

Attention All-Stars! Conference Registration Is Closing Soon

Jeff Eslinger | County News Editor

The NDACo Annual Conference on Oct. 8-10 at the Bismarck Event Center promises to be an All-Star event. Online registration at www.ndaco.org/annual-conference closes Sept. 27, but if you're unable to commit until later, you can call our office or register onsite.

You will also find the tentative agenda on that page. We're going to print the small pocket-sized agenda for you to carry around; and we will provide all the full details of workshops, events, maps, etc. on the conference app, which you can download at <https://my.yapp.us/NDACO>. If you still have the app on your phone from last year, just refresh it for the new content. We won't be printing the big (expensive) detailed agenda book this year.

Here's a little preview of the workshops you can choose from:

- Transportation All Stars
- Five Steps to Safer Elections
- Healthy Counties
- The Power of Fun – Q & A with Keynote Speaker Dave Raymond
- GROW Your All-Star Talent – Hiring and Recruiting in the Bakken
- Technology All Stars – Best Practices in Cybersecurity
- Why Local Security is National Security
- Human Service Zone Topics
- A.I. The Good, the Bad and the I-Ugly



- It's SNOW Joke: The Importance of Clear, Clever and Concise Communication
- Real-Life Applications of GIS in Your County
- Property Tax Relief Explained
- Smile Like it Matters: Lessons from the Science of Thriving.

You'll also get plenty of time to explore exhibit booths from every imaginable industry related to counties. They want your business, and you need their products and services, so this is the easiest way to meet up!

Every year, our most Frequently Asked Question is, "What is the

Monday evening dinner theme and entertainment? Answer: All Star County Olympics! You'll have plenty of options, including cornhole, pool, air hockey and more, plus trivia. We thought we'd try something different than a band, as many folks have told us it's difficult to hold a conversation in such a loud environment; and we definitely want you to visit and get to know your fellow county officials. It'll be fun!

As always, workshop participants can elect to earn ILG Training Hours; and thanks to NDIRE, every county gets one conference registration FREE if the county has at least one commissioner and one other official attend and sign in at the closing workshop.

We are looking forward to seeing you soon!

How to get the "Yapp" app for our conference.

1. Scan the code on this page with your phone and it will take you to a website that will explain a few easy steps, OR...
2. Use your phone's web browser to go to my.yapp.us/ndaco. It's the same web page the code goes to, OR...
3. Navigate to that same address on a computer and enter your cell phone number. You will then receive a text to click on and get started.

Whichever method you choose, you'll be downloading Yapp from your app store (Apple Store or Google Play) and it should then take you right to our content. If for some reason it doesn't, you can simply conduct a search within the app for NDACo and you'll find us.

Contact Jeff Eslinger if you have any problems at jeff.eslinger@ndaco.org or (701) 328-7300.



County QUICK FACTS

Prescription Savings in Just ONE County in 2023

County: **Burleigh**
Rx Discount Program users: **6**
Total # of Prescriptions: **17**
Total Savings: **\$4,245**
Avg. Savings: **\$377**
Savings Percentage: **44**

If you would like to save your county's residents on their prescriptions, look into NACo's Live Healthy program.

www.naco.org/live-healthy-us-counties

NDACo Proposing Simplified 9-1-1 Fee Process

Jeff Eslinger | County News Editor

Did you know that every month, every telecommunications carrier in North Dakota collects a 9-1-1 fee, then sends a payment to every county their customers live in? There are dozens of telecommunications providers, some of which cover the whole state and some cover only a few counties. That's a lot of payments for both the carrier and the county.

Then, each county sends payments to the 9-1-1 centers, Statewide Interoperable Radio Network (SIRN) and the Statewide Next Generation 9-1-1 Program (NG9-1-1).

There's got to be a simpler way!

NDACo thinks there is. Over the coming months, we'll be visiting with

counties about a process we are proposing where the telecommunications providers would send us ONE check, saving them a lot of processing. We would then send ONE payment to each county for all the 9-1-1 fees collected on their behalf, as well as sending payments to the NG9-1-1 system and SIRN.

This only works if we have a very high participation rate – preferably 100 percent – of counties.

See the graphic on page 7 for an easy, at-a-glance version of how simple it can be.



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Board Member PROFILE



NICK MOSER

Cavalier County Commissioner

What is your favorite thing about being a commissioner? Working with the employees and constituents to make Cavalier County a great place to live now and in the future. I decided to run for commission 10 years ago when two long-term members decided to retire. I felt having a younger member “at that time” with a different perspective on how things should operate would be beneficial to Cavalier County.

Family: Married to Andrea for 20 years, three sons Rudy-17, Ryder-13, and Rayce-7.

Other involvements: I have worked for Montana Dakota Utilities for 22 years, volunteer firefighter for the Langdon Fire Department for 22 years, Cavalier County Search and Rescue for 20 years, NDFA State fire instructor, and hockey coach. In my spare time, I enjoy the outdoors - hunting, fishing and camping.

Favorite movie or movie genre: Top Gun

Music: what are you listening to right now? Classic Rock

Something people probably don't know about you: If I were to make a career change, it would be to become a law enforcement officer!

Philosophy of life and/or work: When life throws you hurdles, ease over the small ones and bulldoze through the large ones.

Favorite quote: “Speak softly and carry a big stick; you will go far.”

Anything else you'd like to add? We have a great team in Cavalier County and I appreciate all that our employees, board members and citizens do to make Cavalier County a great place to live!



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NRG Technology Services Staff:

See page 6



NDCCA Executive Committee

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FROM the COUNTIES

Time Flies When You're Having Fun!!

The past year has flown by as I have had the privilege to serve as President of NDACo. The learning experience has been an incredible trip for an old cattle rancher and McLean County Commissioner.

Serving on the NDACo executive board has provided an opportunity to meet and engage with county officials from all across the United States. I have been able to attend conferences in Washington D.C., Anchorage Alaska, Denver Colorado, St. George Utah, and Austin Texas. Being able to network with county officials from all fifty states has been a real eye-opening experience. The issues we face here in North Dakota are shared by nearly every other state in the country. Often, the size or scope of an issue is different, but many times the potential solutions are similar. Issues like energy production ranging from oil, coal, hydroelectric, nuclear, solar and wind affect everyone in various ways and have a surprising number of similar concerns.

Here in North Dakota, we have “food deserts” in many rural areas where access to groceries like fresh meat and produce is not available without a significant drive to another community. Many states with much larger populations than ND have similar issues, such as a community with a population of five or ten thousand people, and they still have no local access to fresh meat and produce.

Nationwide, access to technology is a huge concern, especially in impoverished areas. Here in North Dakota, we still have isolated areas that have limited access to modern technology, but we are far ahead of many of the “more progressive” counties/states.



Steve Lee | NDACo President
McLean County Commissioner

Being a fairly conservative person, I expected to find conservative county officials in the more rural states, but discovered that there are conservative county officials from Hawaii (yes Hawaii), California, the Midwest, and even on the East Coast, though Washington D.C. may be the exception.

Even though attending these out of state conferences has been a rewarding experience, nothing compares to the great opportunity to meet with North Dakota county officials and employees and discuss the issues and concerns we all share. The county tours have been the highlight of my time on the NDACo Board experiencing the hospitality of each county seat we visit. County tours provide the opportunity to visit with county officials and county staff on “their turf” and be able to discuss issues that affect that individual county. The counties that I was fortunate enough to visit, provided tours of their courthouses, both older and newer buildings. Some of us even climbed the spiral iron staircase leading to the dome on top of the Foster County Courthouse. What a great view!! In each county we viewed the unique qualities in each courthouse from beautiful murals, marble artisan construction, majestic oak woodwork, to historic displays. Each county shared their pride in these great courthouses.

These county tours have inspired some new NDACo services such as GIS coordination, grant writing assistance, and 911 fee collection.

Thank you to all the counties for your gracious hospitality during these visits!

The NDACo Annual Conference will be held on October 8-10. Be sure to attend and take advantage of the opportunity for some education, networking with your fellow county officials, visiting with vendors, and having some good old fashioned fun.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as NDACo President over the past year!

FROM the COMMISSIONERS

Thank You, 53!

This will be my last letter to all the members of ‘The 53’. Let me start by saying “thank you” to all of you that have supported me in these two years. From my county staff to you and the Bismarck team, I am so grateful for the chance to learn more about you, your county, and our great state.

Knowing this is my last note, I’d like to leave you with a couple call backs from my past articles.

Please stay engaged with local leaders. Our neighbors are often having the same issues we are. Whether we can learn from their successes or work together to find an answer, in the end, we all save time and effort.

Take time to spend with state leaders. Last session we had lots of new faces making laws. Those faces don’t always understand local government. The more time we spend with them, the more of a chance we share what our mission is.

Make time to get involved in NDACo and NACo. With technology evolving in recent years, it’s never been



Chad Peterson | NDCCA President
Cass County Commissioner

easier to engage outside your county. These two organizations represent us when we can’t be there. They let us know what some of the people mentioned above are doing and keep us informed. They are the ones that engage for us when we can’t.

Now, the most important one; tell your team, ‘Thank you.’ It’s simple, free and goes further than you can imagine.

FROM the ASSOCIATION

On the Road Again...What a Great State!

As NDACo has been traveling around this fall, either to regional meetings or County Tours, I can’t help but think what a great state we live in (especially in the fall).

There are not too many things more beautiful than watching a combine turn a waving field of gold grain into a shiny stubble field or coming over that next hill to only see a quarter section of freshly rolled bales waiting to be picked up for the winter. Of course, none of that could even be possible without a government that focuses on developing its infrastructure.

