

Bakken Briefs

New cheer classes in Ray

Acro Stars Gymnastics in Ray has launched a new cheer program as part of a few big changes. "This is a pretty big year for us," said Tanya Hill, president of the club's board of directors.

The cheerleading program launched last month with a recreational class and a competitive class, coached by Linda Binde.

Hill said she had wanted to bring a cheer program to Ray "for a long time."

"I did cheer up in Crosby, and I really liked it," said Hill, a native of Divide County. "I like the competition side of it, I love the school spirit side of it - supporting your school and other sports."

Part of the motivation to launch the program now, Hill said, was to further diversify the already broad offerings of the gymnastics club. The rest of the motivation came from Binde.

--The Journal, Crosby

Cross-country riders visit ND

Cyclists on a 4,000-mile charity ride stopped in Stanley on June 22 after a ride from Williston.

The Fuller Center Bicycle Adventure raises funds for the Fuller Center for Housing's work to help families have simple, decent places to live through home repairs and construction.

The riders were hosted by Queen of the Most Holy Rosary Catholic Church in Stanley before continuing to Minot on their journey.

The number of riders in Stanley was 20, though numbers fluctuate because participants can join for a single segment or the full 10 weeks.

Along the way, riders hop off their bikes for build days to practice what they preach with Fuller Center covenant partners across the nation. The first build was in Othello, Washington, and the next is in Detroit Lakes, Minnesota.

--Mountrail County Promoter, Stanley

Williston losing Delta flights

Delta Air Lines will end its Williston service after nearly 14 years, with Delta Connection flights between Williston Basin International Airport and Minneapolis-St. Paul ending Sept. 7.

The city of Williston announced the decision June 27. City Administrator Shawn Wenko said in a statement that while the city is "disappointed" to see Delta leave the Williston market, "we are grateful for the partnership we have shared with Delta and SkyWest over the years."

Delta suspended the flights in 2020 during the pandemic. Service returned in 2021 with the help of a minimum revenue guarantee, which provides financial support to offset airline losses.

Airport Director Ryan O'Rear said the route's inability to become self-sustaining since then led to Delta's decision to discontinue service.

--Williston Herald

Minot State earns A-plus

Minot State University's teacher education program has earned an A-plus from the National Council on Teacher Quality for its preparation of elementary educators in reading instruction.

The recognition comes as part of NCTQ's 2026 Teacher Prep Review, which evaluates how well teacher preparation programs equip future teachers with reading instruction practices aligned with the science of reading.

"We are deeply committed to preparing our students to teach reading well to all learners and are happy to have been recognized for that dedication," said Lisa Borden-King, MSU associate professor and director of teacher licensure.

The A-plus designation is awarded to programs that demonstrate exceptional preparation in the core components of reading instruction.

--Minot Daily News

Keeping nurses in Dickinson

North Dakota State University and Dickinson State University signed a partnership June 18 to expand nursing education programs.

Graduates from DSU's nursing program can now pursue education through NDSU's Family Nurse Practitioner program. They will be able to stay at DSU and receive further education through Fargo and Bismarck campuses and also will have the chance for hands-on experience with clinics in southwest North Dakota.

Both university presidents say the program will support the need for rural healthcare.

"They can advance their careers and help their community even more from the hospitals in Bowman and Hettinger and all around the area," DSU President Scott Molander said.

The program partnership will launch this fall.

--Dickinson Press

Oil well tax break weighed

The state Legislature's interim Taxation Committee spent June 23 probing whether the state's stripper well extraction tax exemption is still the right tool to keep marginal oil production online.

Stripper wells are lower-producing wells that average 35 barrels per day or less over 12 months. They pay the 5% gross production tax but are exempt from the 5% oil extraction tax.

Energy and Environmental Research Center CEO Charles Gorecki told lawmakers the purpose of the policy "is to keep wells that fall below that predetermined level in production."

Lawmakers heard a proposed 2.5% extraction tax on wells that rise back above the production threshold, potentially raising new tax revenue. Industry leaders warned that an aggressive shift could accelerate the plugging of marginal wells.

