

Bakken Briefs

Divide at odds with PSC

The North Dakota Public Service Commission on May 14 approved Basin Electric Power Cooperative's permits for two new transmission lines in Divide and Williams counties, though Divide officials are still withholding other permits.

The PSC praised Basin Electric on what it described as a thorough application and said the cost for the new lines, from two existing substations to the Canadian border, will be paid for by Saskatchewan energy provider SaskPower.

The comments were less praiseworthy for Basin the next day at the Divide County Planning and Zoning Commission meeting.

That board has tabled for the second time two conditional-use permits for the projects and said they will not be forthcoming without approval from Hawkeye and Blooming Valley townships.

--The Journal, Crosby

Bison Station breaks ground

Basin Electric Power Cooperative's Bison Generation Station, now under construction near Ray, is being hailed as a landmark project for both the state and country's energy future.

When completed, Bison will be the largest electric generating facility in the state and the flagship of Basin's natural gas fleet, co-op leaders said at a groundbreaking ceremony May 11.

At an estimated cost of \$4 billion, the plant is also the single largest generation investment in Basin Electric's 65-year history.

"North Dakota's demand for electricity has grown faster than any other state over the last 10 years," CEO Todd Brickhouse said.

The natural gas-fired station is expected to produce nearly 1,500 megawatts of electricity, with two units of roughly 745 megawatts each.

--Western Dakota Energy Association

Williston schools still surging

Enrollment in the Williston Basin School District is projected to continue its steep rise, and the district needs to be prepared for this, according to a presentation by a consulting firm.

In a 76-slide presentation to the school board, RSP & Associates CEO Rob Schwartz provided extensive information and analysis regarding the school district's student population.

"We need capacity in many different places," Schwartz said during the May 11 meeting.

RSP projects enrollment will increase from 5,623 students in 2026 to 6,171 students by 2031. If the projection is correct, the district will need to accommodate 548 more students, more than are enrolled in any single grade level in 2026.

Schwartz said this increase in enrollment is expected to hit elementary schools first.

--Williston Herald

Minot freezes some hiring

A temporary hiring freeze for some vacancies is in place as the city of Minot seeks to position itself for a tough budget cycle.

City Manager Tom Joyce told the Minot City Council on May 18, that

five vacant positions that draw on general fund spending are not being filled currently. They include an assistant city manager, public information officer, financial clerk, mechanic and engineering technician.

Joyce said he has been approving hiring for the police and fire departments and dispatch.

City departments have been asked to trim their 2027 budget requests by 3% from 2026. The tentative budget includes a 4% cumulative salary increase and estimated 7% increase for benefits.

Joyce said he also is looking at whether certain employee positions need to be full time.

--Minot Daily News

McKenzie denies back pay

The McKenzie County Commission has denied back pay for 10 employees of the sheriff's office affected by a mistake in the county's pay scale.

Lt. Edward Martinez of the sheriff's office presented the commission with findings from an internal audit that revealed a wage discrepancy affecting 10 employees between 2023 and 2025.

According to Auditor Erica Johnson, the total amount of underpayment was approximately \$10,000, or roughly \$1,000 per employee.

Commissioner Joel Brown said the discrepancy stemmed from an inconsistency within the approved pay scale. One of the pay steps on the scale increased by only 1% rather than 1.5%.

But the commission voted 3-2 to deny back pay. Chairman Howdy Lawlar characterized the discrepancies as relatively small.

--McKenzie County Farmer, Watford City

Grassland oil sites reclaimed

As oil and gas wells come and go in the Little Missouri National Grassland, the U.S. Forest Service says it is dedicated to returning these sites back to the way they were.

Brian Kempenich, minerals program manager for the Medora Ranger District, said reclaiming oil and gas sites is important because the grasslands are a multiple-use area. Whether the land is used for wells or for grazing, the Forest Service restores the land so it can be used by the public for hiking, hunting and other recreations.

"Different people visit the grasslands for various reasons," Kempenich said.

Once a well is plugged, the Forest Service and the well operator agree on a reclamation plan. Then begins contamination inspection and cleanup, soil restoration, revegetation and more.

--Dickinson Press

School Board Meets:

Board Updated As End Of School Year Approaches

By Mary Kilen

Stanley School Board held their regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, May 20. Highlights of the meeting included building project updates, discussion on proposed policy changes and end of the school year updates.

Financial Report

Business Manager Beth Hall presented the board with the information on changing the capital projects account from a money market to a platinum checking account at Bravera. The account would have the same interest rate but would allow for an unlimited number of transactions, saving the district the fees assessed for over the limit transactions. The board moved to approve the change.

