

## NDACo Choose New Leadership

**Cavalier, Foster, Mountrail, Steele/Trall and Stutsman Counties Represented on Executive Committee**

Bismarck, ND - The ND Association of Counties (NDACo) elected new leadership to its Board of Directors today at the 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:

- **Chad Kaiser, Stutsman County Sheriff**, was elected President
- **Nick Moser, Cavalier County Commissioner**, was elected 1st Vice President
- **Kim Jacobson, Agassiz Valley Human Service Zone Director**, was elected 2nd Vice President
- **Becky Hagel, Foster County Commissioner**, was elected 3rd Vice President
- **Trudy Ruland, Mountrail County Commissioner**, became Past President

In addition to these officers:

**Tiffany Harr, Eddy County Clerk of District Court/Recorder**, was recently elected by the ND County Clerks of District Court



Mountrail County Commissioner Trudy Ruland, passes the gavel to new President, Stutsman County Sheriff Chad Kaiser

Association to represent them on the Board.

**Howdy Lawler, McKenzie County Commissioner**, was recently elected by Region 1 to represent them on the Board

**Jarret Van Berkum, Burke County Commissioner**, was recently elected by Region 2 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](http://www.ndaco.org/about-ndaco/board-of-directors).



NDACo Board of Directors: Jayme Tenneson, Griggs County State's Attorney - Former President; Joshua Frey, Towner/Nelson County State's Attorney - ND State's Attorneys Association; Trudy Ruland, Mountrail County Commissioner - Past President; Robert Wilson, Cass County Administrator - National Association Representative; Chad Kaiser, Stutsman County Sheriff - Newly Elected President; Stanley Dick, Cavalier County Commissioner - National Association Representative; Kim Jacobson, Agassiz Valley Human Service Zone Director - 2nd Vice President; Scott Ouradnik, Slope County Commissioner - Region 8; Becky Hagel, Foster County Commissioner - 3rd Vice President; Erica Johnsrud, McKenzie County Auditor/Treasurer - County Treasurers Association; Shirley Murray, Sheridan County Auditor - ND County Auditors Association; Kelly Palm, Griggs County Recorder/Clerk - ND County Records Association; Nick Moser, Cavalier County Commissioner, 1st Vice President; Don Flaherty, Dickey County Tax Director - Association of Assessing Officers.

Not pictured:

Jamee Folk, Mercer County Commissioner - Region 7; Tony Grindberg, Cass County Commissioner - Region 5; Tiffany Harr, Eddy County Recorder/Clerk of District Court - Clerks of District Court Association; Dana Larsen, Ward County Engineer - ND Association of County Engineers; Howdy Lawler, McKenzie County Commissioner - Region 1; Neal Messer, Stark County Commissioner - NDCCA President; Aaron Mork, Nelson County Commissioner - Region 4; Jarret Van Berkum, Burke County Commissioner - Region 2.

## County Commissioners Choose New Leadership

**Cass, Cavalier, Dunn, Eddy, Morton, Mountrail, Sargent, Slope, Stark, Ward and Williams Counties Represented**

The North Dakota County Commissioners Association (NDCCA) met Monday to pass legislative resolutions and elect members of its Board of Directors for 2025-2027.

The officers of the NDCCA Executive Committee for 2025-2027 are:

- **Neal Messer, Stark County**, President
- **Tracey Dolezal, Dunn County**, Vice President
- **Glenda Collier, Eddy County**, Treasurer (re-elected)
- **Joan Hollekim, Mountrail County**, Past President

**Miranda Schuler, Ward County**, was elected to a new two-year term on the NDCCA Board.

**Cory Hanson, Williams County**, and **Jim Kapitan, Cass County**, were re-elected to two-year terms.

**Scott Ouradnik, Slope County**, was re-elected as North Dakota's



NDCCA President Stark County Commissioner Neal Messer, left accepts the Gavel from Past President Mountrail County Commissioner Joan Hollekim.

representative on the Western Interstate Region Board of Directors.

Board Members not up for re-election this year were Andy Zachmeier, Morton County, and Jason Arth, Sargent County.

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### 2025 Scholarship Fund Success!

*Thanks to everyone who participated in this year's fundraising events at the conference!*

#### HERE'S WHAT YOU HELPED RAISE:

Dunk Tank - \$376  
Monday Night 70/30 Raffle - \$1,746  
Elite Exhibitor Tickets & NACo Trip - \$6,766.45

**TOTAL \$8,888.45**

#### OUR BIGGEST YEAR YET!

- 2024 - \$8,209.60
- 2023 - \$7,925.42
- 2022 - \$8,565.66





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Board Member PROFILE



**KELLY PALM**  
**ND County Recorders Association**  
**Griggs County Recorder/Clerk of Court**

**What is your favorite thing about being a County Recorder?**

I enjoy working with the public, and love the historical indexing that will benefit people for years to come.

**Family:** My husband, Travis, and I have four daughters; two are still in High School, and I have one granddaughter. Also Rudy (Golden Retriever) and two cats.

**Other things you are involved in:** Going to a lot of sporting events, sewing (especially Halloween costumes), gardening (love raised bed gardens), canning and baking. BIO girls – a program to support adolescent girls’ mental health.

**Favorite movies:** Goonies, Castaway – I’m an 80s kid!

**Music: What are you listening to right now?** Alternative/folk, Lumineers, Gregory Allen Isakov.

**Books:** I love listening to audiobooks, especially WWII topics. The Boys in the Boat and Unbroken are great books that are better than the movies. Also murder mysteries.

**Philosophy of life and/or work:** Remember that “this too shall pass.” Appreciate the good times. They won’t last forever.

**Favorite quote:** “Practice the pause.”



**NDACo Executive Committee**

Chad Kaiser, President.....Stutsman  
Nick Moser, 1st Vice President.....Cavalier  
Kim Jacobson 2nd Vice President...Agassiz Valley  
Becky Hagel, 3rd Vice President.....Foster  
Trudy Ruland, Past President.....Mountrail

**Directors**

Howdy Lawler, Region 1 .....McKenzie  
Jarret Van Berkorn, Region 2.....Burke  
Aaron Mork, Region 4 .....Nelson  
Tony Grindberg, Region 5.....Cass  
Jamee Folk, Region 7.....Mercer  
Scott Ouradnik, Region 8.....Slope  
Don Flaherty, Tax Directors.....Dickey  
Josh Frey, States Attorneys.....McHenry  
Tiffany Harr, Clerks.....Eddy  
Erica Johnsrud, Treasurers.....McKenzie  
Dana Larsen, Engineers.....Ward  
Shirley Murray, Auditors.....Sheridan  
Kelly Palm, Recorders.....Griggs

**Ex Officio Members**

Stanley Dick (Cavalier).....NACo Board  
Robert Wilson (Cass).....NACo Board  
Neal Messer (Stark).....NDCCA President

**NRG Technology Services Staff**  
See page 6



**NDCCA Executive Committee**

Neal Messer, President.....Stark  
Tracey Dolezal, Vice President.....Dunn  
Glenda Collier, Treasurer.....Eddy  
Joan Hollekim, Past President.....Mountrail

**Directors**

Jason Arth.....Sargent  
Cory Hanson.....Williams  
Jim Kapitan.....Cass  
Miranda Schuler.....Ward  
Andy Zachmeier.....Morton

**Ex Officio Members**

Stanley Dick (Cavalier).....NACo Board  
Scott Ouradnik (Slope).....Western Interstate Region Board

**NDACo Staff**

Aaron Birst.....Executive Director  
Alisha Adolf.....Professional Development Manager (ILG)  
Kaitlyn Bakken.....GIS Coordinator  
Cassie Braun.....Accounting Assistant  
Michael Casey...CEG Underwriting & Loss Control Manager  
Sara Cote.....Indirect Cost Program Manager  
Genny Dienstmann.....Director of 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 Assistant/Technician  
Teanna Hintz.....Accounting Assistant  
Jason Horning.....Next Gen 9-1-1 Program Manager  
Lisa Jahner.....Research & Programs Director  
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



## FROM the COUNTIES

### Greetings from NDACo President Chad Kaiser

Hello, everyone from your new NDACo President Chad Kaiser. I have been asked to tell you a little bit about myself.

I grew up on a family farm north of Jamestown. We grew mainly sunflowers, small grains and had cattle and buffalo. We also raised/bred Quarter Horses. I went to Wimbledon-Courtenay High School. Once I graduated, I attended the University of Mary and received my Bachelor of Science Degree in Athletic Training.

While awaiting a career in Athletic Training I moved back to Jamestown and worked on the Ambulance Service as an EMT-I for several years. I was asked to apply for an open deputy position and was given the opportunity to work for the Stutsman County Sheriff's Office, where I worked through the ranks and became Sheriff in 2010.

I have two children. My son is 19 and is attending the University of North Dakota pursuing an Aviation degree; and my daughter is 17, just finishing



Chad Kaiser | NDACo President  
Stutsman County Sheriff

high school and is looking at pursuing a Nursing degree.

Some of my hobbies I like to do is spend time in the summer camping and boating; and in the fall I love to hunt and do some fishing.

That's me in a nutshell – I look forward to meeting more of you and serving as your President this year!



