

2026 ND State Spelling Bee Results

The 2026 North Dakota State Spelling Bee was held on Monday, March 23 at the Bismarck Event Center.

Chilaka Ugobi was declared the champion of the 2026 North Dakota State Spelling Bee. Chilaka is an 8th grader at Our Redeemer's Christian School (Minot) in Ward County. His hobbies include Bible reading, soccer, basketball, language learning (German, Arabic), and chess.

Chilaka's grant prize is a trip to Washington D.C. to compete in the Scripps National Spelling Bee from May 24th to May 30th. His prize includes airfare and lodging for two as well as an expense allowance. He also took home a trophy, gold medal, Barnes and Noble gift card, wireless noise cancelling earbuds, and the following prizes were from Scripps and their sponsors: one-year subscription to Britannica Online Premium; one-year subscription to Merriam-Webster Unabridged Online; and one-year subscription to News-O-Matic for his school.

The oral portion of the competition began with twenty-six competitors. Chilaka Ugobi was declared champion after correctly spelling "eviscerate" in the fourteenth round of the oral spelling. Other words he spelled correctly leading up to his final word included: sedge, schism, pituitary, and behoove.

2nd Place Runner Up: Chaitanya Gopi is the 2026 Runner-Up of the North Dakota State Spelling Bee. She is a 6th grader at Dakota Montessori School (Fargo) in Cass County. She enjoys drawing and reading. Her awards were a trophy, silver medal, Barnes & Noble gift card, wireless noise cancelling earbuds, and from Merriam-Webster, the Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (11th Edition).

3rd Place: Sam Edward Pasag, an 8th grader from Elgin/New Leipzig Elementary School in Grant County, took third place at the North Dakota State Spelling Bee. His hobbies include drawing, story writing, sculpting, and playing video games. His prizes were a trophy, bronze medal, Barnes & Noble gift card, and wireless noise cancelling earbuds.

4th Place: Callen Gelsing took fourth place at the North Dakota State Spelling Bee. He is an 8th grader at Hope Christian Academy (Dickinson) in Stark County. His hobbies are archery, raising chickens, and playing video games. His prizes were a trophy, bronze medal, Barnes & Noble gift card, and wireless noise cancelling earbuds.

State Spelling Bee Competition Schedule and Other Awards

The North Dakota State Spelling Bee Competition began in the morning with ninety-nine spellers representing fifty-one of the fifty-three counties in the state. All spellers took part in a fifty-word

written spelling test, followed by a twenty question, multiple choice vocabulary test. Students with the top twenty-five scores (plus any ties at 25th place) advanced to the oral spelling session in the afternoon.

In addition, one student was recognized for achieving a Perfect Score on the Spelling Words portion of the written test. Congratulations to Chaitanya Gopi, Cass County, 6th grader from Dakota Montessori School.

"We are honored to host an event that showcases the remarkable abilities and dedication of spellers from across North Dakota," said Miranda Streifel, North Dakota Spelling Bee Director. "Their achievements are a reflection of both individual effort and strong educational support systems."

The State Spelling Bee would not be possible without the following:

Program Administrator - North Dakota Association of county Superintendents (NDACS), the official regional partner of the Scripps National Spelling Bee; Gold Level Sponsors: North Dakota Newspaper Association Education Foundation; Silver Level Sponsors: American Legion Post #29 (Watford City); Bison Booster Club (Milnor); Finley Improvement Association; Magic City Lions Club (Minot); Minot Junior Golf Association; Thundering Saints (Valley City); Bronze Level Sponsors: Aggie Foundation; Center Community Club; Fraternal Order of Eagles (Watford City); Schwandt Goodman Post 9050 (Enderlin); Upham American Legion Earl Nermoe Post #269.

The North Dakota Newspaper Association (NDNA) serves as the primary sponsor of the North Dakota Spelling Bee program, reflecting its commitment to literacy, communication, and student achievement across the state. As an organization dedicated to promoting strong writing and communication, NDNA recognizes the importance of spelling as a foundational skill.

