

One arrested after Mandan standoff ends in flames

By Brendan DeLuca-Rodenberg
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A man was arrested on the morning of Friday, February 20, but not before a standoff with Police ended in the complete destruction of a Mandan home.

According to a press release from the Morton County Sheriff's Office, on the afternoon of February 19, Morton County deputies responded to a trespassing incident at a home in the northwest portion of Mandan. The suspect, a 46-year-old Mandan man, was stated to be under an active restraining order barring them from the property.

Despite this order, deputies reported finding a vehicle belonging to him in the driveway, and were led to believe that the situation involved access to weapons and potential threats of self-harm. Attempts to contact the subject by phone were met with adversity, causing police observation of the residence to occur overnight.

The next morning, on February 20, police entered the home in the hopes of locating the suspect. When they were spotted carrying a weapon,

a county deputy discharged their firearm before officers decided to retreat and establish a perimeter. They were soon joined by the West Dakota SWAT team, as well as both Metro Ambulance and the Mandan Rural Fire Department on standby.

Negotiation attempts and tactical maneuvers then took place, as officers unsuccessfully attempted to get the suspect to surrender without a fight. At some point during the standoff, a self-initiated fire broke out in the residence, causing the suspect to exit while wielding a handgun. While the Mandan Rural Fire Department was able to extinguish it, the entire home was destroyed as a result.

After some communication with the suspect, they laid down their weapon without issue, and were swiftly taken into custody. Their injuries were later treated at a nearby hospital.

The subject has been identified, but charges are currently pending. The case remains under investigation by both the ND Bureau of Criminal Investigation and the Morton County Sheriff's Office.

Ministerial Moments

Pastor Alyssa Fitzgerald

Light of the Prairie Church

A group of us local ministers in New Salem have been gathering for several months now because we all believe in the power of unity in the Body of Christ and have been meeting regularly to explore ways we can live that out. One of the ideas we landed on was exactly what you're reading right now - a weekly column where we each get the opportunity to encourage the community we serve. What you'll see each week will be a unique encouragement from each pastor or priest in the hopes of building up the members of our community and strengthening the place we love.

For me, it's hard to believe we're already almost two months into 2026. Personally, the turn of the new year always brings excitement, and if I'm being honest, a little trepidation about

the unknown. What a great opportunity to reaffirm my commitment to the most important things in my life: my faith, my family, and my community. Each year, I pray about my own "word of the year", which helps to direct my efforts for the year ahead. When things get tough (and trust me, it's not a matter of if, but when), that word helps to keep me focused and is a gentle reminder of Who is in charge. I highly encourage you to do the same. Ask God, and He will deliver.

If your New Year's resolutions have failed spectacularly, if you're struggling with the state of our culture, or even if your life is generally pretty good at the moment, no matter where you're at as we approach March, know that God remains in control. Nothing surprises Him and He loves and cares for YOU. May God bless you today and every day.

County Commission wrestles with century-old tax exemption

By Brendan DeLuca-Rodenberg
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In recent years, the ND state legislature passed a law that asked counties to provide exemption data for a study on property taxes. During a Morton County Commission meeting on Thursday, February 12, Tax Equalization Director Donald LaFleur stated that doing so revealed a portion of land that has been tax-exempt for over 100 years: Parcel 450141100, located just south of New Salem. In doing so, however, he unearthed a problem that will take more than just the Commission to solve.

According to LaFleur, the ten-acre portion of land was created in 1911 for the area's Evangelical Lutheran Bethlehem Congregation, and put aside for the construction of a church. While the exemption originally applied if the church was constructed within ten years, none was ever built. He also noted that the congregation itself does not seem to exist in modern times, and no other records of its presence or deed holder are available.

The deedholder who owns the rest of the quarter's surrounding land has been using this area as part of their

farm without owning it, and no deed transfers have included the parcel. There is no verification of any rental agreements involving the land, either, leading City Commission officials to question whether he is even aware of the exemption to begin with.

At the meeting, LaFleur requested guidance from the City Commission on how to approach lifting the exemption, noting the difficulties that would come with putting a place without ownership on the tax roll, and the minimal \$40 benefit that would come from taxing it. The concept of a 'quiet title action' (a lawsuit used to determine final ownership of property) was also considered, but this also faces issues in finding someone to transfer it to.

Eventually, the Commission decided to send the topic to the Morton County State Attorney's Office, citing previous local examples such as Greenwood Cemetery that designate them as unused church property. However, they still expressed an interest in solving the problem as soon as possible, and letters are expected to be sent out to local landowners in due time to prevent any new construction.