NORTH DAKOTA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES



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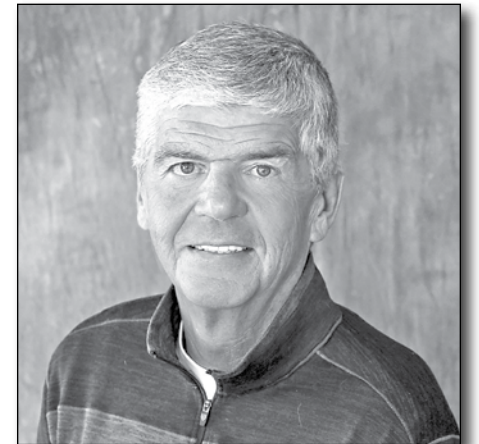
## FROM the COMMISSIONERS

### Greetings from Stark County

Thank you for your support and confidence in electing me as YOUR president. I take the position of YOUR president very seriously. As I said at our conference in October, our job as an association is to make your job as a county commissioner easier. All comments and suggestions will be heard, so please reach out and forward any thoughts you may have that might improve our association.

I think one of my first actions as your president is to introduce myself. I was born and raised on a farm in the Richardton area. After high school, I went to Dickinson State University and entered the real estate business in 1979. The next 47 years I've basically farmed the dirt, and sold the dirt. It's been awesome being able to do the things I love! Speaking of doing things I love to do, you will find hunting and fishing at the top of that list. So, if you are ever out west during pheasant season, look me up; I'm sure we can find a rooster or two.

My wife Bonnie and I have three daughters. Brooke and her husband live in West Fargo, Kari lives in Dickinson, and Lynn and her husband Kelly live in Beulah. We are also the spoiling grandparents of four grandchildren, of which our youngest grandson, Isaak, was just born on November 2nd. We are blessed to have our little family all living in North Dakota.



Neal Messer | NDCCA President  
Stark County Commissioner

Over the years, I've been asked "why in the world would you want to be a county commissioner?" It might just be in the DNA. My grandfather was elected to the Stark County Commission in 1946, and he served for 20 years in that position. I've also had an uncle and cousin serve as Stark County Commissioners.

Please mark your calendars and make plans to attend the "Commissioners Summit" to be held in Bismarck on December 8th and 9th. The lineup of speakers, topics and sessions will make it worth your time to travel to Bismarck. Full details of the Summit were released recently.

Thanks again and I look forward to serving you.

## FROM the ASSOCIATION

### 50 Years – Amazing!

Wow, another NDACo conference has come and gone! This one was special, and broke all attendance records! Celebrating 50 years of service to county government is a great milestone to hit. Over the last 50 years our conference has certainly gone through changes. What used to be a few commissioners playing pinochle at a small hotel has grown to a significant statewide event with over 600 attendees.

If you missed the conference (or the Monday night get-together) you missed another special moment. We were joined by over 20 past board presidents and two former executive directors! Former Burleigh County Commissioner Clause Lembke gets the award for being the "Dean of the Presidents" that night with his presidency going back to 1992!



Aaron Birst | NDACo Executive Director

Seeing all that history reminded me of the saying, "We all stand on the shoulders of giants." For NDACo's 50 years we have been blessed with leaders

who only want one thing—to make county government function, and function well. But no matter whether it's NDACo or your local county, there have always been people (whether elected or not) who have devoted themselves to that goal. I am sure if I asked everyone across the counties today, everyone would have a name that stood for excellence over the years that they owe a debt of gratitude to.

We try to recognize those folks with our Excellence in County Government awards, but the list is longer than a North Dakota horizon. To all those individuals over the decades, we all owe you a big Thank You!

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

## INSTITUTE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### *Congratulations to the 2024 Hour Level Award Recipients!*

#### LEVEL I – 30 HOURS

Wendy Belgarde, Rolette – Tax Director  
Nathan Berseth, Richland – Commissioner  
Stormy Bertsch, Dickey – Deputy Auditor  
Tia Bopp, Sargent – Auditor/Superintendent of Schools  
Melissa Brown, Richland – Tax Director  
Stan Buxa, Wells – Commissioner  
Tim Campbell, Richland – Commissioner  
Paul Clarys, Stark – Commissioner  
Kelley Cole, Walsh – State's Attorney  
Alyssa Dockter, Kidder – Deputy Auditor  
Cathy Ebert, Hettinger – Tax Director  
Stephanie Edland, Griggs – Commissioner  
Wade Enget, Mountrail – State's Attorney  
Don Flaherty, Dickey – Tax Director  
Bob Flath, LaMoure – Commissioner  
Lacy Fox, Sioux – 911 Coordinator  
Fritz Fremgen, Stutsman – State's Attorney  
Marchell Ganskop, Burke – Deputy Treasurer  
Melissa Gapp, Pembina - Auditor/Treasurer/Superintendent of Schools/Risk Manager  
Andy Gates, Renville – Commissioner  
Ben Gates, Steele – Emergency Manager/911 Coordinator  
Dave Gehrtz, Eddy – Commissioner  
Lee Gessner, Ramsey – Commissioner  
Teresa Haecherl, Ransom – Tax Director  
Maurice Hardy, McLean/Mercer/Oliver/Sheridan – Human Service Zone Director - Dakota Central  
Tiffany Harr, Eddy – Recorder/Clerk of District Court  
Lindsey Harriman, Williams – Community Engagement Coordinator  
Michelle Haugen, Williams – Deputy Recorder  
Holly Hutchison, Dunn – Tax Director  
Jodie Jeanotte, Rolette – Treasurer  
Lance Johnson, McHenry – Commissioner  
Jason Johnston, Walsh – Highway Superintendent  
Sydnee Kidd, Bowman – Treasurer/Superintendent of Schools Designee  
Sady Kjorven, Steele – Treasurer  
Mikaela Klein, Hettinger – Deputy Auditor  
Sue Koropatnicki, Stutsman – Deputy Treasurer  
Casey Krieg, Pembina – Deputy Recorder  
Donald LaFleur, Morton – Tax Director  
Maria Langland, Ransom – Deputy Auditor  
Julie Larsen, Williams – Senior Staff Accountant  
Thomas Larson, Burleigh – Elections Coordinator  
Sheri Leas, Towner – Tax Director  
Ashley Lies, Eddy – State's Attorney  
Dennis Meier, Grant/Morton/Sioux – Human Service Zone Director - Three Rivers  
Neal Messer, Stark – Commissioner  
David Migler, Pierce – Commissioner  
Samantha Mogard, Ward – Administrative Assistant  
Lori Morgan, Grand Forks – Assistant Treasurer  
Raymond Morrell, Morton – Commissioner  
Wayne Munson, Burleigh – Commissioner  
Kate Naumann, Cass – Assistant State's Attorney  
Shaun Olauson, Barnes – Commissioner  
Wayne Olson, Mountrail – Commissioner  
Cindy Ornsbey, Slope – Recorder/Clerk of District Court  
Erin Ourada, Grant/Mercer/Morton/Oliver/Sioux – Western Plains Public Health Administrator  
Javayne Oyloe, Divide/McKenzie/Mountrail/Williams – Upper Missouri District Health Unit Executive Officer

Rory Porth, Mountrail – Property Assessor/GIS Coordinator  
Mindy Reimer, Towner – Auditor/Treasurer/Risk Manager  
Dean Rodne, Billings – Commissioner  
Kim Savage, Mountrail – Tax Director  
Andi Schimke, Dickey – Clerk of District Court  
Allen Schlenvogt, Rolette – Commissioner  
Kelly Schmidt, Dickey – Recorder  
Hope Schnieder, McIntosh – Tax Director  
Dan Schriock, Burleigh – Senior Assistant County Engineer  
Becki Schumacher, Eddy – Auditor  
Jean Schuster, Benson – Deputy Tax Director  
Kristy Schutt, Mercer – Administrative Assistant  
Greg Schwab, Ransom – Commissioner  
Desiree Sorenson, McKenzie/Mountrail – Human Service Zone Director  
Tom Soucy, Cass – Deputy County Engineer  
Mark Splonskowski, Burleigh – Auditor/Treasurer  
Brenda Stallman, Traill – Public Health Nurse/Chair-SACCHO  
Daniel Stutlien, Wells – Auditor/HR Director/Superintendent of Schools  
Amy Suda, Walsh – Commissioner  
Colleen Sweet, Foster – Billing Support  
Rachele Tang, Cass – Accounting/Budgeting Specialist  
Gabe Titus, Renville – Tax Director  
Lori Wald, Dickey – Deputy Treasurer  
Sarah Warner, Hettinger – Sheriff/Coroner  
Sally Whittingham, Dunn – Auditor/Treasurer/Superintendent of Schools  
Carol Williams, Divide – Tax Director  
Pamela Winhold, Stark – Office Specialist  
Kimberly Wuori, Rolette – Auditor/Superintendent of Schools/Risk Manager  
Cindy Yagow, Sargent – Treasurer/Recorder/Clerk of District Court  
Andrew Zachmeier, Morton – Commissioner

