#### **Hoeven To Serve As Chairman Of Senate Agriculture Appropriations Committee**

Senator John Hoeven last week announced that he will again serve as chairman of the Senate Agriculture Appropriations Committee. Hoeven has served as the lead Republican on the committee since 2017, having previously fulfilled the role of chairman in the 115th and 116th Congresses.

"The hard work of our farmers and ranchers provides a solid foundation for North Dakota's economy, while ensuring Americans continue to benefit from the lowestcost, highest-quality food supply in the world," said Hoeven. "My role on the Senate Agriculture Appropriations Committee has been a tremendous opportunity to address the needs of our producers, agribusinesses and rural communities. I look forward to serving as chairman once again, where I will continue working to provide the tools and resources needed to support a strong ag economy, while advancing new innovations and market access to give our producers a competitive edge in the global economy.

As chairman, Hoeven will continue his efforts to advance critical priorities for farmers, ranchers and rural America through annual funding legislation. This includes:

 Advancing implementation of the \$33.5 billion in disaster assistance that he worked to secure for producers in the year-end legisla-

• Securing strong support for agriculture research, including:

• The precision agriculture work NDSU) and their partners.

• The agriculture policy research center the senator is working to stand up at NDSU.

- Ensuring access to credit for producers to better enable them to manage their operations, cover their
- Improving access to foreign markets for producers and agri-
- Supporting greater transparency and competition in cattle markets, including through his Cattle
- reduce costs for producers and making sure programs are voluntary and

# North Dakota Weekly **Gas Price Update**

Dakota are unchanged in the last week, averaging \$2.86/g on Monday, according to GasBuddy's survey of 493 stations in North Dakota. Prices in North Dakota are 10.9 cents per gallon higher than a month ago and stand 8.6 cents per gallon higher than a year ago. The national average price of diesel has decreased 2.4 cents in the last week and stands at \$3.626 per gallon.

The national average price of gasoline has fallen 3.5 cents per country

Historical gasoline prices in North Dakota and the national aver-

February 3, 2024: \$2.78/g (U.S.

Average: \$2.45/g)

February 3, 2020: \$2.38/g (U.S.

Average: \$2.60/g)

being undertaken by Grand Farm, North Dakota State University

- costs and weather challenges.
- Contract Library Pilot Program. • Providing regulatory relief to
- farmer-friendly.

Average gasoline prices in North

According to GasBuddy price reports, the least expensive station in North Dakota was priced at \$2.61/g on Sunday while the most expensive was \$3.04/g, a difference of 43.0 cents per gallon.

gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.04/g Monday. The national average is down 1.4 cents per gallon from a month ago and stands 10.3 cents per gallon lower than a year ago, according to GasBuddy data compiled from more than 11 million weekly price reports covering over 150,000 gas stations across the

age going back ten years:

Average: \$3.15/g) February 3, 2023: \$3.32/g (U.S.

Average: \$3.45/g)
February 3, 2022: \$3.25/g (U.S. Average: \$3.44/g)
February 3, 2021: \$2.30/g (U.S. Average: \$2.45/g)

Average: \$2.45/g)

February 3, 2019: \$2.10/g (U.S. Average: \$2.25/g) February 3, 2018: \$2.64/g (U.S.

Average: \$2.27/g) February 3, 2016: \$1.66/g (U.S. Average: \$1.78/g)
February 3, 2015: \$1.96/g (U.S.

Average: \$2.06/g)

Neighboring areas and their current gas prices: Sioux Falls-\$2.81/g, up 15.5 cents per gallon from last week's \$2.66/g, Fargo- \$2.86/g, down 1.7 cents from last week's \$2.88/g, South Dakota- \$2.90/g, up 9.3 cents per gallon from last week's \$2.81/g.
"The national average has seen

little meaningful change over the past week, as oil markets continue to face selling pressure. However, with President Trump imposing tariffs on Canada and Mexico, some motorists may see gas prices inch up in certain regions," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy. Trump's new trade war has already triggered retaliatory tariffs on U.S. goods, escalating tensions. While, on paper, tariffs on Canadian energy could have a significant impact on fuel prices, a prolonged trade war could weaken global economies, reducing demand and partially offsetting the effects of tariffs. For now, I expect a slow but modest impact on fuel prices, particularly in the Great Lakes, Midwest, Rockies, and Northeast U.S. - all markets that rely heavily on Canadian crude

