

AARP Fraud Alert: A Big Win, Or A Big Red Flag?

Reports of sweepstakes scams to the AARP Fraud Watch Network™ Helpline are on the rise. The prospect of a big financial windfall or amazing vacation plays on our emotions. Criminals count on our excitement to deceive us into paying a fee or divulging sensitive information.

Know that no legitimate sweepstakes or contest requires payment in advance or sharing your Social Security number or bank account details.

If an unexpected message sparks strong emotions and demands ur-

gency, treat it as a potential fraud attempt. Take an "active pause", an intentional step back to consider the scenario and reflect on what you might know about it. That moment could lead you to recognize the scam and protect yourself and your assets.

Learn how to spot and avoid scams with AARP Fraud Watch Network™. Suspect a scam? Call our free helpline at 877-908-3360 and talk to one of AARP's fraud specialists about what to do next.

New Research Finds ND Keeps Data Center Tax Breaks Hidden

By Judith Ruiz-Branch, Prairie News Services

As North Dakota emerges as a high-growth hub for data centers, recent reporting shows the state is among at least fourteen others failing to disclose the amount of money the facilities save from tax breaks. Researchers are now calling for greater transparency.

Supporters of data centers argued they are good for economic development, bringing high-paying jobs, tax revenue and capital investment to communities, with many states giving special tax breaks to companies building them.

Kasia Tarczynska, senior research analyst for the policy resource center Good Jobs First, said the industry continues to lack transparency and states like North Dakota are withholding how much money is going to tax breaks for the facilities.

"Some states are doing a little bit better job than other states," Tarczynska acknowledged. "But generally speaking, states in (the) Midwest really need to step up and disclose way more information about data center subsidies because the transparency is quite poor."

Tarczynska pointed out in states providing annual incentives for local facilities, revenue losses are soaring, with three states already losing \$1 billion or more per year. She not-

ed most failures to disclose financial information violate the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles set forth by the federal Governmental Accounting Standards Board.

North Dakota lawmakers are increasingly working to regulate and manage the rapid growth of data centers. There are currently twenty-three facilities in the state, according to Data Center Map, which tracks developments across the U.S.

Tarczynska stressed data centers often do not pay sales taxes on equipment like servers, computers and cooling systems due to state-level economic development incentives.

"Every time a regular person goes to a store and buys a computer, we pay sales tax," Tarczynska added. "That goes to the state budget, and that money supports public services, supports infrastructure development, supports schools, public healthcare programs and so on."

Tarczynska emphasized many communities do not know they're losing out on money which could be going to public services. A bill to include data centers within the regulatory framework of the state's Public Service Commission was previously introduced but died in committee this month. While the agency regulates the power infrastructure serving the facilities, it currently has limited authority over data centers.

ND Stockmen's Association Accepting Junior Beef Expo Entries

The North Dakota Stockmen's Association is now accepting entries for the 2026 North Dakota Junior Beef Expo, a multi-breed junior beef field day. It will be held June 27-28 at the McKenzie County Ag Expo in Watford City. The NDJBE will feature breeding heifer and market shows, showmanship contests and networking opportunities. Youth will learn to compete and develop friendships with others who are interested in the beef industry.

A link to the entry forms, rules and other information can be found at www.ndstockmen.org, on the NDJBE Facebook page or by contacting NDSA Special Projects Director Jade Koski at (701) 223-2522 or jkoski@ndstockmen.org.

Entries are due June 5 through the Showman App at www.showman.app. Exhibitors will receive a t-shirt. Late entries will be accepted

for an additional fee per head, but t-shirts cannot be guaranteed for late entrants.

A block of rooms has been reserved at Teddy's Residential Suites at 113 9th Avenue SE in Watford City. To make reservations, call (701) 842-6480 and ask for the NDJBE room block to receive the discounted rate.

The NDJBE will be held in conjunction with the Bakken Classic Junior Livestock Show, which will be held June 26-27, giving exhibitors multiple opportunities to show in the same weekend. For Bakken Classic Junior Livestock Show information, e-mail bakkenclassic@gmail.com.

Both the NDJBE and the Bakken Classic are sanctioned by the North Dakota Junior Point Show Association.

HHS Recognizes May As Foster Care Awareness Month

North Dakota Health and Human Services (HHS) is recognizing May as Foster Care Awareness Month, a time to highlight the resilience of children involved in the state's foster care system and the dedication of those who support them.