#### LEVEL II – 100 HOURS

Helen Askim, Williams – County Administrator  
Bev Bachmeier, Ramsey – Recorder  
Rick Braaten, Bowman – Commissioner  
Kristi Brintnell, Walsh – Commissioner  
Taylor Carlblom, Barnes – Assessor  
Kandy Christopherson, Ramsey – Auditor  
Angela Eagle, Sioux – Auditor/Superintendent of Schools/Risk Manager/911 Coordinator  
Kathie Erickson, Ransom – Treasurer/Superintendent of Schools  
Julie Fischer, Grant – Recorder/Clerk of District Court  
Carol Grenz, Barnes – Deputy Auditor  
Lisa Guenther, Dunn – Recorder/Clerk of District Court  
Missy Hanson, Burleigh – Recorder  
Sarah Heinle, Cass – Finance Director  
Angela Herda, Nelson – Emergency Manager/Superintendent of Schools  
Alicia Hildebrand, Cass – Treasury Manager  
Kim Jacobson, Steele/Traill – Human Service Zone Director - Agassiz Valley  
Lana Jahner, Stark – Deputy Auditor  
Jessica Jenrich, Barnes – Emergency Manager/Planning & Zoning Administrator  
Brenda Johnson, Williams – Chief Deputy Auditor/Property Tech  
Kim Kasian, Stark – Recorder  
Tracy Kruger, Hettinger – Deputy Auditor/Risk Manager/911 Coordinator  
Samantha Larson, Griggs – Auditor/Risk Manager/Weed Control Officer

Steve Lee, McLean – Commissioner  
Wonada Lematta, Dickey – Treasurer  
Karen Migler, Pierce – Auditor/Treasurer/Highway Superintendent/Superintendent of Schools/Risk Manager  
Katie Paulson, McKenzie – Tax Director/Recorder  
Terri Reidman, Renville – Deputy Recorder/Deputy Clerk of District Court  
Ellen Roundy, Foster – Auditor/Treasurer/Superintendent of Schools/Risk Manager  
Nickela Runck, Ransom – Deputy Auditor/Risk Manager  
Jaden Schmidt, Oliver – Auditor/Planning Director  
Amie Vandegraft, Burke – Auditor/Superintendent of Schools/Risk Manager

#### LEVEL III – 150 HOURS

Shannon Davis, Stutsman – HR Director/Risk Manager  
Tracey Dolezal, Dunn – Commissioner  
Sandy Fossum, Richland – Auditor/Administrator  
Nicole Gentzkow, Ransom – Auditor  
Dawn Grannis, Mercer – Treasurer  
Jan Hamlin, LaMoure – Auditor/Superintendent of Schools  
Kari Hatzenbuhler, Morton – Treasurer  
Jim Heinrich, McIntosh – Commissioner  
Heather Hovey, Traill – Chief Deputy Auditor/HR Generalist/Risk Manager  
Rachel Keohane, Golden Valley – Recorder/Emergency Manager  
Kayla Knudson, Traill – Tax Director  
Yvette Moe, Walsh – Recorder  
Brenda Nagel, Oliver – Deputy Treasurer  
Tyler Perleberg, Stutsman – Tax Director/Planning Director/GIS Coordinator  
Sandy Rohde, Dunn – Planning Director/911 Coordinator/GIS Coordinator  
Jeri Schmidt, Hettinger – Auditor/Treasurer  
Nancy Seefeldt, Morton – Recorder  
Mary Senger, Burleigh – Emergency Management Director  
Adam Smith, Golden Valley – Commissioner  
Tamra Sperry, Golden Valley – Auditor/Superintendent of Schools

#### LEVEL IV – 200 HOURS

Lorrie Buzalsky, Slope – Auditor/Risk Manager  
Krista Faller, Adams – Auditor/Treasurer/Superintendent of Schools/Risk Manager  
Laurie Good, LaMoure – Recorder  
Joan Hollekim, Mountrail – Commissioner  
Jody Kristiansen, Logan – Auditor/Treasurer  
Debbie Magnuson, Barnes – Treasurer  
Laura Muscha, Wells – Treasurer  
Patti Ogurchak, Williams – Treasurer/Recorder/Superintendent of Schools Designee  
Jody Pfaff, Barnes – Recorder  
Liz Roorda, Barnes – Deputy Tax Director  
Brandy Zepp, Burke – Tax Director/GIS Coordinator  
LEVEL V – 300 HOURS  
Jessica Alonge, Stutsman – Auditor/COO  
Laura Huber, Oliver – Treasurer/Superintendent of Schools  
Gayle Jastrzebski, Divide – Auditor/Treasurer/Risk Manager/IT Coordinator  
Erica Johnsrud, McKenzie – Auditor/Treasurer  
Marlys Ohlhauser, Emmons – Auditor/Treasurer/Risk Manager

#### LEVEL VI – 400 HOURS

Vicki Kubat, Cavalier – Recorder

# The Newly Redesigned NDCompass: A Decision-Making Partner for North Dakota Counties

Are you planning for an aging population, preparing for economic changes, addressing housing shortages, or applying for grants? Any of these tasks benefit from reliable and localized data to support them.

North Dakota Compass (ndcompass.org), a program of the North Dakota State University (NDSU) Center for Social Research\*, has been a trusted source for demographic and socio-economic data available at the state and county level for more than a decade. County leaders have used North Dakota Compass data to strengthen understanding and knowledge of issues relevant to various audiences, generate positive discussions and engagement during the legislative sessions, and support county leaders throughout the state in their decision-making efforts.

Building on the strengths of its well-established website and looking ahead to the future, the Center for Social Research recently launched a redesigned and enhanced NDCompass platform. The new website embraces updated technology, a streamlined design, and new features to better respond to stakeholders needs. NDCompass has also rebranded to better convey its mission: *NDCompass, by NDSU Center for Social Research — Data you can trust. Research you can use.*

“With this new version of NDCompass, we’re taking a major step forward in making high-quality data more accessible to the people who need it most,” said Nancy Hodur, director of the Center for Social Research. “Whether you are a city or county planner, nonprofit leader or policymaker, NDCompass provides tools and analysis that help inform decisions and strengthen communities across North Dakota.”



On NDCompass you will continue to find reliable, accurate, and unbiased data on a variety of topics, all in one place. Topic areas cover everything from health, housing, and education to the economy, workforce, and demographics. Under the new concept, the **Data** section of the website features modern data visualizations, with a flexible structure to allow users to focus on specific issues, demographic groups, or geographic areas. Expanding further, NDCompass is used as a platform to disseminate valuable socio-economic research performed by researchers at the Center for Social Research. A **Research by Topic** section makes available all published Center for Social Research reports, by topic and by year. A **Research in Action** section features annually updated interactive and insight-driven dashboards in a more user-friendly format. Going beyond previous program offerings, if you want to analyze the data yourself, a **Build Your Own Dataset** tool allows you to customize the data you want to download for your own analysis.

One of the most powerful upgrades to NDCompass is the way it connects data, in-depth research, and interactive tools in one easy-to-access platform. For example, if a user is looking for ways health is impacted by various socio-economic conditions, they can visit Health, Education, or Economy topics in the Data section to quickly find relevant indicators. With the addition of the new research

information, users can go beyond the numbers by accessing the Social Drivers of Health report in the Research by Topic section of the website — a comprehensive analysis that provides greater context and insights into the factors influencing community health. To make it even easier to apply this information, an interactive dashboard on the same topic — found under Research in Action and updated regularly—allows users to explore trends, compare areas, and drill down to the details most relevant to their county. The same integrated approach will soon be applied to other topics. Users can view up-to-date data, consult a report for deeper analysis, and also explore dashboards with interactive data visualizations. This combination of data, research, and interactive tools ensures that county officials don’t just have access to information—they have the context and flexibility to turn that information into actionable solutions.

The redesigned NDCompass (ndcompass.org) is more than a website — it’s a decision-making partner for North Dakota counties. Whether a county is developing strategies for rural health care, planning for housing growth, or tackling workforce shortages, NDCompass offers localized, trustworthy data and research to help leaders allocate resources effectively and improve outcomes for residents.

In conclusion, we offer three reasons you should use NDCompass (ndcompass.org).

1. **Data You Can Trust**  
Get reliable, up-to-date demographic and socio-economic data tailored to North Dakota counties.
2. **Research You Can Use**  
Access the new Research section on the website for in-depth reports and practical analysis conducted by the NDSU Center for Social Research.
3. **Tools for Action**  
Use enhanced visualizations and expanded indicators at the county level to guide planning, shape policy, and strengthen grant applications.  
Explore it today and see how data and research can strengthen your community.

\*The Center for Social Research at North Dakota State University is dedicated to providing reliable, unbiased socio-economic and demographic data and applied research to meet North Dakota’s need for information to identify needs, guide planning, and accomplish goals. Using customized data collection, research methods, and analysis, the Center responds to the need for information that helps address the state’s evolving social and economic landscape. The Center’s work informs planning, guides decision-making, evaluates outcomes, and supports program and policy development.

For more information, contact Ina Cernusca (mihaela.cernusca@ndsu.edu), Research Specialist with the Center for Social Research at NDSU and NDCompass Program Director.

NRG TECHNOLOGY STAFF

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Dwight Driscoll.....Account Manager

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Kendall Fey.....System Engineer

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Kay Ternes.....Service Coordinator

David Weiand.....Systems Engineer



## Purchasing Pulse State Contracts for Human Resources

Abby Dschaak | Office of Management and Budget, State Procurement Office

Struggling to find the right talent quickly and efficiently? State contracts for human resources are available to all North Dakota political subdivisions and local governments making it easy to access top-notch temporary employees and professional recruitment services. Whether you need skilled staff temporarily for short-term engagements, or expert support to streamline your hiring process, these competitively sourced contracts provide a fast and cost-effective solution. Let us help you fill critical roles, reduce administrative burdens, and keep your operations running smoothly.