GasBuddy is the authoritative voice for gas prices and the only source for station-level data. Gas-Buddy's survey updates 288 times every day from the most diverse list of sources covering nearly 150,000 stations nationwide, the most comprehensive and up-to-date in the country. GasBuddy data is acces-February 3, 2017: \$2.28/g (U.S. sible at http://prices.GasBuddy.com.

oil or refined product imports from

### **ND Community Foundation President And CEO To Retire After 37 Years**

Kevin Dvorak, President and CEO of the North Dakota Community Foundation (NDCF),has announced that he will retire at the end of 2025 after 37 years at the organization.

"It has been an honor and a privilege to lead this foundation for most of my career," said Dvorak. "I am especially proud of our work to support rural communities through our grantmaking and in building our 69 local community endowment funds. It has been 'work worth doing', but the time has come for the next chapter of my life. The Foundation has never been stronger and the next CEO, whomever that will be, will take it to new levels of relevance and usefulness for the citizens of North

Dvorak began work at NDCF in 1989 as a Program Officer and became President and CEO in 1995. He is only the third President and CEO in the organization's history, succeeding Dr. Richard Timmins and the original Executive Director (and former ND Governor) William L. Guy. Established in 1976, NDCF is considered one of the first statewide community foundations in the

Under his leadership, NDCF has grown from \$5 million to more than \$160 million in charitable assets and made grants in excess of \$118 million supporting North Dakota communities, schools, and nonprofit organizations. Its staff size has also increased during his tenure from two employees to eleven. The organization now has offices in Bismarck, Dickinson, Larimore and

"Kevin has been an incredible leader, not just at NDCF, but in the entire nonprofit world of North Dakota and this region," said NDCF Board Chair Chantel Southam. "We are thankful for his many years of service; he is leaving this foundation in a very strong position."

Dvorak is a North Dakota native with a BS in Social and Behavioral Sciences from the University of Mary. He is a Certified Financial Planner® and has been active in numerous organizations during his career. He is a member and past president of the Bismarck Rotary Club and the Leadership Bismarck Mandan Alumni Association. He has served for more than a decade as the president of the Western Dakota Estate Planning Council and is a member of the Diocese of Bismarck Finance Council. He is also an active member of the ND Association of Nonprofit Organizations Public Policy Committee.

Part of Dvorak's legacy is the implementation of the North Dakota 40 percent income tax credit for gifts to qualified North Dakota endowment funds. Dvorak helped lead the team that crafted and vetted the proposed legislation, traveling across the state for nine months to speak with nonprofit leaders and get their input. The legislation passed both the North Dakota House and Senate unanimously in 2007.

"That legislation made a tremendous impact in our state nonprofit sector," said Dana Schaar Jahner who was Executive Director of the North Dakota Association of Nonprofit Organizations at the time. "It encouraged North Dakotans to keep their charitable dollars in our state, to help our own residents and those in need, and has increased charitable giving by millions of dollars."

NDCF is governed by a Board of Directors, made up of fifteen volunteers from across the state. A transition team has been appointed to lead the search for Dvorak's successor.

The North Dakota Community Foundation is a public, non-profit tax-exempt corporation which receives and distributes charitable funds to support a wide range of programs that improve the quality of life for North Dakotans. NDCF currently manages more than 950 funds for various North Dakota communities and donors, including 69 community foundations and more than 200 scholarship funds. It holds assets in excess of \$160 million and has made more than \$118 million in grants all across North

## **Lane Departure Leads Fatal Crash** Causes In 2024 According To Vision Zero

Vision Zero reminds drivers to stay in their lane to reduce vehicle crashes and deaths. Preliminary data for 2024 shows nearly seventy percent of fatal crashes in North Dakota involved lane departure.

Lane departure crashes are especially common in rural areas and are a leading cause of severe injuries. These crashes occur when a vehicle crosses the edge or center line or leaves the roadway entirely, often resulting in a serious injury or death due to the typically high speeds in-

North Dakota continues to install enhanced road safety features with proven measures such as wider edge line pavement markings, curve warning signs, cable median barriers and edge and center-line rumble strips, all of which are aimed at reducing lane departure incidents.

Drivers are reminded to take personal responsibility by wearing seat belts, using proper child safety seats, obeying all speed limits and driving sober and distraction-free. Together, these actions can help eliminate fatalities and serious injuries on North Dakota roadways.

