

Spickler Ranch North recognized with Environmental Stewardship Award

The North Dakota Stockmen's Association (NDSA) presented the 2025 Environmental Stewardship Award to Spickler Ranch North of Glenfield, N.D., during the NDSA's 96th Annual Convention & Trade Show, "Think Big, Achieve More," at the Clarion Hotel in Minot, N.D., on Sept. 24-26.

Spickler Ranch North is a third- and fourth-generation registered Angus seedstock operation that focuses on stewardship, sustainability and generational succession. The operation is owned and operated by Justin and Sara Spickler and their children, Wyatt, Will, Jessa and Watson. Established in the early 1940s by Justin's grandparents, the ranch has been a member of the NDSA for 76 years.

The Spicklers have adapted their practices to the unique challenges of their location along the James River. Flooding in 2009 and 2011 prompted the construction of a protective dike that prevents damage to their corrals and limits runoff into the river. When constructing the dike, they worked with the NDSA Environmental Services Program to construct a 2,200-head permitted feedlot. The feedlot now has a holding pond that contains the waste from the feedlot and better protects the environment.

Since 1999, the Spicklers have added more than 10 miles of cross-fencing to im-



Justin (center) and Sara Spickler of Spickler Ranch North were honored as the North Dakota Stockmen's Association's Environmental Stewardship Award winners at the organization's annual banquet last Friday. They are pictured with Jeb Williams of the North Dakota Game and Fish Department, an award sponsor. Courtesy photo.

prove their rotational grazing system. The majority of their pastures are managed under a twice-over grazing system that supports improved forage quality, increased biodiversity and healthier cattle. Despite access to freshwater from the Prairie Pothole Region and New Rockford aquifer, the Spicklers have invested in infrastructure such as solar-powered water tanks, wells and pipelines to ensure reliable access to clean water for their livestock.

For Justin, sustainability also means improving their cattle genetics and raising

animals that thrive in their environment and complement the available resources. Their calving season is from February to April each year and aligns with the growth of native cool-season grasses, ensuring optimal nutrition for cows during peak lactation.

"From every corner of our state, cattle producers are dedicated stewards of the land, air and water, and they approach that responsibility with great care," said NDSA President Randy Schmitt, a rancher from Rugby, N.D. "The Stockmen's Association

is proud to honor the Spickler family, whose commitment to conservation sets a powerful example. We congratulate them on this well-deserved recognition."

As the state Environmental Stewardship Award winner, Spickler Ranch North will advance to the regional level, where they will compete with state winners from South Dakota, Nebraska and Kansas.

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department is the state Environmental Stewardship Award sponsor.

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Rundown
by Leasa A. Lura

The counties and cities within the state of North Dakota hold many interesting news stories. Here are just a few of the feature stories that others are reading in communities around the state.

Still only one arrest in theft of 113-year-old bell

Last time it was seen intact, it weighed 700+ pounds. Recently 450 lbs. of it were sold to a scrap yard in West Fargo.

That is the fate of a 113-year-old bell donated to the White Stone Hill congregation in Sargent County.

The donation of the bell was made in 1912 by the Luther League of the White Stone Hill Congregation. No one is left who remembers the day of the donation, but many of their ancestors know the bell and wonder how one person could have gotten the bell out of its long-time home.

Authorities aren't sure how the theft of the bell could have been a one person job.

The only arrest so far is Paul Vincent, 39, of Cooperstown who has ties to southeast North Dakota and an extensive criminal record in Sargent, Ransom and Richland counties.

The bell was noticed missing on Sept. 6. Vincent was arrested in Gwinner on Sept. 16.

Vincent has denied actually stealing the bell, but has said that he and another person took pieces of the bell to the salvage yard. He has not identified that person.

Estimates for replacing the bell run in the range of \$40,000 to \$50,000. The scrap price of the bell was \$1,300. Records indicate that the bell was originally purchased for \$220.

The church closed in the 1960s with the bell being relocated to the cemetery shortly thereafter. The bell has been the centerpiece of the cemetery since then.

(Story by Lynn Kaspari, the Ransom County Gazette)

Malt Shoppe closes after 24 years

The Malt Shoppe in Garrison has been a fixture on Main Street since 2001.

It opened on July 3, 2001.

After 24 years in business, the restaurant will close its doors for good.

