

Counties Association Chooses New Leadership

Cavalier, Griggs/Nelson, Mountrail, Steele/Trail and Stutsman Counties Represented on Executive Committee

Bismarck, ND - The ND Association of Counties (NDACo) elected new leadership to its Board of Directors during the 2024 Annual Conference in Bismarck. County officials from every county in the state gathered to take in multiple workshops on topics important to counties, network with other officials, and focus on future potential legislation and other issues.

The new officers on the NDACo Board of Directors are:

Trudy Ruland, Mountrail County Commissioner, was elected President

Chad Kaiser, Stutsman County Sheriff, was elected 1st Vice President

Nick Moser, Cavalier County Commissioner, was elected 2nd Vice President

Kim Jacobson, Agassiz Valley Human Service Zone Director, was elected 3rd Vice President

Jayne Tenneson, Nelson/Griggs County State's Attorney, became Past President

Don Flaherty, Dickey County Tax Director, was recently elected by the ND County Tax Directors Association to represent them on the Board.

Joshua Frey, McHenry/Towner County State's Attorney, was recently elected by the ND State's Attorneys Association to represent them on the Board.

Aaron Mork, Nelson County Commissioner, was recently elected by



ND Association of Counties Board of Directors Executive Officers, L-R: Nick Moser, 2nd VP (Cavalier), Chad Kaiser, 1st VP (Stutsman), Trudy Ruland, President (Mountrail), Kim Jacobson, 3rd Vice President (Agassiz Valley) Jayme Tenneson, Past President (Nelson/Griggs).

Region 4 to represent them on the Board.

Each member of the NDACo Board of Directors represents a Member Association or Commissioner Region. A full list of Board Members, including pictures, can be found at www.ndaco.org/about-ndaco/board-of-directors.

BREAKING NEWS: As this issue went to press, election results began rolling in.

NDACo thanks all county officials and all our coalition partners for their hard work defeating Measure 4!

North Dakota County Auditors Association Named 2024 Election Hero Award Recipient

Bismarck, ND - North Dakota Secretary of State Michael Howe has named the North Dakota County Auditors Association as the recipient of the 2024 North Dakota Election

Hero Award. The honor was presented October 21 during the opening session of the North Dakota Association of Counties (NDACo) Annual Conference.

"We would not be able to hold North Dakota elections without the hard work and dedication of our state's county auditors," says Secretary Howe. "The County Auditors Association gives them the opportunity to have conversations and support each other as they administer North Dakota's elections securely and with integrity."

The County Auditors Association was nominated by North Dakota Elections Director Erika White, who highlighted the work that auditors and their staff put into running elections.

"Auditors follow laws and processes, test equipment, train election workers, and ensure each voter in our great state has access to the ballot box," said White.



"Being a County Auditor is sometimes a thankless job, but each one takes great pride in the services they're offering the voters of North Dakota."

Formed in the early 1900s, the ND County Auditors Association helps the 53 County Auditors in North Dakota keep up to date with changing methods of administration and with laws affecting their offices.

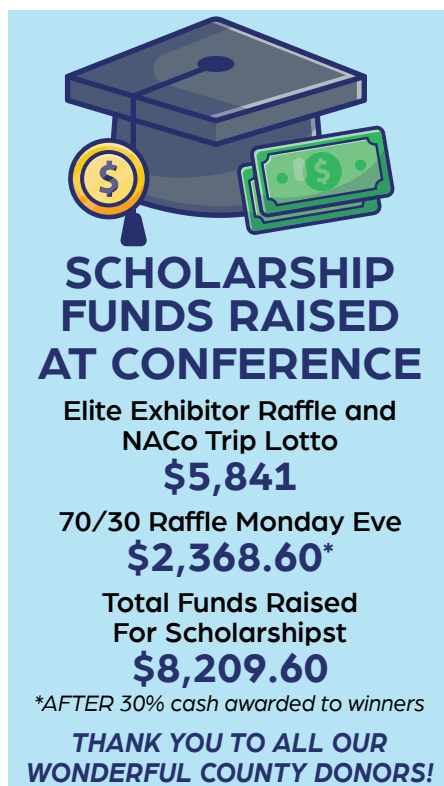
The North Dakota Election Hero Award was created in honor of National Election Hero Day, which celebrates the importance of election teams, poll workers, state leaders, and the many people who

work to provide safe, secure, and accessible elections. This is the second year the award has been presented in North Dakota.

See photo p. 13.

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SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS RAISED AT CONFERENCE

Elite Exhibitor Raffle and NACo Trip Lotto
\$5,841

70/30 Raffle Monday Eve
\$2,368.60*

Total Funds Raised For Scholarshipst
\$8,209.60

*AFTER 30% cash awarded to winners

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Board Member PROFILE



TONY GRINDBERG
Cass County Commissioner

What caused you to decide to run for a seat on the county commission? I've been curious how you would compare county work to state legislative work. I was encouraged to run for an open county commission seat in 2022 to bring my legislative and city experience to county government as a result of term limits impacting two longtime Cass County commissioners who cannot run again in 2024.

Family: I'm married to my wife, Karen, and we have three adult children.

Other involvements: I enjoy spending time with family and our first grandchild, along with hunting, fishing and golfing.

Favorite movie: My all-time favorite is *American Graffiti*.

What is on your current playlist: I listen to a lot of top country music including Eric Church and Tim McGraw.

Currently Reading: *Lone Ranger* by C.J. Box.

Something people don't know about you: I'm a private pilot and spent 15 years officiating high school basketball.

Life/work philosophy: I believe life is a journey where family comes first. Work hard and learn from your mistakes.

Favorite quote: Years ago, I found a framed quote by President Abraham Lincoln at Union Station in Washington, D.C.: "Things may come to those who wait... but only the things left by those who hustle."



NDACo Executive Committee

Trudy Ruland, President Mountrail
Chad Kaiser, 1st Vice President..... Stutsman
Nick Moser, 2nd Vice President Cavalier
Kim Jacobson 3rd Vice President Agassiz Valley
Jayme Tenneson, Past President Nelson/Griggs

Directors

Beau Anderson..... Williams
Don Flaherty..... Dickey
Jamee Folk Mercer
Josh Frey..... McHenry/Towner
Tony Grindberg Cass
Becky Hagel Foster
Erica Johnsrud McKenzie
Wanda Knutson..... Mercer
Dana Larsen..... Ward
Aaron Mork..... Nelson
Shirley Murray..... Sheridan
Scott Ouradnik..... Slope
Kelly Palm Griggs

Ex Officio Members

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

NRG Technology Services Staff:
See page 7



NDCCA Executive Committee

Joan Hollekim, President..... Mountrail
Neal Messer, Vice President Stark
Glenda Collier, Treasurer Eddy
Chad Peterson, Past President..... Cass

Directors

Jason Arth..... Sargent
Tracey Dolezal..... Dunn
Cory Hanson Williams
Jim Kapitan Cass
Andy Zachmeier..... Morton

Ex Officio Members

Scott Ouradnik (Slope)..... Western Interstate Region Board
Perry Turner (McIntosh) NACo Board

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Alisha Adolf..... Professional Development Manager (ILG)
Kaitlyn Bakken GIS Coordinator
Cassie Braun..... Accounting Assistant
Michael Casey... CEG Underwriting & Loss Control Manager
Genny Dienstmann..... Operations
Patrick Engelhart..... CEG Safety Specialist
Jeff Eslinger..... Communications Director
Ryan Gellner..... Vision Zero Outreach Program Manager
Peter Halbach Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor
Cathy Heidt..... Administrative Secretary
Teanna Hintz..... Accounting Assistant
Jason Horning..... Next Gen 9-1-1 Program Manager
Lisa Jahner..... Research & Programs
Mary Korsmo..... SACCHO Executive Director
Kathy Kottenbrock..... 9-1-1 Project Manager
Jennifer Morman..... CEG Claims Manager
Donnell Preskey..... Government/Public Relations Specialist
Linda Svihovec..... Research Analyst
Michelle Tabbert..... Administrative Officer
Angie Wentland Controller
Mike Wolf..... CEG Underwriting & Loss Control Manager

FROM the COUNTIES

Howdy from the Ruland Ranch!

I, along with my husband, Scott, operate a ranch in the “peninsula” south of New Town. The peninsula is formed by the Missouri River on the west and south and the Van Hook Arm of Lake Sakakawea on the east. Though most of our pasture and cropland is in Mountrail County, we have fields in McLean (far southeast side of the peninsula) and look out onto both Dunn and McKenzie—the four-county region!

The seasons on our ranch are defined by not only the time of year but by the activity. Late fall is busy time of hauling hay home, working cows, selling and weaning calves. Luckily, we have no sunflowers, so we are done combining. Our crops came off better than expected considering the drought. The cows, on the other hand, are not happy as the pastures are all dried up. Oh! so much better than burned up...my heart goes out to all those who experienced the devastating fires earlier this fall.