As I have heard many times before, a lot of places in this world can grow wheat and corn but North Dakota farmers and ranchers feed the world because they can get their product to market better than anyone else. That should be a source of pride for all of us; and we should thank our state, county, city, and township leaders for making that happen.

But just like fall brings harvest season, it also brings budget season. As county leaders, you have the unenviable



Aaron Birst | NDACo Executive Director

position to ensure North Dakota’s legacy is preserved while still being mindful that the money being expended is also coming from everyone’s paycheck. That can be a delicate balancing act; but I am confident with education, transparency and humility, most voters will understand just like our farmers and rancher friends that greatness only comes from putting in the hard work.



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How to Conduct a Workplace Investigation

Chuck Horner | NDACo HR Coordinator

As a past HR Director, one of the most challenging situations I would periodically encounter was someone walking into my office and dumping an employment issue in my lap and then expecting the organization to immediately do something about it. It could be a compensation issue, harassment, bullying or someone observing unethical behavior. In any event, it was now in my hands; and I was expected to get down to the bottom of it. Most of the time, the most obvious approach required an investigation and strategy on how to resolve it. Based on my experience, here are some steps as how to proceed forward in putting together an investigation process in handling an employee complaint:

1. Is an investigation necessary?

Sometimes the course of action is so obvious because of the simplicity of the facts presented, that an investigation is not necessary. However, if the facts are grey and open to interpretation, it would be relevant to initiate an investigation, if for nothing else, but to verify the facts of the incident. It will help firm up or defend any action that the organization needs to take.

2. You must address the situation immediately!

Even before you complete an investigation you may have to put someone on administrative leave or at least separate some of the parties involved. I recall a situation in my previous company where one of our delivery drivers had an altercation with an employee who worked at one of the independent stores we serviced. We suspended the driver pending an investigation, and it was a good thing we did because he would have encountered some angry buddies of the store employee on his next trip to that location. A potential violent act was avoided!

3. Determine who will investigate the issue.

Depending on the issue, an experienced HR management person and/or other related officials can investigate a situation collectively. It is important that they understand the functionality and the duties of the person(s) involved so the actions can be clearly defined and analyzed.

Editors note: This will be Chuck Horter's last column in the *County News*. He has announced his well-deserved retirement, beginning in September.

Chuck has been an invaluable member of the NDACo team since 2016. His connection to counties is strong, having been born practically in the shadow of the Walsh County Courthouse, where his mother was employed in the Treasurer's Office. He had a stellar career in the private sector, primarily at Super Valu, and in the public sector, with the ND Department



Chuck Horter

of Transportation. He adapted his skills to county government seamlessly and has been a tremendous resource for many counties over the years, an enthusiastic supporter of and contributor to the Human Resource Collaborative for Local Government and an all-around great guy to work with in the NDACo office.

He is a real classic, just like the classic cars he'll be spending more time on in his retirement. On behalf of the NDACo staff, board and county members, THANK YOU, Chuck!

In some cases, it is beneficial to get an outside investigator who will take an impartial and observant view of the matter and make recommendations. The investigator should be experienced, knowledgeable about the law, and professionally be able to testify in a legal venue if necessary.

4. Plan the investigation.

Don't just jump into an investigation and randomly start talking to people who may or may not have knowledge of the situation. Determine what facts or actions on which you are trying to gain more insight. Who specifically should you talk to? What files or records are relevant? Discuss this matter with other ranking officials for additional insight and thought. Planning can help reduce time and allow focusing on important facts as you investigate.

5. Interview.

The interview is the most important part of any investigation. Generally, you will have to interview the employee who is charged with wrongdoing, the employee who complained or was the victim, and any related witnesses. You will want to prepare some open-ended questions in advance that encourage disclosure in a nonthreatening way. The more facts that are disclosed, the better.

6. Gather supporting evidence.

I was involved in an investigation where a derogatory note was put on an employee's piece of equipment and they in turn filed a complaint. In addition to interviewing all the employees who worked on that shift, we also secured the services of a handwriting expert to see if they could compare signatures to help determine the source of

the handwritten note. Although it was inconclusive, the actions taken did send a message to the workforce that the company was serious about addressing professional behavior in the workplace.

7. Evaluate the evidence.

I have stated many times that in labor law we generally follow the reasonable person standard, which means we try to find a practical remedy to a problem based on the facts and information provided to us. It's a point where the state's attorney, HR and pertinent management officers can collectively review the information and try to find consensus and resolution.

8. Take Action.

If the investigation points to the fact that a serious action of misconduct has taken place, the entity will have to take immediate action to avoid legal liability for that employee's behavior and to protect other employees from harm.

9. Document the investigation.

Once the investigation is

complete, you will want to document the process in a report. This will give the entity some protection from lawsuits relating to the investigation and will also provide a written record of actions taken, in case of future misconduct by the same employee.

10. Follow up and closure.

This step should reflect the fact that the problem was addressed in good faith and has been resolved. It is very important that follow through with the complaining employee and the accused employee is taken so that there is closure for everyone. You must be clear of what was done in the investigation process and the logic used to make a final ruling. The individuals involved generally appreciate the fact that management took the time to investigate and address the problem in a quick and concise manner. It allows everyone to move forward to more constructive activities and a more positive environment.



What is ChatGPT?

Amber Schriock | NRG Service Manager

ChatGPT is an AI (artificial intelligence) chatbot that can answer questions. It is one of the products created by OpenAI (<https://chat.openai.com>) and has been transforming our lives since last fall, even if you don't use it. It is a natural language processing tool using conversational and generative AI. It can create resumes, summarize large amounts of text, solve difficult problems, and create computer codes.

Students have found this useful to create their essays and reports, leading some schools to block access. Anti-plagiarism tools are not yet advanced enough to detect ChatGPT generated content; however, the writing style is polite and conversational and may be a giveaway. It also cannot use metaphors, irony, or sarcasm.

Businesspeople have used it to create content for blogs, speeches, and emails. Be sure to review information ChatGPT provides as it may be incorrect. The program is designed to put words together that statistically make sense. The data ChatGPT pulls from is limited to what is put in, current events and information up to September of 2021. The program does not have access to the internet.

As for safety, OpenAI recommends users limit personal/sensitive information shared with the chatbot. The usage



policies prohibit illegal and hateful activity. Chats may be monitored by humans for compliance and future research to improve services.

ChatGPT is just one form of AI. We use AI every day and may not even know it:

- Recommendation systems, such as YouTube and Amazon.
- Strategic computer games, like chess.
- Web search engines, like Google and Bing.

AI is all around us and to address the growing popularity, the National Association of Counties has put together the NACo AI Exploratory Committee. This committee will work to identify potential applications of AI and evaluate the risks, amongst many other things. Committee membership includes representation from 16 county leaders across the country, including Cass County Commissioner Chad Peterson. Look for the AI presentation at the NDACo Conference in October to hear more!

AI is Everywhere Are We Considering the Ethical Implications?

Chuck Gallagher, LLC

In today's digital age, generative AI stands at the forefront of technological marvels, reshaping the way we view content creation and the very essence of creativity. However, like all innovations that harbor transformative powers, it presents many ethical dilemmas with far-reaching consequences.

Unearthing the Ethical Challenges:

- **Distribution of Harmful Content:** Generative AI has the latent capability of churning out content that ranges from misleading to downright harmful. This could jeopardize societal fabric, propagating falsehoods or promoting hate.
- **Legal Ambiguities and Copyright Nightmares:** Picture this - an AI generates content eerily reminiscent of a copyrighted piece. Where does the line of infringement begin or end?
- **Navigating the Murky Waters of Data Privacy:** The vast expanse of data fuelling generative AI models could have dubious origins. This calls into question the ethics of data acquisition and the potential breach of privacy.
- **The Pandora's Box of Sensitive Information:** A seemingly innocent AI model could unintentionally spill sensitive information, jeopardizing individuals and corporate entities.
- **Bias Amplification:** Generative AI can unknowingly be an echo chamber, amplifying entrenched biases in its training data, leading to skewed and potentially prejudiced outputs.
- **The Enigma of Accountability:** Generative AI operates in intricate patterns, often too complex for the human mind to decipher. This raises the alarm on transparency and the pivotal question: Who will be held accountable?

Charting the Ethical Path Forward:

- **Crafting Ethical Roadmaps:** Drafting holistic ethical guidelines tailored to sectors like healthcare and journalism can be the lighthouse in these uncharted waters.
- **Upholding Transparency:** Advocating for generative AI models that are both efficient and transparent can bridge the chasm of mistrust.
- **Fortifying Data Privacy:** An impermeable fortress of data security and privacy protocols is paramount.
- **Confronting Biases:** A conscious effort to rectify and neutralize biases in AI models, coupled with diversified training data, can pave the way for impartial outcomes.
- **Educational Initiatives:** Informing users and stakeholders about generative AI's intricacies and ethical implications can foster a more cautious and informed utilization.
- **Synergistic Collaborations:** Bridging divides by initiating dialogues between the academia, corporate sphere, and policymakers can usher in balanced regulations and ethical best practices.

At this crossroads of innovation and ethics, ensuring that generative AI flourishes responsibly and ethically is not just a technical challenge but a societal one. As we stand on the brink of this new era, it's imperative to ask: How can we harness the potential of generative AI while safeguarding our values and principles?

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Are you grappling with the ethical implications of AI in your domain? Or are you looking to understand its broader impact on society? Reach out, engage in the dialogue, and let's consider having a discussion. I'd love to talk about how we can bring AI to life in your next meeting or discuss the ethical implications. I'm only a phone call away, 824-244-1400.

