties

Tony L. Mutzenberger | Selective Service State Director

Each county has a five-person Selective Service Local Board. In the event of a national emergency or wartime mobilization/draft, these citizen volunteers will review applications for deferment, postponement, or hardship from residents of that county, based on the individual applicant's circumstances and situation.

Our goal is to fill as many of these positions as possible during peacetime, to ensure board members are appointed and trained BEFORE they need to serve.

Time commitment is minimal; after the initial (online) board member training, there are no regular meetings or duties during peacetime. These boards reflect some of the oldest models of our democracy, with determinations made at the community level by our own neighbors...so it's critical to have qualified, responsible men and women available to fill these roles.

### HOW LOCAL BOARD MEMBERS ARE APPOINTED:

Local Board members are endorsed by the governor and appointed by the

Director of Selective Service, in the name of the president. If you are interested in serving as a local board member, you may request an application or apply online. Some requirements are:

- Must be a U.S. citizen, at least 18 years old, no criminal record
- May NOT be a retired or active/current member of the Armed Forces or any Reserve component
- Must live in the county in which the board has jurisdiction
- Must have registered themselves with Selective Service
- Be willing to spend at least a year in the position and complete the initial (online) training.

To request an application and/or for more information on the Local Board Member program, contact Tony Mutzenberger, ND Selective Service State Director, at [tmutzenberger@sss.gov](mailto:tmutzenberger@sss.gov) or (701) 240-0465. Or you can go to <https://www.sss.gov/volunteers/> and select "Get Involved" for more information.



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# 2024 COUNTY CALENDAR

## May

1-31 \_\_\_\_\_ Mental Health Awareness Month  
 14-16 \_\_\_\_\_ Williston Basin Petroleum Conference, Bismarck Event Center  
 27 \_\_\_\_\_ Memorial Day

## June

11 \_\_\_\_\_ Primary Election  
 12-13 \_\_\_\_\_ Energy Development and Transmission Committee, Energy and Environmental Research Center, Grand Forks  
 18 \_\_\_\_\_ Juvenile Justice Committee, Harvest Room, Capitol  
 18 \_\_\_\_\_ Tentative – Government Finance Committee  
 18-20 \_\_\_\_\_ Records Convention, Dickinson TownPlace Suites  
 19 \_\_\_\_\_ Judiciary Committee, Roughrider Room, Capitol  
 19 \_\_\_\_\_ Budget Section, Senate Chamber, Capitol  
 19-20 \_\_\_\_\_ Summit on Behavioral Health in Energy Country, Dickinson Astoria Hotel & Event Center  
 19-21 \_\_\_\_\_ State’s Attorneys Summer Meeting, Bismarck Quality Inn  
 20 \_\_\_\_\_ Legislative Audit and Fiscal Review Committee, Roughrider Room, Capitol  
 20 \_\_\_\_\_ Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, NDSU, Fargo  
 20 \_\_\_\_\_ Tax Relief Advisory Committee, Harvest Room, Capitol  
 21 \_\_\_\_\_ Taxation Committee, Roughrider Room, Capitol

## July

4 \_\_\_\_\_ Independence Day  
 9-11 \_\_\_\_\_ ND Auditors & Treasurers Association Conference, Fargo Holiday Inn  
 9-11 \_\_\_\_\_ Human Service Zone Directors Annual Meeting, Bismarck Hampton Inn & Suites  
 12-15 \_\_\_\_\_ NACo Annual Conference, Tampa, FL  
 24 \_\_\_\_\_ Audit Summit (virtual conference for local governments)  
 24-25 \_\_\_\_\_ County Tour to McLean, Mercer, Oliver, Renville and Ward Counties



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- ▲ Dozers
- ▲ Compact equipment
- ▲ Skid steers and attachments
- ▲ Snow removal equipment & attachments
- ▲ Generators
- ▲ Water pumps

### Aggregate

- ▲ Full-line aggregate processing equipment

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