The seasons in the counties are similar to the ranch. Midsummer into fall counties are busy planning and budgeting for the next year. Road departments are working to finish mowing ditches and are starting to switch equipment from summer to winter. But every two years, our counties are front and center in the most important season for our nation...election season. Hats off to the Auditors and their staff for their hard work and professionalism to assure that this and every election goes well. Conducting elections are best done locally with the counties.

I am writing this column before Election Day as it is due the Monday before. I don't know the outcome of the many local, state and national races or the five ballot measures. Of the five, Measure 4 will have a direct impact on county government, if passed.



Trudy Ruland | NDACo President
Mountrail County Commissioner

It gives me heartburn, the thought of completely scrapping the current revenue mechanism for local governments and obligating the State with about \$1.6 billion annual need. We could debate forever on what is fair or unfair, wasteful or needed spending; but we will have to create new revenue mechanisms for local governments in less than a year to replace one that took many, many years to develop. Roll up your sleeves, because we will have a lot of work to do in a short time!

If Measure 4 does not pass, we will still have a lot of work to do in the following legislative “season”. We still need to work to find alternatives to property tax funding to lessen the burden on the property taxpayer. Now, if that last sentence sounds familiar, it should. It is part of Resolution 2024-01-one of the nine resolutions adopted by the members of the NDACo and NDCCA at our Annual Conference. Those resolutions will be my focus this upcoming legislative season as I work to represent y'all.

FROM the COMMISSIONERS

On To the Next Season

Game 5 of the World Series ended in victory for the Dodgers. I personally have not been much of a baseball fan since the Kirby Puckett era, but I did catch a play or two. The Dodgers were not the only team that knocked it out of the park; the NDACo Team did an amazing job providing us with an educational, entertaining and emotional conference. I am proud of our NDACo Team and want to thank them for a spectacular conference. I also want to thank our sponsors, exhibitors, speakers, attendees, and anyone else that contributed to the success of our 40th Annual Conference. Keynote speaker and entertainer, Christopher Carter, certainly did wow the crowd; I am still baffled. For those that were not able to attend the closing session, you missed an experience of a lifetime. I don't believe I have ever heard a speaker that touched me as much as Hunter Pinke. What an amazing young man and what an emotional story he tells. We should all strive to be a Hunter Pinke.

Election Day is less than a week away and Measure 4 will be one of the most impactful measures in North Dakota history. I don't know what the results of the election will be, but I honestly don't feel there will be a winner either way on election night. Regardless of the outcome, please keep in mind it was our member associations that voted to oppose the elimination of property tax at their annual conference in October 2023. This year the associations adopted a whole new set of policies that will give our staff at NDACo direction. The NDACo Team was tasked with a



Joan Hollekim | NDCCA President
Mountrail County Commissioner

difficult job this election season. Let us remind ourselves, they are part of our family as we continue our journey to make counties strong.

I want to take the opportunity to thank all the commissioners that willingly stepped up to the plate and volunteered to be on NDCCA standing committees. Your participation and that of all the officials is important to our successes and in giving the NDCCA and the NDACo direction to lead counties. The legislative committee will have their work cut out for them during this session.

In closing, I will unfortunately miss the next county tour. I will say it over and over, the county tours are the most satisfying part of this job. Thank you to all the counties visited in the 2024 county tours; your hospitality was second to none.

FROM the ASSOCIATION

A Great Gathering! Let's Do Another One!

Wow, I cannot believe another Annual Conference has come and gone! It is always good to see so many of you. Virtual meetings certainly have their place in this world; but to me, you can never replicate that feeling of a handshake or hug from an old (or new) friend.

We here at NDACo are still in the debrief process to ensure our next conference continues to not only meet your expectations but exceed them. We are also looking for new uses for a couple hundred plastic steins! (Just a hint: you might see these mugs in the goodie bags on the next county tours).

A big highlight of every conference is the Excellence in County Government awards. There are so many dedicated county employees just trying to make their slice of the world better, and I only regret we don't give out more awards. This year's surprise award by the Secretary of

State celebrating the County Auditors and their efforts to keep our voting rights protected was certainly well deserved. By the time you read this I am sure we had another successfully run election in North Dakota. Thanks to all the Auditors and election staff for a job well done.

Election time is also a reminder that right around the corner is the upcoming Legislative Session. We will begin organizing our legislative committees. We are always looking for county officials to help us engage our state elected leaders, so give me a holler if you would like to become more involved. The more the merrier!


Speaking of engaging legislators during the session, we are trying something new next year. NDACo has historically sponsored a county legislative get-together mid-Session. This Session, we are going to partner with all the other



Aaron Birst | NDACo Executive Director

political subdivisions to do a “Local Government Capitol Connection” Summit. So, block your calendars off for coming to Bismarck February 18-19. It will be a great educational and fun event. Keep your eyes peeled for further details in the coming months.

Thank you all!


NORTH DAKOTA
County NEWS

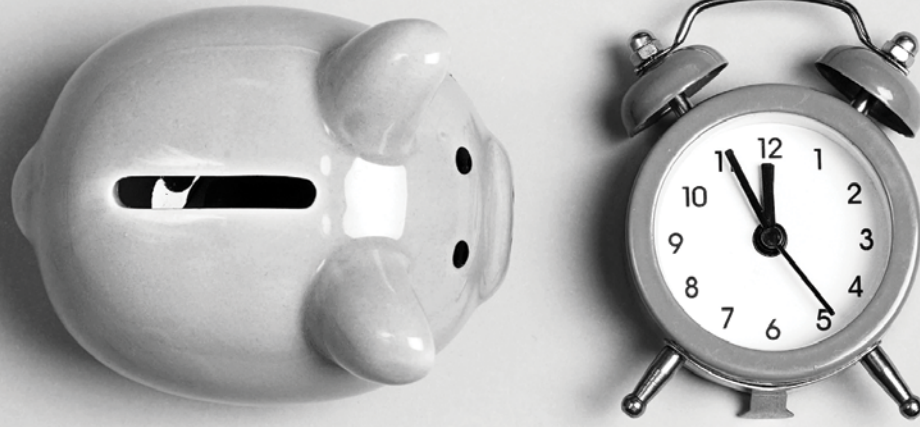
Aaron Birst, Managing Editor
Jeff Eslinger, Editor

Clearwater Communications,
Layout/Design

ND Association of Counties
PO Box 877
Bismarck, ND 58502-0877
Ph 701-328-7300
Website: www.ndaco.org

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North Dakota Election Highlights

Donnell Preskey | NDACo Government/Public Relations Specialist

The General Election proved to be successful for North Dakota Counties with the defeat of Measure 4. 63% of voters were opposed to the measure to eliminate property taxes. A county-by-county analysis shows that the No vote was in the majority in all 53 counties, in some counties the No vote was as high as 75%.

“It was apparent during the campaign that North Dakotans are frustrated with property taxes, but the defeat of Measure 4 signals that North Dakotans realize that proposal was not the answer,” said NDACo Executive Director Aaron Birst. “The failure of Measure 4 also indicates that ultimately citizens trust their local government to make budget decisions rather than the Legislature.”

NDACo joined the Keep It Local Coalition after NDACo members passed a resolution to oppose efforts to eliminate property taxes. Several other county member associations also joined in the efforts to inform voters about the importance of property taxes in funding local services.

“Many county members spent their own time to meet and inform North Dakota citizens about their concerns on Measure 4. Those efforts paid off. Thank you to all the county officials who used their voice to inform voters,” said Birst.

Property tax relief will be a top priority for the Legislature to address in the 2025 Session. It is certain legislators will bring forward various concepts for

County Measures - 2024 General Election Ballot			
Property Tax Levy Measures			Yes %
	Divide #1	Levy up to 30 mills for road and bridges	65%
	Walsh #1	Levy 10 mill capital projects levy for roads and bridges	63%
	Pembina #1	Increase 1/4 mill to 3/4 mill for historical society	35%
	McIntosh #1	Increase 1/4 mill to 3/4 mill for historical society	35%
	Sargent #2	Increase 1/4 mill to 3/4 mill for historical society	44%
	Hettinger	Levy up to 4 mills for extension services	45%
Home Rule Measures			
	Morton #1	1% sales tax for public safety - offset property tax	59%
	Sargent #1	0.5% sales tax for infrastructure - offset property tax	45%
Other Measures			
	McHenry #1	Increase 911 fee from \$1 to \$1.50	54%
	Nelson #1	Appointment of State's Attorney	31%
	Mercer #1	Make Auditor, Treasurer, Recorder Appointed	13%
	Williams #1	Abolish Weather Modification Authority	71%
	Mountrail #1	Abolish Weather Modification Authority	66%

providing further relief to citizens, but we also recognize that limitations on the level of increase will also be part of the conversation. In a news conference the day after the Election, Governor-Elect Kelly Armstrong said property tax relief will be his number one priority and finding a level that is sustainable long term is critical.

Voters also rejected Measure 5, to legalize marijuana, but more narrowly. The measure was defeated with a vote of 53% No to 47% Yes. This is the third attempt to get voters to legalize marijuana. Previous measures were on the ballot in 2022 and 2018.