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Observations from Esri User Conference 2023

Kaitlyn Bakken | NDACo GIS Coordinator

If you tried to contact the GIS Program between July 9th through the 15th, you likely received an automated “out of office” response. During my time out of the office, I attended the Environmental Systems Research Institute (Esri) User Conference in San Diego, California alongside over 18,000 other GIS Professionals from around the world. This is the largest GIS conference in the world and offers almost 1,000 workshops, sessions and special interest groups spread out over the course of a week. With that many learning opportunities, it wasn’t easy to narrow down my schedule to what time allowed.

The theme of the User Conference was “What kind of world do you want to see?” I was able to pack my schedule with 28 sessions that pertained to informing policy, application workshops, grant funding, aligning GIS work with policy drivers, and Next Generation 911. Before the conference officially kicked off, I attended the plenary sessions to hear from the President of Esri, Jack Dangermond, and others about the week to come.

During a session on informing policy, Manatee County, Florida gave a presentation on how they are communicating capital improvement projects with their communities. By creating a Capital Improvement Hub using Esri tools; they can share project purpose, impact, progress, cost, and location all in one place. The hub also offers citizens the option to opt in on project notifications and lists when that project is on the commission meeting agenda. Additionally, Manatee County also created an Extreme Weather Dashboard to relay information to keep their communities safe before, during and after tropical storms and hurricanes. This dashboard communicates storm location and current threat level, evacuation areas, shelters, availability of resources like gas, sandbags, and power outages. Both resources have been shown to be incredibly helpful to both the county offices and the public, not to mention they were created with readily available data from open access resources and third-party vendors.

Since I’ve had a few counties reach out to me inquiring about



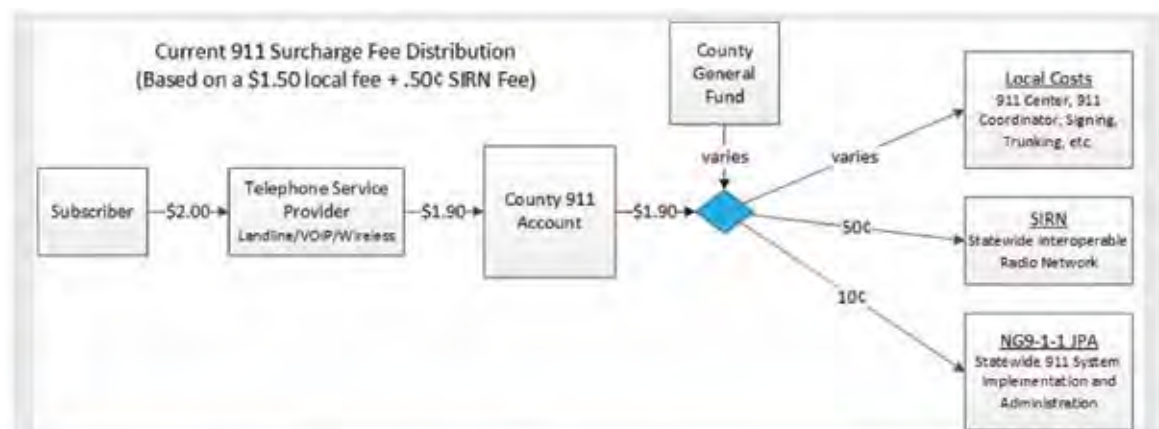
ArcGIS solutions, I made sure to attend a workshop to learn the ins and outs. ArcGIS solutions is an application that connects different web based Esri products to meet certain industry needs. Depending on the Solution you find to suit your needs, it will deploy an application that will collect information (whether that be a survey form or simple data capture) and normally an ArcGIS hub and dashboard to display the information with an interface for public view and interoffice use. All aspects that are deployed within the Solution are editable and can be modified to better suit your needs. This application was specifically created to

empower the public to aid in data collection and effectively allows them to answer the “who, what, when, and where.”

Going off the theme of this year’s User Conference, “What kind of world do you want to see? As county folks, we’re no stranger to serving our communities and ensuring they are functioning to the best of our abilities. GIS poses a multitude of opportunities for our communities to be proactive rather than reactive. Having the opportunity to attend this conference was a phenomenal learning and networking experience. This being my first GIS Conference has me excited to attend more in the future!

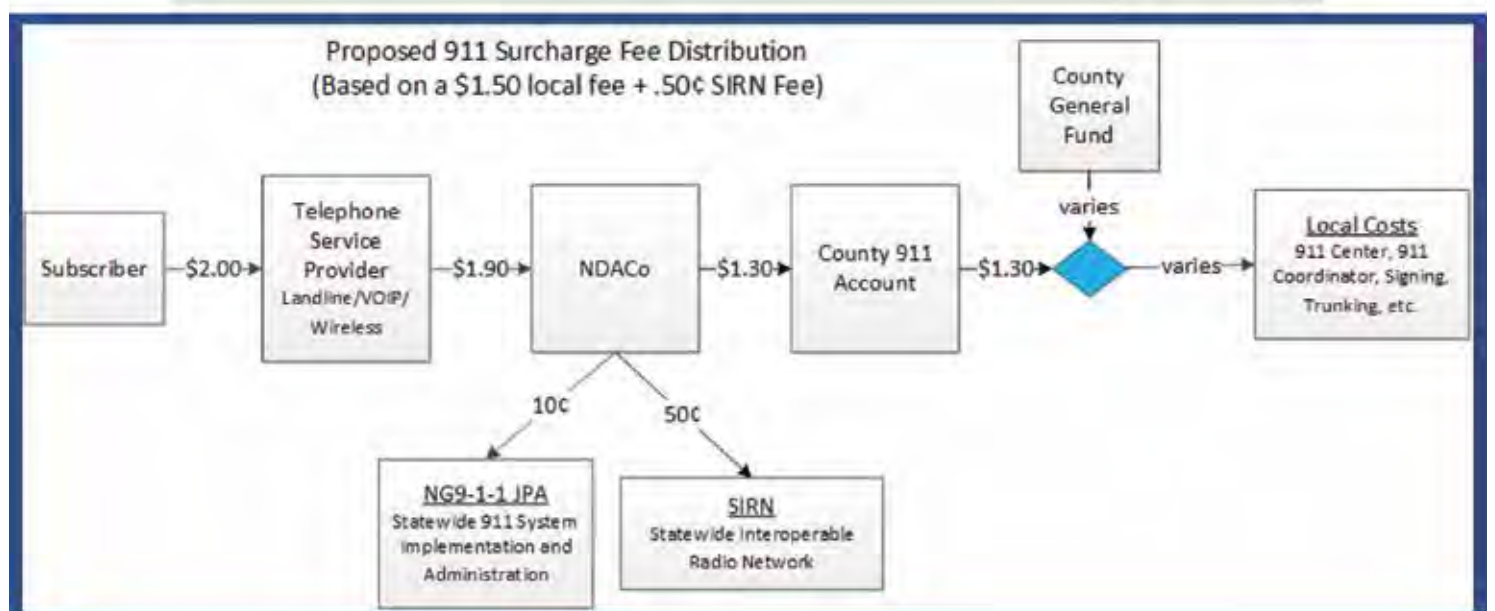
911 Fee Proposal

- NDACo serves as collection point for county 911 surcharges
- NDACo calculates county fees to support NG911 & SIRN programs
- NDACo remits fees to appropriate program
- NDACo returns balance to county for deposit in 9-1-1 account



Benefits To Counties

- Ensures NG911 & SIRN programs receive funds consistently
- Removes numerous 911 surcharge remittances, fee calculation, accounts payable overhead
- Eliminates responsibility to notify providers on rate changes
- Accurately captures annual statewide 911 surcharge revenue
- Provides NDACo audit capabilities
- NDACo sets remittance documentation requirements



Cole Just – More Than JUST a Student Leader

Leah Kelm | Vision Zero Regional Outreach Coordinator

LaMoure High School Freshman, Cole Just is a busy teenager. He plays football and basketball, is involved in 4-H and FFA, is a member of Zoar Church's Lutheran Youth Organization, and works on his family's farm. However, this spring, he found time to add one more activity to his schedule, becoming a Vision Zero School Student Leader.

Joining the Vision Zero School program has allowed Cole and the other Student Leaders in LaMoure to spread traffic safety messaging and education throughout their school. This peer-to-peer program is designed to guide the Student Leaders in building a safe driving culture in their community to help prevent motor vehicle fatalities and serious injuries. Developed by the North Dakota Department of Transportation, Vision Zero Schools is a no-cost program for schools across the state, with LaMoure being the eighth school to participate.

When asked why he wanted to join the Vision Zero School program, he echoed a similar theme that many of our Student Leaders throughout the state have also mentioned. "In a small town, everyone knows everyone. When someone gets in a crash, it affects a lot of people." And in Cole's case, that is especially true. His mom has been a leader in the EMS community locally and statewide for 22 years and has felt the impact of crashes firsthand.



Cole's Reserve Champion Award at the North Dakota State Fair in July.

During this year's legislative session, Cole testified in Bismarck in front of the House Transportation Committee in favor of SB 2362, more commonly known as the Primary Seat Belt Bill. "If you decide not to wear your seatbelt and you're thrown from your vehicle during a crash, the chances of being killed are four times greater. And your death doesn't just affect you and your family. It can affect me and my family too. Your decision NOT to buckle up can affect every EMS provider – like my mom – every firefighter, and every law enforcement officer responding to that scene. They

have to go home after seeing the worst of the worst and pretend nothing happened and can't talk to us about it. Trust me, I've seen this firsthand – and it's not easy for them to do."