### State Contract #482 - Temporary Staffing Services Vendor Pool

This contract for temporary staffing services offers flexible staffing solutions across a variety of categories:

- Administrative Support (including office and clerical)
- Commercial & Industrial Workers
- Healthcare Staffing Services



- Information Technology Professional Services
- Professional Services

Vendors under this contract include 22nd Century Tech, ATA, Comtech Global Inc., Infojini Inc., Maximum Healthcare Staffing (Amergis), Rose International, and Spherion Staffing LLC.

### State Contract #004 - Recruitment Services

This contract provides professional recruitment services for permanent placement across multiple categories for executive level (Directors, Chief

Officers, Presidents/Vice Presidents, etc.) and non-executive roles. Categories available include:

- Legal Services
- Healthcare
- Information Technology
- Financial Services
- Business Management and Administration
- Public Safety, Corrections and Security
- Human Services
- Agricultural Manufacturing

Vendors under this contract include Adelphi Staffing LLC, CBIZ Talent Solutions, Experfy Inc., First Connect Health, IMD Logic LLC, LanceSoft Inc., Ledelsea, MGT Impact Solutions LLC, Resourcesoft Inc., Spherion Staffing LLC, #Twiceasnice, and Vastek Inc.

For step-by-step instructions and a list of all available state contracts, go to [www.omb.nd.gov/cooperativepurchasing](http://www.omb.nd.gov/cooperativepurchasing). Each contract includes a user summary with details and a contract administrator you may reach out to with any questions.

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# Reaching Young People to Curb Impaired Driving

Theresa Thom | Vision Zero Southwest Regional Coordinator

In 2024, 23% of North Dakota's motor vehicle fatal crashes could have been prevented if everyone chose to not get behind the wheel after consuming alcohol or drugs.

Vision Zero has been working to get education out to young people about the dangers of impaired driving. Unfortunately, we still have citizens who are choosing to drive after they have been drinking alcohol or using drugs, leading to devastating consequences. Nearly everyone knows someone who has been affected by the tragic results of impaired driving.

One of the high schools Vision Zero worked with recently was Legacy High School in Bismarck, ND. On Friday, Sept. 19 during their homecoming week, students were given the opportunity to try out the Simulated Impaired Driving Experience (SIDNE). SIDNE is a go-cart that has two features: normal and impaired mode. During normal mode, the go-cart works like any other go-cart. During impaired mode, the go-cart does not respond to the driver's commands and does not turn when the driver tries to turn, nor does it brake immediately when the driver tries to brake. The experience the driver has while using the SIDNE in impaired mode is a way to educate students that when a person drives impaired, their judgement, control, and reaction time are all compromised. After each Legacy student drove the SIDNE, we asked them about their experience and what other options they had beside getting behind the wheel after drinking alcohol. Many of them said Lyft, Uber, calling a sober friend, calling their parents, or simply staying where they were at, rather than risking their lives and others. Young people know the dangers of impaired driving and the SIDNE is a great way for students to solidify their beliefs that driving impaired is dangerous and not worth the risk.

Vision Zero also partnered with the University of Mary Sept. 24 and Bismarck State College (BSC) on Oct. 3 for alcohol awareness events. College students learned about the nine-step walk and turn and how officers use it as a tool to gauge impairment. There were several different levels of impairment goggles for students to try from .07 - .25+ blood alcohol level. The students put on the goggles and attempted to walk on a taped line, heel to toe, nine steps in a row. Most failed to walk in a straight line and of the two or three who were able to do so, they couldn't do it as instructed, i.e. arms not at their sides, beginning before



being told to start. After going through the demonstration, the students learned about the consequences of impaired driving and the fines that come with it. Even though the citation for a first time DUI is \$500, that does not include court costs, fees for an attorney, insurance rates going up, and a criminal driving record that will follow them for the rest of their life. The students at both the University of Mary and BSC were receptive towards the message and had questions related to impaired driving.

Having awareness events like these, especially for young people, can help curb impaired driving numbers in North Dakota. Impaired driving crashes, deaths, and arrests are 100% preventable. Please help Vision Zero end impaired driving! If you drink, plan a sober ride. Your life and others' lives are too valuable to lose due to one poor decision. Thank you for driving sober and saving lives!





**Jeff Eslinger | ND County News Editor**

FOSTER COUNTY

STATE HISTORICAL SOC.  
BISMARCK, N. D. 58501

X 1

# INDEPENDENT

CARRINGTON, N.D. GARRISON CONSERVANCY DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS

Ninetieth Year Carrington, N.D. 58421 Wednesday, April 2, 1975 Number 40

## Trial Of Holy Bull Moved To Bismarck

A change of venue in the first degree murder trial of Gary Holy Bull, 22, was granted in Fourth Judicial Court at Jamestown.

The jury trial of Holy Bull, charged with the stabbing death of Robert L. French on July 26, is set to begin April 8 at Bismarck. Judge Alfred A. Thompson, who granted the change of venue, will preside at the district court trial.

Holy Bull is being held in Lake Region Law Enforcement Center at Devils Lake in lieu of \$50,000 bond. Tom Rutten of Devils Lake is the court-appointed counsel for Holy Bull.

The body of French, a Carrington-New Rockford area farm employee, was found in a ditch north of New Rockford. Death was attributed to stabbing.

## Irrigators Using Project To Get Financial Breaks

Farmers who irrigate their lands with water from the Garrison Diversion Project when it is completed are scheduled to receive a significant financial break during the first years of their operation.

That fact was brought out at an all-day conference on the Garrison Diversion, held at District Office, completed here Mar. 26 at Garrison Diversion Conservancy District headquarters.

Attending the meetings to obtain latest information on Garrison Diversion's plans and progress were county extension agents, agricultural representatives of banks and lending institutions, irrigation district directors.

Representatives of the Soil Conservation Service, Garrison Diversion Project Production Credit Association and Farmers Home Administration.

Home M. Engelhorn, manager of the GDC, explained that under 40-year irrigation contracts with the district, farmers are required to pay none of the construction payment costs of the project during the initial 10-year development period. However, they are responsible for operation and maintenance costs.

Under a plan worked out by the Conservancy District, Engelhorn said, the irrigator during his first year will pay only 10 percent of the operation and maintenance costs and the district will pay the difference.

Engelhorn said that this will graduate with 10 percent added to the farmer's share each year until the 10-year development period is completed, after which the farmer will be "on his own."

Other speakers at the meeting included Alan Butts, Carrington, who, along with his father and two brothers, have had crops under irrigation for some time and are presently discussing their operation.

Discussing the importance of irrigated crops to livestock production were Howard Olson, superintendent, and Dave Rodgers, animal husbandman, of the Carrington Irrigation Branch.

Others on the program included John Critchfield, area manager of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and representatives of the U. S. Bureau of Reclamation from Bismarck.

## Big Job Accomplished Quickly

It was snow removal in force in Carrington during the weekend in the wake of the biggest snowfall here in many years. Four trucks were hired to supplement the city crew and equipment.

## 17 Inches Of Snowfall Resulted In Biggest Removal Job In Years

This was the scene on Highway 20-32 entering Carrington after snowplows had cleared the roadways following the March snowfall here.

The biggest snow removal operation in several years took place in Carrington during the weekend following one of the biggest snowfalls here in several years.

Snowfall recorded at Carrington on the government gauge amounted to Mr. and Mrs. Andy Hollett was 17 inches, the least. Hollett said. Moisture during the week of precipitation amounted to 1.5 inches.

The snow piled up in streets, alleys and yards as there was considerable wind with the snowfall. Travel on the possible on main streets and nearby highways during the week of delivery here Monday and Friday from Jamestown, all trucks were unable to get up the North Hill at Jamestown.

Some services were delayed as supply trucks failed to arrive.

Closed for the Good Friday observance the morning of March 28, many stores remained open in the afternoon as there

## Legislature Gave New Taxing Authority To Counties, Smaller Cities

by Bob Kallberg

BISMARCK (NSB) — The 47th session of the North Dakota Legislature passed a number of bills during its 57 days of deliberation that will allow a variety of political subdivisions to levy mill levies in various amounts.

Permissible mill levies increases were granted that require only a motion of the mill increases were granted that require vote approval.

"Among legislation that would mean an increase in mill levies," said Kallberg.

A bill allowing counties to join in the establishment of an association of county commissioners to levy one-twentieth of a mill for membership in the association.

A bill that allows the establishment of hospital districts and allows the county to levy up to five mills for the support of the district. The mill levy would have to be approved by a 60 percent majority of the voters.

Another bill requiring approval by a 60 percent majority of the voters would allow a county mill levy increase from one-fourth mill to three-fourths mill for historical value.

The maximum mill levy for counties was raised from 30 to 25 mills. The increase here is

## CHS Musicians Were Lacking Members For Northeast Event

Several Carrington High School music students accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Old Ringwood went to Cavalier to participate in the

## "Daily Living" Workshop Will Be Held Here Apr. 4

Closed for the Good Friday observance the morning of March 28, many stores remained open in the afternoon as there

CHAPTER 21

A black and white photograph of a man with dark hair and a mustache, wearing a dark suit jacket, white shirt, and patterned tie. He is standing behind a dark podium, looking slightly upwards and to his right. His right hand is resting on the podium. A microphone is positioned in front of him. The podium features a sign with the text "KIRKWOOD" on the top line and "MOTOR IN" on the bottom line. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.



