

Bakken Briefs

Ray adds liquor licenses

Restaurants wanting to serve alcohol in Ray will be allowed to keep the bar open for two hours after the kitchen closes.

This and other amendments to the proposed restaurant-alcohol ordinance were made following public comment during a special meeting June 30 held to pass a second reading.

The ordinance creates a new class of liquor license for restaurants serving alcohol. The commission also approved setting the total number of restaurant liquor licenses allowed at two.

Commissioners decided to reduce the fee for restaurant liquor licenses from \$2,350 to \$1,500.

The number of regular liquor licenses allowed in Ray is still set at four. They are currently held by the Ray Golf Association, Horizon Resources, the Northside Tavern and Club Ray.

--The Journal, Crosby

Burke regulates battery sites

The Burke County Commission has approved amendments to the county's zoning regulations that include a new section regulating battery energy storage systems.

The ordinance provides a framework for siting, construction, operation and decommissioning of a battery energy storage system in the county, saying its purpose is to "preserve the safety and well-being of residents and property, while facilitating orderly development."

The county's existing moratorium on battery energy storage facilities, imposed late last year, cannot yet be removed, State's Attorney Amber Fiesel told the planning and zoning board.

Under state law, the new regulations do not go into effect until public notices are published for two weeks, among other requirements.

--Burke County Tribune, Bowbells

Minot pound is still crowded

The city of Minot's first six months with a new animal pound operator shows the number of impounded dogs and cats is down, but the reason may be problematic.

There has been an increase in holdovers of animals taken into emergency custody due to abuse/neglect, abandonment or owners taken into custody for unrelated criminal offenses, the Minot Police Department noted.

"We've seen a dramatic increase," Acting Police Chief Dale Plessas said.

The police department will be reviewing several animal ordinances this year, including looking into new fines to adequately cover expenses. Additionally, the department has formed a working committee to establish estimated costs for a city-owned/operated animal impound.

--Minot Daily News

Arnegard may pave artery

The city of Arnegard made a funding request to the McKenzie County Commission on June 17 for a significant infrastructure investment.

Harvey Fitzgerald of Interstate Engineering and two council members outlined a multiphase plan to upgrade 133rd Avenue, a vital artery on the city's east side, to a paved road.

"The fire hall is out there," Fitzgerald said. "There's also been some subdivisions up north of town. So it's just increased the amount of traffic."

The initial request focused on improving a half-mile section within in Arnegard city limits, estimated at \$1.3 million. However, Fitzgerald said there's also a desire from Arnegard Township to extend the improvements further north.

The commissioners requested that Arnegard obtain a cost estimate for the expanded proposal.

--McKenzie County Farmer, Watford City

Dickinson takes over EMS

June 30 marked the final day of operations for Dickinson Area Ambulance Service after 44 years of uninterrupted emergency medical care in Dickinson and the surrounding region.

Shortly after midnight on July 1, emergency medical services officially shifted to the newly formed Dickinson Fire/EMS Department.

The transition from a privately owned EMS provider to a publicly operated department began in early 2024. At the time, city officials said they learned the ambulance service's owners wished to retire and sell the business.

In July of that year, the city and county jointly announced the \$5 million purchase of the service through a joint powers agreement.

The only other municipality in North Dakota to operate its own EMS system is Williston.

--Dickinson Press

Planning council is hiring

The Lewis and Clark Regional Development Council says it will be adding a position geared toward helping to find money to expand services in south-central North Dakota communities.

Executive Director Brent Ekstrom spoke at a Mercer County Commission meeting June 18 in Stanton and told county leaders the council is expanding by hiring an additional director.

Ekstrom said this position would be available to council members who need help finding grants in funding for upcoming projects. They would not only investigate possible funding opportunities but also help apply for the funds.

Lewis and Clark is the regional planning council established by the state to serve Burleigh, Morton, McLean, Mercer, Sioux, Emmons, Kidder, Grant, Oliver and Sheridan counties.