"We don't have enough employees," Owner Denise Kolden said. "The employees I have are the best ever. They are workers, like crazy. My three from Romania are awesome.

She said if it wasn't for them working this summer, she would've closed a lot sooner.

Kolden had put the business up for sale after the Dickens Village Festival last winter.

There have been many inquiries, but none serious enough to result in a bid.

"After awhile, I said 'enough is enough,'" Kolden said. "I can't do it anymore."

Kolden's two main employees have new jobs lined up and her three workers from Romania will head home at the end of the month.

In addition to staff challenges, food and ice cream prices have increased substantially.

(Story by Tyson Matthews, McLean County Independent)

All charges dismissed in child pornography case

In a surprising turn of events, a judge has dismissed all 44 counts of child pornography against Daniel Christensen, a former McKenzie County Sheriff's office (MCSO) deputy. The decision, which has raised questions within the community, was based on constitutional arguments related to unlawful searches of digital data.

Christiansen was initially charged in Dec. 2024, following a tip from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) to the North Dakota Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI).

Investigators with the BCI received a "Cybertip" for an account with Synchronoss Technologies, which was linked to Christensen. A subsequent search of his residence in Alexander, N.D. reportedly led to the discovery of 48 items of Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) within his Synchronoss account.

The charges, however, were dismissed by the court. While State's Attorney Nathan Madden declined The Farmer's request for comment, Christensen's attorney said, "This case represents a win for our individual right of privacy against unauthorized rummaging by the police through our virtual lives," said Attorney Christopher Redmann.

(Story by M.K. French, the McKenzie County Farmer)

Not his first rodeo

Honeymoons aren't forever, Mike Every knows, so he's enjoying the blissful period while it lasts.

School started August 19 in Harvey with Every taking the position as principal at B.M. Hanson Elementary School.

Every, a veteran educator and school administrator, said this was his first position in a non-Indian school.

He's taught and worked at Selfridge, N.D., on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation and at Minnewaukan, near the Spirit Lake Reservation. Every was the K-12 principal at Selfridge the last 15 years.

He grew to love the many children and their families at Selfridge, but someone has to care enough to keep them in school after grade 9.

"I couldn't do it anymore," said Every.

Mike Every knew it was time to leave the reservation when his wife related how she feared for her safety. That wasn't long after she discovered a strange woman in the couple's kitchen in the middle of the night holding a pistol.

When Mike entered the kitchen, the woman raced outside and proceeded to fire round after round into the Every home.

Reservation police arrived 45 minutes later. While everyone agreed the distraught woman was under the influence of drugs, including the law, the shooter is back on the reservation.

"She claimed the school had kidnapped her children," Every recounted.

"We were literally driven from town," he explained.

Now, Every said he feels like he's fitting in at the elementary school in Harvey.

"I'm glad to be here, not there."

(Story by Neil O. Nelson, the Herald-Press, Harvey)

Sheyenne

by Patti Clifton

Dwain and Connie Brown were in Fargo Saturday and Sunday to attend great-grandson Ezra Tinquist's baptism and great-grandson Avery Tinquist receiving his third grade Bible at First Lutheran Church in Fargo. Following church, they visited with the Tinquist and Allmaras families.

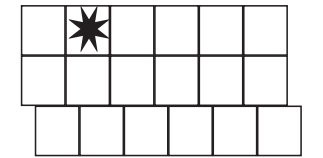
Jan Loe and Bonnie Deegan enjoyed the American Legion breakfast in Minnewaukan after attending worship at Calvary Lutheran Church in Oberon. They also stopped for a quick visit with Brian and Pam Hill at their lake home in Minnewaukan after breakfast.

Family, friends, former teaching associates and students filled First Lutheran Church in New Rockford last Monday for the funeral of Betty Georgeson. The service was graced with special music and beautiful flowers, appropriately celebrating her life. She was buried at Grandfield Lutheran Cemetery.

Dianne Hanson and Patti Larson drove out to Krugers last Monday to pick raspberries. Stan and Marilynn invited them in for ice cream with raspberries after they picked.

Karen Anderson and Diane Yri stopped at Larsons for coffee on the way to Devils Lake last Tuesday morning. Diane brought Patti copies of hand-written recipes from Grandma Leone Cudworth for suet pudding and from great-aunt Helen Sampson for oatmeal bread. They noted the beautiful penmanship.

