

Klumph Bridge slated for demo in 2026

County approves purchase of vehicle; additional compensation for staff

by Amy Wobbema
The second of three dilapidated bridges in the county is expected to be demolished next year, Road Superintendent Todd Weber reported to county commissioners at their Tuesday, Dec. 2 meeting.

The Klumph Bridge demolition and replacement project will come to bid in early 2026, Weber said. The narrow bridge that traverses the James River on 64th Ave Northeast has been a safety issue and was therefore approved for state bridge funding nearly three years ago.

Weber said he expects the bridge to be replaced with a box culvert. More details will be released with the bid notice. Both removal and replacement of the bridge will be funded entirely by the state.

The Munster Bridge was rehabilitated in 2024 through the same program.

Hanson Bridge was also approved for demolition in 2023, but due to its listing on the National Register of Historic Places, more paperwork must be done before that bridge can be demolished, Weber said.

Weber also proposed to insulate the county shop in New Rockford. The current insulation is deteriorating. He requested to use \$15,000 remaining in his repair and maintenance fund for the supplies and material needed to complete the project. All labor will be completed by county employees over winter. Commissioners authorized the expense, citing that the project would save the county money in heating costs.

County employees appealed to the commission for additional compensation as the Flickertail Wind project moves forward. Auditor Becki Schumacher, Tax Equalization Director Kristy O'Connor, State's Attorney Ashley Lies and Recorder Tiffany Harr all were in attendance at Tuesday's meeting.

They outlined for commissioners the extra time they have already spent and expect to undergo over the next two years to first evaluate the project's permit and then to ultimately see it through the construction process upon approval of the permits.

Schumacher noted that PRC Wind, the project's developer, paid the county \$10,000 in permit application fees based on the new fee schedule adopted late this summer. The primary reason for increasing the fees was to account for the additional workload on county staff.

O'Connor and Schumacher outlined several responsibilities that will be placed on county staff, noting, "we're going to have to do a lot of legwork," such as shifting parcels to new acres with base evaluation, assigning new parcel numbers, and preparing mailings to property owners, among other duties.

Harr does not have an assistant right now, as Becky Anderson retired early this fall and her replacement has not been hired due to lack of applicants. "Court days are hard," Harr said, as she maintains both the Clerk of Court office and the Recorder's office.

"We have a very good team of people working for us, and we certainly want to take care of them," Commissioner David Gehrtz said.

"I think we should think about compensating them ... a little more," Chairman Allmaras added.

Under the plan approved by commissioners Tuesday, five employees - including the four listed above as well as Lisa Thompson - will receive a 5% pay increase. Tia Davis, who works part-time as Lies' assistant in the state's attorney's office, will receive a 2.5% increase. The cost to the county is an additional \$17,352 in wages in 2026. This was not budgeted; however, more than 50% of the cost will be offset

by the permit application fee.

In other business, the county commission authorized the purchase of a new vehicle to be used by county employees traveling on official county business. The vehicle recommended by Gehrtz is a 2024 Ford Edge on the lot at Soeby Ford in Walhalla. The \$30,000, 4-wheel drive vehicle with only 15,000 miles on it could reliably transport employees for years, Gehrtz said. The commission agreed to move forward with the upgrade. It's unclear as of press time whether they will be able to purchase the vehicle directly from Soeby or will need to advertise for bids before making a purchase.

The commission enacted a policy in January to use a former sheriff's vehicle as a county car that staff could use to travel to conferences,

meetings and other county business rather than use their own vehicles. The proposal was designed to save the county money on mileage expenses.

Commissioners reviewed a spreadsheet of the vehicle's usage over the past year, which represented a savings of about \$1,400 after paying for repairs, gas and insurance on the aging vehicle. The report notes that the car was unavailable for several weeks as repairs were completed, and therefore mileage was still paid out to staff.

David Gehrtz was elected chairman of the commission for 2026, and Jamie Allmaras will assume the role of vice chair.

The courthouse will be closed December 25-26 and January 1-2 for the Christmas and New Year holidays, respectively.

Ystaas to take over DRMC clinic

Dakota Regional Medical Center announced Wednesday, Dec. 3 that they would be turning their New Rockford clinic practice over to Liza Ystaas, FNP in support of her desire to work at her own private practice.