Helping to pass the Primary Seat Belt Law during this year's legislative session was just the beginning of Cole's contribution to traffic safety. Since his school joined the Vision Zero School program, he has helped other schools with Vision Zero Days, utilized Impact Teen Drivers resources to provide small group presentations to other students on the dangers of reckless and distracted driving, assisted with planning other educational activities within his school, participated in a Driving Skills for Success event, and most recently, he applied for and received grant funding from North Dakota Farmers Union to be used towards promotional items to create

VISION ZERO

Zero fatalities. Zero excuses.

awareness of LaMoure's Vision Zero School program.

This summer, he was recognized for his work in the 4-H Civic Engagement, Volunteerism, and Service Learning category with a Reserve Champion Award at the North Dakota State Fair and with a Premium Exhibit Award at the county level during the LaMoure County 4-H Achievement Days.

With school back in session, North Dakota looks forward to seeing what Cole and all the other Vision Zero Student Leaders throughout the state have planned to help achieve Vision Zero's goal of zero motor vehicle fatalities.

LaMoure Public School will have their "official" kick-off as a Vision Zero School in September. To learn more about the Vision Zero School program and to view the other Vision Zero Schools in the state, please visit VisionZero.ND.gov.



LaMoure VZ School Student Leaders include (back row) Gunner Thielges, Austin Laney, Cole Just, Colby Thielges, Bailie Kelley, (middle row) Jarin Ragan, Avery Kramer, (front row) Kelsi Alber, Karyssa Meidinger, Kianna Weight, Addie Robbins during their Media Day in March.



LaMoure VZ School Student Leaders Austin Laney (left) and Cole Just (right) attending the Driving Skills for Success event in West Fargo in August.



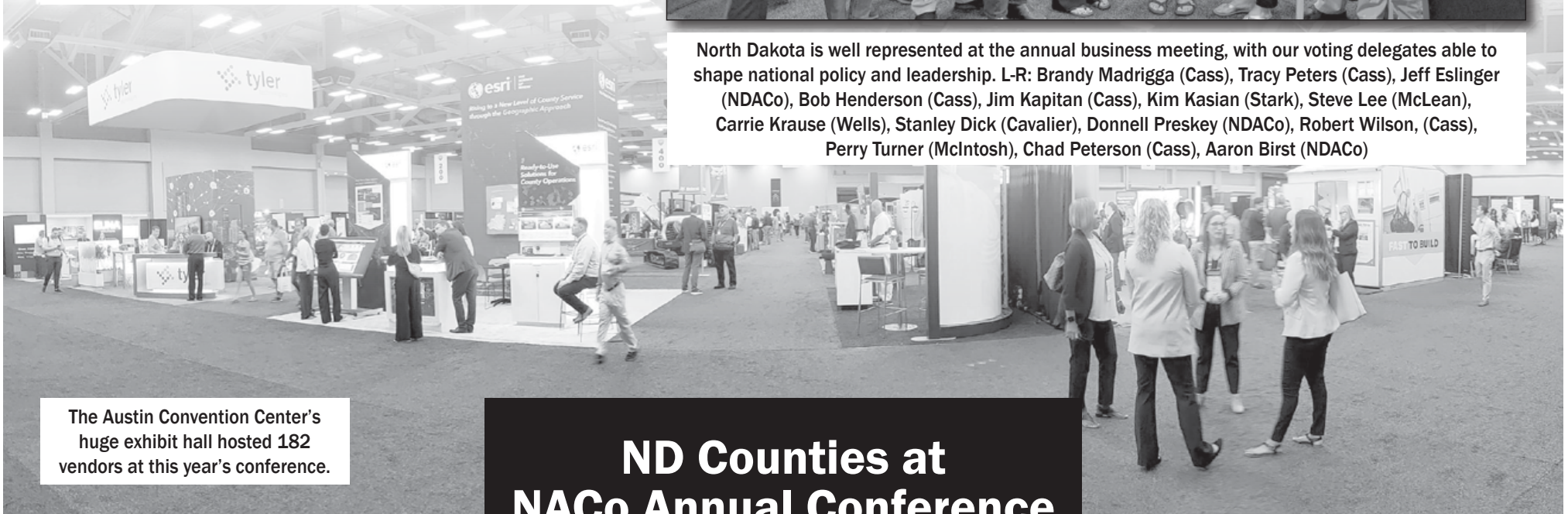
A group of LaMoure VZ School Student Leaders and North Dakota Highway Patrol Troopers John Bartlette (left) and Dustin Pattengale (right) with the Rollover Simulator in April.



Cass County Commissioner and NDCCA President Chad Peterson participated in the Artificial Intelligence Exploratory Committee meeting.



North Dakota is well represented at the annual business meeting, with our voting delegates able to shape national policy and leadership. L-R: Brandy Madrigga (Cass), Tracy Peters (Cass), Jeff Eslinger (NDACo), Bob Henderson (Cass), Jim Kapitan (Cass), Kim Kasian (Stark), Steve Lee (McLean), Carrie Krause (Wells), Stanley Dick (Cavalier), Donnell Preskey (NDACo), Robert Wilson, (Cass), Perry Turner (McIntosh), Chad Peterson (Cass), Aaron Birst (NDACo)

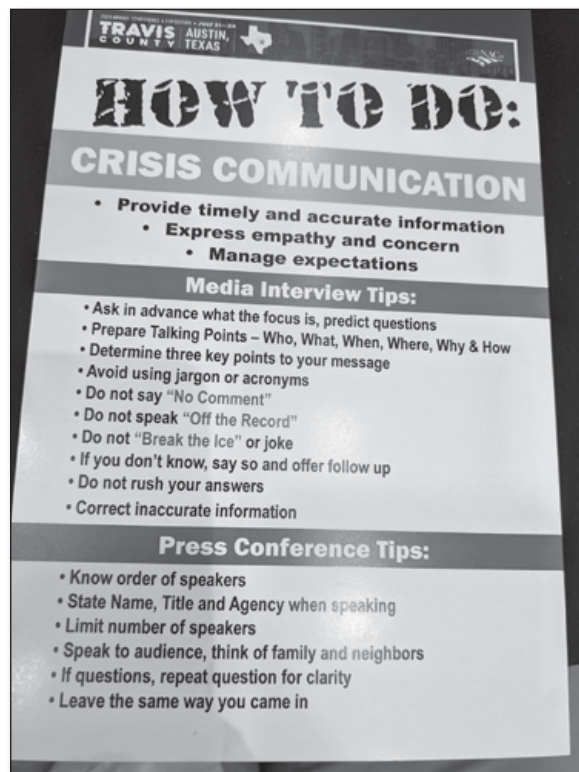


The Austin Convention Center's huge exhibit hall hosted 182 vendors at this year's conference.

ND Counties at NACo Annual Conference



Cass County Administrator Robert Wilson moderated a workshop called "Breaking the Stigma: Empowering Mental Health Champions"



Just one of many great takeaway pieces: This one produced by the National Association of County Information Officers for a workshop on crisis communications



You didn't think we would miss out on Austin's famous barbecues, did you?

Bryon Fuchs to lead ND Local Technical Assistance Program

Bryon Fuchs has been named to lead the North Dakota Local Technical Assistance Program (NDLTAP), a program of the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute at NDSU that provides technical outreach, professional development, and leadership growth opportunities for local road workers across the state. He began work with UGPTI/NDLTAP August 2.



Bryon Fuchs

Fuchs brings more than 25 years of transportation engineering experience to NDLTAP. He worked as a consulting engineer, and in the Materials and Research Division of the North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT). Most recently, he was the assistant local government engineer for NDDOT, overseeing the rural and special program areas and serving as NDDOT's Tribal Liaison.

Fuchs oversaw or was involved in multiple programs that provided federal and state funds to local public agencies and tribal governments. Annual

funding through these programs exceeded \$50 million for roadway and bridge projects, safety improvements, and the transportation alternatives program. He was the program manager for NDDOT's Local Public Agency Bridge Inspection and Load Rating contracts. He managed the nearly \$900 million in oil impact funds that were distributed to all North Dakota counties over six years. Fuchs also oversaw NDDOT's emergency relief program from 2009 to 2011. That program addressed some of the most extensive flooding in state history.

He was also part of the NDDOT team that worked with all 53 counties, 12 of the largest cities, and all four tribal governments in the state to complete local road safety plans. This team received the 2014 American

Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials' (AASHTO) President's Transportation Award for Highway Traffic Safety.

Fuchs received the 2017 Western Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials' Dr. L.I. Hewes Award for contributions to highway development, the 2016 Friends of North Dakota Association of County Engineers Award, and the 2016 AASHTO President's Transportation Award for administration of the local county roads program.

Fuchs, a U.S. Navy veteran, is a registered professional engineer in North Dakota. He earned a bachelor of science degree in civil engineering from North Dakota State University.