North Dakotans approved reducing how much Legacy Fund principal lawmakers can spend from 15% to 5%. Voters defeated the measure that required constitutional measures to be approved in two elections and to be one subject only.

County Measures and Races

County Measures were more mixed. Divide and Walsh Counties had measures to increase taxes for roads and bridges which passed with more than 60% support. Three counties had proposals to increase taxes for historical society and one with an increase for extension; those measures failed. Two counties proposed a sales tax increase to offset property taxes. A 1% sales tax increase in Morton County was approved to be dedicated to public safety. However, a .5% sales tax for infrastructure in Sargent County was defeated. McHenry County residents approved increasing the 911 fee to

\$1.50. Measures to allow counties to appoint officials failed in Nelson and Mercer. Voters in Williams and Mountrail approved abolishing their Weather Modification Authorities.

There were many county races as well. 115 Commissioners were on the ballot with only 48 incumbents running unopposed. There are 39 newly elected commissioners. Due to our print deadline, we were unable to complete an analysis of these races.

Legislative Races

Republicans have retained super majorities in both the North Dakota House and Senate. In the House, Republicans won 46 of the 51 available seats. 25 seats were up in the Senate, with Republicans winning 22 of the races.

Voters Show Up

A record number of North Dakotans cast their ballots before Election Day with 51% voting early or voting absentee. 62.5% of eligible voters cast 371,510 ballots.

Election results are unofficial until county canvassing boards meet on November 18 and are certified by the State Canvassing Board on November 20.

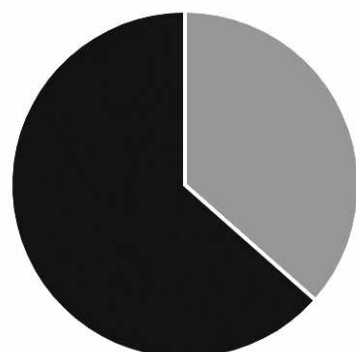
Related to prohibiting all political subdivisions from levying any tax on real property except for bonded indebtedness until paid.

Vote For 1

Precints Fully: 385 / 385

Partially: 0 / 385

● Yes	129,753	36.53%
● No ✓	225,403	63.47%
TOTAL VOTES	355,156	



Save The Date: Local Government Capitol Connection

Feb. 18-19 at Bismarck Event Center

Donnell Preskey | NDACo Government/Public Relations Specialist

NDACo, along with our local government partners from the ND League of Cities, ND Recreation and Parks, ND School Boards and ND Townships are putting together a joint event during the Legislative Session. This will replace the NDACo County Day. The event is scheduled for Feb. 18 and 19 and will be held at the Bismarck Event Center with a legislative social being held Feb. 18th. We will be inviting all our county members to attend. NDACo will start to get the word out about this event and include the attached save the date in future marketing to members. Below is the tentative agenda.

County attendees will get 5 FREE ILG training hours.

Please save the date on your calendar as well so you can take part and mingle with our members. With the different associations sharing in the responsibilities, there won't be a ton of requirements from our staff. But we will know more as details get finalized.

Join us for this excellent new opportunity for our county members to collaborate with other local government partners.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT CAPITOL CONNECTION

AGENDA

Tuesday, February 18

3:00 p.m. — *Welcome*

3:10 p.m. — *Governor's Address*

3:40 p.m. — *"How To" on Legislative Engagement:* Learn effective strategies for engaging with legislators and advocating for your community's needs. This session will provide practical tips and best practices for building relationships with legislators and growing your confidence in the legislative process.

4:25 p.m. — *Local Government Legislative Priorities Panel:* Join a panel of representatives from the political subdivision state associations as they discuss pressing legislative topics affecting local government.

5:30-7:30 p.m. — *Legislative Social:* Network with fellow local government officials and professionals, along with legislators and key stakeholders in a relaxed setting. This social event is an excellent opportunity to build relationships and discuss the day's insights in an informal atmosphere.

Wednesday, February 19

8:30 a.m. — *Welcome and Announcements*

8:40 a.m. — *Minority Leaders Address*

9:10 a.m. — *Property Tax Panel:* Property tax is a hot topic this legislative session. Hear from a panel of experts about property tax legislation that has been proposed and how it may impact political subdivisions.

10:10 a.m. — *Break*

10:30 a.m. — *NDIRF Presentation*

11:00 a.m. — *Majority Leaders Address*

11:30 a.m. — *Lunch:* Grab a boxed lunch at the Event Center before attending floor sessions or legislative hearings, or attend the Public Safety Lunch at the Capitol – *Indicate your choice on your registration*

**Attendees are encouraged to attend floor sessions and legislative hearings throughout each day to deepen their understanding of ongoing legislative activities.*

Registration

The cost to attend is \$60 per person. Registration will open Dec. 2, 2024, on the ND School Board Association website at ndsba.org.

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Don't Get Caught in a Phishing Scam

Phishing emails have recently circulated in which employees appear to request a change to their direct deposit or banking account information. So, how can your entity determine which requests are legitimate and which are not?

Here are some steps your entity's employees can take to help reduce the chance they get caught in a phishing scam:

1. Verify the sender's email address, specifically its domain. The NDIRF's domain is bolded here: First.Last@**ndirf.com**. If the sender's domain doesn't match the domain used in their previous emails, it may be a sign the email is a phishing scam.
2. Be wary of emails that pressure you to act quickly. Scientific tests have shown that time pressure drastically reduces detection accuracy¹, making it important you slow down when engaging with emails.
3. Review the greeting and tone of the email to determine if it's consistent with the sender's previous emails. Scammers "often target a broad set of victims at one time, [so] they often use generic greetings like 'Dear Customer,' or they may even skip the greeting altogether²". Their emails may also contain "unnatural phrasing²" among other errors.
4. Don't click on links or download attachments unless you know the email is legitimate. Links and attachments are tools scammers often use to install malware "that will infect your PC³".

To help your entity's employees outsmart phishing scams, here are some actions it can include in its email, computer, and/or technology policy:

1. Report suspicious emails to its IT, security, or other designated department.
2. Verify an employee's request or safety of links or attachments by



directly calling the employee or talking with them in person.

3. Complete the NDIRF's LocalGovU Computer Security Basics course, available free through your entity's NDIRF membership.

Contact NDIRF Director of Member Services Corey Olson at (701) 751-9107 or Corey.Olson@ndirf.com if your entity wants further information about LocalGovU, our online training platform offered free to NDIRF members.

Brian D. Schmidt is an attorney and partner at Smith Porsborg Schweigert, Armstrong, Moldenhauer & Smith.

References

¹Butavicius, M, Taib, R, & Han, S. December 2022. *Why people keep falling for phishing scams: The effects of time pressure and deception cues on the detection of phishing emails*. Retrieved 9 September 2024 from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0167404822003297>.

²Rafter, D., 30 July 2024. *10 real phishing email examples*. Retrieved 9 Sept. 2024 from <https://us.norton.com/blog/online-scams/phishing-email-examples>.

³Moon, B. 14 January 2016. *Don't Click On Strange Links: 6 Tips To Avoid Phishing Attacks*. Retrieved 9 September 2024 from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/bradmoon/2016/01/14/how-to-avoid-becoming-a-victim-of-phishing/>.



NDACo Legislative Blog – Your Source for Legislative Information

Donnell Preskey | NDACo Government/Public Relations Specialist

The North Dakota Legislative Session is just two months away. Before the action starts, make sure you subscribe to the North Dakota Counties Legislative Blog at ndcounties.blog. The blog, once again, will be the primary tool NDACo will use to push out county related legislative information. This is where you can read weekly reports, weekly schedules, receive updates on bills and more.

How to subscribe:

- ➔ Go to ndcounties.blog
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- ➔ Enter email in the box to the left of subscribe box
- ➔ Hit Subscribe

You will receive an email from the [ndcounties](http://ndcounties.blog) blog whenever the blog is updated.

Can I Shop Online Privately?

Amber Schriock | NRG Technology Services

You know exactly what to get for the special people in your life this holiday season, but how can you keep it secret from them? Holiday shopping can be a bit tricky if you must use a shared device, for example, at a library or a hotel. It's much preferred to shop from your smartphone or personal tablet/laptop!

A small adjustment to keeping your personal shopping secure is to make sure your browsing history isn't shared between devices. Perhaps you are logged into your Google account or Apple ID on multiple devices, so the accounts sync automatically. This would also include

favorites or bookmarked sites and saved passwords.

Next step: incognito, or private, browsing. Google Chrome has an option to open sites in an incognito window, which basically means that it doesn't save browsing history, cookies, and site data to your device. The browsing history isn't documented in the browser, whether you signed into your account or not. Microsoft Edge has an option to open sites in an InPrivate window, which does the same thing as the Google option.

Happy shopping!