Cecile Wehrman, Executive Director of the North Dakota Newspaper Association (NDNA) stated, "The ND Spelling Bee is one of most foundational enrichment activities students can engage in. Accurate spelling is essential for good communication, which is why it's a natural for our newspaper members to support the bee."

Distributing awards and prizes at the conclusion of the competition were North Dakota Association of County Superintendents (NDACS) President, Nikki Johnsrud, and North Dakota Newspaper Association (NDNA) Executive Director, Cecile Wehrman.

Area students who qualified for the final round in the State Spelling Bee included: Amber Wilhelmy, Williams Co.

Senators Introduce Bill To Support Outdoor Rehabilitation For Veterans

Veterans have increasingly pointed to outdoor recreation as a tool for recovery and reintegration after leaving military service, noting time in nature and shared activities can help rebuild community, reduce stress, and support long-term mental health. U.S. Senators Kevin Cramer (R-ND) and Maggie Hassan (D-NH), along with U.S. Senators John Boozman (R-AR) and Elissa Slotkin (D-MI), are proposing a new effort to expand veteran access to structured outdoor recreation programs across the country. The effort comes as the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) released its 2025 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report, highlighting persistent struggles with anxiety, depression, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) among former service members.

Cramer, Hassan, Boozman, and Slotkin introduced the Veterans Outdoor Rehabilitation Act; legislation aimed at helping veterans reconnect with community and improve their well-being through outdoor recreation. Early studies show these programs are an effective tool in reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety among veterans.

The bill would create a federal grant program for state veterans' agencies to develop or expand outdoor recreation opportunities for former service members. Under the proposal, states could run programs directly or partner with local outfitters and recreation providers to offer nature-based activities. States and contracted partners are encouraged to coordinate with relevant federal land management agencies to utilize these spaces for the outdoor programs. Every state that applies would get a minimum of \$200,000 to deliver services for veterans.

"Let's face it, for a lot of veterans, healing doesn't happen in a doctor's office," said Cramer. "One of our nation's greatest veterans and of course, eventually the Commander in Chief, the President, Theodore Roosevelt, escaped to North Dakota's badlands after the death of his wife and mother on the same day. After that inexplicable great grief, he credits North Dakota's outdoors as the place where the romance of his life began. Sometimes healing begins in places like a quiet trail, by the water, or under an open sky. Our bill helps state veterans' agencies expand outdoor recreation opportunities, so that more of the men and women who served our country can find their healing, hope, and a sense of calm in the outdoors once again, much like Theodore Roosevelt did."

"This bipartisan bill will expand access to outdoor rehabilitative and wellness programs for the brave men and women who have sacrificed to keep us safe, secure, and free," said Hassan. "Outdoor recreation is good not only for our physical health, but it has also been shown to improve our mental health. This bill is one more way to get veterans the support that they have earned and deserved."

"Veterans often find comfort and healing in the great outdoors, so helping increase their opportunities for healthy rehabilitation in those settings is important," said Boozman. "Our former servicemembers in Arkansas and nationwide struggling with anxiety, depression and the effects of PTSD will benefit from this commonsense, bipartisan solution that taps into their love for outdoor recreation through programs close to where they are. I am pleased to join my colleagues in this effort to support their mental health."

The program is designed to let states tailor programs to the interests and physical abilities of the veterans in their communities. States are responsible to collect and report data on participation and impacts on mental health and overall well-being.

This effort builds on progress made through the Veterans COMPACT Act of 2020, which established a task force to provide recommendations regarding the benefit of outdoor recreation activities for veterans and the use of federal lands to support these activities.

The Veterans Outdoor Rehabilitation Act is supported by the North Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs (NDDVA), American Legion, Veterans Outdoor Advocacy Group, the Action Foundation, Veterans of Foreign Wars, the National Association of State Park Directors, and the Action Foundation.

"I thank Senator Cramer for bringing forward this important bill," said NDDVA Commissioner Lonnie Wengen. "Outdoor excursions have been proven to significantly improve the mental and physical well-being of our returning veterans. Programs like these have helped many veterans begin a new chapter in their journey back to civilian life."