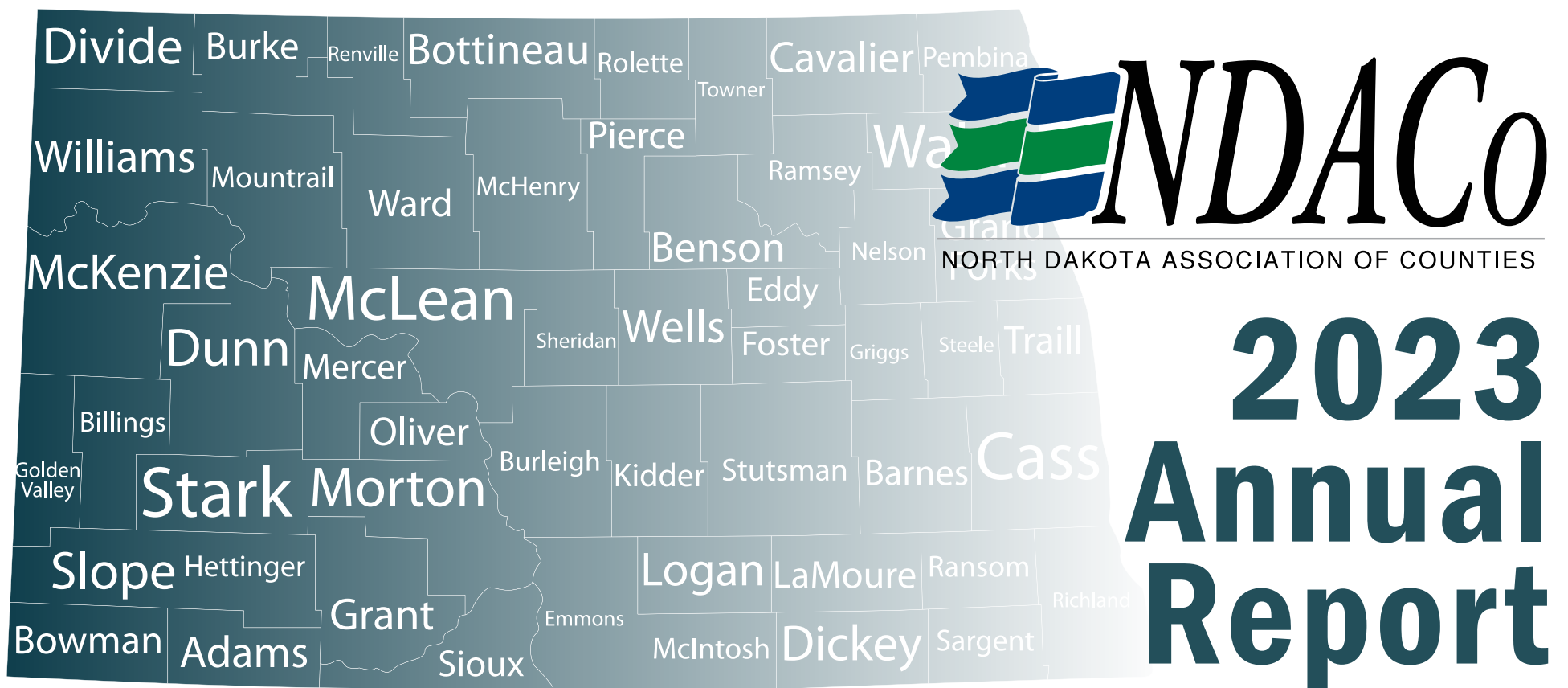
2023 Innovation Champions

Congratulations to McKenzie County Highway Department on 1st Place in the 2023 Innovation Champions contest. This amazing innovation, the fifth-wheel quick-attach sander easily attaches to a semi-tractor and is another vehicle the road department can use for better snow and ice coverage. By adapting equipment to make it multi-functional, the results are improved safety for the motoring public, better utilization of equipment, and cost savings to the county.



The 2nd Place innovation is the Asphalt Crevice Blaster, submitted by the Walsh County Highway Department. A simple yet effective way to modify an air compressor nozzle to follow the path of a crack for cleaning before filling it.





State of the Counties

I find it hard to describe the amount of change counties have experienced in the past year without it sounding like exaggeration. The 2022 election brought in over 50 new county leaders and a week rarely goes by without us hearing about upcoming retirements of longtime county friends across the state.

On top of that, the state legislature – a quarter of whom were rookies themselves – handed counties the challenge of figuring out how to replace the pension system most of them participate in.

But change is good, right? It certainly can be. I am optimistic about our future together in the counties. Despite all that will be new and unfamiliar in the future, I believe we will continue to climb our challenges like true mountaineers, tied together, pulling each other up, and always ultimately rising to the top.



Aaron Birst
Executive Director

County Employer Group

For the purpose of “worker’s comp,” all county employees are covered together – over 7,000 employees in one group, rather than 53 separate employers – saving money, time and administration. This program, called the County Employer Group (CEG) has been modeled in other states due to its success in North Dakota.

CEG saves money and lives in three important ways:

1. Safety Training

To prevent workplace injuries, CEG trained over **7,000** employees on safety topics, ranging from the general - like lifting safely - to the highly specialized - like bloodborne pathogens. County employees in 27 counties received over **10,000** hours of safety training, including nearly 4,800 computer-based safety training courses.

2. Risk Management

Fifty-six risk managers assist CEG with compliance issues such as investigations, inspections, reporting and injury prevention, among other duties, resulting in discounts of up to 17% in worker’s comp premiums.

3. Transitional Work Program

CEG handled **351** claims in 2022, **up 18%** from 2020.

We’re proud that CEG’s indemnity claim (lost time) is less than half of the average cost of other North Dakota employers, according to ND Workforce Safety & Insurance. CEG is one of our earliest and most successful programs, a fine example of how we work for the good of all counties.

Geographic Information System (GIS) Program

Since we launched the GIS Program in 2022, in response to a need in many counties:

10 counties have signed on to the program.

1 county met its goals with the program and completed its contract.

😊 In other words, the program is working as intended.

The program supports counties with a qualified GIS professional who helps empower counties to maximize use of their GIS data. As with other NDACo programs, the GIS Program is envisioned not to replace county employees or vendor relationships, but as a support for counties to help them kick start or improve how they use this exciting technology.

The kind of work being done with counties under contract includes:

- Redistricting
- Creating new voting districts
- Readdressing
- Precincts
- Answering questions and providing help with specific projects.

Goals for the future include:

- Continued training and networking
- Finalizing contract with NDIT to support State Parcel Program
- Contracting with more counties (16 by end of 2023)
- Informing counties and other agencies about the applications and importance of GIS.



Human Resources Service

NDACo also provides specific HR consulting services for ND counties and related political subdivisions. Like the GIS Program, it provides professional support to counties and is not intended to replace employees or contractors. Services include but are not limited to:

- Updating employee handbooks
- Training in recruitment and selection, FMLA*, harassment, etc.
- FLS** interpretations, writing job descriptions and consultation on specific HR issues and strategy.

A networking group has been developed for the County HR Directors and can be accessed as a resource for guidance and direction.

* Family Medical Leave Act

** Fair Labor Standards

Human Resources Collaborative

There was a major change to the HR Collaborative in 2023, as the program transitioned to the ND Insurance Reserve Fund after the retirement of consultant, Kathy Hogan. The Collaborative continues to be a vital resource to local government entities, and the trainings opportunities and resources will continue under NDIRF's guidance. The HR Collaborative for Local Government continues to be an important element in NDACo's HR effort. Over the spring and summer months of 2023 the Collaborative held a series of **6** online training opportunities, featuring such diverse topics as...

- Q & A with Labor Commissioner
- Focused Interviewing
- ADA
- Remote Work
- Supporting Workplace Well-Being
- HR Reference Guide Review and Utilizing LocalGovU for further training opportunities.

Nearly **600** participants took the online courses live, while all were recorded and are available upon request. The Collaborative continues to work with local government partners, including NDACo and ILG, in providing HR training to its members.

The online HR Reference Guide for Local Governments, updated in 2022, serves as a great tool for officials to understand many facets of human resources for government. You can find this resource, along with many others, at www.hrndgov.org.

NDACo encourages all local government officials with HR responsibilities to join the collaborative by clicking the "Join Now" tab on their website.

Institute of Local Government

The Institute of Local Government (ILG) soared through this past year hosting widespread training webinars. Over the past 12 months, ILG has reached more than **6,000** county officials with more than **70** training sessions! Webinars are the perfect professional development solution for all county officials and employees.

ILG was also deeply involved in the HR Collaborative trainings over the summer. Employees are your #1 asset, and human resources is an integral part to your county! HR topics continue to be prevalent. The HR Collaborative and ILG continue to offer training regarding trending and important HR subject matter.

ILG works with public and private partners from across the state to assure all courses are provided by highly qualified presenters. The online library of recorded webinars offers a variety of training opportunities and keeps expanding.

In the last 12 months, ILG has sent out nearly **1,000** recordings.

In 2023, ILG will honor around 80 hour-level award recipients!

In addition to webinars, ILG continues to offer training with member conventions and on site by request. ILG trainings are listed on the NDACo website at www.ndaco.org/ilg.

NRG Technology Services

NRG is a subsidiary of NDACo, developed to support the IT needs of all North Dakota counties. NRG's owners are all North Dakota counties.

NRG works directly with the state's IT department, NDIT, on issues that affect all counties, meeting with them to discuss the latest issues every six weeks. NRG was asked to present at the Cyber Security Interim committee meeting on behalf of NDACo. NRG's Account Manager Dwight Driscoll discussed the Cyber Security features provided by the state and the ability of counties to help fund those features.

Dwight has been attending the county tours with NDACo staff to spread awareness of the purpose of NRG and listen to feedback from all the counties.

NRG's President sits on the Criminal Justice Information Sharing Board and the State's Cybersecurity Collaboration Committee. As resources become available, NRG purchases government bonds to help support local governments with financing their projects.

All Human Service Zones should now be using Microsoft 365, provided through DHS and NDIT, for email. They also have access to Teams for increased collaboration. NRG will send a representative to the Human Service Zone Directors meeting to complement standardization and implementation efforts.

The tagline **Stress-Free IT** means their customers let them worry about managing their ever-changing and complex IT infrastructures.

Juvenile Justice Services

To assist counties and local communities with services for at-risk youth, the Division of Juvenile Services (a division of the ND Dept. of Corrections) contracts with NDACo to employ North Dakota's Juvenile Justice Specialist, Lisa Jahner. This position is federally mandated by the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act. Lisa works with federal, state and local officials on practices and policies, administers federal grant funding, and coordinates the activities of a Governor's advisory group on juvenile justice.