NRG TECHNOLOGY STAFF



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 Amber Schriock Service Manager
 AJ SnyderField Technician
 Kay Ternes..... Service Coordinator
 David Weiand Systems Engineer

Editor's Note: BRIEFS are collected from newspapers throughout the state over the past two months. Counties with news items to include in future issues are encouraged to submit them to jeff.eslinger@ndaco.org.

Barry Jager, Emergency Management, presented information on lock down kits to the **Burke** County Commissioners at their regular meeting held Tuesday, Sept. 17. After polling the three county schools, an interest was presented for lock down kits for each class room at the Powers Lake, Burke Central and Bowbells schools. Jager explained that when a lock down situation prevents students from being able to leave the classroom, it's critical that every classroom have emergency supplies to support the teacher and the students. The kits cost \$92.03 each, have a five-year shelf life and supplies a classroom of 30 individuals. Items contained in the five-gallon bucket container include essential bar (emergency food ration); SOS emergency drinking water pouches; plastic whistle with lanyard; emergency survival blanket; plastic tarp; Nitrile gloves; toilet paper roll; hand sanitizer; T-5 toilet chemicals; biohazard waste bags; snap-on toilet seat lid; and

duct tape. Jager has funding available in the Equipment and Training Budget to cover the expense. He would like to purchase 70 kits to cover all the classrooms in the three county schools. The commissioners were in favor of the purchase with Commissioner Shannon Holter stating, "I hope we never have to use it."

- *Burke County Tribune*

The **Pembina** County Commission during their July 16, regularly scheduled meeting voted in favor of switching their dispatching services over to State Radio. In a release from the Pembina County Auditor's Office received Sept. 17, it was stated the Pembina County Commission made this decision due to cost, staffing and the fact that almost half (25) of all counties in North Dakota have made the switch to State Radio. The cost analysis indicated that Pembina County would save approximately \$90,000 to \$100,000 per year by making the transition to State Radio. Pembina County has struggled to staff the dispatch center for a full 24-hour period. The ability to properly staff the dispatch center was also a key factor in the commission's decision. According to the statement,

the commission considered each option thoroughly before making the final decision to close the local dispatch center.

- *Walsh County Record*

The **Walsh** County Commission, at its September monthly meeting, discussed the ballot measure they are posing to voters of Walsh County for the upcoming November election. The question states, "Shall the Walsh County Commission be authorized to levy up to an initial 10 mills for capital projects to be used to maintain roads and bridges?" "It's pretty straightforward," Walsh County Commission Chairperson Karen Anderson said. Commissioner Barta questioned if some wording could be added so it doesn't look like we are raising the mill levy rate by 10 mills. "I'm just worried because of this negative property tax thing on the ballot that people will think that a yes vote will raise their taxes by 10 mills," he said. According to Walsh County Auditor Kristi Quibell, back in 2020 the voters approved 20 mills for capital improvements. "Since that approval, the state sunsetted the county's ability with county roads, so we are out those 10 mills," Quibell said. Walsh

County Highway Superintendent Jason Johnston said having those additional 10 mills is crucial to funding roads and bridges due to the fact of what everything costs. "It's hard enough trying to find funding to keep up with roads and bridges due to the increased costs of supplies, but to lose 10 mills on top of that would be devastating," he said.

- *Walsh County Record*

Cass County residents will be able to check on wait times at each of the available polling locations before going out to cast their vote for the 2024 General Election. The dashboard can be accessed by visiting casscountynnd.gov/pollinglocations.

The dashboard will show the approximate time a voter will have to wait in line before receiving their ballot at each polling location in Cass County. Cass County election officials strongly encourage voters to use the dashboard in an effort to reduce long lines at polling locations.

If voters have any issues while using the wait times dashboard, please send an email to pio@casscountynnd.gov with a description of the problems encountered.



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Purchasing Pulse

Adjustments to Newspaper Legal Notice Rates for 2025-2027 Biennium

By: Sherry Neas and Sara Bilden, Office of Management and Budget, State Procurement Office

Transparency in government is paramount. There are many laws that require certain information to be published as legal notices in the official county newspaper to inform the public. Examples include meeting minutes, ballots and bidding opportunities.

State law requires the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to “biennially review and adjust rates to reflect changes in economic conditions within the newspaper industry and the general economy, and those adjustments become effective on each July first following the review.” (North Dakota Century Code section 46-05-03 Legal notices – Fees)

The law also requires OMB to consult with representatives from the newspaper industry and representatives of state and local units of government regarding rate adjustments. OMB coordinates with the North Dakota Newspaper Association (NDNA) which represents the North Dakota newspaper industry.

In October, OMB will be sending out a survey regarding legal notice rates to counties, cities, townships, public schools, state agencies and higher education institutions.

The current newspaper legal notice rates went into effect July 1, 2021. In 2021, the rates were increased by 4%. OMB and NDNA agreed to continue those rates with no increases for the 2023-2025 biennium.

In 2024, OMB reviewed legal notice rates, including an analysis of the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Consumer Price Index (CPI). BLS defines CPI as “a measure of the average change over time in prices paid by urban consumers for a

market basket of consumer goods and services.” OMB’s analysis averages three indexes:

- CPI – Urban Consumer – All Items (United States)
- CPI – Urban Consumer – Newspapers and Magazines (United States)
- CPI – Urban Consumer – All Items (Midwest Region)

A summary of the economic conditions as related to legal notice rates is as follows:

- Legal notice rates for the 2021-2023 biennium were increased by 4%. CPI rates actually increased by an average of 11.50% during that period.
- CPI forecasts for 2023-2025 estimate an increase of 4.20% during this biennium.
- CPI forecasts for 2025-2027 estimate an increase of 3.83% during next biennium.

• The total forecasted CPI change from 2023-2027 is cumulative 8.03%.

• The newspaper industry has been economically impacted by material increases in postage rates in recent years.

Based upon this analysis and consultation with NDNA, OMB is proposing legal notice rate increases of 3.25% for each year of the 2025-2027 biennium, resulting in a cumulative 6.5% rate increase over the biennium.

Newspapers use different fonts and column widths. OMB uses the standard legal note rate to calculate rates for each newspaper to effect uniformity in billing. A legal notice should cost the same when published in any official county newspaper. These rates apply to legal notices in printed newspapers and “E-editions.”

North Dakota Legal Notice Rates Summary

	2021-2023 Biennium	2023-2025 Biennium	2026-2027 Biennium	
			FY2026 Proposed	FY2027 Proposed
	Rate Increase 4%	No Change	Rate Increase 3.25%	Rate Increase 3.25%
Base Line Rate	\$.86	\$.86	\$.89	\$.92
Column Inch Daily	\$14.24	\$14.24	\$14.70	\$15.18
Column Inch Small Daily	\$9.67	\$9.67	\$9.98	\$10.31
Column Inch Weekly	\$6.98	\$6.98	\$7.20	\$7.44

Sample Impact:

- Current Legal Notice Expenditures - \$100,000 Fiscal Year (FY)
- Proposed Rate Adjustment:
 - FY 2026 \$103,250 and
 - FY 2027 \$106,605.63

OMB encourages your entity to respond to the Legal Notice Rate Survey. The survey will provide an opportunity for government entities to comment on

the proposed legal notice rate adjustment. Government entities will also be requested to provide an estimated annual spend on newspaper legal notices for fiscal year July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024.

For more information about Legal Notice Rates, visit www.omb.nd.gov/doing-business-state/legal-notice-rates or contact Sara Bilden, State Procurement Officer, at infospo@nd.gov.




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NDDOT and Stark County Celebrate Completion of Eastern Bypass Project in Dickinson

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT) and Stark County celebrated the completion of the Eastern Bypass project on 107th Avenue in Dickinson Tuesday, Oct. 1.

Governor Doug Burgum and other state and local officials were in attendance to participate in a ribbon cutting ceremony.

“This bypass in Dickinson is a great example of the local projects we aimed to accelerate when we established the Flexible Transportation Fund last year in collaboration with the State Legislature,” Burgum said. “We’re grateful for the partnership of Stark County on this piece of critical infrastructure, which will improve safety for motorists, enhance the movement of goods and support economic development.”

The \$12.1 million paving project connects North Dakota Highway 22 to Stark County Highway 10. Additional



Ribbon cutting for Dickinson Bypass.

safety features added include turning lanes and an acceleration for vehicles turning on to Highway 10.

“Our goal with this bypass project was to give motorists a safer and more efficient route,” said Al Heiser, Stark County road superintendent. “We are proud to partner with the governor and the state to improve our transportation system in Dickinson and Stark County.”

The Eastern Bypass project was one of 66 local projects selected for funding

through the Flexible Transportation Fund. The NDDOT awarded \$7.3 million of state funding for the bypass.

The program provided \$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. Total payout for local projects was approximately \$84 million.

“There is a strong need for funding at the local level and the state will continue to look for ways to improve our transportation system,” said House Majority Leader Mike Lefor. “This program shows the commitment of the State Legislature, governor and NDDOT to provide the funding needed to safely move people and goods.”

For more information about the Flexible Transportation Fund, visit dot.nd.gov/flexfund.