"We want to express our deepest gratitude for the trust and confidence you have placed in our organization while we have owned and operated the clinic. DRMC posted to its Facebook page. "Our official closure date will be February 1st, 2026 and Liza will be 'independent' at that point."

Ystaas plans to operate at the same location - 107 13th St. N in New Rockford - and provide full family practice services.

DRMC will continue to process lab specimens and report results back, so patients should not notice any

changes other than who the clinic bill comes from.

Bills for the labs will continue to come from Dakota Regional Medical Center.

DRMC clinic will remain open on Tuesdays only, starting Dec. 9, until its closure Feb. 1, 2026.

Further details about services, hours, etc. at Ystaas' private practice, James River Family Medicine, will be released as the transition draws near.

In the meantime, Ystaas told the Transcript Thursday that if Tuesdays don't work for a patient, he or she should reach out to her at (701) 947-2042 so she can provide assistance as needed. "I won't let patients go without their meds," Ystaas said, and asked for patience from the community as the details are ironed out.

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LAWSUIT-

"Because petitioner has failed to allege any facts that would trigger the provisions of [N.D. Century Code 11-16-06] that would allow the district court to appoint an 'independent' state's attorney, Petitioner has failed to state a claim for which relief may be granted, and as such, Petitioner's petition must be dismissed," states Lies' motion.

The legal document goes on to explain that for an acting state's attorney to be appointed, Danduran must prove that at least one of four requirements are satisfied - each of which are outlined in N.D. Century Code 11-16-06.

Of those four requirements, Lies and her legal counsel say Danduran's petition only claims that one of them was met - which is that the state's attorney has "refused or neglected to carry out any of the duties listed in subdivisions b through f of subsection 1 of section 11-16-01."

However, the State's Attorney's duties listed in that section of century code does not include addressing conflicts of interest.

The responsibilities listed in subdivisions b through f of

N.D. Century Code 11-16-01, include:

b. Instituting proceedings before magistrates for the arrest of persons charged with or reasonably suspected of public offenses;

c. Attending before, and giving advice to, a grand jury whenever cases are presented to it;

d. Drawing indictments and informations;

e. Defending all suits brought against the state or county;

f. Prosecuting bonds forfeited in the courts and prosecuting actions for the recovery of debt, fines, penalties and forfeitures owed to the county.

Danduran's petition does not accuse Lies of failing to accomplish any of those duties, only that she failed to enforce conflict-of-interest laws. For that reason Lies and her legal counsel argue the case must be dismissed.

Essentially, Lies' motion argues that even if Danduran's accusations were true, they don't fall within the relevant duties the law requires for removal of a state's attorney.

"Based on the foregoing, Respondent respectfully requests the court dismiss, in total and with prejudice,

Petitioner's petition and all of his claims and causes of action," states the motion.

As of press time, no decision had been made regarding the motion to dismiss, nor Danduran's request to appoint an acting state's attorney. Should the case be dismissed with prejudice as requested, Danduran would not be allowed to file the lawsuit again.

CLEANUP-

tendent Bruce Hirschert said the owners of nine more vehicles will soon be receiving their final 48-hour notices from the sheriff's department, at which point they'll have two days to come into compliance with city ordinance or risk their vehicles being impounded.

In previous years, the city's impound lot had been too full to follow through on their threats of impoundment. This year, however, the city made sure to sell their impounded vehicles months ago, leaving plenty of room for more this year.

"This is the most progress we've made in a long time," said Hirschert at Monday's regular meeting.

Meanwhile, the city has also seen a large reduction in

the number of properties violating their junk ordinance.

Over the past seven months, their list of 20 properties has been whittled down to just four - an 80% reduction.

Hirschert said that once they had a chance to speak in person, nearly everyone on the list was cooperative and more than willing to let the city help clean their yards.

"We just knocked on the door and explained to them that we're here to help," said Hirschert, "that we're not trying to threaten them with notices in the mail."

And in addition to junk and vehicles, the city has also been taking care of several blighted structures within the city.