With the recent award of several federal discretionary grants, in addition to the annual federal formula grant, NDACo is currently administering over \$3.8 million in federal juvenile justice grant funds. Almost all of this funding goes out to local government or community-based service organizations.

The annual formula grant provides funding to local government specifically to assist with placement costs for youth picked up by law enforcement as an alternative to secure detention (i.e. attendant care). A number of regional agreements have been established between local law enforcement agencies to provide for placement options for youth. In addition, with the use of formula grant funding, a Request for Proposals just went out to award up to \$500,000 in grant funding to local community-based organizations to implement services for at-risk youth. The goal of the funding allocation is to connect youth and families to individualized services in an effort to prevent child welfare and/or juvenile justice system involvement.

With the discretionary funding that was awarded, Lisa is managing a contract with a national training and technical assistance provider that is assisting North Dakota with juvenile justice system enhancements. Through this contract North Dakota has implemented major reform to its juvenile justice system during the last two legislative sessions. More recently, due to the significant over-representation of minority youth in the juvenile justice system, a statewide racial equity workgroup was established to look at ways to keep minority youth out of the system.

With the new legislation this past session, Lisa was asked to chair an Alternatives to Detention Planning Committee. Pursuant to the committee's recommendations, grant agreements are being finalized with the Grand Forks County and Ward County Juvenile Detention Centers to provide funding for their assistance to law enforcement with scoring the detention screening tool. The tool provides an objective determination about the proper placement of youth that have been picked up by law enforcement.

Next Generation 911

The Next Generation 911 Program made a significant impact on the state in 2023. The program collaborated with Dakota Carrier Networks and SRT Telecommunications in Minot to deploy end-to-end IP communications for the north central region of ND.

This new connectivity demonstrated its resilience during a July 911 outage event by remaining online while almost all other companies were having difficulty. T-Mobile customers are also benefiting from end-to-end IP communications, and other cellular providers in the state are planning to transition in the coming months.

With four significant outages in 2023, the 911 system has faced significant challenges. Two of these events occurred in the wireless carrier's networks outside of the 911 system, and two occurred inside the 911 system.

All these events were related to analog-based networking that NDACo is working to quickly replace. As a state, North Dakota is on the leading edge of a transition away from analog networks, ahead of all but a couple states in the country. This transition is extremely important and will lead to a more resilient and accessible 911 network in the future.

Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor

The Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor (TSRP) is a joint effort between NDACo and the ND Department of Transportation (NDDOT).

Aaron Birst was North Dakota's first TSRP and worked this grant program from 2006 until May of 2022 when he was hired as the Executive Director of NDACo. Once Aaron left the position, NDACo contracted with Kristi Venhuizen (the Grand Forks City Prosecutor) to continue providing TSRP services. Recently, Kristi was appointed by Governor Burgum to be the next District Court Judge in the Northeast Central Judicial District. Aaron has been working with DOT and various stakeholders to chart the next course for this important program.

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Legislative Services

The 2023 Legislative Session placed counties in a strong position to serve North Dakota. Lawmakers considered nearly 1,000 bills and resolutions. NDACo tracked more than 500 bills. NDACo's advocacy efforts during the Session involved testifying at hearings, meeting with lawmakers one on one and gathering information from county officials. Legislative schedules of county-related bills are shared with county members weekly and discussed on various member association calls. Weekly updates and the schedule is published on the NDACo Legislative Blog.

A few of the greatest "wins" for counties this session are:

- A more permanent and reliable infrastructure funding formula
- Emergency snow removal cost assistance
- Primary safety belt enforcement
- Continued support and funding for human service zones
- Increased funding for public health, extension, guardianships and law enforcement
- Defeat of harmful legislation related to elections, budgets and property taxes.

ND Public Employees Retirement System (PERS)

The Legislature's overhaul of the PERS public pension system was not just the most impactful policy change of the session. It is possibly the most impactful of the past (and future) several decades. PERS has provided defined benefits (pension) to state and political subdivisions for years. Starting sometime in the next few years, new employees will enroll in a defined contribution plan, similar to a 401k. Current participants in PERS will not be affected, but future legislatures will have to fund the program until it closes out with its last retiree decades from now.

For detailed analysis of the 2023 Session, please visit our Legislative Blog at ndcounties.blog, and select the "2023 Legislative Wrap Up Report – Presentation" link.

Member Services

While you might say everything we do at NDACo is a member service, there are certain activities that are designed solely to keep us in close touch with county officials – our members – to be sure we are meeting their needs.

County Tours

Our goal is to reach every county approximately every three years, which means four or five counties per tour, spread out over the year in four tours. Select NDACo staff, along with the presidents and other officers of NDACo and NDCCA attend the tours. From October 2022 to September 2023, the tours visited 13 counties: Benson, Billings, Bottineau, Burleigh, Dunn, Eddy, Emmons, Foster, Golden Valley, Grant, McHenry, McKenzie, Morton, Pierce, Rolette, Sheridan, Sioux, Stark and Wells Counties.

Onboarding

NDACo welcomed a record number of county officials in 2023 with an introductory letter or email, along with copies of information on resources and programs NDACo offers that can help them in their new jobs. We do our best to follow up by one or more phone calls from staff and board members; no easy task after a big election!

Events

This year, we made a significant change to one of our primary events. In prior election years, we conducted a two-day training event called the **County Officials Academy**. In 2023, we shortened the event and focused solely on legislative advocacy training and action. It is now called **County Day at the Capitol**. Training on the essentials of each office is still important, so we have posted a playlist of twelve "Roles & Responsibilities of County Offices" videos on our YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/NDCounties.

Our Annual Conference serves as the primary training and networking event for all county officials. 2022 saw a continued recovery from having to do the conference virtually in 2020, and we are eager to see continued growth in 2023.

Social Media

We keep in touch through the major social media outlets (below) and encourage counties to connect with us so we can also follow their accounts.

- Website – www.ndaco.org
- Facebook – facebook.com/ndcounties
- Twitter – [@ndcounties](https://twitter.com/ndcounties)
- YouTube – youtube.com/ndcounties

Board of Directors

The NDACo Board of Directors is made up of one commissioner for each region and one representative from each member association.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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President

Region 7

McLean County Commissioner

Jayne Tenneson

1st Vice President

Nelson/Griggs County State's Attorney

Trudy Ruland

2nd Vice President

Region 2

Mountrail County Commissioner

Chad Kaiser

3rd Vice President

Stutsman County Sheriff

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Past President

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Region 1

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Nick Moser

Region 3

Cavalier County Commissioner

Steve Forde

Region 4

Nelson County Commissioner

Mary Scherling

Region 5

Cass County Commissioner

Becky Hagel

Region 6

Foster County Commissioner

Scott Ouradnik

Region 8

Slope County Commissioner

MEMBER ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVES

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ND County Auditors Association

Sheridan County Auditor

Wanda Knutson

ND County Clerks of District

Court Association

Mercer County Clerk of District Court

Dana Larsen

ND Association of County

Engineers

Ward County Highway Engineer

Kim Jacobson

ND Human Service Zone

Directors Association

Agassiz Valley Human Service

Zone Director

Kelly Vincent

ND County Recorders Association

Griggs County Recorder

Lori Hanson

ND County Tax Directors

Association

Mountrail County Tax Director

Erica Johnsrud

ND Treasurers Association

McKenzie County Auditor/Treasurer

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS

Robert Wilson

NACo Board Representative

Cass County Administrator

Perry Turner

NACo Board Representative

McIntosh County Commissioner

Chad Peterson

ND County Commissioners

Association President

Cass County Commissioner

Vision Zero Outreach Program

NDACo continues to work with the ND Department of Transportation in the Vision Zero Outreach Program.

The program hosts four regional Outreach Coordinators who have been hard at work developing and maintaining partnerships, providing resources, and coordinating outreach activities to support communities to work toward zero motor vehicle crash fatalities and serious injuries. In the past fiscal year, the Outreach Coordinators have conducted Impact Teen Driver presentations in 30 schools across the state, educating over 2,700 North Dakota teenagers on the dangers of distracted and reckless driving.

The Coordinators have widespread partnerships in every corner of the state and continue to push the needle on the importance of traffic safety and safe driving.

The mission of Vision Zero relies on personal responsibility to obey traffic safety laws and is implemented through various strategies, including:

1. Widespread public education/outreach
2. Infrastructure/road safety improvements
3. High visibility enforcement of existing laws
4. Technology advancements
5. Working with the legislature to ensure state laws represent best practices in traffic safety

The strategy of **Vision Zero** is simple: to eliminate motor vehicle crash fatalities and serious injuries in the state.