Request for Project Applications: ND Federal Lands Access Program

The Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) presents an exciting opportunity for improvements to state, county, tribal, and local government owned or maintained transportation facilities that provide access to, are adjacent to, or are located within federal lands.

The ND Programming Decisions Committee (PDC) is currently soliciting project applications to develop a program of transportation projects for the next 2-4 federal fiscal years. The approximate federal program funding availability for North Dakota is approximately \$1.1M/year.

Eligibility

- Any public transportation facility that is owned or maintained by any state, county, local government, or tribe, and that provides access to federal lands.
- The project proposes improvement to any public highway, road, bridge, trail or transit system located on or adjacent to federal lands, typically no farther than 10 miles away.
 - o Federal lands are lands in the United States owned by the federal government. Land leased to a Federal Land Management Agency is not eligible.
- The FLAP has no local match requirement, however, local leveraged funds may be appropriate to propose depending on the project.

- Confirm support from the Federal Land Management Agency (FLMA) site accessed by the project.

The following elements are also eligible for inclusion in any proposal:

- Adjacent vehicular parking areas, including interpretive panels
- Acquisition of necessary scenic easements and scenic or historic sites
- Facilities and infrastructure for pedestrians and bicycles
- Environmental mitigation in or adjacent to federal land to improve public safety
- Improvements to reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality while maintaining habitat connectivity
- Construction and reconstruction of roadside rest areas, including sanitary, and water facilities
- Contextual wayfinding markers, landscaping, and mitigation of visual blight

Project Preference

Per legislation, preference must be given to transportation facilities providing access to federal high-use recreation sites and federal economic generators.

Program Contact Information:

Questions about the application process or the Federal Lands Access Program can be directed to:

NDFLAP Website:
highways.dot.gov/federal-lands/flap/nd

Federal Land Management Agency Specific Contacts:		
Agency	Name	Email
National Park Service	Mark Mitts	Mark_Mitts@nps.gov
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Michael Smith	Michael_d_smith@fws.gov
U.S. Forest Service	Keith Meredith	Keith.meredith@usda.gov
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	Christopher Langland	Clangland@usbr.gov
Army Corps of Engineers	Jonathon Knacke	Jonathon.W.Knacke@usace.army.mil
Tentative Schedule*:		
Call for Projects Open for Submittals: October 1, 2024 to December 15, 2024		
PDC & FLMA Review of Applications: January/February 2025		
Project Selection & Applicant Notification: February/March 2025		
Scoping of Short-listed Projects: March to August 2025		
Final Program Decisions: Summer/Fall 2025		
Project Implementation: 2027-2029		

Andrew Valdez, Transportation Planner, (720) 963-3329, Andrew.Valdez@dot.gov

How do I submit a project application?

1. Complete the ND Federal Lands Access Program application found at highways.dot.gov/federal-lands/programs-access/nd.

2. Obtain endorsement from the appropriate Federal Land Management Agency (FLMA) or agencies.

3. Send your completed project application via E-Mail to cfl.planning@dot.gov.

Excellence in County Government Awards Recognize County Officials and a Corporate Partner

The North Dakota Association of Counties (NDACo) honored four county officials and one private sector partner in a ceremony October 21st during the NDACo Annual Conference in Bismarck. The annual Excellence in County Government Awards honor those who have shown exceptional dedication, leadership and involvement for the good of all counties.

In the County Commissioner category, Slope County Commissioner Scott Ouradnik was recognized for his leadership roles across the state, as well as national role advocating for North Dakota Counties. Active on both the ND County Commissioners Association (NDCCA) and NDACo Boards, he also represents our state on the Western Interstate Region (WIR) Board. WIR is affiliated with the National Association of Counties, advocating for public policy issues affecting counties in the West. The NDCCA Board of Directors nominated Scott for this award.

In the County Official category, Burke County Road Foreman Kenny Tetrault was recognized for his work in the county as well as cities and other agencies. His many letters of recommendation for this award included stories of walking through blizzard conditions to reach the county shop to get the blades going. He finds innovative ways to get the job done, including innovating road equipment and processes. Kenny and his department won the 2018 Innovation Champions Award from the ND Local Technical Assistance Program. The Burke County Board of Commissioners nominated Kenny for this award.

In the County Employee category, Pembina County Veterans Service Officer (VSO) Revel Sapa was recognized for her tireless work advocating for the county's veterans. After completely reorganizing and modernizing the office, Revel began an outreach effort to identify all the county's veterans who were eligible for benefits, adding a significant number who are now able to take advantage of programs benefiting veterans. Sapa was nominated by the

Pembina County Board of Commissioners, who reported that they have heard from many veterans who want them to know what a gem Pembina County has in their VSO.

The Hall of Honor award recognizes former county officials who have left their mark on county government over the years. Retired Barnes County Highway Superintendent Kerry Johnson was nominated for this award by the ND Association of County Engineers (NDACE). Kerry started part time with Barnes County in 1975 and served his county for 48 years. He was active in NDACE. His county benefitted from his oversight of construction projects, recovering from 15 disasters, and his tireless pursuit of grants to fund the county's needs. Private companies and other counties supported his nomination due to how he reached out beyond the borders of Barnes County to raise the bar of professionalism and effectiveness, not just building bridges and roads, but building up the people around him.

The Dedicated Partner Award recognizes individuals or organizations outside of county government who have contributed to the good of counties. Bjorn Johnson has been a key advocate for the counties' Next Generation 9-1-1 Program for over a decade. During his nine years at CenturyLink/Lumen, he worked tirelessly to align his company's efforts with the Program's goals, ensuring its needs were met. Since joining Carrier Access in early 2022, Bjorn has continued to serve as a vital liaison between the counties and Lumen, consistently seeking opportunities to enhance the state's 9-1-1 system. His unwavering dedication and trusted partnership have been instrumental in making North Dakota's 9-1-1 system one of the most advanced in the nation. Mr. Johnson's award was presented with the help of representatives of the ND School for the Deaf, emphasizing the value of his accomplishments for the deaf and hard of hearing communities.



NDACo Executive Director Aaron Birst, NDACo President Jayme Tenneson, NDCCA President Joan Hollekim, EICG Award Recipient Scott Ouradnik, Slope County Commissioner



NDACo Executive Director Aaron Birst, NDACo President Jayme Tenneson, NDCCA President Joan Hollekim, EICG Award Recipient Kenny Tetrault, Burke County Highway Superintendent



NDACo Executive Director Aaron Birst, NDACo President Jayme Tenneson, NDCCA President Joan Hollekim, EICG Award Recipient Revel Sapa, Pembina County Veterans Service Officer



NDACo Executive Director Aaron Birst, NDACo President Jayme Tenneson, NDCCA President Joan Hollekim, Dedicated Partner Award Recipient Bjorn Johnson, Tammy Derrick and Renae Bitner, ND School for the Deaf.



NDACo Executive Director Aaron Birst, NDACo President Jayme Tenneson, NDCCA President Joan Hollekim, Hall of Honor Award Recipient Kerry Johnson, retired Barnes County Highway Superintendent

Your 2024-2025 NDACo Board of Directors



Shirley Murray, Sheridan County Auditor – ND County Auditors' and Treasurers' Association (Auditors' Rep); Joshua Frey, McHenry/Towner County State's Attorney – ND State's Attorneys Association; Jayme Tenneson, Nelson/Griggs State's Attorney – Past President; Chad Kaiser, Stutsman County Sheriff – 1st Vice President; Kim Jacobson, Agassiz Valley Human Service Zone Director – 3rd Vice President; Nick Moser, Cavalier County Commissioner, 2nd Vice President; Trudy Ruland, Mountrail County Commissioner – President; Scott Ouradnik, Slope County Commissioner – Region 8; Becky Hagel, Foster County Commissioner – Region 6; Don Flaherty, Dickey County Tax Director – County Tax Directors Association; Wanda Knutson, Mercer County Clerk of Court – Clerks of Court Association; Erica Johnsrud, McKenzie County Auditor/Treasurer – County Auditors' and Treasurers' Association (Treasurers' Rep); Joan Hollekim, Mountrail County Commissioner – NDCCA President; Dana Larsen, Ward County Engineer – ND Association of County Engineers; Aaron Mork, Nelson County Commissioner – Region 4; Beau Anderson, Williams County Commissioner – Region 1; Aaron Birst, NDACo Executive Director. Full board listing and photos at www.ndaco.org/board.



Thank you for supporting the Scholarship Fund! (See p. 1 for results)



Networking with new and old friends, and of course, vendors.





North Dakota County Auditors accept the 2024 Election Hero award presented by North Dakota Secretary of State Michael Howe.



Mentalist Christopher Carter performs behind duct tape AND a blindfold!



Fashion Trend-Setters Ryan Gellner and Aaron Birst in lederhosen, giving out prizes.



Your NDACo Staff - ready to serve!



