

Burgad Appointed Interim President Of Valley City State University

The State Board of Higher Education (SBHE) last week appointed Dr. Allen Burgad as interim President of Valley City State University beginning January 1, 2026. Current President Alan LaFave is leaving VCSU to lead his alma mater, Northern State University in Aberdeen, S.D. His final day at VCSU will be December 31, 2025.

SBHE Chair Kevin Black said, "We extend our gratitude to President LaFave for his seven years of dedicated leadership at VCSU, a period marked by steady growth and advancements in teaching and technology. Dr. Burgad brings both deep institutional knowledge and broad experience in education, which ensures a seamless transition in leadership. Known for its nationally recognized teacher education program, VCSU remains committed to serving students, faculty and staff while continuing to meet the evolving workforce needs of the state."

Under SBHE policy, the SBHE selects an interim president based on recommendations from NDUS Commissioner Brent Sanford, who issued a Request for Letters of Interest from individuals wishing to be considered for the VCSU interim presidency. It is expected that this interim appointment will continue until the permanent president is hired, likely in late spring 2026.

Burgad has been VCSU's dean of the Department of Education since June 2021 and has more than thirty-five years of experience in education. Previously, he served as an administrator in multiple North Dakota schools including West Fargo, Stanley, Northern Cass, Napoleon and Powder River County District in Montana. Prior to joining VCSU, he



was the assistant superintendent for eight years at West Fargo, one of the largest school districts in the state of North Dakota.

"As a member of the VCSU community, I am honored and humbled to embrace this opportunity and will do my utmost to serve the institution, its people and our community with dedication and care in this interim role," Burgad said.

Last month, the North Dakota University System (NDUS) announced the selection of co-chairs to lead the Valley City State University (VCSU) Presidential Search Committee. SBHE Vice Chair D.J. Campbell and VCSU Vice President for Business Affairs Erica Buchholz will serve as co-chairs of the search process.

The Presidential Search Committee will include representatives from faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community members. The committee's work will begin immediately with the goal of recommending finalists to the SBHE in the coming months.

NDFB President On Court Decision Protecting Private Property Rights

North Dakota Farm Bureau President Val Wagner issued the following statement regarding the district court ruling that struck down the state's pore space statute as unconstitutional:

"This is a significant victory for private property rights in North Dakota. The Court affirmed NDFB's longstanding argument that pore space is private property, and the government cannot utilize it without proper legal procedures and fair compensation. We are grateful to have played a role in this case, and it is encouraging that our arguments helped strengthen the Court's understanding of the importance of protecting landowners.

"We also appreciate the Court's decision requiring the State to reimburse legal costs, highlighting the importance of standing up when

property rights are threatened. NDFB will continue to advocate for laws and policies that respect voluntary landowner participation and protect the rights essential to agriculture and rural North Dakota."

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Buy-Up Option For Prevented Planting Insurance Eliminated

A new federal crop insurance rule that drops buy-up option coverage for prevented planting insurance will be "bad news for North Dakota farmers," according to North Dakota Farmers Union President Mark Watne.

"Preventive Plant and the buy-up for North Dakota farmers is an essential tool for us," said Watne. "It is where farmers can purchase additional coverage to minimize weather impacts. It seems we are getting kicked in the gut again when our markets are impacted by tariffs and profitability is nearly impossible."

The Federal Crop Insurance Cor-

poration rule that eliminates the buy-up option is part of the One Big Beautiful Act (OBBBA). The rule is set to take effect for the 2026 crop year and succeeding years for crops with a contract change date on or after November 30, 2025.

"While we appreciate the improvements OBBBA made to farm programs and crop insurance to improve the farm safety net, this rule does the opposite for North Dakota farmers, it creates a hole in the net. It will definitely hurt farmers' bottom lines, creating uncertainty and continued need for ad hoc disaster aid."

North Dakota Company Sentenced To Clean Air Act Violation

United States Attorney Nicholas W. Chase announced that pursuant to the terms of a plea agreement, U.S. District Judge Daniel M. Traynor sentenced Targa Badlands LLC, a company which does business in North Dakota, to: 1) three years of probation; 2) 500 hours of community service to the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation; 3) payment of \$500,000 fine on a National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants ("NESHAP") Clean Air Act violation; and 4) \$400.00 in special assessments. Targa Badlands LLC pleaded guilty to this offense on February 18, 2025.

As stated in the criminal information and plea agreement, Targa Badlands LLC operates six natural gas compressor stations on the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation. Between 2018 and 2022, Targa Badlands LLC operated the Johnson Compressor Station, located in Dunn County, North Dakota, but failed to timely install continuous parameter monitoring systems on two Johnson Compressor Station engines when required to do so under NESHAP. Continuous parameter monitoring systems monitor and collect data on temperature and pressure for engine operations to ensure the catalyst is being utilized properly, thus ensuring the engine not producing excess emissions. Failure to timely install a required continuous parameter monitoring system can lead to increased hazardous air pollutants being released into the environment.