On any given day, about 1,050 children are in foster care in North Dakota. More than 700 licensed foster care providers and nearly 200 relative caregivers open their homes to provide stability and support for children until reunification or another permanent plan can be achieved.

This year's theme, "It Takes All of Us: Caring for Children, Supporting Families and Strengthening Futures," emphasizes the importance of strong, collaborative communities in ensuring the safety, well-being and long-term success of children. The theme highlights the role of partnerships across organizations, with families at the center of the work.

Everyone involved in the child welfare system plays a critical role in supporting the safety, permanency and well-being of children in

care. This includes relatives, foster care providers, public agencies, juvenile court, child welfare professionals, schools, community service providers and other partners working together to support families and promote reunification whenever possible.

"Foster care is a temporary service designed to ensure child safety while supporting families," said Chelsea Flory, HHS Children and Family Services director. "May is a time to recognize everyone involved in the child welfare system. This year's theme highlights the importance of all who play a role in engaging with and supporting families. Together, we strengthen connections and help create brighter, more stable futures."

Individuals interested in becoming licensed foster care providers are encouraged to call 833-FST-HOME (833-378-4663). For information about providing respite or emergency shelter care, contact the Children and Family Services Licensing Unit at 701-328-2322 or email cfslslicensing@nd.gov.

Governor's Photo Contest Invites North Dakotans To Capture The Spirit Of A Legendary State

The 2026 North Dakota Governor's Photo Contest for Travel and Tourism is now open, inviting North Dakotans to share the beauty, character and inspiration found across the state. A partnership of the Office of Gov. Kelly Armstrong, AAA, North Dakota Tourism and the North Dakota Council on the Arts, the annual contest celebrates storytellers whose photography highlights North Dakota's landscapes and communities.

This year's contest carries added significance as the state marks America's 250th anniversary and prepares to welcome visitors to the new Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library. Roosevelt's deep connection to the North Dakota Badlands and his reflection that he "would not have been president" without his experiences here shape this year's theme. Entrants are encouraged to capture the places and moments that continue to inspire people to "Be Legendary."

"North Dakota has a way of grounding you and lifting you up at the same time," Armstrong said. "From the sweeping views of the North Dakota Badlands to the small-town traditions that bring people together, this contest is an opportunity

to celebrate what makes our state remarkable. I look forward to seeing the creativity and pride that shine through in this year's submissions."

Photographers and videographers may submit entries across six categories that reflect the many sides of North Dakota, including Outdoors, Events, Wildlife, Must-See Places, Skies and the new vertical video category "Call It Home." Each category offers a chance to highlight the state's natural beauty, community life and legendary sense of place.

Winners in each category will receive a \$250 cash prize. Honorable mentions will receive \$75 and North Dakota merchandise. One standout submission will earn the Governor's Choice award, which includes an additional \$300 and a one-year AAA membership. Winning imagery will appear in partner promotions and be displayed at the North Dakota Capitol in November.

Photos and videos may be submitted via Instagram, Flickr or the official entry form. Full submission details are available at <https://belegendary.link/GovPhotoContest26>.

The contest is open through Aug. 31, 2026.

Prolonged Spring Fire Season In North Dakota Despite Some Green Up

North Dakota continues to brace for spring fire season due to lower-than-average snowpack combined with well below average spring precipitation, especially across the west and northern parts of the state. This past month was the tenth driest April on record for the Williston area, covering 131 years of National Weather Service records.

Cool mornings and dry conditions are slowing green up in parts of the state, a key indicator in wildfire seasons.

The North Dakota Department of Emergency Services continues to host Fire Readiness Level calls alongside partners including ND Forest Service, National Weather Service, ND National Guard, ND Highway Patrol, Civil Air Patrol, ND Game and Fish, ND Parks and Recreation, and the ND Fire Marshal.

Engines and personnel are prepositioned throughout the state as conditions warrant to be able to respond to local request for aid. The North Dakota Forest Service has been deployed several times throughout the spring fire season, including an extended deployment to assist with the fires burning near Dunseith.

"It was the first time I've ever seen a fire crown through deciduous trees," said Hunter Noor, Wildland

Fire Operations Assistant Fire Management Officer with the North Dakota Forest Service. "That tells you just how dry it is up here."