Members of the Williams County Assessor's Office receiving the Certificate of Excellence in Assessment Administration from the President of IAAO, Rebecca Malmquist. Pictured from left to right: Assessor Shawna Page, Director of Tax Equalization Darcy Anderson, IAAO President Rebecca Malmquist, Assessor Kristi Gutierrez, and Assessor Lea Dunn.

Williams County Assessor's Office Receives the Certificate of Excellence

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – The International Association of Assessing Officers (IAAO) and Williams County are pleased to announce that the Williams County Assessor's Office has received the Certificate of Excellence in Assessment Administration.

IAAO's Certificate of Excellence in Assessment Administration recognizes governmental units that adhere to accepted standards and integrate best practices in the workplace. This challenging and rigorous program is a self-conducted, peer-reviewed evaluation of adherence to specific, accepted assessment administration and appraisal standards as defined in the IAAO

publication *Assessment Practices: Self-Evaluation Guide*.

This certificate was presented during a ceremony at the IAAO 90th Annual International Conference on Assessment Administration at the Colorado Convention Center in Denver, Colorado on August 27, 2024. IAAO's Certificate of Excellence in Assessment Administration is an important recognition of industry professionals who strive to meet the highest standards in their line of work. It is a great honor for IAAO to present the Williams County Assessor's Office with this certificate in recognition of these efforts.



L to R: Todd Slawson, NDPC Chair, Daryl Dukart and Ron Ness, NDPC President

Dukart Awarded Outstanding Public Servant by NDPC

The ND Petroleum Council (NDPC) recognized Daryl Dukart as an Outstanding Public Servant at their 2024 Annual Meeting, September 17-19 in Watford City.

Dukart was a Dunn County Commissioner for 12 years, represented ND on the NACo Board of Directors,

chaired the Western Dakota Energy Association and served on countless other state, regional and local organizations. He and his wife Reyne have retired from operating their ranch and he now enjoys fishing, hunting, gardening and spending time with his two adult children, nine grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.



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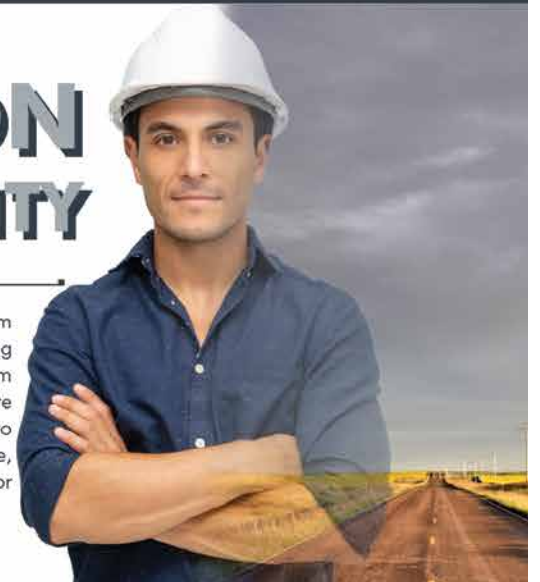
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Fidlar Technologies
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ND Weed Control Association
NDSACCHO

NDSU Extension
North Dakota Community Foundation
North Dakota Concrete Council
North Dakota Safety Council
North Dakota Township Officers Association
OMB State Procurement Office & State Surplus Property
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Purple Wave Auction
Radox Toxicology
Rinker Materials
Roosevelt Custer Regional Council
Rough Rider Industries
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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

INSTITUTE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT***Congratulations to the 2024 Hour Level Award Recipients!*****LEVEL I – 30 ILG TRAINING HOURS**

Tiffany Ambuehl..... Traill County Deputy Treasurer
 Hailey Bachmeier..... Foster County Deputy Auditor
 Carla Beeler..... Golden Valley County Tax Director/GIS Coord.r/911 Coord.
 Jim Benjaminson..... Pembina County Commissioner
 Nathan Boehm..... Morton County Commissioner
 Kendall Brehm..... Towner County Recorder/Clerk of Court
 Perry Brown..... Steele County Commissioner
 Karissa Dockter..... Wells County Deputy Treasurer
 Sarah Duttenhefner... Dunn County Emergency Manager
 Madison Eli..... Griggs County Treasurer
 Jana Flaten..... Steele County Auditor/Risk Manager/Superintendent of Schools
 Steve Forde..... Nelson County Commissioner
 Jodi Freier..... Bowman County Tax Director/Planning Director
 Michelle Garrett..... Mercer County Deputy Treasurer
 Lolly Gorze..... Ward County Human Resources Director/Risk Manager
 LaJuana Hayen..... Sargent County Tax Director
 Laura Henry..... Logan County Recorder/Clerk of Court
 Lisa Hilbert..... Foster County Public Health Nurse
 Cora Johnson..... Traill County Deputy Auditor/Human Resources Generalist
 Jim Kapitan..... Cass County Commissioner
 Lisa Keney..... Pembina County Tax Director
 Patty Koapke..... Oliver County Tax Director/Planning Director/GIS Coord.
 Candie Loftsgard..... Golden County Valley Treasurer
 Jeremy Ludlum..... Williams County Parks Director
 Brandy Madrigga..... Cass County Finance Director
 Bernie Marsh..... Stark County Commissioner
 Lori Marshall..... Barnes County Administrative Assistant
 Emily McLean..... Stutsman County Deputy Auditor
 Dan Mittlender..... Kidder County Commissioner
 Tayonne Nachatilo.... Burleigh County Office Manager
 Linda Nelson..... Oliver County Deputy Auditor/Risk Manager
 Jennifer Neumiller.... Mercer County Tax Director/Planning Director
 Terri Northrup..... McKenzie County Human Resources Generalist
 Nathan Parks..... Nelson County Auditor/Treasurer/Risk Manager
 Ashley Pedie..... Bottineau County Tax Director/Planning Director/GIS Coord.
 Katie Roseland..... Adams County Tax Director/GIS Coord.
 Lisa Scanson..... Foster County Deputy Recorder
 Randi Schumaier..... Mountrail County Human Resources Director/Risk Manager
 Andrea South..... Richland County Deputy Auditor
 Lisa Stebbins..... McKenzie County Sheriff Executive Assistant
 Frankie Stremick..... Cavalier County Deputy Auditor
 Liza Taylor..... Mercer County Commissioner
 Johnna Torr..... McHenry County Recorder
 Perry Turner..... McIntosh County Commissioner
 Jarret Van Berkom..... Burke County Commissioner
 Amie Vandegraft..... Burke County Auditor/Superintendent of Schools/Risk Manager
 Jerry Walsh..... Dickey County Commissioner
 Samantha Weeks..... Pembina County 911 Coord./GIS Coord.
 Lisa Weigel..... Logan County Deputy Auditor

LEVEL II (17 TOTAL)

Dessie Calihou..... Dunn County Human Resources Director/Risk Manager
 Emily Deschamp..... Bottineau County Auditor/Superintendent of Schools
 Nicole Gentzkow..... Ransom County Auditor
 Dawn Grannis..... Mercer County Treasurer
 Marisa Haman..... Ward County Auditor/Treasurer
 Vernetta Iron Eyes..... Sioux County Treasurer/Recorder/Clerk of Court
 Kristin Kowalczyk..... Ward County Recorder
 Deb Moeller..... Cass County Recorder
 Brenda Nagel..... Oliver County Deputy Treasurer
 Jodie Nelson..... Barnes County Deputy Recorder
 Mechelle Olsen..... Richland County Human Resources Director/Risk Manager
 Joetta Percy..... Stark County Human Resources Director/Risk Manager
 Carmen Reed..... Mercer County Auditor
 Brian Senger..... Ramsey Human County Resources Director/Risk Manager
 Adam Smith..... Golden Valley County Commissioner
 Michele Thiel..... Grand Forks County Human Resources Director/Risk Manager
 David Zeis..... Cavalier County Commissioner

LEVEL III (17 TOTAL)

Elizabeth Black..... Ramsey County Tax Director
 Glenda Collier..... Eddy County Commissioner
 Krista Faller..... Adams County Auditor/Treasurer/Risk Manager
 Laurie Good..... LaMoure County Recorder
 Jody Kristiansen..... Logan County Auditor/Treasurer
 Michelle Linstad..... Nelson County Tax Director/GIS Coord.
 Debbie Magnuson..... Barnes County Treasurer
 Mickie McNulty-Eide... Oliver County Recorder/Clerk of Court
 Laura Muscha..... Wells County Treasurer
 Steph Pappa..... Mountrail County Auditor/Superintendent of Schools
 Jody Pfaff..... Barnes County Recorder
 Liz Roorda..... Barnes County Deputy Tax Director
 Mindy Schumacher..... Bowman County Auditor/Risk Manager
 Wanda Sheppard..... Dickey County Auditor
 Stacey Swanson..... Billings County Tax Director/Planning Director/911 Coord./GIS Coord.
 Cindy Worrel..... LaMoure County Treasurer
 Brandy Zepp..... Burke County Tax Director/GIS Coord.