## Background History on Start of NDACo

Prior to the formation of the North Dakota Association of counties, county representation in legislative matters was up to the initiative of individual counties. In 1972, the lack of organization became so apparent that some commissioners were literally told to go home and get their act together.

That year the North Dakota County Commissioners Association voted to research the possibility of forming an association that would include all elected county officials. About 700 letters were mailed out asking for commitments to the new organization. Response was good.

In 1973 county leaders proposed to the legislature that 1/10th of a mill be used to begin the Association. The idea became a political football and the county people had to work hard to sell the idea. The bill finally came up for a vote when it was least expected. The county people had four hours to get to Bismarck. Fifteen of them made it on time.

The North Dakota Association of Counties was created by the 1973 Legislature. That summer a tentative constitution was drawn up and officers were elected. Ed Duden, a LaMoure county commissioner was elected president and Wayne Lematta, Dickey county auditor, became Secretary/Treasurer. On Dec. 2, 1974 the Executive Committee hired Henry Luther as Executive Secretary (Director).

By 1975, all 53 counties were members and all of the member associations voted to support the new association and elected representatives. Early dues were set at \$50 per county. After the 1975 Legislative Session, Lynn Will was hired as office manager, a position she held until her death in 1990.

Although NDACo services and programs have expanded considerably since 1973, surprisingly, the goals today are very similar to those first set down. There were five goals mentioned in a 1974 communication with members:

1. Provide for a medium for exchange of ideas, information and experiences of all county officials.
2. Promote training of county officials in new developments in their fields of endeavor.
3. Facilitate cooperation with other levels of government.
4. Propose and support legislation for county governments.
5. Engage in such other activities as will only achieve more effective county government in North Dakota.

Early historic summary – author unknown.



**Ground breaking.** NDACo headquarters construction – completed 2002.



## 2025 Innovation Champions Award

It is with great pleasure that NDLTAP announces the Innovation Champions contest. We are in the 28th year of recognizing and celebrating innovations through this contest. The contest is a great opportunity to share successful solutions that increase:

Safety for:

- road crew personnel
- motoring public

Efficiency for:

- personnel
- working smarter

Savings for:

- road departments
- taxpayers

The contest is an opportunity to give road department personnel well deserved recognition for looking at ways to make the work place better, for putting forth extra efforts for the greater good of the entire team.

The 2025 Innovation Champion is from Richland County. Their innovation is a temporary and portable mailbox stand. When the inevitable happens and a mailbox accidentally gets broken off while plowing snow, a temporary fix is needed so the homeowner continues to receive mail. Winter conditions do

not allow for a new post to be installed and steep ditches can make it hard to place a temporary mailbox at the correct angle. Richland County designed a solution that was lightweight, portable, and adjustable. NDLTAP is honored to announce Richland County as the 2025 Innovation Champion. Congratulations to designers Matt Peterson and Lyle Minar and to Donnie Witt and the rest of the Richland County team for their innovative spirit.

There were two other entries in this year's contest and both were from Bismarck Public Works. We thank Bismarck Public Works for their entries.

The submission files from the 2025 Innovation Champions are now online.

- The contest winner is shown on the main page: <https://www.ndltap.org/programs/innovation/>

- All 2025 entries are shown on the archives page: <https://www.ndltap.org/programs/innovation/submissions.php>

For more information or to submit an application, contact Matthew Johnson at [matthew.johnson.20@ndsu.edu](mailto:matthew.johnson.20@ndsu.edu) or (701)929-0581.

## Vision Zero Infrastructure Safety Awards

*Nominations are due December 31, 2025*

NDDOT is accepting applications/nominations for Vision Zero Infrastructure Awards. These awards are an annual event to recognize people, groups, organizations, programs, and projects that improve infrastructure safety across the state of ND for a safer and better quality of life. There are the three categories:

### Vision Zero Infrastructure Safety Award - Individual

- Individual – this award is designed to recognize an individual who has made outstanding contributions to promote or implement Safety Improvements or Programs on North Dakota's state or local road system.

### Vision Zero Infrastructure Safety Award - Program

- Program – this award is designed to recognize organizations that have made a difference within their agency, community, or the state to be recognized. The program should be such that it implements or improves safety throughout the state, region, county, community, or organization regarding transportation related infrastructure.

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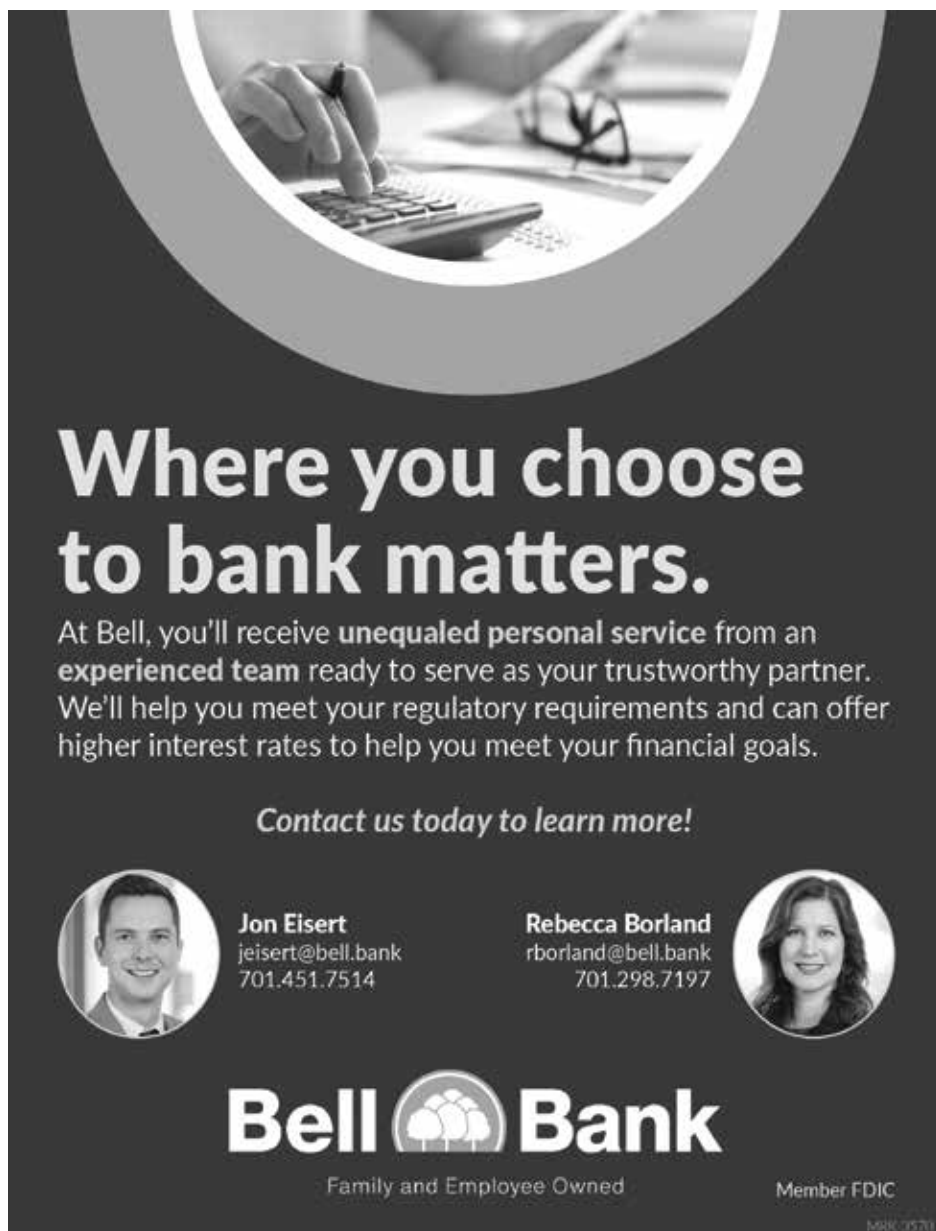
### Vision Zero Infrastructure Safety Award - Project

- Project – this award designed to recognize a project that improved safety in an area regarding transportation related infrastructure. The project can be roadway improvement, bicycle/pedestrian, or a multi-modal project that demonstrates a commitment to improve safety.

Those who receive an award will be recognized at the Vision Zero Partner Conference awards banquet to be held May of 2026.

Eligibility dates are October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2025. Nominations are due December 31, 2025

Questions concerning the Vision Zero Safety Awards contact: Justin J. Schlosser, P.E., 701-328-2673



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## North Dakota Counties with Rail

Jim Styron | Hwy/Rail Crossing Safety Manager

The North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT) is requesting your assistance to identify locations within your jurisdiction where rail/highway crossing safety could be improved. The information provided should contain the location of the grade crossing by street or road name and the distance and direction to the nearest town(s). Please be specific about your concern or suggestion for improvement.

NDDOT has annual federal funds available for safety enhancement projects at rail/highway at-grade crossings. These funds are used for the

installation of active warning devices (e.g. flashing light signals with gates), crossing signs, and crossing surface improvements.

Please remit your concerns or suggestions before **December 31, 2025**, so they can be included in the annual review process. Be assured past concerns have been incorporated in the statewide pool of prioritized crossings.

Crossing concerns or suggestions can be forwarded via email to: [jstyron@nd.gov](mailto:jstyron@nd.gov)

Thank you for your cooperation and supporting rail/highway crossing safety.