The properties at 608 Central Avenue, 815 4th Avenue North, 306 2nd Avenue North and 806 1st Avenue North in New Rockford have all been demolished this year - clearing out a number of eyesores within the city.

With noticeable progress already made, commissioners say they plan to keep the momentum going into next year.

The city's next regular meeting is scheduled for 9 a.m. on Monday, Jan. 5 in the New Rockford City Hall.

Community Calendar

DPRCA PRESENTS "RED AND GOLD: A CHRISTMAS CAROL" Dec. 4-21 at Old Church Theatre in New Rockford. Tickets on sale at dprca.com or by calling or texting (701) 399-9634.

EDDY COUNTY MUSEUM & HISTORICAL SOCIETY will meet on Monday, Dec. 8 at noon. in the conference room of the Eddy-New Rockford Public Library.

NR-S HS/MS CHRISTMAS CONCERT on Monday, Dec. 8 at 7 p.m. in the NR-S gymnasium.

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY HOLIDAY PARTY on Tuesday, Dec. 9 at the Legion Hall. A potluck supper will start at 6 p.m. followed by the party. If you would like to participate in the gift exchange game, bring a gift that is \$10 or less. Come enjoy the games, prizes and companionship.

NR-S ELEMENTARY CHRISTMAS PROGRAM on Thursday, Dec. 11 at 6 p.m. in the NR-S gymnasium.

KINDERGARTEN GINGERBREAD DAY on Friday, Dec. 12 at 2 p.m. Join the kindergarten class for songs in the gymnasium, followed by gingerbread house decorating in the lunch room.

SIP & SHOP AT FLAIR BOUTIQUE on Friday, Dec. 12 from 6-9 p.m. Gather your gal friends and join us for wine, hot chocolate, festive snacks and great holiday deals!

HOLIDAY VENDOR & CRAFT FAIR at Open Season Lodge on Saturday, Dec. 13 from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Call Renae at (701) 302-8318 or Tara at (701) 351-2488 to sign up as a vendor.

SHOP WITH THE SHERIFF on Monday, Dec. 15. If you would like your child to participate, call (701) 947-5515 or stop by the Sheriff's Office by Friday, Dec. 12 between 8 a.m. and 12 p.m. to sign them up.

CENTRAL DAKOTA AG DAY on Friday, Dec. 19 from 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m. at the Carrington Research Extension Center, 3.5 miles north of Carrington. Concurrent sessions will cover agronomy, livestock and agricultural life. Lunch provided. No registration required. Free.

UGLY SWEATER PARTY AT HANSON'S BAR on Saturday, Dec. 20 at 8 p.m. Join us for chances at door prizes and drink specials. People's choice award will be announced at midnight.

DECEMBER ITEM OF THE MONTH at the Eddy County Hunger Free Food Pantry is pasta sauce. Donations can be dropped off at First Lutheran Church, 436 1st Ave. N, New Rockford.

EDDY CO. VETERAN SERVICE OFFICER Same day appointments available. Please call (701) 302-8087.

RELAX & RETREAT MASSAGE now offering massage therapy through VA Community Care Program. For more information, call (701) 302-0325.

TOPS 370 is a weight loss support group. Meetings are on Mondays at 5 p.m. at First Lutheran Church in New Rockford. For more information call (701) 947-2138.

COMMUNITY AMBULANCE SERVICE BOARD meets the second Monday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Ambulance Hall, New Rockford.

SHEYENNE VFW meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. at Sheyenne VFW Post 2696.

LAKE REGION SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE support group meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. in the Community Room of North Star Community Credit Union, Devils Lake. For info call Theresa at (701) 662-4790.

FOOT CARE CLINIC every third Wednesday of the month at Eddy County Public Health. Call (701) 947-5311 for appointments. Cost is \$25.

EDDY-NEW ROCKFORD LIBRARY BOARD meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 5 p.m.

NEW ROCKFORD POST OFFICE has a new phone number, (701) 505-8842. The office is open 9-11 a.m. and 12:30-4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

SHEYENNE POST OFFICE also has a new phone number, (701) 404-1149. Open 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. Monday - Friday.

Please contact the Transcript at nrtranscript@gmail.com or (701) 947-2417 to have your event notices listed.

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