LEVEL IV (8 TOTAL)

Karen Anderson..... Walsh County Commissioner
 Lynnette Fox..... Sheridan County Treasurer
 Lisa Gellner..... Cavalier County Auditor/Superintendent of Schools/Risk Manager
 Stacie Hansen..... Barnes County Tax Director
 Wanda Knutson..... Mercer County Clerk of Court
 Julie Mindt..... Barnes County Auditor/Superintendent of Schools
 Danielle Petersen..... Renville County Recorder/Clerk of Court
 Jean Schoenhard..... Kidder County Auditor

LEVEL V (1 TOTAL)

Melissa Vachal..... Mountrail County Recorder/Planning Director

LEVEL VI (1 TOTAL)

Beth Knutson..... McLean County Auditor/Treasurer/Risk Manager

NDSU Extension Specialists are Rooted in Community

In many regions of North Dakota where fields stretch for miles and small towns weave their way through the landscape, NDSU Extension specialists serve as resources and connectors of the Extension network to local communities.

“Our county NDSU Extension agents are the lifeblood of NDSU’s land-grant mission, serving as an extension of NDSU in every county in North Dakota,” says Lynette Flage, NDSU Extension associate director. “But what some people may not know is that we also have many NDSU Extension topic area specialists living in communities across North Dakota, not just working from NDSU’s Fargo campus.”

NDSU Extension specialists provide technical expertise and lead programs of statewide concern in agricultural and natural resources, family and community wellness, and 4-H youth development topics. They are integral in supporting Extension agents with research-based information.

Lacey Quail, the NDSU Extension livestock systems specialist at the North Central Research Extension Center near Minot, North Dakota, highlights the critical importance of direct, personal connections in her work.

“I get to have direct contact with producers in the area, which then informs



Andrea Bowman with a participant in one of her training sessions.

the recommendations I provide to producers throughout North Dakota,” Quail explains. “Instead of learning about conditions or issues second-hand, I get to interact with producers personally.”

Living in the same environment as the producers she serves allows Quail to experience the challenges they face, whether it’s drought, poor grazing conditions or disease outbreaks. This firsthand knowledge enables her to provide tailored recommendations. Her role goes

beyond simply offering information—Quail connects new producers with more experienced peers, fostering a network where they can learn from one another.

Similarly, Jan Stankiewicz, NDSU Extension community health and nutrition specialist and tribal liaison, based in Bismarck, North Dakota, emphasizes the unique opportunity to connect with people on a deeper level by living where she works.

Stankiewicz grew up in a small town in northeast Montana that instilled in her the value of involvement and building relationships.

“I bump into people at community events, sporting activities or the market and get to know them and meet their families,” she shares. “I love hearing about Extension programs or projects that are working in my community and exploring opportunities to see what might work elsewhere. I am able to not just see it from an Extension or work perspective, but I live it and feel it as a community member or parent, and that certainly is motivating and empowering.”

Andrea Bowman, NDSU Extension leadership and civic engagement program coordinator, loves living in Bowman County, with its strong agricultural foundation and ranching heritage.


“My job is about building community leadership, so every organization and city I work with becomes a community to me,” Bowman explains. “I find fulfillment in helping local organizations build skills and overcome challenges. Going back to groups and seeing how their leaders have grown makes my heart happy and motivates me to be better in everything I do.”

By living, working and engaging directly within the communities they serve, Extension specialists are uniquely positioned to foster meaningful change. They are not outsiders offering theoretical solutions—they are neighbors, peers and leaders who understand the intricacies of their local areas.

“We believe the work of our specialists and agents is a powerful testament to the importance of NDSU Extension in sustaining and enriching rural communities across North Dakota,” shares Flage. “Through their dedication, these specialists ensure that knowledge is shared, networks are built and communities are empowered to thrive.”

For more information:

<https://www.ndsu.edu/agriculture/extension/about-ndsu-extension>



North Dakota
Livestock Alliance
ndlivestock.org



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](https://www.ndsu.edu/agriculture/extension/about-ndsu-extension) or 701-712-1488 Follow us on Facebook @LivestockND



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North Dakota Attorney General's Opinions

These and all other Opinions issued by the ND Attorney General's Office can be seen at: attorneygeneral.nd.gov/attorney-generals-office/legal-opinions.

SPECIAL MEETING NOTICE

Opinion #: 2024-O-09

Date issued: September 17, 2024

Issued to: Apple Creek School Board

Requests:

1. Whether Apple Creek School Board properly noticed a special meeting.
2. Whether Apple Creek School Board failed to properly describe the general subject matter and legal authority before entering an executive session.

On August 18, 2022, Ms. Jacobson contacted this office regarding an alleged violation of the Open Meetings Law. On September 30, 2022, this office sent a letter to Coty Sible, President of the Apple Creek School Board (Board), requesting information about the special meeting held on August 17, 2022, the meeting notice for the meeting, and the procedures used for any executive sessions. On April 17, 2024, this office sent a follow-up letter to Coty Sible informing her the office had not received a response from the Board and that failure to respond would result in the opinion being based on the facts received from the requestor. To date, this office has not received a response from the Board. The only information this office reviewed was the information contained in Ms. Jacobson's request for an opinion and an emergency meeting announcement and meeting minutes posted on the Apple Creek Elementary School's (School) website.

Conclusions:

1. Apple Creek School Board did not properly notice a special meeting because it failed to list the location of the meeting, lacked the level of specificity required for a special meeting notice, failed to mention that the discussion would be considered in an executive session, and the Board discussed matters which were not included in the meeting notice.
2. Apple Creek School Board did not properly announce its executive sessions when it failed to announce the legal authority for the executive sessions and the topics to be discussed during the executive sessions.

WATER RESOURCE DISTRICTS ARE REQUIRED TO INVESTIGATE COMPLAINTS REGARDLESS OF PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

Opinion #: 2024-L-03

Date Issued: October 21, 2024

Issued to: Pembina County Water Resource District

Requests: Does N.D.C.C. § 61-32-07 apply where an individual has removed culverts from an abandoned railroad property, resulting in an open ditch and potentially increasing the flow of water onto a neighboring landowner's property?

Does a Water Resource District have the jurisdiction to order the owner of the abandoned property to remedy the problem?

Conclusion: When a complaint of unauthorized drainage is received by a water resource district, N.D.C.C. § 61-32-07 requires the water resource district to promptly investigate and make a determination of the facts and conclusions with respect to the complaint. The water resource district is then required by law to exercise its discretion in determining whether landowner must replace culverts or fill in a ditch on the landowner's property when it was not the landowner who removed the culverts.

TIME LIMITATIONS IN N.D.C.C. SECTION 1-01-50 APPLY TO THE FILING OF A PETITION TO INITIATE AN ORDINANCE IN THE CITY OF BISMARCK

Opinion #: 2024-L-04

Date Issued: October 31, 2024

Issued to: Janelle Combs, Bismarck City Attorney

Request: Whether a petition to initiate an ordinance pursuant to Article 5 of the City of Bismarck's Home Rule Charter is subject to the time limit for the filing or presentation of a petition set forth in N.D.C.C. § 1-01-50, and, if so, whether this time limitation violates the constitutional right of the people to initiate a petition under N.D. Const. Art. III, § 1.

Conclusion: Because Article 5 of the City of Bismarck's Home Rule Charter does not contain a provision related to time limits for the filing of a petition to initiate an ordinance, the time limitations set forth in N.D.C.C. § 1-01-50 apply. Additionally, the power reserved for the people to initiate and refer legislation under N.D. Const. art. III, § 1 does not apply to local ordinances, and the application of N.D.C.C. § 1-01-50 to the initiation or referral of ordinances does not unlawfully encumber constitutional rights reserved to the people under N.D. Const. Art. III, § 1.

Cutting Down on Liability Claims

Brian D. Schmidt | Partner - Smith Porsborg

Lawnmowers throw rocks through windows. It is an unfortunate fact of life and can happen even when nobody did anything wrong. If your political subdivision's mower throws a rock through a car window, you will likely get an angry phone call demanding it be fixed. You may wonder: "Do we really have a legal duty to pay for this?" The answer is, "it depends."

In general, political subdivisions and private individuals have the same liability for injuries caused by negligence. *M.M. v. Fargo Public School Dist. No. 1*, 2010 ND 102, ¶ 9, 783 N.W.2d 806. While political subdivisions do enjoy statutory immunity in certain circumstances, routine mowing activities will not likely fall within any exception to this general rule. This means your political subdivision will be liable for damage caused by its mowers if the operator failed to "exercise reasonable care under the circumstances." *Doan ex rel. Doan v. City of Bismarck*, 2001 ND 152, ¶ 25, 632 N.W.2d 815. This duty of care extends to "injuries that are foreseeable." *Nelson v. Gillette*, 1997 ND 205, ¶ 40, 571 N.W.2d 332. In other words, a political subdivision's standard of care is measured "by reference to the circumstances of danger known to one at the time or which...should reasonably have [been] foreseen." N.D.J.I. C-2.05 Negligence. However, just because "a mishap occurred" does not necessarily mean anyone was negligent.