The National Weather Service issued a Red Flag warning for Friday, May 8th. The National Weather Service has indicated that dangerous conditions will likely exist early into this week as well.

With the expected conditions and May also being Wildfire Awareness Month, NDDFS and NDFS would like to remind North Dakotans how to take reasonable measures to reduce the risk of starting a wildfire.

Check current fire danger and expected fire weather conditions and always follow any local burn restrictions in place. You can learn before you burn at NDResponse.gov/burn.

Stay with burn piles until totally extinguished and cooled as piles can and do reignite in winds days later.

Always stay off dry grass when driving a vehicle as hot exhaust pipes can be a heat source for starting a wildfire.

Double check to ensure chains do not drag as you tow, and properly dispose of cigarettes.

Every fire prevented is one less that responders have to fight.

Learn before you burn at NDResponse.gov/burn.

North Dakota Weekly Gas Price Update

Average gasoline prices in North Dakota have risen 16.5 per gallon in the last week, averaging \$4.13/g Monday, according to GasBuddy's survey of 493 stations in North Dakota. Prices in North Dakota are 54.2 cents per gallon higher than a month ago and stand \$1.26/g higher than a year ago. The national average price of diesel has increased 0.2 cents compared to a week ago and stands at \$5.623 per gallon.

According to GasBuddy price reports, the least expensive station in North Dakota was priced at \$3.59/g on Sunday while the most expensive was \$4.48/g, a difference of 89.0 cents per gallon.

The national average price of gasoline has risen 5.1 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$4.48/g on Monday. The national average is up 37.3 cents per gallon from a month ago and stands \$1.40/g higher than a year ago, according to GasBuddy data compiled from more than eleven million weekly price reports covering over 150,000 gas stations across the country.

Historical gasoline prices in North Dakota and the national average going back five years:

May 11, 2025: \$2.87/g (U.S. Average: \$3.08/g)

May 11, 2024: \$3.29/g (U.S. Average: \$3.61/g)

May 11, 2023: \$3.34/g (U.S. Average: \$3.52/g)

May 11, 2022: \$4.08/g (U.S. Average: \$4.41/g)

May 11, 2021: \$2.80/g (U.S. Average: \$3.00/g)

Neighboring areas and their current gas prices: Sioux Falls- \$4.13/g, up 17.3 cents from last week's \$3.96/g, Fargo- \$4.03/g, up 16.7 cents from last week's \$3.86/g, South Dakota- \$4.20/g, up 15.8 cents per gallon from last week's \$4.04/g.

"Average gasoline prices declined in just six states over the

last week, led by the Great Lakes region, where motorists in states like Michigan and Ohio saw prices fall sharply, while Indiana experienced even steeper relief after the state temporarily waived both its excise and use taxes on gasoline," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy. "Those declines helped pull the national average lower by roughly eight cents over the last several days after oil prices eased mid-week on optimism that the U.S. and Iran could reach a deal. However, that optimism has since largely unraveled, with talks appearing to stall and President Trump signaling the latest proposal is unacceptable, helping push oil prices higher again in Sunday electronic trade. As a result, many states could see another round of price cycling in the days ahead, potentially sending the national average toward the \$4.65-per-gallon mark if oil continues climbing. In addition, diesel prices across the Great Lakes region are nearing new record highs as ongoing refinery issues continue to disproportionately impact diesel production. Should geopolitical tensions escalate further, fuel prices could rise even more sharply in the weeks ahead."

GasBuddy®, a PDI Technologies company, is North America's trusted fuel savings platform, helping consumers fuel up for less for over twenty-five years. With over 100 million app downloads, GasBuddy delivers real-time prices at 150,000+ stations and tangible savings through Pay with GasBuddy™. It is the most authoritative source of station-level fuel pricing data, updating averages 288 times daily from the broadest mix of inputs - spotter reports, direct station integrations, and transactional data. GasBuddy data is accessible at <http://prices.GasBuddy.com>.

Women Encouraged To Prioritize Their Health And Well-Being

May 10-16, which overlaps Mother's Day, is recognized as National Women's Health Week. This year, the federal Office of Women's Health and North Dakota Health and Human Services (HHS) are promoting the theme: "Prevention, Innovation, and Impact: A New Era in Women's Health," and focusing attention on prevention and early detection of women's health issues, chronic diseases and science-based care.