Visit the North Dakota Crash Memorial Wall to view memorials built on the hope of preventing another death on North Dakota roads.

# **NDSU Extension 4-H Youth Development Initiative Awarded** \$250,000 CHS Foundation Grant

NDSU Extension's Center for 4-H Youth Development announced that the Next Chapter at NDSU initiative has been selected to receive a \$250,000 grant from the CHS Foundation. Only one program per college is eligible to compete for the

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 seventeen 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 and

"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 ini-

tiative is a response to a national survey of high schoolers indicating they do not feel prepared for a job after graduation and want an educational pathway that is shorter, more affordable and connected to a ca-

"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.

In 2023, CHS was recognized as an NDSU Foundation Partner in Excellence. CHS's past contributions include the CHS Endowed Chair in Risk Management and Trading in 2015, a grant to support NDSU's precision agriculture program in 2022 and ten annual CHS Foundation Scholarships for students pursuing a degree in the NDSU College of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Natural Resources.

# **PSC Receives More Than 880 Consumer Contacts In 2024**

The North Dakota Public Service Commission (PSC) recently reported that the agency received 889 consumer contacts in 2024. These contacts include informal complaints against regulated entities, public input submitted as part of an open ase, referrals to other agencies and/ or requests for information.

Commissioner Sheri Haugen-Hoffart, who oversees the Consumer Affairs portfolio, emphasized the importance of public and consumer gagement in shaping effective olicies. "One of our top priorities at ne Commission is to actively listen to public and consumer feedback. The input is critical in crafting wellinformed rules, regulations and deexisting system is highly effective in addressing the daily issues and concerns, allowing us to respond romptly and appropriately.

Informal complaints are received and processed regarding utilities the Commission regulates, including certain aspects of telephone service, natural gas providers, and the three investor-owned electric companies in the state: Xcel, Otter Tail and MDU. Of the 889 contacts, 90 (10.1) percent) were informal complaints against public utility companies regulated by the Commission. Inormal complaint numbers overall were slightly higher for 2024 than the previous year. The most frequent reasons for complaints are billing issues, disconnects and phone outages. The most common billing complaints include customers wanting to investigate if their bill is correct, higher than normal bills, and pay-

ment plans to avoid disconnection. In addition to recording complaints and concerns, the Commission also receives public input for cases being considered by the Commission. Public input is most often received for siting cases where the Commission is looking at permitting new transmission projects like pipelines, electric transmission lines and wind farms or for rate cases. Siting hearings are held in a community close to where the project is proosed to be built. The comments can be either in support or opposition of the project. In 2024 there were 179 public input contacts recorded or 20 ercent of the total contacts. Public iput was submitted for a variety of different cases throughout the year with the majority submitted for the Summit Carbon Solutions Pipeline Project, the Oliver Wind IV Project, MDU and Xcel's gas rate increase cases, and Otter Tail's electric rate icrease case.

"This Commission takes public input seriously," said Commission Chair Randy Christmann. "It provides us with the information we need to make the best possible decisions, so we urge North Dakotans to

The Consumer Affairs Portfolio is headed by Commissioner Haugen-Hoffart and provides additional focus on consumer issues and complaints and on improving communication with the public through traditional public information channels, public meetings and social media. An annual public contact report is issued showing data and trends related to complaints and input received by the Commission. The Commission launched a new public comment tracking system in January 2020 that allows more flexibility to record comments from the public and generate statistics and reports.
"Public input is an integral part of the Commission's process," said Commissioner Jill Kringstad. "It allows us to listen to the important information provided by our citizens and evaluate and consider how best to support their needs. It's also important to know our staff is available to assist or answer questions. When a complaint is received, a

PSC staff member works as a liaison between the consumer and the company to resolve the problem within the jurisdiction of the Commission. Often, the complaint is outside of the Commission's jurisdiction and needs to be referred to another agency or the caller simply needs information. These calls are recorded as "referrals." The Commission re-

The report does not include any docketed information that is part of formal cases before the Commission. During the 2021-23 biennium, there were 840 formal cases filed with the Commission.