Courts generally acknowledge there is no duty to "minutely inspect [a] yard before mowing" because this would "impose an impossible burden and, in effect, make one who operates a... mower an insurer of the world at large." *Stayton v. Funkhouser*, 263 N.W.2d 764 (Ind. Ct. App. 1970). However, courts have found mower operators liable when the circumstances made it reasonably foreseeable that mowing activities would cause damage. See *Loonan Lumber Co. v. Wannamaker*, 131 N.W.2d 78 (S.D. 1964) (operator held liable for broken window which occurred while mowing a ditch near a gravel surface that contained an abundance of rocks and stones.); *Jones v. St. Louis Housing Authority*, 726 S.W.2d 766 (Mo. Ct. App. 1987) (operator held liable for death of young child struck by stick propelled from lawnmower when operator knew of wooden debris in area and mower's propensity to propel objects).

Liability for a damage caused by mowers will turn on the facts and circumstances of each case. Common sense and basic precautions can limit your potential for liability. For example, mow areas near parking lots before cars show up or after they leave. Mow areas abutting streets during low-traffic times. If there is - or was - construction near the area you need to mow, check for broken concrete, tools, and debris before you do so. If mowing next to a gravel road, be mindful of passing vehicles. Also, inspect rock guards on your mowers to ensure they are in proper working order.

There is no way to ensure mowing operations will not cause damage. In general, the law does not punish those who act reasonably; however, reasonableness depends on what you know or should know and the foreseeable harms that exist. Exercising additional care to avoid foreseeable risks can save your political subdivision from liability in the event your mowing operations cause damage.

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988 Lifeline Empowers Supervisor to Support Employee's Mental Health

BISMARCK, ND - In a compelling display of leadership and compassion, a North Dakota construction supervisor's call to the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline has sparked an important conversation about mental health in the workplace. North Dakota Health and Human Services (HHS) partners with FirstLink to answer both 988 and 211, the numbers for resources.

With September marked as Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, FirstLink Development Director Jeremy Brown recently shared this impactful story of answering the call from a construction supervisor, illustrating the profound impact of accessible mental health resources.

According to Brown, when the supervisor recognized changes in a crew member's behavior, he reached out to 988 with concerns about an employee's well-being. He had been dealing with significant personal issues, including a divorce and custody battle, which were beginning to affect his job performance and mental state. Unsure of how to address these sensitive topics, the supervisor sought guidance from 988 on how to approach the situation.

Brown recounted the call, illustrating the profound impact of recognizing changes in someone's behavior, taking proactive measures to support others and the importance of accessible mental health resources.

988

SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

"The supervisor told me about his employee's struggles and expressed concern that the employee might be having suicidal thoughts. This was not a conversation he was accustomed to having, especially in a male-dominated industry like construction where mental health topics can be stigmatized," Brown explained.

Rather than having a third-party intervention, the supervisor opted to be coached on how to have a direct and empathetic conversation with his employee. Brown took time to role-play the conversation, provided strategies on how to address the topic of suicide, and offered a list of resources that could be shared during the supervisor's discussion with his employee. This approach ensured the supervisor was equipped to handle the conversation with sensitivity and support.

The outcome was twofold. The immediate concern for the employee's mental health was addressed, and the supervisor realized the broader need to foster a more open dialogue about mental health within his entire team. He expressed a desire to create a workplace environment where resources are readily available and mental health conversations are normalized.

HHS Suicide Prevention Program Administrator Melissa Markegard highlights the broader implications of this story.

"This isn't just about one call. It's about changing the culture of how we address mental health in the workplace. This supervisor's initiative is a perfect example of how leadership can make a difference," said HHS Suicide Prevention Program Administrator Melissa Markegard. "I'd like to encourage all employers to seek out the tools and knowledge to support their employees' mental health in order to create a safer and more supportive environment for everyone."

The story underscores the critical role that 988 can play not only in crisis situations but also in providing ongoing support and education for anyone needing help. It also serves as a call to action for other business owners and supervisors to take proactive steps in supporting their employees' mental health.

"I hope more supervisors and business owners in North Dakota are inspired to take similar steps, demonstrating that addressing mental health proactively can lead to positive changes not just for individuals but for entire workplace cultures," said Brown.

The partnership between HHS and FirstLink supports HHS' strategic priorities to advance the foundations of well-being through access to high-quality services and supports closer to home as well as deliver best-in-class customer-centered experiences.

RESOURCES

In addition to contacting 988 for resources, employers can seek out the following resources and available trainings that range from brief introductory sessions to comprehensive day-long workshops.

HHS suicide prevention resources: <https://www.hhs.nd.gov/behavioral-health/prevention/suicide>

HHS suicide prevention trainings: <https://www.hhs.nd.gov/behavioral-health/prevention/suicide/suicide-prevention-trainings>

FirstLink resources: <https://myfirstlink.org/resources/>

FirstLink printable resources: <https://myfirstlink.org/resources/printable-resources/>

988 for ND Veterans

ND Governor Doug Burgum proclaimed 2024 as "Veteran and Military Suicide Prevention and Awareness Year"

The Effort Must Continue Through 2025 And Beyond

"Use FIRST AID for physical health emergencies and S.A.V.E. for behavior health Emergencies"

In his 2024 State of the State address Governor Burgum stressed the need to double down on efforts to make North Dakota the most military-friendly state in the nation, including expanding marketing of the 988 Suicide and Crisis hotline.

"We encourage any state agency, government entity or business to follow suit and proudly display the 988 icon to raise awareness around suicide and destigmatize the fear of asking for mental health support," Burgum said.

988 is the "One Stop" for crisis needs that we have wanted for years by call, text or email. Help for...

1. Suicide prevention
2. Mental Health
3. Drug and Alcohol treatment
4. Disaster Distress helpline
5. Many other crisis needs

Counties are encouraged to promote and share the 988 number and link to Crisis help for suicide, mental health, drugs, and alcohol | SAMHSA with all 53 of ND Counties.

1. On your websites
2. On your email signature page
3. On your printed newsletters
4. Social media
5. Letterheads
6. Any way you have an opportunity

**THIS NUMBER
SAVES LIVES!**



**988 SUICIDE & CRISIS
LIFELINE**

24/7 CALL, TEXT, CHAT

Estvold joins NDNA/New Salem Staff

Reprinted with permission from the NDNA Bulletin

Ann Estvold, former intern for NDACo, has joined the staff of the Morton County News Journal and will also be working at the ND Newspaper Association through the legislative session.

Estvold will be doing reporting and layout for the New Salem paper, and will also work this fall on formatting NDNA's 2025 Media Guide. Come January, Estvold will serve as one of NDNA's legislative interns. Excerpted from a recent introduction appearing in the Morton County News Journal, Estvold writes: "I am originally from Lakota, ND but currently live in Bismarck. "I started working with newspapers while in high school. As the reporter for my 4-H club I would submit our minutes to the local newspapers."

"As a media productions major, I learned all about film, videography, photography, journalism and graphic design. My focus was journalism, photography and design. "While in college I wrote articles about my study



Ann Estvold

abroad experience and helped create a campus wide student newspaper. "In my free time I enjoy reading, watching movies, hanging out with friends, crafting, cooking and traveling.

"NDNA is thrilled to have Ann's graphic design talent during what is a busy season of layout for the Media Guide, and we're glad to provide an opportunity for her to expand her journalism skills by covering the legislature," said Cecile Wehrman, NDNA executive director

County Employees Recognized at the ND Emergency Management Association Conference in September



Andrew Kirking, Emergency Management Director for Stutsman and Foster County: Achievement award.



Joel Rostberg, Morton County Assistant Emergency Manager and former Homeland Security trainer for NDACo: Lifetime Achievement award.

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2024 COUNTY CALENDAR

November

- 5 _____ General Election
- 11 _____ Veteran's Day
- 20-21 _____ County Tour to Hettinger, Adams, Bowman and Slope Counties
- 22-23 _____ North Dakota Farm Bureau Annual Meeting,
Bismarck Hotel & Conference Center
- 28 _____ Thanksgiving Day

December

- 2 _____ Registration opens for Local Government Capitol Connection
www.ndsba.org
- 2-3 _____ ND Township Officers Association Annual Convention, Bismarck Ramada
- 2-4 _____ 69th Legislative Assembly Organizational Session, Capitol
- 5 _____ NDIRF Board Meeting, NDIRF Office Building
- 10-13 _____ Joint ND Water Convention & Irrigation Workshop,
Bismarck Hotel & Conference Center
- 11 _____ NDCCA Board Meeting, NDACo County Office Building
- 12 _____ ILG/NDACo Board Meeting, NDACo County Office Building
- 12-13 _____ ND Sheriffs & Deputies Association Meeting, Bismarck Radisson
- 13-14 _____ ND Farmers Union State Convention, Bismarck Event Center
- 21 _____ First Day of Winter
- 25 _____ Christmas

January

- 1 _____ New Year's Day
- 7 _____ 69th Legislative Assembly Begins
- 20 _____ Martin Luther King Jr Day



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