--Western Dakota Energy Association

Armstrong Issues Executive Order Declaring Statewide Disaster For Severe Storms

Governor Kelly Armstrong last week declared a statewide disaster for severe storms in early June that caused an estimated \$4.6 million in damage to electrical infrastructure and also damaged homes, farms and businesses in North Dakota.

The disaster declaration issued last Tuesday via executive order covers the June 7-9 storm systems impacting Burke, Bottineau, Divide, McLean, Mercer and Mountrail counties.

"These storm systems caused significant damage and destruction requiring extensive response and recovery efforts by local agencies and citizens, and we've activated our State Emergency Operations Plan to help coordinate those efforts," Armstrong said.

Numerous confirmed tornadoes,

repeated rounds of severe thunderstorms, destructive straight-line winds approaching 100 mph and hail up to 3 inches in diameter resulted in significant damage and disruption to communities throughout North Dakota.

The statewide disaster declaration is a precursor to applying for a major presidential disaster declaration. The Department of Emergency Services works closely with local officials and electric utility providers to perform preliminary damage assessments that help determine if storm impacts meet the necessary thresholds for requesting a presidential declaration which, if granted, could unlock public assistance programming through the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

ND Launches Funding Opportunity To Strengthen Rural Health Care

North Dakota Health and Human Services (HHS) is launching a new funding opportunity to help rural health care providers strengthen and modernize electronic medical record systems to better address the medical and behavioral health needs of North Dakotans and improve outcomes for the individuals they serve.

In many rural communities, health care providers face increasing demands with limited resources. Enhancing existing electronic medical record systems can help providers improve care coordination, streamline workflows and leverage emerging technologies that support patients and reduce administrative burden on staff.

"Rural providers are finding innovative ways to meet the needs of their communities, often with limited resources," said HHS Commissioner Patrick Traynor. "This funding opportunity is about making sure they have the tools and technology needed to deliver high-quality care close to home, improve outcomes and strengthen the long-term sustainability of rural health care in North Dakota. Patients shouldn't have to navigate disconnected systems or repeat their story multiple times because providers lack the technology to communicate effectively."

The Electronic Medical Record Enhancement funding opportunity is designed to support enhancements to existing electronic medical record systems that improve service delivery and health outcomes for rural North Dakotans. Examples may include technology enhancements, expanded functionality and artificial intelligence-supported tools that help providers better manage patient care and improve operational efficiency.

The funding opportunity aligns with Initiative 4: Connect Tech, Data

and Providers for a Stronger North Dakota, part of North Dakota's Rural Health Transformation Program. The initiative focuses on modernizing health care delivery, improving access to information and helping providers leverage technology to better serve their communities.

Approximately \$500,000 per awardee in first-year funding is available through the Rural Health Transformation Program. Applicants have the opportunity to request additional funding for eligible strategies that align with the goals of the funding opportunity.

Eligible applicants include:

- Critical access hospitals
- Rural hospital systems
- Rural Federally Qualified Health Centers
- Non-federally operated Indian Health Service facilities and tribally run 638 health facilities

Applications are due by July 29, 2026, at 5 p.m. CT. A technical assistance call for interested applicants will be held July 8, from 11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., CT.

More information about the funding opportunity, including application materials and technical assistance resources, is available at hhs.nd.gov/rural-health-transformation/funding.

The Rural Health Transformation Program is supported by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$198,936,969.55, with 100 percent funded by CMS. The contents are those of North Dakota Health and Human Services and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement by, CMS, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services or the U.S. government.

Ranchers Should Weigh Options For Supplemental Forage During Drought

Many livestock producers in North Dakota are facing forage shortages due to drought and/or cool spring temperatures. Currently, 8.79 percent of the state is experiencing some level of drought, and 23.41 percent is abnormally dry.

North Dakota State University Extension specialists are offering considerations for supplemental forage during drought and dry conditions.