Last Tuesday, Chenze Construction and Heartland Cement made a new sidewalk from house to garage at



the Jan Loe residence.

A crew from McVile was in Sheyenne to work on jetting the sewer main lines last Thursday.

Several city council members also helped with Gavin Brown getting closer to having water and sewer hooked up at his location.

Last Thursday evening, Ian Gilley and Patti Larson took in the keynote address by David Brooks on the University of Jamestown campus. The Leader Town Conference theme was "Discover the Power of Character." Patti visited with David after his presentation and asked for his autograph in two books, "How to Know a Person" and "The Road to Character." David is a New York Times best-selling author and appears regularly on PBS News Hour.

Friday night, Sept. 26, Sheyenne GRIT held a community meeting at the senior center. Laurie Westby provided bars. Patti Larson opened the meeting showing a presentation put together by Sandra Larson. It included photos of the Sheyenne events, highlighting volunteers and organizations, and projects and improvements made possible by grants. Patti thanked all the volunteers for stepping up to get things done. The playground committee reported that a new basketball hoop will be installed on the grounds at Open Season Lodge. Summer Rec funds were used for the purchase. The stone pit stonework will take place next summer instead of this fall. Other discussion around the N.D. Forest Service grant tree planting at the north and south Sheyenne signs deter-

mined that some rock cleanup prior to planting would make for easier long-term maintenance. Other business was board member elections. Tara Hanson, Laurie Westby and Patti Clifton all agreed to another two-year term. Vote was unanimous that the three serve until 2027. Patti Larson, Sharon Whitmer and Joanna Larson's terms will be up in 2026.

The last full week of September could not have had nicer weather. Sheyenne residents took it all in, doing yard work, field work and playing outside.

Lowell Larson called a meeting of the unincorporated Augustana Lutheran Church and Augustana Cemetery Association on September 28. Lowell, secretary/treasurer, Curtis Larson and daughter Olivia, Mark and Luann Seastrand, Peter Larson, Joanna Larson and Ian Gilley were in attendance. Lowell called the meeting to order and explained that the late Bruce Larson was still on record as chairperson, so a motion was passed and carried to elect Joanna as new chairperson. Joanna then chaired the meeting and Olivia took minutes of business brought forth by Lowell. Those in attendance thanked Curtis and Olivia for their continued efforts as groundskeepers and expressed appreciation for keeping the cemetery looking nice even with all the storms causing havoc on the cottonwoods. Alex Molander of PRC Wind joined the group briefly to answer questions about towers pro-

posed in the area. Ian Gilley shared updates of his efforts to curtail the decay of the building. He and his dad have removed trees that were growing much too large and close to the front face of the church. Ian has also gathered materials to "bird proof" the broken windows.

Last Friday, Lacey Grade Photography was in town at Prairie Gates. The Foundation for Agricultural and Rural Resources Management and Sustainability (FARRMS) commissioned Lacey to photograph Joanna Larson at her farm and Main Street Farm Stand. FARRMS will use the photographs in their marketing and outreach work with new and beginning farmers. The photographs will be used as content to promote FARRMS and Joanna will have access to use them to promote Prairie Gates as well. Lacey is from Harvey and her business can be found on Facebook. She expressed wanting to come back with her dad's El Camino to photograph it in front for the Sinclair station. She was overall impressed with how nice Main Street Sheyenne is.

Dianne Hanson called bingo for Sheyenne Civic Association October 27. Bob Hanson and Randy Keller sold cards and Darlene Kolsstad served lunch. On October 3, Sheyenne Civic Association hosted again with a \$200 blackout in 58 numbers.

Saturday noon, Patti Clifton and Deanna Erickson met for lunch and a visit at Rockford Café in New Rockford.

Senior Meals

October 6-10

Monday: Beef stew, low sodium vegetable, bread and fruit sauce.

Tuesday: Porcupine meatballs, mashed potatoes with gravy, parslied carrots, bread and fruit cocktail.

Wednesday: Roast pork with gravy, au gratin potatoes, low sodium vegetable,

bread and peach crisp with topping.

Thursday: Meatloaf, baked potato, glazed carrots, bread and mandarin orange.

Friday: Roast beef on a bun, oven browned potatoes, low sodium vegetable and fruit or sauce.

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