"Veterans continue processing the experiences of their service long after their military career ends," said Ben Davis, a Navy SEAL Veteran and Executive Director of the Veterans' Outdoor Advocacy Group. "With millions of Americans transitioning from more than two decades of conflict, that work is happening across the country right now. Studies increasingly show that time spent in the outdoors can improve well-being, strengthen community, and support veterans as they move forward in civilian life. Expanding access to structured outdoor recreation ensures more veterans have the opportunity to benefit from those experiences."

"The National Association of State Park Directors supports the Veterans Outdoor Recreation Rehabilitation Act, which would help state park systems give veterans more options to access the outdoors," said Paul McCormack, CEO & President, National Association of State Park Directors. "State parks across the country are already improving accessibility through trails, boat ramps, campsites, and adaptive technologies. This grant program would allow state parks and

our partners to scale these efforts to serve more veterans and their families."

"On behalf of the Action Foundation, I am pleased to express our strong support for the Veterans Outdoor Rehabilitation Act," said Audra Klinker, Executive Director of the Action Foundation. "This bill aligns

closely with our mission by increasing access for veterans across the United States to beneficial outdoor and nature-based activities. It will also strengthen collaborative ties with nonprofit organizations and veterans service organizations, facilitating more effective program delivery and broader impact."

Dakota Datebook: Northern Lights

By Christina Sunwall
Compared to some states, North Dakota can only claim a short list of feature-length films. Today, "Fargo" is arguably the most widely recognized, but that wasn't always the case. On March 30th in 1982, Americans outside of the upper plains were treated to the first viewing of "Northern Lights".

A 90-minute work of historical fiction, "Northern Lights" dramatizes the struggles encountered by farmers who settled in western North Dakota, using the rise of the Nonpartisan League as the backdrop.

The film was written, directed and produced by North Dakota natives John Hanson and Rob Nilsson; funded in part by the North Dakota Humanities Council and Prairie Public. Working with a tiny budget of \$300,000, the movie was filmed in Crosby using only a few professional actors mixed with local talent.

The film is framed as a project of 94-year old Henry Martinson, a real-life player in North Dakota's NPL movement and grandfather of writer and producer, John Hanson. In the movie, Martinson finds the diary of Ray Sorenson describing the harsh winter of 1915-1916. Unlike Martinson, Ray Sorenson is a completely fictional character.

Using the journal, Martinson spins a tale of the past. The story opens in March of 1915. The usual economic and political burdens endured by farmers had become crushing, and banks foreclosed on farm after farm. Out of the unrest, an agrarian reform movement with links to socialism took root. Ray Sorenson hears rumbles of this growing reform movement, but skeptical of their promises and busy with daily life, he initially pays little attention. Besides, he has more important things on his mind, like proposing marriage to his sweetheart, Inga.

But after the death of his father

and the mortgage foreclosure on Inga's family farm, Ray sees the Nonpartisan League in a different light. He joins the movement, traveling across the state on behalf of the NPL. As the radical organization gains popularity, influencing state elections and reform legislation, Ray admits, "we felt, for the first time in our lives, powerful." But there were no happy endings for Ray Sorenson. He drifts away from Inga and creditors finally force him to move on.

Completed in 1978, the film took a unique journey to international acclaim. Following the world premiere in Crosby, the movie travelled across the state before making its way to a film festival in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. Receiving European exposure, the filmmakers were invited to the Cannes Film Festival in 1979. Much to everyone's surprise, "Northern Lights" won the Golden Camera Award for Best First Feature. The movie soon made the rounds on European television, but it would take several more years before Americans nationwide were treated to the fictional film made by and about the people of North Dakota.

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PUBLIC NOTICES
"BECAUSE THE PEOPLE MUST KNOW"

Probate No. 31-2026-PR-00027
IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF
MOUNTRAIL COUNTY,
STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA
In the Matter of the Estate of
STEVEN J. JEMTRUD, Deceased.
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the undersigned have been appointed co-personal representatives of the above estate. All persons having claims against the said deceased are required to present their claims within three months after the date of the first publication or mailing of this notice or said claims will be forever barred. Claims must either be presented to JARVIS JEMTRUD and LACEY JEMTRUD, Co-Personal Representatives of the estate, at 2525 Elk Drive, PO Box 1000, Minot ND 58702-1000, or filed with the Court.