PUBLIC NOTICE

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF MORTON COUNTY, STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA

In the matter of the petition for name change of Ryder John Hofstad, a minor child

NOTICE OF PETITION FOR NAME CHANGE

1. PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that a petition will be filed by the Petitioner with the above-entitled court requesting an Order changing the name of Ryder John Hofstad to Ryder John Larson.
2. NOTICE IT FURTHER GIVEN that thirty days after publication, the Petitioner intends to file a petition requesting entry of the Court's Order changing the name of the minor child. Any objection to granting this name change must be given in writing to the address listed below within 30 days of the date of this publication. The written objection must also be filed with the Court. If no objections are given, the Court may respond to the Petition without further hearing.

Dated 1-28-2026
Jessica Larson
Petitioner
3350 CR 139
Mandan, ND 58554

Published February 25, 2026

A Sincere Thank You!

Thank you to our great community of New Salem for your generous contributions to the food pantry in the past year. Also, thank you to Tellmann's Market for supporting us with the food pantry donation box at the store and to everyone who contributed cash or groceries there. Without all of you, we couldn't do what we do. Thank you again to all the businesses, churches, organizations, and individuals who donated food and cash and wish to remain anonymous.

New Salem Food Pantry



Event Calendar

March Western Plains Public Health Clinics

2 Immunizations at Western Plains Public Health in Mandan. Call 667-3370 for an appointment.

4 Footcare and Blood Pressure at Mandan Senior Center, 8:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. Call 667-3370 for appointment.

9 Immunizations at Western Plains Public Health in Mandan. Call 667-3370 for an appointment.

10 Footcare and Blood Pressure for Seniors 60 and older, Elm Crest Manor in New Salem, 9:00 a.m.-10:30 a.m. Call 667-3370 for appointment.

11 Footcare and Blood Pressure at Mandan Senior Center, 8:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. Call 667-3370 for appointment.

12 Footcare at Hebron Senior Center, 8:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. Call 701-622-3591 for appointment.

12 Footcare at Glen Ullin Senior Center, 12:30 p.m.-1:30 p.m. Call 701-622-3591 for appointment.

Morton County Fairboard Meeting

The Morton County Fairboard will have their regular monthly meeting on Monday March 2, 2026 at 7:00pm at the fairgrounds in New Salem.

16 Immunizations at Western Plains Public Health in Mandan. Call 667-3370 for an appointment.

17 Footcare and Blood Pressure for Seniors 60 and older, Elm Crest Manor in New Salem, 9:00 a.m.-10:30 a.m. Call 667-3370 for appointment.

18 Footcare and Blood Pressure at Mandan Senior Center, 8:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. Call 667-3370 for appointment.

18 Footcare and Blood Pressure at Library Square in Mandan, 1:00 p.m.-2:30 p.m. Call 667-3370 for appointment.

23 Immunizations at Western Plains Public Health in Mandan. Call 667-3370 for an appointment.

25 Footcare and Blood Pressure at Mandan Senior Center, 8:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. Call 667-3370 for appointment.

30 Immunizations at Western Plains Public Health in Mandan. Call 667-3370 for an appointment.

New Salem FFA Pie Social

New Salem FFA is holding their annual pie social for National FFA Week on Wednesday, February 25th. Please join us between 2-4:30pm in the new ag facility for pie, and ice cream! We look forward to seeing you there!

Have a meeting notice? Email Us at mcjournal@gspublishing.net to have it featured in the community calendar!

MORTON COUNTY

Golden Age Menu

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 26
Meatloaf or Liver & Onions, Baked Potato, Mixed Vegetables, Fruit Cocktail

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 27
Parmesan Crusted Fish, Rice Pilaf, Coleslaw, Apricots

MONDAY MARCH 2
Chicken and Dumplings, Green Beans, Fruit Cocktail

TUESDAY MARCH 3
Beef Barley Soup, Turkey and Cheese Sandwich, Macaroni Salad, Fresh Orange

WEDNESDAY MARCH 4
Polish Sausage, Sweet Potato Fries, Three Bean Salad, Applesauce

Call 701.663.6528 to have meals delivered to you if you are 60 or older

CORRECTION: In the article about Western Plains Public Health on February 11, two pieces of information were incorrect. Western Plains Public Health has four offices in their jurisdiction (Mandan, Carson, Beulah and Bismarck). Their website was also printed incorrectly, it is www.westernplainsph.org. Reporter Brendan DeLuca-Rodenberg acknowledges his mistakes and apologizes for any confusion this may have caused our readers.