--Hazen Star

Full Senate Appropriations Committee Advances FY2026 Agriculture Funding Legislation

Senator John Hoeven issued the following statement after helping secure approval of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 agriculture funding legislation by the full Senate Appropriations Committee. As chairman of the Senate Agriculture Appropriations Committee, Hoeven worked to ensure the legislation continues strong support for farm country, while finding \$350 million in savings to help reduce the debt and deficit. Importantly, the legislation:

- Invests in agriculture research, including:
 - o Nearly \$2.5 million for the Agricultural Risk Policy Center at North Dakota State University (NDSU), bring the total funding Hoeven has secured for this initiative to nearly \$6.5 million since FY2024.
 - o \$5 million for the AgTech Cooperative Agreement between Grand Farm, NDSU and the Agricultural Research Service (ARS). This includes \$2 million to establish an ARS work site at Grand Farm.
 - o \$3 million for continued renovations at the Edward T. Schafer Agricultural Research Center in Fargo.
- Helps ensure producer access to credit, providing sufficient funding to meet demand for the Farm Service Agency's (FSA) direct and guaranteed operating and ownership loans.
- Continues the prohibition on FSA county office closures.
- Give ranchers the necessary resources to comply with the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's (APHIS) electronic identification (EID) tag requirement.
- o This follows Hoeven's efforts last year to secure an additional 3 million EID tags to prevent an unfunded mandate from being imposed on U.S. ranchers.
- Provides \$500,000 for black-bird depredation in the Northern Great Plains.
- Empowers APHIS to protect the nation's livestock against diseases, including avian influenza and chronic wasting disease (CWD), while supporting continued CWD

research at ARS.

- Supports a more competitive and transparent cattle market by:
 - o Providing \$1 million to continue Hoeven's cattle contract library pilot program.
 - o Maintaining funding for the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) to enforce the Packers and Stockyards Act.

"Our farmers and ranchers provide the highest quality, lowest cost food supply in the world, and this legislation makes important investments to ensure they can continue this good work," said Hoeven. "As chairman of Agriculture Appropriations, we made it a priority to support our nation's producers with tools like better access to capital and funding to prevent damage from pests and diseases like the avian flu and chronic wasting disease. At the same time, we're investing in agriculture research, including the important policy research and precision ag work being done by NDSU, Grand Farm and their partners. Ultimately, these efforts will help ensure stronger rural economies, a more secure food supply and the continued success of our farmers, ranchers and agri-businesses."

Youth Compete At North Dakota Junior Beef Expo

The North Dakota Stockmen's Association (NDSA) hosted 60 youth exhibitors and their families at the 30th annual North Dakota Junior Beef Expo (NDJBE) June 28-29 at the McKenzie County Ag Expo in Watford City, ND.

"The Junior Beef Expo was started to provide an opportunity for youth to gain interest and involvement in the beef industry," said NDJBE Chairman Trey Klain, a Ruso, ND cattle producer. "It was rewarding to see the relationships and skills that developed during the weekend's contests."

On Saturday, exhibitors participated in a beef trivia quizbowl activity. The objective was to provide beef education in a fun, yet competitive, game. The champion team consisted of Zane Lodoen of Westhope, ND; Layton Mrnak of Bowman, ND; Kaleb Neshem of Berthold, ND; and Cooper Strommen of Solen, ND.

The cattle show began Sunday morning. Fifty-six heifers representing ten breeds, one cow-calf pair and fifteen market animals were exhibited, followed by the pee wee, junior and senior showmanship competitions.

Bennett Mrnak of Bowman, ND, exhibited the supreme champion female, IVM Miss Outlier 4507M IET, an April 6, 2025, daughter of BOY Outlier 812 ET PLD, which was first the champion Charolais female. Rylee Erdmann of Lisbon, ND, exhibited the reserve champion female, BSF 1812 Miss Pin Up 2409, a Feb. 1, 2024, daughter of PVF DLX King Pin 0058, which was first the champion Angus female. Layton Mrnak of Bowman, ND, exhibited the champion market animal, a steer weighing 1,315 pounds on show day. Dylon Cargo of Arnegard, ND, exhibited the reserve champion market animal, a steer weighing 1,380 pounds on show day. Kyle Best of Watford City, ND, exhibited the champion cow-calf pair, DCS Luna 3L, with a Feb. 24, 2025, bull calf, BEST Norsk 501, at her side.