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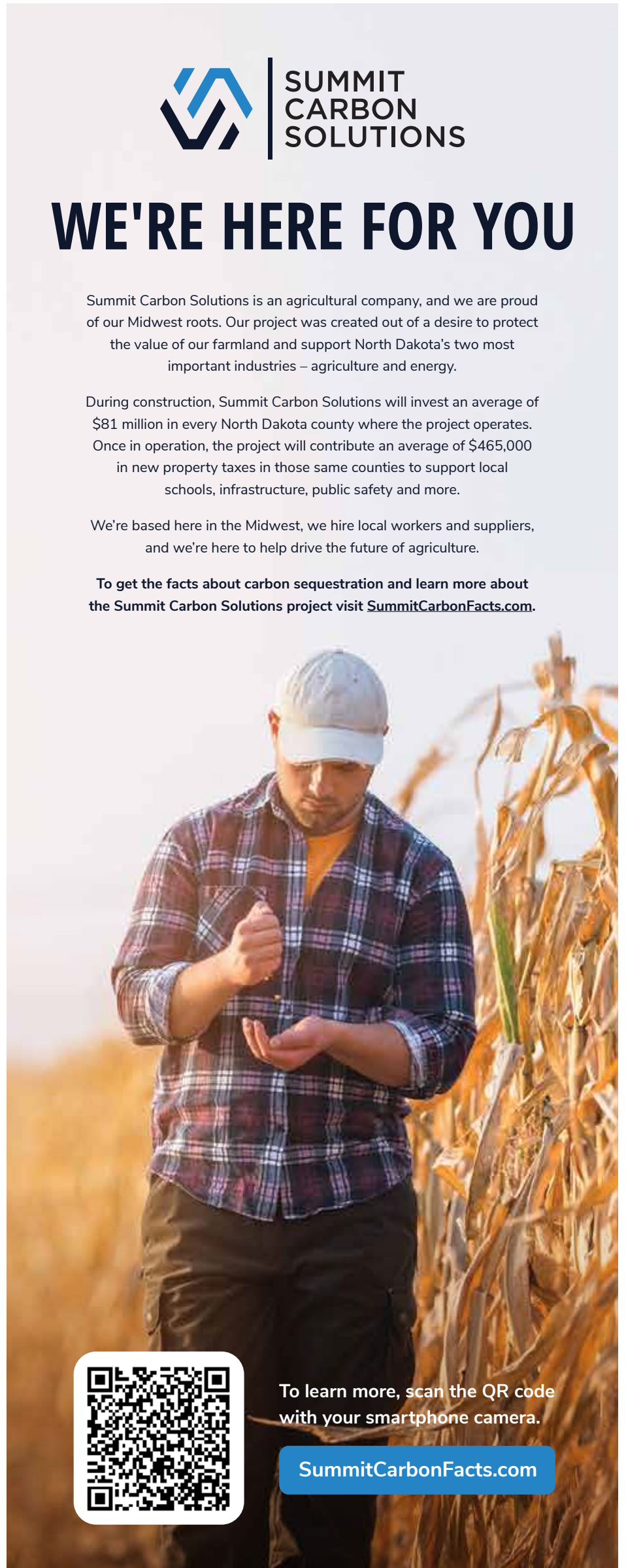


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Purchasing Pulse

The Big Picture: Cooperative Purchasing in North Dakota

Sherry Neas | Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Central Services Division

Cooperative purchasing has many benefits:

- Cost savings as government entities aggregate spend to obtain lower prices from suppliers.
- Timing savings as one entity conducts the procurement process for the benefit of all, and needed goods and services can be purchased from existing contracts.

On Aug. 1, laws went into effective giving counties and cities authority to participate in cooperative purchasing contracts upon board approval by executing a joint powers agreement

under N.D.C.C. Chapter 54-40.3. These laws are:

- Cities see N.D.C.C. 11-11-14 (4) and N.D.C.C. 11-11-69
- Counties see N.D.C.C. 40-05-01 (52) and N.D.C.C. 40-05-25

Contact your legal counsel for assistance when considering joining a cooperative purchasing agreement. Cooperative purchasing contracts cannot be used for public improvements (N.D.C.C. Chapter 48-01.2).

The OMB website www.omb.nd.gov has been updated to provide more information about cooperative purchasing organizations. There are many cooperative purchasing

organizations that have contracts for the same goods and services. Comparing pricing and contract terms is important.

Many goods and services are commonly used by all government entities. OMB has authority to “participate in, sponsor or administer” cooperative purchasing agreements that are available to all public entities in North Dakota. Visit the OMB website under “Doing Business with the State” for a list of the existing state contracts.

OMB continues to add new statewide contracts. If you have an idea for a new statewide contract, please contact the State Procurement Office at infospo@nd.gov or call 701-328-0819.

Interpretation and Translation Service Available through Cooperative Purchasing

NDACo visited with many exhibitors during the NACo Annual Conference in Austin, and learned that one of them, Language Link, is already available to North Dakota counties through the state’s cooperative purchasing program (see article above). Language Link holds a state contract which covers Over-the-Phone and Video-Remote Interpretation services, as well as document and website translation services.

Counties can get a quote for document translation services within

one business day. The price for live, over-the-phone interpretation language services is \$0.57 per minute all languages.

Language Link’s Over-the-Phone Interpretation (OPI) service (contract number 488) ensures that those who have limited English proficiency have equal access to vital information and services. They offer dual handset phones to access OPI quickly for your walk-in limited English-speaking clients.

Through the National Association of State Procurement Officials (NASPO),

Language Link provides a webinar presentation the second Wednesday of each month at 12:00 pm CST. Sign up by contacting naspo@language.link.

For further information, visit language.link/naspo-valuepoint.



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NDSU Extension Prepares Leaders in Soil Conservation

Twice a year, soil conservation district supervisors and staff from across North Dakota attend a Soil and Water Conservation Leadership Academy hosted by NDSU Extension. The academy prepares supervisors to become more effective leaders and community builders in the area of soil and water conservation. It incorporates both technical training and professional leadership development.

Supervisors are responsible for the management of the soil conservation district and the implementation of North Dakota Century Code rules and regulations. They run board meetings, manage the district budget, develop district policies and hire district support staff. Attending annual training on topics related to their work is a requirement of the Century Code.

“One of the most important responsibilities of soil conservation district supervisors is creating the district’s annual plan of work,” says Jodi Delozier, Extension specialist and program director of soil and water leadership development. “We help them write impactful goals,

identify partners and expand community outreach.”

The academy also includes sessions on ethics, parliamentary procedure, open records and open meetings laws, human resources policy, conflict management, communication and relationship building.


Two grant-funded soil conservation district program coordinators help Delozier develop other types of training to support the districts throughout the year, including 10- to 15-minute “microlessons” for use at board meetings. They are also putting together webinars, a podcast, and a toolkit of resources, including an onboarding checklist for new district staff and templates to help districts create individual legislative updates.

“We want to help soil conservation districts deliver more outreach and promote the conservation work they are doing,” says Delozier. “The districts are doing great things. If asked, I could list one thing they are doing that is unique and impactful.”



“NDSU Extension’s role is to help build soil conservation district capacity,” says Delozier. “We help them become more knowledgeable and do more with the resources they have.”

More Information:
North Dakota State Soil Conservation -
<https://www.ndsu.edu/ndssc/>
Jodi Delozier, 701-231-1861, jodi.delozier@ndsu.edu



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:

- ***Livestock development benefits and challenges***
- ***Modern livestock management and environmental stewardship***
- ***State and local livestock zoning and permitting procedures***
- ***Why your County wants to be a Livestock Friendly Community***



Contact us or invite NDLA to your next County Commission meeting at ndlivestock.org or 701-712-1488 Follow us on Twitter @LivestockND

National Association of Counties Leadership Development

We would like to acknowledge and congratulate the April NACo Leadership Academy graduates from North Dakota. They join over 10,000 graduates and current participants from across the country benefitting from the 12-week online program enabling existing and emerging county leaders to achieve their highest potential.

- Andrew Kirking, Stutsman County Emergency Manager/911 Coordinator
- Dawn Grannis, Mercer County Treasurer
- Jim Kapitan, Cass County Commissioner
- Kimberlee Hegvik, Cass County State's Attorney
- Laurie Good, LaMoure County Recorder
- Maureen McGilvrey, Stutsman County Treasurer/Recorder
- Megan Nettum, Cass County Office Administrator
- Sarah Duttonhefner, Dunn County Emergency Manager

Invest in your team with Leadership Training!

Our September cohort is just around the corner. Prioritize leadership development today and deliver results for your team and county. Scholarships are available.

<https://www.naco.org/resources/education-and-training/naco-high-performance-leadership-academy>

Developed by General Colin Powell, the Professional Development Academy and NACo, the High Performance Leadership Academy is an online 12-week program that helps your workforce develop fundamental, practical leadership skills to deliver results for counties and residents.

NACo Leadership Academy Alumni Profile

Laurie Johnson

Mountrail County Correctional Center Administrator



Number of years in your role: 20

Don't miss this in my county: *Whirly Whip.*

My motivation for signing up for the NACo leadership Academy: *To be a better leader.*

My favorite part of the NACo Leadership Academy: *Break out groups.*

My favorite leadership rule of the NACo Leadership Academy: *Bring your own weather.*

My leadership oath: *To lead with honesty & integrity while being transparent.*

In my spare time I: *Work around the farm.*

I'm most looking forward to: *Drawing from the leadership training to make positive changes.*

NACo Leadership Academy Alumni Profile

Christopher J. Deery

Cass County Veterans Service Officer



Number of years in your role: *Two*

Don't miss this in my county: *The Fargo National Cemetery, downtown Fargo and Duane's House of Pizza.*

My biggest challenge: *Veteran homelessness and affordable housing.*

My motivation for signing up for the NACo Leadership Academy: *Be a better supervisor and leader to our veteran group.*

My favorite part of the NACo Leadership Academy: *Meeting new people with the same attitudes towards helping others and sharing those thoughts each week.*

My favorite leadership rule of the NACo Leadership Academy: *Share credit.*

My leadership oath: *Be confident and be on point. Get your message across to your target audience.*

In my spare time I: *Love to BBQ, watch NDSU and Green Bay Packer football games, travel and love being with my family and friends.*

I'm most looking forward to: *Find more veterans in our county to register them with our office and assist them with their deserved benefits.*

NACo Leadership Academy Alumni Profile

Debby Magnuson

Barnes County Treasurer



Number of years in your role: 4.5

Don't miss this in my county: *The bridges - we are the City of Bridges.*

My biggest challenge: *Wages and retaining employees.*

My motivation for signing up for the NACo leadership Academy: *It was highly recommended and I like to learn.*

My favorite part of the NACo Leadership Academy: *The live conversations.*

My favorite leadership rule of the NACo Leadership Academy: *You bring the weather.*

My leadership oath: *To lead with integrity, be supportive, be prepared and keep a positive attitude, to be organized and communicate with those around me. To be genuine and heartfelt. Listen with the intent to hear. Put feelings behind leadership more than a technical approach. Respond rather than react. Design a way to measure successes, because what gets measured gets done. Know your audience and purpose of your business. Never think you are too important to take out the trash.*

In my spare time I: *Spend time with family and travel.*

I'm most looking forward to: *Becoming elected as Treasurer.*

Burgum Appoints Grand Forks Attorney Kristi Venhuizen to Northeast Central District Judgeship

Gov. Doug Burgum has appointed Grand Forks attorney Kristi Venhuizen to a newly created judgeship in the Northeast Central Judicial District, which is comprised of Grand Forks and Nelson Counties.