The North Dakota Public Service Commission is a constitutionally created state agency with authority to permit, site and regulate certain business activities in the state including electric and gas utilities, telecommunications companies, power plants, electric transmission lines, pipelines, railroads, commercial weighing devices, pipeline safety and coal mine reclamation. For more information, contact the Public Service Commission at (701) 328-2400 or www.psc.nd.gov

2024 Consumer Contact Report Summary by Jurisdiction (Includes complaints, public input, information requests, general comments and offsite referrals)

Jurisdiction, 2020, 2021, 2022,

Abandoned Mine Lands, 23, 10, Auction, 51, 84, 83, 75, 2 Common Pipeline Carrier, 19, 1,

Damage Prevention, 0, 0, 4, 2, 1 Electric Utility, 316<sup>1</sup>, 230, 84, 91,

Gas Pipeline Safety, 0, 0, 0, 0, 1 Gas Utility, 14, 249, 134, 11, 82<sup>5</sup> Grain, 14, 0, 0, 0, 0 Railroad Safety, 17, 25, 26, 16, 21 Reclamation, 2, 11, 0, 1, 3 Siting, 22, 8, 86<sup>2</sup>, 226<sup>4</sup>, 105<sup>6</sup> Telecommunications, 51, 34, 37,

Weights & Measures, 96, 167, 344<sup>3</sup>, 139, 169 Offsité Referral, 194, 211, 224,

Total: 819, 1030, 1027, 851, 889 <sup>1</sup>162 Northern Divide Wind Project-Public Input
<sup>2</sup>47 related to Summit Carbon Solutions CO2 Pipeline Project

3187 related to Notices of Non-180 related to Summit Carbon

Solutions CO2 Pipeline Project MDU Gas Rate Case (66); Xcel Gas Rate Case (5)

680 related to Summit Carbon Solutions CO2 Pipeline Project Informal Complains (Public Regulated Entity, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024
CenturyLink Communications, LLC, 28, 22, 36, 32, 35

Dakota Natural Gas, 0, 1, 0, 0, 0 Montana-Dakota Utilities Co., 16, 11, 12, 12, 10 Otter Tail Power Company, 7, 7,

Xcel Energy Inc., 13, 26, 33, 22, Total: 64, 67, 85, 73, 90



#### **Carol Ann Jones**



Dec. 17, 1952-Jan. 17, 2025 Carol Ann Jones, 72, of Mandan, passed away January 17, 2025, at her

Carol Ann was born on December 17, 1952, to Lloyd and Caroline (Smart) Jones. She was raised on a farm near Palermo, ND where she attended school, graduating in 1970.

After high school, Carol married Brian Cluver and moved to Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin. They welcomed their son, Jamie, in 1972. Carol and Brian later divorced, at which time she and Jamie moved back to North

Carol had a passion for writing. She obtained a degree in Journalism from the University of North Dakota in 1997. She also enjoyed collecting rocks, minerals and precious gems, and loved riding her Harley Davidson motorcycle/trike.

Carol was warm and welcoming and hosted many holiday festivities for her friends and family. She was always willing to offer a meal and

place to stay for those in need. The highlight of Carol's life was her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, since moving to Mandan in 2019, she was able to spend much time with them.

Carol was employed at Cashwise North in Bismarck at the time of her

Carol is survived by her son, James "Jamie" Cluver; grandson, Kevin Cluver (Manaiah Heilman); granddaughter, Kayla Cluver; greatgrandchildren, Kingston Heilman, Lilliana, Vaida and Opal Cluver; along with many cousins and close

Carol was preceded in death by her parents; brother, Tilman (TJ); sister-in-law, Vicky Jolly (Jones); and infant great-granddaughter, Alice Rose Cluver. Cremation has taken place, and

a memorial celebration will be held this summer. (Weigel Funeral Home)

### Linda Odegard



Oct. 26-Jan. 26, 2025

Linda Odegard, 80, New Town, passed away on Sunday, January 26, 2025, at a Minot hospital. She will be missed by all who knew her.

Blessed be her memory among us. Linda Louise was born on October 26, 1944, to Arthur Mac and Mary (Judd) Wardlow in Williston. She grew up in Sanish and New Town, frequently spending time at her grandparents' farm at Ray. After graduating high school, she attended Interstate Business College in Fargo and received her secretarial

On July 19, 1963, Linda married Gerald Odegard in New Town. They moved to Bismarck, where Linda worked for the North Dakota State Health Department. Their daughter, Kristin Lee, was born in 1966. They returned to New Town for a few years before relocating to Everett, Washington, where their son, Michael Arthur was born. During this time, Linda became a homemaker, happily raising her children.

