

Norway Steakhouse wins Metigoshe Melt contest



The Norway Steakhouse was recently honored for winning this year's Metigoshe Melt Sandwich Showdown, sponsored by the Bottineau Area Chamber of Commerce. (Submitted photo)

Student cellphone bills pass North Dakota Legislature; bell-to-bell ban comes back

By Michael Achterling and Jeff Beach
North Dakota Monitor

North Dakota lawmakers passed bills last Monday that would prohibit student cellphone use during the school day, reviving one bill that had been defeated last week.

Senate Bill 2354 and House Bill 1160 differ on which schools would be affected and whether school districts would have the power to allow cellphone use during noninstructional time, such as in between classes or over the school lunch period. The bills are expected to have their differences ironed out in conference committees, each made up of three legislators from each chamber.

Senate Bill 2354 passed the House on a 61-29 vote.

The Senate bill, amended by the House Education Committee, would require all schools, public and private, to follow the statewide student cellphone ban. The House bill would only affect public school students.

Under the Senate bill, students would be allowed to stow their phones in their lockers while turned off, or on silent, instead being secured in a lockbox or lockable pouch purchased by the school district.

School boards would also have the ability to create their own cellphone policies for student-use during noninstructional time under the Senate bill. The House bill would ban the use of the devices from bell to bell.

Rep. Anna Novak, R-Hazen, voted in favor of the Senate bill, and said limiting cellphone use would have a positive impact on the mental health of students.

"Each school district knows what's best for their respective schools and should be allowed to tailor their own policy based on their school's needs as long as it fits in the parameters of this bill," Novak said.

Rep. Daniel Johnston, R-Kathryn, said he voted against the bill because it regulates private schools the same as public schools.

"We should limit it to public school," Johnston said.

Both bills allow students access to their phones while traveling between learning sites,



Gov. Kelly Armstrong speaks during a press conference on banning student cellphone use in North Dakota on March 26. (Photo courtesy Michael Achterling / North Dakota Monitor)

such as career and technical academies.

The bills also require school districts to collect data on their cellphone policies to judge the impact on student behavior, mental health, disciplinary incidents, school attendance and academic performance. The districts will report the data to the Department of Public Instruction, which will be compiled into an annual report.

Sen. Michelle Axtman, R-Bismarck, requested a revote in the Senate after missing Friday's vote where the House bill failed.

She said if local school dis-

tricts had been more proactive on phone policies, the bill would not have been necessary.

She said passing it would be "one of the most impactful things we do for teacher retention in North Dakota."

The bill passed the Senate on a 42-4 reconsidered vote.

Sen. Mark Enget, R-Powers Lake, was among those who switched their vote from no to yes. He said he felt school districts in his part of the state had done a good job managing phone use, but also learned that's not the case statewide.

Armstrong signs several additional bills into state law

By Ann Estvold, legislative intern
N.D. Newspaper Association

Gov. Kelly Armstrong has now signed 358 bills into law as of Wednesday, April 16. Below are summaries of some of the bills signed into law in the past week:

TRANSPORTATION

HB 1106 provides \$2 million for public transportation. North Dakota has about 32 bus programs that provide public transportation to people in rural areas. The service is often used by people to travel to medical appointments.

Tow trucks may now display a flashing blue light when stopped on a highway under HB 1241. Previously, tow trucks could only display white or amber lights when performing emergency duties. The North Dakota Towing Association says blue lights are more visible at night, and motorists are more likely to be cautious when seeing them. Under the new law, a tow truck cannot display blue lights when transporting a vehicle.

Under HB 1316, an individual with a temporary restricted driver's license who commits a moving traffic violation must pay an additional \$100 fine. A temporary restricted driver's license will be revoked if the individual commits three moving traffic violations.

POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENTS

Under HB 1167, political advertisements and other political content that use AI-generated images, graphics, videos, audio, text or other digital content created to impersonate a human must have a disclaimer that states the content is generated by artificial intelligence.

HB 1204 makes it a crime, punishable by a year in jail and a \$3,000 fine, to publish false political advertising by using text messages, telephone calls, and commercial social media. North Dakota law already punishes false political advertising; HB 1204 only extends the penalties to text messages, phone calls and social media.

FINANCIAL DISCLOSURES

Under HB 1319, the state Investment Board will display information about state Legacy Fund investments on its website. It will list all companies, funds and other financial instruments in which the fund is invested. The Legacy Fund, which is financed mostly by state oil tax collections, was worth \$12 billion in January.