Additionally, as described in the plea agreement, on two prior occasions, in 2019 and 2021, Targa Badlands LLC had previously agreed to pay civil penalties to the United States, and entered into Consent Agreement and Final Order's with the EPA, for separate NESHAP violations pertaining to natural gas

compressor stations it operates on the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation.

Finally, as noted in the plea agreement, Targa Badlands LLC self-identified, self-reported, and corrected the failure to timely install continuous parameter monitoring systems at the Johnson Compressor Station and has since adopted an implemented policy and procedural best practices to improve its environmental permit review and implementation requirements.

"Today's sentence underscores the importance of enforcing our environmental laws, which protect the land, water, and communities," said U.S. Attorney Chase. "At the same time, we recognize that Targa Badlands LLC took responsibility for its actions and self-reported the violation. Natural gas production is vital to our state's economy, and it must be done responsibly. This case demonstrates that we can support strong energy production while holding companies accountable when they fall short of their legal obligations."

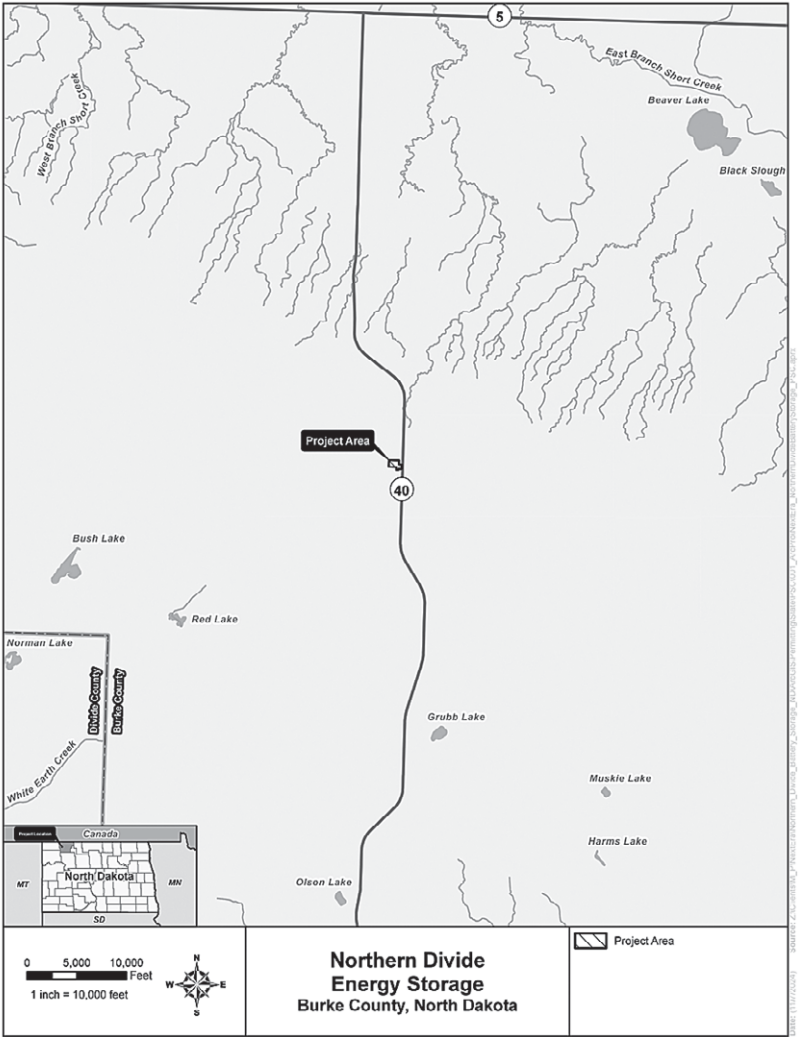
This case was investigated by the United States Environmental Protection Agency - Criminal Investigation Division and prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Jonathan J. O'Konek.

Card of Thanks

Thank you to Fritz and Cheryl Weisenberger for their donation in memory of Danny Lindberg to Gutter Alley. We appreciate your support.

Gutter Alley
Chris and Holly Kaiser

PSC Schedules Public Hearing For Proposed Battery Energy Storage Project In Burke County



The North Dakota Public Service Commission (PSC) will hold a public hearing on Friday, December 19, regarding a proposal to construct a battery energy storage system in Burke County, North Dakota.

Northern Divide Energy Storage, LLC, is requesting a siting permit for a 100-megawatt battery energy storage system with a four-hour duration to store excess energy available on the grid. The system would be capable of storing excess power from the grid when production exceeds demand. The estimated cost of the project is \$130 million.

The project is proposed to be located adjacent to the existing Northern Divide Wind Energy Center and would connect to the existing substation. The project area would encompass approximately twenty acres in Burke County.

Details for the public hearing are as follows:
Friday, December 19, 2025 - 10 a.m. Central
Bowbells Memorial City Hall
100 Main Street NW
Bowbells, ND 58721

The hearing provides an opportunity for members of the public to contribute to the PSC's official record. Any comments from members of the public must be received at a hearing to be part of the record. People with concerns or support/opposition for the project are encouraged to attend the hearing and present their information. Information received after the hearing will not be part of the official record and cannot be used as a basis for the Commission's decision unless certain additional procedures are followed.

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.

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