Hall also reported on the letter received regarding the pledged securities. Bravera had provided over \$500,000 more in pledged securities than required and they were asking the district to release the previous list and they would provide a new list that would be more in line with the required amounts. The board said they would like to see the new list before releasing the old list.

The board moved to approve the financial reports.

Business Manager Report

Business Manager Hall requested permission to change the pay dates in June as she would be taking time off. The board moved to approve the change for those payroll deposits to be made on June 15.

Cheryl Demafiles had requested her pay be issued early as she is going back to the Philippines mid-June and would like to have that taken care of. The board moved to approve this exception due to the circumstances.

Hall reported they have been working with WSI on the ergonomic grants. If they are approved for the \$20,000 grant, the district will be required to spend an additional 25% or \$5,000. They are looking at items including chairs, keyboards, monitors and desks.

Hall reported she and Superintendent Tim Holte are working on the budget to predict end of year balances. The original budget projected a \$580,000 deficit, but they did receive additional unpaid taxes income. The deficit should not be that high. They will also start looking at next year's budget numbers.

High School Project Update

Superintendent Holte reported the new greenhouse has now reached substantial completion, with the contractors planning to turn it over on June 8 or 9. Once that happens, it will have a one year warranty.

The detergent dispenser for the meats lab has not yet been installed. They received information on the hoist for the meats lab with ag teachers agreeing to the proposal. That should be installed soon.

They held the warranty walk-through on the new addition on Tuesday, May 19 with EAPC and Comstock. They talked to the teachers and identified things that need to be addressed. They are also still waiting on the credit for the countertops.

Policy Considerations

David Enander expressed his

concern over the proposed changes to policy FAAD-Tuition Agreements. He said the wording and additions bothered him, possibly being interpreted as favoritism to some parties. He said he was concerned it could open the district to potential discrimination issues and recommended not voting for this policy change. He said if the district wanted to open to additional students they could consider allowing open enrollment again.

The board held second reading and adoption on policy FFK-Suspension and Expulsion. The change to this would be that the superintendent would appoint an alternate hearing officer if the Superintendent would not be able to serve in that capacity.

As for policy FAAD-Tuition Agreements, the board discussed the policy as it is now, allowing for a student to qualify for a tuition agreement if a parent is a district employee, or if they are from a family that was previously open enrolled into the district. The policy adjustments were designed to provide continued enrollment for students already in the district, as well as opening other options for students to enroll in Stanley Schools. The board discussed the concerns expressed by Enander and tabled the second reading on this policy.

The board held first reading and adoption to the board regulation regarding suspension and expulsion regulations to concur with the changes made to the policy.

Finance Committee

With Business Manager Hall having reached the end of the first six months of employment, the committee recommended a salary increase to \$83,200 per year. The board moved to approve the increase.

Building Committee

Holte presented the board with change proposal 53 from Comstock for the greenhouse demolition. The original plans called for the old greenhouse to be torn down and with something else put in its place. The structure is fine, so the district is considering fixing up the old greenhouse instead. Comstock is looking to close the contract for that and they have submitted the change proposal deduct of \$30,545 to remove it from the project costs. The board moved to approve the change proposal.

Tuition Agreements

The board approved the tuition agreements for three students that meet the current policy.

June Meeting

The board was reminded the June meeting will be held on Monday, June 22 at 5:00 p.m. They need to meet on that date to certify election results and will hold their regular meeting at the same time.

DPI Data Agreement

Schools are preparing to make the switch from PowerSchool to Infinite Campus for the next school year. Currently, the district works in several systems to report to the state. With Infinite Campus, DPI will have access to the data. The Attorney General and the NDCEL have looked through the DPI data agreement. Much of the data is al-

ready shared through reporting, but now they will have direct access to the data. The board moved to approve the agreement and directed Superintendent Holte to sign it.

Superintendent Report

Superintendent Holte reported enrollment is the same as last month at 759, but they had one student leave at the elementary and one enter at the high school. Numbers were at 787 in October. Kindergarten registration was held with 57 students registering. Administration anticipates numbers will be in the upper sixties as there are usually ten to fifteen that do not do the early registration.

Holte reported that property valuations in the district are going up this year, which will help as the district looks at the 3% budget increase cap.

Oil and gas revenue was budgeted at \$1.3 million, but that income has been lower this year. Holte reported last month's payment was \$118,000 and they expect a similar payment in June. If that is the case, income will be close to \$1.1 million.

Holte said that the Christian Crossroads Academy has asked about transportation. He will follow up with them for more information and bring that back to the board for consideration.