## NDACo 2025 Annual Conference Photo Album



### Many Past Presidents of NDACo and NDCCA attended the conference Monday evening

Pictured here L-R: Linda Svihovec, 2010 NDACo President & Former McKenzie County Auditor/Treasurer; Steve Lee, 2023 NDACo President & Current McLean County Commissioner; Trudy Ruland, 2025 NDACo President & Current Mountrail County Commissioner; Dan Stewart, 2010 NDCCA President & Former Grant County Commissioner; Devra Smestad, 2018 NDACo President & Former Ward County Auditor/Treasurer; Ron Krebsbach, 2003 NDCCA President, 2009 NDACo President & Former McLean County Commissioner; Scott Wagner, 2007 NDCCA President & Former Cass County Commissioner; Richard Riha, 2012 NDACo President & Former Burleigh County State's Attorney; Joan Hollekim, 2024-2025 NDCCA President & Current Mountrail County Commissioner; Stanley Dick, 2021 NDACo President & Current Cavalier County Commissioner; Chad Peterson, 2022-2023 NDCCA President & Former Cass County Commissioner; Scott Ouradnik, 2019 NDACo President & Current Slope County Commissioner; Randi Suckut, 2017 NDACo President & Former Wells County Commissioner; Cindy Schwehr, 2009 NDCCA President & Former Barnes County Commissioner; Carrie Krause, 2022 NDACo President & Current Well County Recorder; Jayme Tenneson, 2024 NDACo President & Current Griggs County State's Attorney; Les Korgel, 2002 NDACo President & Former McLean County Auditor/Treasurer.

Attending but not pictured were: Steve Reiser, 2016 NDACo President & Former Dakota Central Human Service Zone Director; Jane Amundson, 2011 NDACo President & Former Steele County Commissioner; Hjalmer Carlson, 1998 NDCCA President & Former Ward County Commissioner; Pat Candrian, 1997 NDACo President & Former Hettinger County Commissioner; Claus Lembke, 1992 NDCCA President & Former Burleigh County Commissioner.



### Members of the ND County Commissioners Association Board of Directors

L-R: Jason Arth (Sargent), Director; Jim Kapitan (Cass), Director; Neal Messer (Stark), President; Tracey Dolezal (Dunn), Vice President; Scott Ouradnik (Slope), Western Interstate Region Representative; Joan Hollekim (Mountrail), Past President; Miranda Schuler (Ward), Director; and Glenda Collier (Eddy), Treasurer; Not pictured: Cory Hanson (Williams), Director; Andy Zachmeier (Morton), Director; and Stanley Dick, (Cavalier), National Association of Counties Representative.



Dunn County Recorder Lisa Guenther sings the National Anthem.



# NDACo ANNUAL CONFERENCE



Governor Kelly Armstrong in his first appearance at our conference as Governor.



Keynote Adrianne Haslet’s story inspired and tugged at the heart strings.



Scholarship recipient Martin Heberlie, son of Jana Hennessy, Mountrail County Engineer (BSC-Freshman) accepted his scholarship in person and gave a terrific speech of gratitude and inspiration.



NDACo Executive Director Aaron Birst, Dickey County Tax Director Don Flaherty and Conference Emcee Ryan “Bozo” Gellner took turns getting dunked for the scholarship fund.





You don't have to dress for the theme, but it sure is fun when you do!



Our special guest Bill Novotny, NACo Board West Region Representative traveled from Johnson County, Wyoming to join us, here sitting in on the County Commissioners Association Business Meeting. (Bottom right in yellow tie.)





There was a trip hazard in the carpeting back stage, so Presidents Ruland and Hollekim went right to work on it. That's leadership for you!



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**Trail** County Sheriff Steve Hunt plans to hold off on purchasing stun guns for the sheriff's department due to funding concerns stemming from the state's new property tax cap. Hunt told the Trail County Board of Commissioners on Tuesday that he recently checked prices to replace the 15- to 20-year-old Tasers being used by the county's law enforcement officers. The county would need to shell out about \$14,300 a year – or slightly more than \$143,000 over the next decade – to buy 11 Tasers and a virtual reality training program for the stun guns, Hunt said. Pointing out a state law approved during the 2025 legislative session that limits political subdivisions to property tax increases of 3 percent annually, Hunt said he would wait on purchasing the Tasers. "Prices keep going up and, after getting the numbers, I changed my mind and decided we will need to wait a little longer" before investing in new stun guns, Hunt said. "With the 3 percent (property tax) cap, it's just not a good time to be adding some new bills. I think we need to table (this) until we figure out what's going to happen long-term with that cap."

– *Hillsboro Banner*

The **Foster** County Commission officially approved the county's final 2026 budget at their Tuesday, Oct. 7 meeting. This budget was more difficult than most, as a law passed during the last legislative session capped the amount of property tax

increases to 3% - a difficult pill for rural counties, which don't bring in near the sales tax revenue of larger communities, to swallow. With the 3% cap, Foster County was unable to bring in more than \$88,422 in additional tax revenue for all county levies. That dollar amount had to cover a \$27,900 budget for the upcoming midterm elections, as well as an 18% increase in health insurance costs for county employees, which amounts to more than \$22,000. Additionally, despite Foster County voting in favor of increasing the mill levy for the road department to 25 mills, a 3% cap means the department can only levy 22.71 mills. However, the county chose to appropriate additional savings from other levies to the road department, bringing their road levy to 24.2 mills. Because of their financial limitations, Foster County Auditor Ellen Roundy said the county had to defer the purchase of a new sheriff's vehicle, and said the commission wasn't able to contribute as much to their employees' retirement plans as they had in previous years.

– *Foster County Independent*

The State Auditor's Office has clarified language changes made to official responses from **Stark** County in their fiscal year 2023 audit after questions were raised by the Stark County Auditor's Office regarding the changes. In the audit, released on Oct. 15, the State Auditor's Office said Stark County overtaxed its

residents in fiscal year 2023 in violation of North Dakota Century Code and said the county should have dropped its property tax mill levy to zero the following year to comply with state law. Stark County officials pushed back against the state auditor's claims, saying their solutions oversimplified a complex situation and did not address the county's efforts to gradually bring down their mill levies and general fund balance, an approach they deemed fiscally responsible. Before being released to the public, the State Auditor's Office sent a copy of the audit to the county so they could provide an official response to the audit's findings...However in each case, the phrase "We Agree," was added before each response. Stark County Auditor Richard told *The Dickinson Press* in an interview she didn't know any changes to her answers would be made before the audit's public release. In an interview with *The Dickinson Press*, State Auditor Josh Gallion said his office added the phrase "we agree," based on the county's responses, for clarity's sake and to be in line with professional auditing standards. "When the response essentially agrees with the finding, and they had, 'we agree', in the third finding," Gallion added. Gallion also noted his office asks each of their clientele to state whether they agree or disagree with the findings of the audit. Richard said she appreciated the clarification from the State Auditor's Office for the language change, but still thought they should have used her original answers.

– *The Dickinson Press*

**Grand Forks** County commissioners voted Tuesday to reject a final contract from the state Department of Corrections, saying the county needs to focus on housing its and its partners' inmates instead of leasing space to the state. The most recent version of the DOCR's proposed agreement, in which the county would lease some beds at the Grand Forks County Correctional Center to the agency, addressed concerns from commissioners about releasing nonresidents into the county after serving their sentences. The commission on Sept. 2 rejected a previous version of the contract for that reason. State's Attorney Haley Wamstad said on Tuesday the new version includes new language to address and provide a solution to those concerns. "The update was that they would return them to the area where they initially resided prior to their incarceration," she said. But some commissioners still felt the updated contract came too late, as the commission was told the previous version of the contract was the state's "final offer." "Sheriff (Andy) Schneider has done some extra things to get some federal people in the correctional center, and so I guess at this point, I would say that ship has already sailed," Commissioner Bob Rost said.

– *The Grand Forks Herald*



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## Senator Kristin Roers Named 2025 Election Hero Award Recipient

BISMARCK, N.D. - North Dakota Secretary of State Michael Howe has awarded the 2025 Election Hero Award to District 27 Senator Kristin Roers of Fargo. Senator Roers received this award in recognition of her outstanding service to North Dakota citizens, notably for her support of their elections.

“North Dakota elections are safe, secure, accurate, and timely because of the laws our legislature has put in place,” says Secretary Howe. “Senator Roers has provided support for our elections, not just as a legislator, but also by serving firsthand as an election worker, making her deserving of the Election Hero Award.”



Sen. Kristin Roers



McKenzie County Auditor Erica Johnsrud nominated Roers for the award, detailing how she supports and upholds the integrity of elections.

“Senator Roers has served as a North Dakota election official at every level and in every capacity. In addition to her election worker duties, Senator Roers has been a constant and steadfast supporter of State and Local Election Officials in her role as a Legislator,” said Johnsrud. “Senator Roers is an election champion for the State of North Dakota and is willing to have the conversations to ensure North Dakota elections remain the best and most secure in the nation, ensuring

every qualified citizen is able to cast their ballot and have their voice heard, no matter the final outcome of any given race or question.”

Roers has served in the North Dakota Senate since 2019. She chairs the standing State and Local Government Committee, which includes elections, and also serves on the Human Services Committee.

The awarding of this year’s North Dakota Election Hero Award took place on National Election Hero Day (November 3, 2025), 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 third year the award has been presented in North Dakota. The North Dakota County Auditors Association received the 2024 award, and Kari Phillips of Langdon received the award in 2023.