Venhuizen has practiced law for 25 years and currently is a partner in the law firm of Kalash & Pettit Attorneys at Law. Since 1999, she has served as the Grand Forks city prosecutor, processing cases through Grand Forks Municipal Court, jury trials in Grand Forks District Court, appeals to the North Dakota Supreme Court and

administrative hearings held through the North Dakota Department of Transportation's Drivers License and Safety Division. In private practice, she has represented clients in family law matters, estate planning, guardianships and conservatorships, probate law, domestic violence protection orders and real estate matters.

Venhuizen grew up in Grand Forks, where she graduated from Red River High School. She earned her bachelor's degree in criminal justice from the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks and her law degree from

Washburn University School of Law in Topeka, Kan., in May 1998.

Venhuizen has served as the supervising attorney for the Community Violence Intervention Center in Grand Forks since 2006 and as a Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor for the state of North Dakota since 2011. She has taught criminal law and criminal procedure in the Criminal Justice Department at UND since 2007. She is a member of the State Bar Association of North Dakota, having served as its president in 2011-2012, and has also served on the boards of the United Way of Grand Forks, East Grand Forks & Area, Agassiz Enterprises, Grand Forks Foundation for Education, Crime Stoppers and the North Dakota Ballet Co.



Kristi Venhuizen

The Northeast Central Judicial District currently has five district judges. The 68th Legislative Assembly approved the creation of a sixth judgeship in the district through the passage of House Bill 1002, which the governor signed in

April. The bill became effective July 1. Three attorneys were named as finalists for the judgeship, which is chambered in Grand Forks.

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.

THE ND HIGHWAY PATROL AND STATE RADIO SHOULD HAVE PROVIDED A TRANSCRIPT OF 911 CALLS TO THE FORUM

Opinion #: 2023-O-02

Date issued: August 7, 2023

Issued to: North Dakota Highway Patrol and State Radio

Request: Whether the North Dakota Highway Patrol and State Radio violated N.D.C.C. § 44-04-18 when they failed to provide a 911 transcript.

Request: Forum Communications (The Forum) requested an opinion from this office under N.D.C.C. § 44-04-21.1, asking whether the North Dakota Highway Patrol and State Radio, a division of the North Dakota Department of Emergency Services, violated N.D.C.C. § 44-04-18 by denying The Forum's requests for transcripts of 911 calls.

NDHP and State Radio were obligated by statute to work together to create a transcript of the 911 call. Because the transcript is a public record, it may be reviewed for exempt or confidential information. Because neither entity created a transcript, the response by each entities was premature. As such, it is my opinion that both failed to provide a sufficient reason to deny an open record.

Conclusion: The North Dakota Highway Patrol and State Radio violated open records law when each entity failed to provide a 911 transcript to The Forum.

DEVILS LAKE PARK BOARD COMPLIED WITH THE OPEN MEETING NOTICE REQUIREMENTS

Opinion #: 2023-O-01

Date issued: July 27, 2023

Issued to: Devils Lake Park Board

Request: Did the Devils Lake Park Board provide notice of its December 15, 2021, meeting to the public?

Conclusion: The Devils Lake Park Board posted the December 15, 2021, meeting notice at its office, which was also the location of the meeting, on its website, and notified the newspaper. The website notice presumably had the incorrect date of the meeting. However, it is my opinion that the public had notice of the meeting by December 15th and the Board substantially complied with the notice requirements of N.D.C.C. § 44-04-20.

THE WELLS COUNTY DEPARTMENTS MEETING WAS A MEETING OF THE WELLS COUNTY COMMISSION

Opinion #: 2023-O-03

Date issued: August 22, 2023

Issued to: Wells County Commission

Request: Whether the Wells County Commission conducted a meeting subject to the requirements of N.D.C.C. §§ 44-04-20 and 44-04-21(2).

Conclusion: The Wells County Commission conducted a meeting during the Wells County departments meeting because a quorum of the Commission attended a discussion related to the Commission's public business. The Commission therefore violated open meetings law when they failed to provide proper notice and complete minutes for the departments meeting.

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Income America 5ForLife is a set of target date funds (held in a collective investment trust) that provides access to guaranteed lifetime income upon reaching age 65. That's right, guaranteed.

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Guarantee your income - Regardless of market performance, you will receive 5% of your current income base, every year—for life. Or if you're married, you can choose the joint life option to receive a slightly lower payment (which will continue to pay your spouse after your death).



Guarantee your potential growth - You get to participate in the market's upside while still being able to look forward to guaranteed income. When you reach age 65, any and all market gains to your income base are locked in.



Guaranteed control - You can take your account balance and leave at any time. No surrender charges. No time commitments. No exceptions.



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Participant	Spouse		
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65+	60-64	5%	4.00%
65+	55-59	5%	3.50%
65+	<55	5%	Unavailable



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Emergency managers from McKenzie, Ward, and McLean counties recently participated in the “Follow the Barrel” tour with the Hess Corporation’s Bakken Office. The tour was designed to develop better understanding of the oil production process from initial production to point of sale. NDACo’s Jason Horning also took part.

“The Emergency Management teams found the tour to be very educational and informative,” explains Karolin Jappe, McKenzie County Emergency Manager “The tour really brings it all together once you can see the whole process. Building relationships in my

county is truly what it is all about, and this tour is a big part of building that relationship. “Hess has been a great partner and has helped my office and our first responders in times of need in many ways”.

“We are delighted to have the opportunity to showcase the oil production process to local emergency managers. The ‘Follow the Barrel’ tour is an excellent way to get first-hand experience about how the oil industry works and the various steps involved in the production process,” explains Hess North Dakota General Manager Brent Lohnes.



Becky Podoll Matthews



Steve Cichos

NDACo joins Burleigh and Stutsman Counties in mourning the recent passing of sitting commissioners Becky Podoll Matthews and Steve Cichos. Their dedication to public service will not be forgotten.

Klose Marks 40 Years of County Service

In June, Mark Klose celebrated his 4th decade as a Stutsman County Commissioner. NDACo does not have any record of a longer term of service, past or current. Can you beat this? If so, we want to hear from you! Contact *County News* Editor Jeff Eslinger at jeff.eslinger@ndaco.org.



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Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health Director Serves on National Board

Mary Korsmo | Executive Director, ND SACCHO

Renae Moch, MBA, FACMPE, Public Health Director for Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health, has been re-elected to the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) Board of Directors representing HHS Region 8: ND, SD, CO, WY, MT, UT. Moch recently completed a three-year term and was re-elected by a majority of her peer local health departments to serve another three-year term effective July 1, 2023-June 30, 2026.

“It is a privilege to represent local public health directors in this capacity,” said Moch. “I am committed to upholding the highest standards of public health in this role and look forward to working collaboratively with fellow NACCHO board members to address the health needs in the communities we serve.”

The mission of NACCHO is to improve the health of communities by strengthening and advocating for local health departments. NACCHO is the only organization dedicated to serving the 3000 local health departments in the nation.



Renae Moch

“It is extremely important for ND local public health to have a seat at the table with our national leadership,” stated ND State Association of City and County Health Officials (ND SACCHO) Vice Chair Brenda Stallman, Traill District Health Unit. “Renae excels as a public health champion and is an outstanding representative acting on behalf of ND SACCHO.”



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2023 COUNTY CALENDAR

September

- 4 _____ Labor Day
- 12 _____ Water Topics Overview Committee Meeting, Roughrider Room, Capitol
- 12-13_ County Tour to Sioux, Grant, Morton, Burleigh and Emmons Counties
- 12-13 _____ Economic Development Association of North Dakota Fall Conference, 4 Seasons Pavilion, Bowman
- 19-21 _____ ND Petroleum Council Annual Meeting, Rough Rider Center, Watford City
- 20 ___ Government Finance Committee Meeting, Roughrider Room, Capitol
- 20-22 _____ ND League of Cities Annual Convention, Bismarck Event Center
- 21 _____ Budget Section, Senate Chamber, Capitol
- 23 _____ First Day of Fall

October

- 3 _____ Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee Meeting, Roughrider Room, Capitol
- 8-10 _____ NDACo Annual Conference, Bismarck Event Center
- 11-12_ Western Dakota Energy Association Annual Meeting, Astoria Hotel & Event Center, Dickinson
- 15-21 _____ National Retirement Security Week
- 24-25 _____ Main Street ND Summit, Rough Rider Center, Watford City
- 24-26 _____ ND Behavioral Health & Children and Family Service Conference, Bismarck Event Center

November

- 15 _____ Legislative Retirement Committee Meeting, Roughrider Room, Capitol



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