Other heifer breed champions included the following:

- Champion Chi-influence Female: Lilly Johnson of Froid, MT;
- Champion Commercial Female: Carson Sys of Douglas, ND;
- Champion Hereford Female: Kaleb Neshem of Berthold, ND;
- Champion Lim-Flex Female: Elizabeth Hanson of Velva, ND;
- Champion Red Angus: Adalyn

Bullinger of Powers Lake, ND; Champion Shorthorn Plus Female: Samantha Lyons of Lisbon, ND;

Champion Simmental Female: Zane Lodoen of Westhope, ND; and Champion Sim-Influence Female: Zane Lodoen of Westhope, ND.

In the showmanship competitions, Bennett Mrnak of Bowman, ND, won the pee wee showmanship; Kadence Spickler of Glenfield, ND won the junior showmanship division; and Zane Lodoen of Westhope, ND, won the senior division. Reserve champion showmen were Eli Petersen of Bowbells, ND; Ashtyn Erickson of Plaza, ND; and Anna Petersen of Bowbells, ND, in the pee wee, junior and senior divisions, respectively.

Riley Lafrentz judged the show. Lafrentz is a native of Bienfait, Saskatchewan, Canada. He and his family own and operate Wheatland Cattle Company, a Simmental and Angus operation. He graduated from Kansas State University and was a member of their Livestock Judging Team. He was a recipient of the All-American Livestock Judging Award. Lafrentz has judged in Australia, Canada and the United States.

Another NDJBE highlight included the Hardest Worker Award, which was presented to the Elizabeth Hanson of Velva, ND. Bergen Bullinger of Dickinson, ND, won another prestigious award, the NDSA Member Award, and \$100 cash in the drawing. All NDSA-member exhibitors were eligible for the latter prize.

The NDJBE Planning Committee was composed of Haley Anderson of Lisbon, ND; Trey Klain of Ruso, ND; Cord LaPlant of Binford, ND; Jayd Novak of Minot, ND; and Hope Willson of Wimbledon, ND.

"The Junior Beef Expo is a great expel of how the NDSA supports the next generation of beef producers," said Klain. "It is a fun, educational event where young people can get hands-on experience and build their skills."

Next year's show is scheduled for June 25-26, 2026.

For more information about NDJBE, contact NDSA Special Projects Director Jade Koski at (701) 223-2522 or jkoski@ndstockmen.org.

The NDJBE is a project of the NDSA Seedstock Council.

Letters To The Editor

North Dakota Schools Need Federal Funds Now

North Dakota's public schools and the students they serve find themselves once again being negatively impacted by political gamesmanship, and it is unacceptable. The recent decision by the U.S. Department of Education to withhold millions in federal education funds from our state is already beginning to damage our schools, shortchange our students, and strain educators who are already doing more with less.

These funds are not a luxury. They are essential resources intended to support low-income students, students with disabilities, and vital programs that help both rural and urban districts thrive. When the federal government withholds this funding, it is not politicians who suffer, it is the kids in our classrooms, especially in communities that rely most on this support.

The Department of Education's irresponsible action to delay the delivery of resources appropriated by Congress for express educational purposes must not be allowed to stand. Delaying the provision of these funds does nothing but disrupt plans and promote chaos in school districts across North Dakota. School boards, administrators, and teachers have been planning for the 2025-2026 school year for several months. For the administration to withhold suddenly and arbitrarily \$26,573,545 from ND's schools is a travesty and serves only to undermine our state's great public schools. But maybe that is the point. If it is, it does not reflect well on the Department of Education.

School leaders across the state are already facing difficult choices. This careless decision to withhold funds may cause districts to freeze hiring, increase class sizes, cancel professional development, and/or slash desperately needed programming for our students.

Importantly, this is not a partisan issue. It's a matter of protecting the future of our children, the quality of our public schools, the recruitment and retention of our teacher workforce, and strengthening our communities.