## North Dakota Attorney General's Opinions

These and all other Opinions issued by the ND Attorney General’s Office can be seen at: <https://attorneygeneral.nd.gov/opinions-search/>.

### JACOBSON MEMORIAL HOSPITAL CARE CENTER

A new Attorney General’s Open Records Opinion has been issued:

**Opinion #:** 2025-O-12

**Date issued:** September 10, 2025

**Issued to:** Jacobson Memorial Hospital Care Center

**Request:** 1. Whether the Jacobson Memorial Hospital Care Center is a “public entity” subject to the open meetings laws.

2. Whether the Jacobson Memorial Hospital Care Center violated the open meetings laws by refusing public access to its May 31, 2022, and June 28, 2022, meetings.

**Conclusions:** 1. The Jacobson Memorial Hospital Care Center is a “public entity” subject to the open meetings laws to the extent it is supported by or expends public funds.

2. The Jacobson Memorial Hospital Care Center did not violate the open meetings laws by refusing public access to its May 31, 2022, and June 28, 2022, meetings because the meetings did not relate to public funds.

### HARLOW’S SCHOOL BUS SERVICE

A new Attorney General’s Open Records Opinion has been issued:

**Opinion #:** 2025-O-13

**Date issued:** September 10, 2025

**Issued to:** Mandan Public School District

**Request:** Whether Harlow’s School Bus Service violated the open records laws by not providing the records requested.

**Conclusions:** Harlow’s School Bus Service provides services to the Mandan Public School District at fair market

value and is therefore not a public entity as defined under N.D.C.C. § 44-04-17.1(13). The Mandan Public School District records in the possession of Harlow’s School Bus Service may be subject to the open records law, but it is the ultimate responsibility of the Mandan Public School District to provide a response, and the requester did not make a request to the Mandan Public School District.

### CITY OF PARSHALL

A new Attorney General’s Open Records Opinion has been issued:

**Opinion #:** 2025-O-14

**Date issued:** September 25, 2025

**Issued to:** City of Parshall

**Request:** Whether the City of Parshall violated open records law by failing to respond to a request for records.

**Conclusions:** An unreceived open records request creates no more of an obligation to respond than does a request that is never sent or communicated. As such, the City of Parshall did not violate the open records law in this instance. In this case the City informed this office that they never received the request for records because of an issue with their email service provider. The City provided this office documentation establishing that they had worked with their email service provider to find the missing emails. As explained in a 2023 opinion, every mode of communication has vulnerabilities, and public entities cannot respond to requests they did not receive. As such, the City of Parshall did not violate the open records law in this instance.

*To watch a video of Sec. of State Howe informing Sen. Roers that she was selected, go to <https://www.facebook.com/reel/862313702892251>*

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## Back the Blue Grants Distributed to Counties

By Donnell Preskey, NDACo

For the second straight session, North Dakota lawmakers approved funding to show their appreciation for the work local law enforcement and correctional officers are doing across the state. The Peace Officer and Correctional Officer Appreciation Grant was distributed to counties and cities in late October.

A total of 2,252 officers are eligible to receive a portion of the \$3.5 million in grant funding. Similar legislation was passed in 2023. All 53 North Dakota County Sheriff's Offices and two regional correctional facilities received the grant dollars. The funds were distributed based on number of officers employed by the agencies.

Things to know about the legislation in **HB 1193: Peace Officer and Correctional Officer Appreciation Grant**

- Agencies with 10 or fewer officers: \$750,000 distribution equaling **\$2,819.55 per/officer**

- Agencies with more than 10 officers: \$2,750,000 distribution equaling **\$1,384.69 per/officer**
- **Funds can be used for:**
  - Providing **retention bonuses** to current law enforcement and correctional officers.
  - Covering **tuition and fee payments** on behalf of law enforcement trainees.
    - 2023 legislation allowed funds to be used for recruitment/hiring bonuses but that is not allowable in the legislation passed in HB 1193.
- This is considered a one-time funding item.
- Reporting to Attorney General's Office on use of funds is required.
- All funds need to be used by **March 31, 2027**.

The funding will need the Commission's authorization to be spent (per 11-11-14



and 11-23-09) but the legislative intent is for the Sheriff to determine the best use of the funds and how those funds should be distributed.

According to an informal survey of Sheriffs early last year during the Session revealed counties were mixed on when they distributed grant dollars provided in 2024; some saying they provided the bonuses in a one-time payment while others indicated

they added the bonus to each pay period. However, most counties (62%) say they distributed retention bonuses equally to all law enforcement and corrections officers, followed by 31% that indicated they distributed the bonuses based on length of service. A very small percentage of counties distributed the grant dollars based on rank and work performance.

## Armstrong Appoints Longtime Public Health Leader Sherry Adams to Serve as State Health Officer

Gov. Kelly Armstrong announced the appointment of Sherry Adams, administrator and CEO of the Southwestern District Health Unit, to serve as North Dakota's next State Health Officer, effective Sept. 15, citing her extensive background in public health and emergency response.

"Sherry brings a wealth of experience to the role of State Health Officer, and our citizens will be well-served by her deep knowledge and understanding of public health and emergency response," Armstrong said.

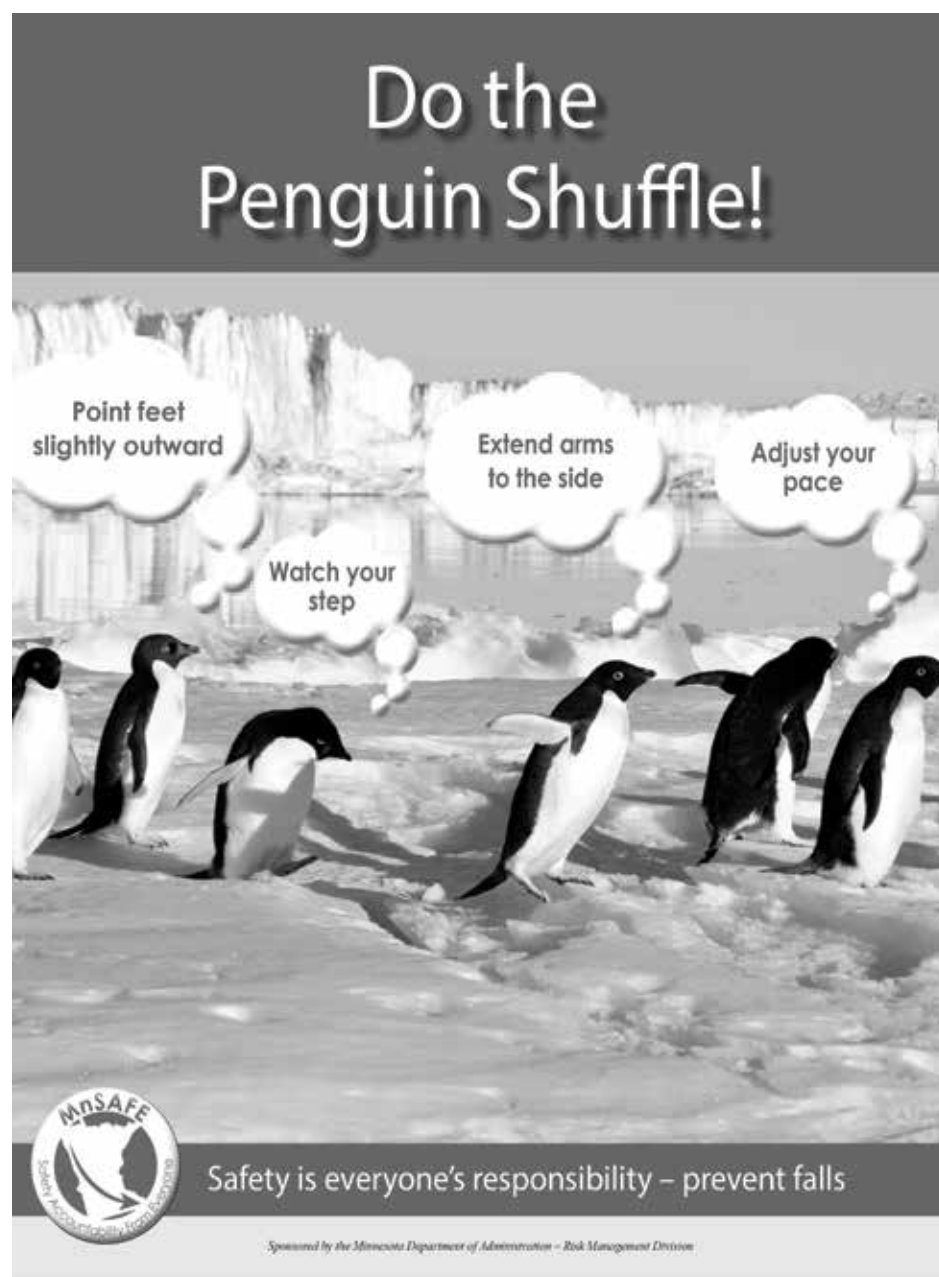
Adams is a registered sanitarian and environmental health specialist who began working in public health in 2004 and has led the Dickinson-based Southwestern District Health Unit since 2009, overseeing 35 staff across eight counties. She has worked in emergency preparedness and response for 21 years and is certified by the state and Federal Emergency Management Agency as an incident command instructor.

As State Health Officer, Adams will be a member of the governor's Cabinet, advising on issues affecting public health. The State Health Officer's statutory duties include providing strategy and policy advice to improve health and wellness, advising local public health officials, promoting the development of local health services and preventing the

spread of communicable diseases. Adams will continue to serve in her current role with Southwestern District Health Unit while fulfilling her duties as state health officer on a part-time basis.