Under HB 1447, a virtual-currency kiosk operator must disclose all relevant terms and conditions generally associated with virtual currency. The kiosk also must display warnings about the risks of virtual currency. Kiosk operators would submit a quarterly report on the location of each kiosk located in the state.

LIABILITY AND MINIMUM SENTENCES

Under HB 1205, if an abandoned infant who is less than 60 days old is left in a newborn safety device, or at an approved location, the infant's receiver may not ask about the identity of the parent or the parent's agent or require either to provide information. Any information provided would remain confidential.

HB 1206 provides a mini-


mum sentence for an individual convicted of causing injury or death while operating a vehicle while under the influence and while accompanied by a minor. The sentence is a fine of \$750, at least two days' imprisonment, 365 days of unsupervised probation, and 365 days of participation in a 24-7 sobriety monitoring program. For a subsequent offense, the sentence is a year and one day's imprisonment, a \$2,000 fine, an evaluation by a licensed addiction treatment program, two years of supervised probation, and a year's participation in the 24-7 sobriety monitoring program.

Under HB 1561, a business is liable for damages if they do not take reasonable age verification steps when publishing or distributing sexual material that is harmful to minors.

MISCELLANEOUS

SB 2138 provides \$200,000 to the Department of Health and Human Services to offer grants to organizations that care for the elderly in North Dakota's rural areas.

Under HB 1170, newly hired state employees will now receive 40 hours of paid leave, which they may use only during their first year on the job.



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Notice of Sale


Notice is hereby given of sale by the Commissioners of Bottineau County, of the following described excess property. Sale pursuant section 39-26-06 of the North Dakota Century Code and will be held on Tuesday, May 6th, 2025 at the Bottineau County Commissioners meeting at 10:00 am. Sealed bids will be opened at that time.

Year/Make

1. Towmaster Pintle Hitch Trailer VIN#4KNFT24227L162009
2. Coats Baseline 500 Tire Machine
3. 1997 F-350 2-Wheel Drive Ford Pickup VIN#1FTJW35GOVEA82042
4. 2009 1/2 Ton Crew Cab 4-Wheel Drive Chevy Pickup VIN#3GCEK23309G220331
5. Bi-directional Plow Model:PR1243 SN:R1690T96
6. 2000-gallon steel water tank
7. 2 - Dock Floats
8. 2 - Falken/Wildpeak Tires LT275/70R18 125/122S and 2 - Firestone/Destination Tires LT265/70R18
9. 1 - Bridgestone/Duravis Tire LT245/75R16 120/116R2, 1-Del-Nat/Tru-Steer F-2 Tire 7.50-16SL, 2 - Triangle/Radial S/T Tires LT235/80R16 TR643
10. 1 - Stampede/Radial AT/S Tire LT265/70R17 112/109R, 1 - Firestone/Destination A/T Tire LT265/70R17 112/109R, 3 - General/Ameritrac TR P255/70R17 110, 2 - Bridgestone/Duravis M700 Tires LT265/70R17 121/118Q
11. 1 - Firestone/Radial All Traction 23" Tire 480/80R42 154 A8
12. 2 - Firestone/Radial DT Tires 480/70R30 152B
13. 1 - Alliance/FarmPro Radial 85 Tire 380/85R30 135-A8
14. 2 - Firestone/Performer 65 Tires 540/65R28
15. 2 - Delta Truck Toolboxes, 1 - Gooseneck ball/hitch
16. L-Shaped Service Tank
17. Trailer with HOL-GAR G5-107-AC Generator
18. Loader for tractor - Farm King Allied Inc. Model 590 SN:500879

Please call Ritch Gimbel at the Road Department at 228-3698 regarding items 1-18. The terms of the sale will be for CHECK. Bidder must tender a check in the amount of the offer to assure the bid will be considered. The check is to be retained by the County as liquidating damages in the event the bid is withdrawn after being accepted by the Board. ALL ITEMS ARE SOLD AS IS. Envelopes must be marked - BID - SALE OF COUNTY PROPERTY AND ITEM AND # SPECIFIED. The Board of Commissioners reserve the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any informalities or technicalities which they as County Commissioners may deem to be the most favorable or beneficial to Bottineau County. By the order of the Board of Bottineau County Commissioners, Bottineau County, State of North Dakota, this 1st day of April, 2025.

Emily Deschamp, Bottineau County Auditor




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