Federal education dollars belong in our classrooms, not locked up in ideologically partisan limbo. With schools starting in just over a month, we need leadership, and we need it now!

That is why we are calling on North Dakotans to contact Senator John Hoeven, Senator Kevin Cramer, and Representative Julie Fedorchak and urge them to work swiftly and decisively with the Department of Education to resolve this needless delay of funds allocated to benefit ND's schoolchildren.

After all, North Dakota's students should not have to pay the price for the misguided actions at the Department of Education.

Nick Archuleta, NDU President



Obituaries

Ramona Lacey

Sept. 23, 1929-July 7, 2025

On Monday, July 7, 2025, Ramona Lacey, age 95, passed away at the Stanley hospital.

Ramona Ruth Peterson was born on the family farm near Sanish, North Dakota, on September 23, 1929, to Elgin and Celia (Benson) Peterson. She graduated from Sanish High School in 1947 and then attended beauty school in Fargo, North Dakota. Ramona used her skills for many years to cut and style hair for family members, friends, and residents of the New Town Nursing Home.

On October 17, 1948, Ramona married John Lacey at her parents' home. Aside from a brief period living in California, they made their home in the Sanish and New Town community until she purchased a home in Stanley in 2018. In May 2024, she moved into Rosen Place Assisted Living in Stanley; she formed new friendships with residents, and staff members who became her "honorary grandchildren."

Ramona was affectionately known to many as "The Doughnut Lady" because of her generosity in sharing her delicious doughnuts with the staff of various local businesses in New Town and later in Stanley. In addition, to her famous doughnuts, she also baked a variety of treats, including cream puffs, pies, bars, cinnamon and caramel rolls, and dozens of buns.

She enjoyed playing card games such as whist and pinochle and was a dedicated member of the Tuesday afternoon bridge group. Ramona was also a member of the Lakeside Senior Citizens in New Town and Bethel Lutheran Church. An avid reader, she always kept a book on the table next to her chair. She had a playful spirit and loved to tease people, often accompanied by a wicked twinkle in her eye.

Ramona was preceded in death by her parents; her husband, John; and brothers, Eugene and Jack Peterson.

Ramona is survived by her children, Joyce Hanson, Minot, ND, Kathie (Mark) Hauge, Vancouver, WA, and Michael (Cheryl) Lacey, New Town, ND; grandchildren, Julie (Scott) Ladner, Luke Hanson, Matthew (Tiffany) Hauge, Paul (Kara) Hauge, Kevin (Perla) Hauge, Jennifer (Jerry) Neset, and Teri (Lance) Ostahl; sixteen great-grandchildren; and one great-great-grandson; sister-in-law, Lilly Peterson of Stanley; niece, Penny (Tim) Solberg; and nephews, Jeff Peterson, Leroy Peterson and Charlie (Ann) Peterson.

Ramona's funeral will be held on Thursday, July 17, 2025, at 11 a.m. at Bethel Lutheran Church, New Town.

Interment will be held at New Town Cemetery, New Town.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations to Bethel Lutheran Church, PO Box 237, New Town, ND 58763; Mountrail Bethel Employee Council, PO Box 700, Stanley, ND 568784; or a charity of your choice.

Arrangements with Langhans Funeral Home, Parshall, www.langhansfuneralhome.com.

Richard Jensen

Richard Jensen, 88, Minot, formerly of Sidney, MT, passed away on Thursday, July 10, 2025, in an assisted living facility in Minot. (Thompson-Larson Funeral Home, Minot)

Ronald Racine

Ronald Racine, 59, Parshall, died Thursday, July 10, 2025, at his home. (Langhans Funeral Home, Parshall)

Ilene Rowe Taylor


Ilene Rowe Taylor, Mesa, AZ, formerly of Minot and Plaza, died February 1, 2025 with her daughter and husband by her side.

Burial will be Friday, July 18, 2025 at the East Cemetery in Plaza, ND. Pastor Chris Lenning will be officiating.

Dr. Susan Asheim
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