"I am deeply honored and grateful for the opportunity to serve as North Dakota's State Health Officer," Adams said. "I am grateful for the trust placed in me and am committed to working collaboratively with our communities, health care partners, and state leadership to protect and promote the health and well-being of all North Dakotans."

Adams joined the state's Emergency Management Support Team as a safety officer in 2009 and became an incident commander in 2012. She has responded to numerous incidents in North Dakota including the Dickinson tornado and H1N1 flu pandemic in 2009 and major floods in 2009 and 2011. She served as a local incident commander, state planning chief and lead testing coordinator for local public health units during the COVID pandemic. Adams has served on the State Association for Local and County Health Units executive committee for five years, as vice chair, chair and now past president. She also has assisted with volcano and hurricane response in Hawaii and taught incident command in Ghana, Togo and Benin, Africa.





# North Dakota 4-H Youth Development Initiative Gears Up to Empower Youth

In January, North Dakota State University Extension 4-H Youth Development announced that the Next Chapter at NDSU initiative was selected to receive a \$250,000 grant from the CHS Foundation. Only one program per college was eligible to compete for the award.

The Next Chapter at NDSU initiative is a career readiness curriculum for youth as young as eighth grade. Through hands-on activities, participants explore their passions, develop critical life skills and map out pathways toward postgraduation goals.

The curriculum features 17 adaptable and updated lesson plans. Topics include goal setting, time management, resume writing and financial management. Delivered in the classroom, after school and in 4-H club settings, the program aims to prepare youth to succeed in their future careers — to be “Beyond Ready,” a new initiative by the National 4-H Council to prepare youth to be healthy, productive and engaged.

“This recognition highlights our and the CHS Foundation’s unwavering commitment to empowering youth and cultivating the next generation of agricultural leaders,” says Leigh Ann Skurupey, assistant director of 4-H Youth Development.

The Next Chapter at NDSU initiative is a response to a national survey of high schoolers indicating that they do not feel prepared for a job after graduation and want an educational pathway that is shorter, more affordable and connected to a career. The program emphasizes both college and career readiness, ensuring youth are equipped to thrive in their future endeavors. It also helps connect youth and professionals to foster networking and mentorship.

Although the initiative is still in a pilot stage, the response has been enthusiastic.

“Teachers are excited about it,” says Margo Bowerman, NDSU Extension specialist for 4-H STEM. “We’re asking the schools currently teaching the curriculum to let us know how they are using it.”

Bowerman says the promotion at the North Dakota Department of Career and Technical Education Conference drew over 200 educators to their booth, and that the turnout for their presentation session confirmed that this will be an attractive addition to classrooms.

A feature of Next Chapter at NDSU is the Careers in a Box resource. Designed to expand program reach and enhance youth development, Careers in a Box introduces participants to career-focused activities

that provide real-world experiences.

This interactive tool connects youth to career possibilities they may have never considered, aiming to foster self-discovery and help envision a future full of opportunity. Where the Next Chapter helps create skills, Careers in a Box creates awareness of careers.

Jenna Radtke, coordinator of Next Chapter at NDSU, has helped develop new Careers in a Box to highlight specific occupations.

“I’ve been building hands-on activities to go along with individual careers and roles,” says Radtke. “‘What does a metal fabricator do?’ We have a lesson about welding. ‘What does an animal nutritionist do?’ ‘What kinds of jobs are in agricultural co-ops?’”

School has just started, so Radtke is looking forward to hearing back from the educators she’s been working with.

In addition to the CHS Foundation grant, there is an incentive program for individual counties to connect their youth with NDSU.

Radtke details the effort to incentivize NDSU Extension agents to teach or promote this curriculum:

“Thanks to Keith and Cathy Peltier’s generous support, the incentive program awards the three counties with the highest

percentage of students enrolled in Next Chapter,” says Radtke. “The county with the highest percentage enrolled can earn monetary prizes which support 4-H programming at the local level. The prizes are based on the highest percentage of total youth enrolled in Next Chapter.”

An agent can even come in as a guest lecturer and teach a lesson.

The Next Chapter at NDSU initiative is meant to complement other career-readiness programming, whether in an FFA chapter or a family and consumer science course.

“We’re not here to compete with programming,” says Skurupey. “Next Chapter is an opportunity to collaborate and support alongside you.”

“The CHS Foundation is proud to support North Dakota 4-H and its Next Chapter at NDSU program,” says Megan Wolle, CHS Foundation president. “This work is both creative and grounded in research for youth development. We’re grateful for the strong program leadership that will help develop the next generation of agriculture leaders in North Dakota.”

Skurupey urges anyone interested in learning more to contact North Dakota 4-H to find out how Next Chapter at NDSU can be involved in their community.



North Dakota

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## NACA Spotlight: Robert Wilson



Robert Wilson

*NDACo Board member Robert Wilson was recently profiled by the National Association of County Administrators. Below is excerpted from that article. You can find the full profile at [www.countyadministrators.org/news/member-spotlight-robert-wilson](http://www.countyadministrators.org/news/member-spotlight-robert-wilson).*

### Tell us about your career.

I was a small-market television reporter for ten years before a crazy 'life happens moment' led me to county government. I was laid off one day as a reporter. The next day, searching help-wanted sites I came across my county's HR page. They'd just posted an Assistant Administrator position. I'd spent the last several years covering the county commission and called the chair. Three months later I was an Assistant Administrator in Minnehaha County, SD. After eight years in that role, I moved to County Administrator position in Cass County, ND.

I received my undergraduate degree at Willamette University in Salem, Oregon and a master's degree in Public Administration from the University of Nebraska - Omaha.

### What are some of your current or notable achievements or projects?

While maintaining (and trying to improve) the day-to-day function of Cass County Government, I have twice served an interim role as the Co-Executive Director of the Metro Flood Diversion Authority. This is a partnership of five local governments in the Fargo - Moorhead metro area that have joined to partner with the US Army Corp of Engineers and a private developer to finance, build and operate a \$3.2B flood mitigation and stormwater diversion project around the Fargo-Moorhead metro area. When not serving in the Co-Executive Director position, I am one of two Co-Deputy Executive Directors, serving with the Fargo City Administrator.

Early in my tenure with Cass County the retiring elected Auditor, Treasurer and Recorder encouraged me to propose an ordinance change converting all three to appointed rather than elected positions. That effort was successful and has led to these important county positions now being appointed based on education, experience and skill.

### Have you volunteered with Roles with NACA or affiliates like ICMA, NACo, IGHN, NFBPA?

I currently serve in the following roles: NACA Mountain Plains Regional Vice-President, NACo Board of Directors (ND representative), NACo committees including: Mid-Sized County Caucus, Membership Committee and Career Economic & Workforce Committee.

### What is one thing that most people don't know about you?

In junior high and high school I was a horrible student - a full-on academic disaster. I don't dwell on it and by college I got things figured out. The lasting impact is an underdog mentality that I'm convinced I basically have to work twice as hard as anyone around me to stand a chance of keeping up. That's served me well over the years.

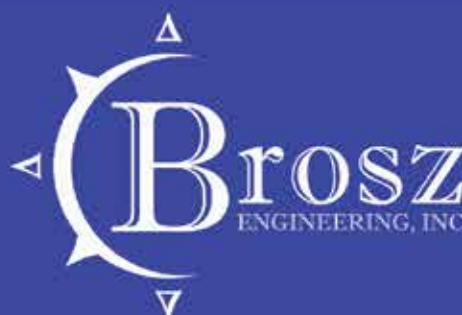
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# 2025 COUNTY CALENDAR

## November

- 17-19 \_\_\_\_\_ Dakota Territory Sheriffs Conference, Fargo Delta Marriott  
21-22 \_\_\_\_\_ North Dakota Farm Bureau Annual Meeting, Fargo Holiday Inn  
27 \_\_\_\_\_ Thanksgiving Day

## December

- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ Judiciary Committee, Roughrider Room, State Capitol  
2 \_\_\_\_\_ Information Technology Committee, Harvest Room, State Capitol  
3 \_\_\_\_\_ Tentative Tax Reform and Relief Advisory Committee  
4 \_\_\_\_\_ NDIRF Board Meeting, NDIRF Office Building  
8-9 \_\_\_\_\_ ND Township Officers Association Annual Convention, Bismarck Ramada Inn  
9 \_\_\_\_\_ County Commissioners Summit, Bismarck Radisson Hotel  
9 \_\_\_\_\_ Water Topics Overview Committee, Room 327B, Capitol  
9-10 \_\_\_\_\_ Upper Missouri Water Association Conference, Bismarck Hotel & Conference Center  
10-11 \_\_\_\_\_ Joint ND Water Convention & Irrigation Workshop, Bismarck Hotel & Conference Center  
10 \_\_\_\_\_ Tentative Budget Section  
10 \_\_\_\_\_ NDCCA Board Meeting, NDACo County Office Building  
11 \_\_\_\_\_ ILG/NDACo Board Meeting, NDACo County Office Building  
11 \_\_\_\_\_ Tentative Government Finance Committee Meeting  
12-13 \_\_\_\_\_ ND Farmers Union State Convention, Bismarck Event Center  
21 \_\_\_\_\_ First Day of Winter  
25 \_\_\_\_\_ Christmas



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