HHS encourages women of all ages to be proactive and prioritize their physical, mental and emotional well-being and to take action to support better health.

Actions women can take:

- Stay current with recommended routine screenings, such as breast and cervical cancer screenings and colon cancer screening. Two HHS programs, North Dakota Women's Way and the Cancer Control Program offer a way to access screening if cost is a concern.

- Schedule an annual checkup with your primary healthcare provider and ask about reproductive health, your blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar and recommended immunizations.

- Keep up with dental, vision and hearing screenings.

- Build daily habits that support balance, strength and physical activity; healthy eating; sound sleep and mental well-being. NDC3 is one community resource.

- Seek treatment resources to support addiction recovery or to quit tobacco use. The NDQuits program can help individuals quit tobacco. Women can find mental health and recovery support services online on the HHS Behavioral Health Division's website.

- If you are pregnant, seek prenatal care early. After baby arrives, keep your postnatal care appointment to support your own health and your baby's well-being.

Healthy habits are easier with support. Women can team up with their spouse, partner, family members or friends to work toward shared goals. The right habits can have long-term benefits by helping

prevent obesity, diabetes, heart disease and other chronic health conditions that can limit quality of life.

"Supporting each other to become the healthiest version of ourselves looks different for every individual and family," said HHS Maternal Health Specialist Angela Reinarts. "You don't have to overhaul your life. You don't have to be perfect. Pick one change to focus on first. Build from there and share successes and challenges with an accountability buddy. Expect starts and stops but keep going. You are worth it."

She offered these first steps, which also help prevent type 2 diabetes and gestational diabetes:

- Move your body for 30 minutes most days
- Choose whole grains, vegetables and lean protein
- Drink water instead of sugary drinks

North Dakota women are already taking important steps to protect their health. The state ranks fourth best among states in cervical cancer screening rates in 2025, and 19th best in breast cancer screening in 2024 in America's Health Rankings reports.

"While that is good news, there is still room for improvement," Reinarts said. "One in four women aren't getting recommended preventive health services each year. Identifying health concerns early through screenings means any needed treatment can begin sooner."

Reinarts reminds women that quitting tobacco and getting good prenatal care both support healthy pregnancies and better health outcomes for both moms and babies.

According to America's Health Rankings, 5.9 percent of North Dakotan women smoke during pregnancy, compared to 3 percent in the U.S. Smoking during pregnancy can cause premature birth and other health issues. Reinarts encouraged women who use nicotine products to reach out to resources like NDQuits for help quitting.

To learn about HSS programs that support women's health, visit hhs.nd.gov/health/women.

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Stanley City Wide RuMmAge Sale
Will Be May 29-31
Sign up sheets are available at Stanley City Hall.
Deadline to sign up is May 21. Cost is \$20.

Mountrail County Medical Center Clinic is starting to give the annual flu vaccine. **Get Your Flu Shot**

Everyone ages 6 months and older should get an annual flu vaccine. A flu vaccine is especially important if you have a chronic health condition such as heart disease or diabetes

Please call today to get your annual flu vaccine - 701-628-2505.
The regular flu vaccine will be \$35 and High Dose will be \$90 at time of visit or billed to your insurance at the same rate.

We have the higher-dose flu vaccine specifically designed for ages 65 and older.

Mountrail County Health Center
Many Avenues - One Goal... Your Health

Thank You!

From the bottom of our hearts, we extend our deepest gratitude to the staff of the Mountrail County Health Center and Bethel Home for the exceptional care and compassion shown to Joyce in her final days; to Springan-Stevenson Funeral Home for guiding us through every detail and for arranging such a beautiful service; to Pastor Milo Mell for his kindness, comfort, and heartfelt words as he officiated; to Thistle Grove Floral for the beautiful floral arrangements; to Eileen Jones for the beautiful music; to Iva Fox, Debbie Haugen, Barb Jones and anyone else that played a part in providing the delicious family meal and to the WELCA for preparing and serving a wonderful funeral luncheon.

We are also profoundly thankful to our family, friends, and community for the cards, flowers, plants, memorials, food, prayers, kind words, and every thoughtful gesture of support during this difficult time. Your compassion and generosity have brought us comfort beyond what we can express, and your kindness will remain in our hearts always.

*With appreciation,
The Family of Joyce Hollekim*