North Dakota grasslands are dominated by cool-season grasses; as a result, about 80 percent of forage growth occurs due to precipitation occurring from April through June. Unfortunately, only a few isolated locations received normal or above-normal precipitation during this period.

Many areas that received normal or above-normal precipitation may still experience decreased forage production, as much of the precipitation occurred after cool-season forages had reached the seedhead stage. As in much of the state, cool-season forages matured early this year due to a combination of cold and drought stress. Once grasses produce a seed head, there is limited potential for the plant to produce additional biomass. If plants were grazed in the vegetative stage, there is still potential for regrowth with recent precipitation.

Ranchers who have tame grass pastures or hay land should expect at least a 25 percent reduction in forage production, regardless of where they are located in the state.

"In the southwest, southeast and west-central regions, tame grass production will be 50 percent at best," says Miranda Meehan, NDSU Extension livestock environmental stewardship specialist and disaster education coordinator; however, some producers may not have adequate production to justify haying.

Recent rains may benefit native rangeland, as some grass species were in the vegetative stage. Producers in much of the state should expect 70-80 percent of normal production on native pastures. In the southwest and west-central, and potentially southeast, forage production on pasture will be 50 percent of normal at best.

This reduction in forage production will shorten the grazing season, necessitating its end by mid-to-late-summer unless livestock are destocked. To account for the deficit in forage production, producers will need to adjust their management

plans to provide supplemental forage and/or reduce their herds' forage requirements.

"If you have a rotational grazing system in place, this negative impact could be much less," says Kevin Sedivec, NDSU Extension rangeland management specialist.

Annual forages can be a source of additional livestock feed if adequate moisture occurs to support growth. At this point in the growing season, the best options for hay are warm-season grasses.

"We recommend foxtail millet, if available," says Meehan, "using Siberian millet to the west and German millet in the central and eastern regions."

Meehan says the next best option is sudangrass and sorghum-sudangrass; however, there is a higher potential for prussic acid toxicity under drought stress.

If the intent is to establish an annual forage for grazing, Meehan and Sedivec recommend planting a diverse cover crop mix that includes both cool-season and warm-season species.

"This will increase the chance of establishment and reduce the overall risk of a total failed crop," says Sedivec. "A diverse cover crop will also have the potential to produce a higher-quality forage with lower risk of toxicity."

In some areas, drought has adversely affected crops, resulting in thin stands and potentially low yields. If crops are not harvestable, there may be the opportunity to use them for hay or grazing. Caution is required, as drought-stressed crops can be toxic.

For more information on feeding livestock drought-stressed forages, refer to the NDSU Extension publication "Managing Stressed or Damaged Crops for Livestock Feed" (ndsu.ag/stressed-crops26).

The most common toxicity is nitrate toxicity, which is common in most small grains and corn. Failed crops should be tested for nitrates before feeding to livestock. For more information on nitrate toxicity, refer to the NDSU Extension publication "Nitrate Poisoning of Livestock" (ndsu.ag/nitrite-poison26).

Given the severity of this drought in many areas, producers will likely need to combine these strategies while reducing stocking rates through culling and/or early weaning. Visit with a local NDSU Extension agent to develop strategies to reduce livestock forage demand.

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NOTICE - CITY OF STANLEY WATER QUALITY REPORT

The 2025 Annual Drinking Water Quality Report was published in the Mountrail County Promoter June 24, 2026. The report will not be mailed out. If you would like to obtain a copy, contact the City Auditor's Office at (701)628-2225 or stop by City Hall at 221 S. Main Street Monday-Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Copies will also be available at the City Library 116 S Main Street.

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING - STANLEY RESIDENTS CONSIDERATION OF FENCE ORDINANCE REVISION

There will be a public hearing held on Monday July 13, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. at the Stanley City Hall located at 221 South Main Street Stanley, ND, for the purpose of taking comments on the possibility of revising the setback portion of the Fence Ordinance. The Planning & Zoning Commission requests your presence and input before moving forth on any action regarding the possible revision of the fence ordinance.

Dated this 10th day of June 2026.
 Amanda Dennis, Planning & Zoning Administrator

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