In 1980, Linda re-entered the workforce as a secretary for US Bayliner Marine in Arlington, WA, where she worked for several years. After retiring, Linda and Gerry moved back to New Town in 2004.

Linda loved to get "dolled up" and go out. Sharing wine and dessert with family and friends always brought her joy. She enjoyed listening to music and was an avid Seattle Seahawks fan. Linda also liked play-

ing bingo and shopping on QVC. She had a strong spirit and faced challenges and losses with grace. She deeply loved her family and cherished her grandchildren, often speaking of them with pride. Linda found joy in simple things, such as flowers and candy.

Linda is survived by her husband, Gerry Odegard of New Town; son and daughter-in-law, Michael and Betsy Odegard of Orondo, WA; grandchildren, Cole and Grace Odegard; sister, Mary Dianne Wardlow (Joe Dickhut) of Lake Kiowa, TX; sister-in-law, Danny Ann Gentry (Lee) of Texas; brother-in-law, Steve Odegard (Ramona) of Bismarck; and special nieces and nephews; Julie Bayne, Allison Curnett, Stewart Aadnes (Jennifer).

Linda was preceded in death by her parents, Mac and Mary Wardlow; daughter, Kristin Odegard; sister, Leslee Gay Strong; and nephew, Joel Clark.

Services for Linda were held Friday, January 31, 2025, at Bethel Lutheran Church, New Town with internment at New Town Cemetery, New Town

(Langhans Funeral Home, Parwww.langhansfuneralhome.

#### Barbara Axelson

Barbara Axelson, 80, Minot, formerly of Tioga, died Thursday, January 30, 2025, in a Minot hospital, surrounded by her loving family.

Funeral service for Barbara will be held on Saturday, February 8, 2025, at 1 p.m. in Living Word Lutheran Church, Minot.

Visitation will be held on Friday, February 7, 2025, from 5-7 p.m. at Thomas Family Funeral Home, Mi-

Interment will be held at the Powers Lake Cemetery in spring of A delayed stream of the service

will be available on the funeral home website on Sunday afternoon Memories and condolences may be shared at www.thomasfamilyfu-

neralhome.com.

#### James H. Olson

James H. Olson, 75, Minot, formerly of Powers Lake, died Sunday, February 2, 2025, in a Minot hospi-

Funeral will be held on February 15, 2025 at 1:00 p.m. at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Powers Lake, ND. To share memories and condo-

lences or view a complete obituary,

access www.thomasfamilyfuneral-

Thomas Family Funeral Home, Minot has been entrusted with ar-

#### Judene "Judy" Cvancara

Judene "Judy" Cvancara, 81, of Ross, ND, passed away on Monday, February 3, 2025, at the Mountrail County Medical Center in Stanley,

Springan Stevenson Funeral Home of Stanley is assisting the family. Condolences may be left on our funeral home website at www. springanstevenson.com.



Support For SB 2200 And The 988 Suicide And Crisis Lifeline Dear Editor.

I am writing to express my strong support for SB 2200, a critical bill that will ensure the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is adequately funded and staffed to provide lifesaving mental health services. With rising mental health challenges and suicide rates affecting individuals of all ages, we must prioritize crisis inter-

vention and support those in need. In North Dakota, suicide is the second leading cause of death among individuals aged 10 to 24. This alarming statistic underscores the urgent need for accessible mental health resources in our state.

Since its launch, 988 has served as a vital resource, offering immediate help to individuals experiencing suicidal thoughts, mental health crises, or emotional distress. However, without adequate funding, the system will struggle to keep up with demand, leaving countless people without access to timely and effective care. Just as we fund 911 to respond to physical emergencies, we must ensure 988 has the resources to handle mental health crises, because mental health emergencies deserve the same urgency as any other life-threatening situation. SB 2200 will provide essential resources to sustain and expand these services, ensuring that everyone in crisis has someone to turn to 24/7.

Mental health is just as important as physical health and it is our responsibility as a community to support policies that strengthen mental health infrastructure. I urge lawmakers to pass SB 2200 and for citizens to contact their representatives in support of this crucial bill. Lives are at stake, and we cannot afford to wait.

> Sincerely, Jennifer Illich, FirstLink **Executive Director**