Dated this 26th day of March, 2026.
/s/ Jarvis Jemtrud
Jarvis Jemtrud
/s/ Lacey Jemtrud
Lacey Jemtrud

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Attorneys for: Co-Personal Representatives
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April 1, 8, 15, 2026

PUBLIC NOTICES
"BECAUSE THE PEOPLE MUST KNOW"

Probate No. 31-2026-PR-00024
IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF
MOUNTRAIL COUNTY,
STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA
In the Matter of the Estate of Rita G. Uran a/k/a Rita Gail Uran, Deceased
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the undersigned have been appointed personal representative of the above estate. All persons having claims against the said deceased are required to present their claims within three months after the date of the first publication or mailing of this notice or said claims will be forever barred. Claims must either be presented to Sammy A. Uran, personal representative of the estate, c/o Johnson & Sundeen, PO Box 1260, Watford City, ND 58854, or filed with the Court.

Dated this 24th day of March, 2026.
/s/ Sammy A. Uran
Sammy A. Uran
Personal Representative

Ross L. Sundeen #05126
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Attorney for Personal Representative
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Apr. 1, 8, 15, 2026



Facts Matter

Our founding fathers knew knowledge was power when they made "Freedom of Speech" our first amendment.

Now more than ever journalism matters. Facts matter. Real news matters.

For facts and real news, read your local newspaper.

View NDNA's "Real News vs. Fake News" video:
http://bit.ly/ndna_real_news

PUBLIC NOTICES
"BECAUSE THE PEOPLE MUST KNOW"

The North Dakota Game & Fish Department announces the following summary of regulations and changes for the 2026-2028 fishing proclamation.

Species	Daily Limit	Possession Limit
Walleye, Sauger, Saugeye, or Combination ^a	5	10
Northern Pike	5	10
Yellow Perch	20	40
White Bass	30	60
Bluegill	10	20
Crappie	10	20
Trout	3	6
Salmon	5	10
Burbot (Ling)	10	20
Channel Catfish	East of ND Highway 1 West of ND Highway 1	5 20
Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass or Combination	1	1
Muskellunge (pure or hybrid)	1	1
Paddlefish (legal snagging only)	See proclamation	
Nongame Fish (Other than legal live baitfish)	no limit	no limit
Legal Live Baitfish ^b	150	150
Leeches	300	300
Smelt	5 gallons	5 gallons
Frogs	50	50
Salamanders	50	50
Crayfish	50	50
Snapping Turtle ^c	One annually	

^a-Zander are included as part of the walleye, sauger, saugeye combination in Spiritwood and Aklali lakes (Stutsman Co.)
^b-In the Red and Bois de Sioux rivers, the limit is 5 catfish regardless of the number of state or provincial licenses purchased by the angler.
^c-Aggregate of all legal species (see Section 4 of proclamation).
^d-Only one snapping turtle may be harvested with hook and line equipment between July 1 through November 15 of each fishing year.

EXCEPTIONS TO STATEWIDE FISHING LIMITS

Red and Bois de Sioux Rivers up to the first vehicular bridge or crossing on any of their tributaries	NORTHERN PIKE - Daily 3, Possession 3 WALLEYE, SAUGER, SAUGEYE, OR COMBINATION - Daily 3, Possession 3
McDowell Dam	ALL SPECIES - Catch & release only while ice fishing.
OWLS Dam	ALL SPECIES - Catch & release
State Fair Pond	ALL SPECIES - Catch & release only from Apr 1-July 31.

FREE FISHING DAYS

Residents of North Dakota may fish without a resident fishing license on Jun. 6-7, 2026, Dec. 26-27, 2026, Jun. 5-6, 2027 and Dec. 26-27, 2027.

A complete 2026-2028 Fishing Proclamation listing all regulations is available from the North Dakota Game and Fish Department, 100 North Bismarck Expressway, Bismarck, ND 58501-5095. (701) 328-6300.