Senior classes had their class composite framed and hung in the school previously, but the district went to the digital board and each year they now create a new one to put on that digital system. They have been traditionally set up in a portrait mode and the board wants a landscape mode. The district will look at making that change in the future. Holte reported they will be redoing the one for this year's class and taking the \$150 from the alumni fund to cover the cost.

Holte also discussed the alumni fund, saying that when a class has extra funds after graduation they have one year to access the funds.

NDDEQ Reminds Residents How To Identify And Avoid Blue-Green Algae

Heading out on the water this Memorial Day weekend? The North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality reminds residents that warm weather can contribute to blue-green algae, also known as cyanobacteria, in lakes and other water bodies.

Some blue-green algae blooms can produce toxins that may affect people, pets and livestock. Exposure may cause symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhea, skin irritation or other health concerns. If you or your pet may have been exposed and symptoms develop, contact a medical provider or veterinarian.

Know it.

Blue-green algae can take many different forms. Watch for water that looks like grass clippings floating on the surface, clumps or puffballs, or green cottage cheese. Affected water may also resemble spilled green paint or pea soup and is often bright

green or turquoise in color. After that it goes into the alumni fund for projects in the school that benefit the entire school. He noted that in the future the district may want to consider changing how long they want to leave the funds available.

Holte reported they have switched the emergency app they use from Raptor to E3 and it is much easier for staff to use. The information and app can also be shared with emergency services. They switched on May 1 and have signed up for the new system for next year at a cost of \$4,000 per year.

Principal Reports

High School Principal Alecia Pulver reported the seniors had their walk through at the elementary school on Wednesday, along with graduation practice. They also had awards day at the high school on Wednesday. They are doing all the things to wrap up the school year while also starting to think about what they want to do for the next school year.

Elementary Principal Brooks Stafslien reported field day was set for Thursday and a half day on Friday as they are also wrapping up the school year and planning for the next year. He noted it has been a great year.

Assistant Elementary Principal Jenn Tronset reported the reading month went well. Students who met their reading goals were able to go to the theater on Wednesday. She also reported that sixth grader Carson Moon was selected as one of the top 4 out of 1600 for the earth day patch contest. She continues to work on planning for summer school.

Board Comments

Board president Matt Ruland commended the school for the ability to be resilient and host the regional track meet on short notice. He said he had gotten many positive comments about that ability.

green or turquoise in color.

"By learning what these blooms look like and reporting them immediately, residents play a vital role in protecting their families, their pets, and their communities," said DEQ Environmental Scientist Brian Houle.

Avoid it.

- Check water before you go. DEQ posts updates from May 1 to December 31 at www.tinyurl.com/WMP-HABS.

- Avoid swimming in or drinking from water that may contain blue-green algae. Bring fresh water for you and your pets.

- If you or your pet accidentally swim in water that might have an algal bloom, rinse off with fresh water as soon as possible.

Report it.

Report blooms at 701-328-5210, www.tinyurl.com/WMP-HABS, or DEQ-HAB@nd.gov.

Meeting Change
The City of Palermo will be moving their regular council meeting to **Thursday, June 11, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.**
Kathryne Meckle
City Auditor

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING- MOBILE FOOD PERMIT
Take notice that Emmanuel Villa has applied for a Mobile Food Permit to allow a mobile food unit at 911 4th Street SW (Sonshine Car Wash LLC property).
The public is hereby notified that the Stanley Planning & Zoning Commission will hear comments on **Monday June 8, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. at 221 S. Main Street, Stanley, North Dakota.** The Stanley City Council will then hear comments on **Tuesday, June 8, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. at 221 S. Main Street, Stanley, North Dakota.**
All persons who would object to the mobile food unit should be present at the meetings or submit any objection in writing before the date of the meetings to Amanda Dennis, Planning & Zoning Administrator, PO Box 249 Stanley, ND 58784.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING - REZONE REQUEST
Take notice that the Mitchell Fitzgerald has made a request to the Stanley Planning & Zoning Commission to change the use of the property from C- Commercial District to R1 Single Family Detached District.
The property is located at 8403 62nd Street NW and is described as: Sublot A of Outlot 4
The public is hereby notified that the Stanley Planning and Zoning Commission will hear comments on the proposed zoning change on **Monday, June 8, 2026, at 5:35 p.m. at 221 S. Main Street, Stanley, North Dakota.** The Stanley City Council will then hear comments on **Monday, June 9, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. at 221 S. Main Street, Stanley, North Dakota.**
All persons who would object to the proposed zoning change should be present at the meetings or submit any objections in writing before the date of the meetings to Amanda Dennis, Planning & Zoning Administrator, PO Box 249 Stanley, ND 58784.
Amanda Dennis, Stanley Planning & Zoning Administrator

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