

### 'No Kings' rally in Ray



Submitted photo

Fourteen people at a "No Kings" rally in Ray on Saturday hold signs protesting against President Donald Trump's administration and the war in Iran. The rallies were taking place across the U.S. and Europe; the Ray rally was organized by the District 2 Democratic-NPL Party.

## Bakken briefs

### Longer wells sought in ND

North Dakota's first-ever 5-mile spacing unit has been applied for, Department of Mineral Resources Director Nathan Anderson told lawmakers March 18, illustrating how drilling innovation is reshaping the state's oil patch.

Presenting to the state Legislature's interim Budget Section, Anderson said operators are steadily moving from traditional 2-mile wells toward 3- and 4-mile laterals, with 4-mile permits now topping 10% of new approvals.

Those longer laterals, he said, allow companies to maintain production while running fewer rigs, a key efficiency gain as prices fluctuate.

Approval of the state's first-ever 5-mile spacing unit, from Phoenix Operating, is pending. The case will head to the state Industrial Commission for a final decision as soon as April.

--Western Dakota Energy Association

### Lignite has groceries again

Bobbi Jo and Cole Allen have been in the gasoline business for many years. They've grown Lignite Oil from bulk delivery service and station gas pumps to a full convenience store.

Seeing the need for grocery items since the city's only grocery store closed in 2024, Bobbi Jo decided to make a change: She downsized her variety of potato chips to clear room for a small grocery section in the convenience store.

"I should've done it a long time ago," she said.

Lignite residents can now locally purchase eggs, bread, mi-crogreens and dairy products. The Allens also added beef and chicken broth, spaghetti sauce and noodles, cake mix, pancake mix and syrup, stuffing mix, crackers, spices and seasonings, coffee, condiments, soaps and shampoo, laundry soap and cleaning supplies.

--Burke County Tribune, Bowbells

### Kenmare church is closing

Trinity Lutheran Church of rural Kenmare, established on the prairie 130 years ago, will host its final worship service on June 14.

"It's the struggle of small towns, right?" lay minister Jean Quigley said. "And it seems Kenmare is struggling moreso right now."

The congregation was organized 3 miles north of Kenmare in 1896 as Trinity First Danish Evangelical Lutheran by a group of 12 Danish immigrant men who homesteaded in the area.

The following spring, the men brought their families, which included a young woman, Jensine Damskov, who gave 5 acres of her homestead to build a church and lay out a cemetery.

The church has since had a history of mission work in Nigeria and hopes to continue that through the creation of an endowment fund.

--Kenmare News

### New wholesaler for Bakken

A new warehouse in Williston aims to provide quicker and more affordable access to oil field chemicals for Bakken service companies.

Centrium Energy Solutions, a Texas-based oil field chemical wholesaler, partnered with Red River Supply to open the warehouse in March.

The warehouse provides a regional alternative that saves oil field companies from high shipping costs and long wait times for chemicals.

"We've really had a need lately to stock and to have material for our service providers or our operators and partners in that area," said Sean Moore, Centrium's operations lead. "And it's grown in the last four months or so."

The Williston facility also has the distinction of being able to house flammable chemicals.

The warehouse is located at 1202 E. Broadway.

--Williston Herald

### Oliver halts data centers

After almost five-and-a-half hours of discussion March 13, the Oliver County Commission set a 180-day moratorium on any and all data center projects in the county.

The commission relocated its meeting to the Betty Hagel Memorial Civic Center, in Center, to accommodate the large crowd of residents, business owners and landowners that gathered.

Commission Chairman Rob Schmidt said though the meeting was extensive, he believes the commission heard the public's concerns, with just as many people in favor of or open to data centers as there were people opposed.

While the commission initially agreed to a 90-day moratorium in order to create a data center ordinance, Schmidt argued that 90 days would not be enough time to plan the ordinance.

--Center Republican

# ND agency will stop publishing oil lease auction notices in newspapers

**By Jacob Orledge**  
**North Dakota Monitor**  
The North Dakota agency responsible for managing state-owned minerals is changing how it keeps the public informed, prompting concerns about a lack of transparency. The Department of Trust Lands is moving ahead with plans to stop publishing notices in local newspapers of oil and gas lease auctions after a lawmaker's attempt to delay the rule change was defeated in an interim legislative meeting.

Rep. Don Longmuir, R-Stanley, made the motion in the March 12 meeting because he fears the change will result in less transparency for communities in his district, which includes a significant slice of the state's oil field.

"That's the one thing we always hear so much about, is transparency. Well, transparency is letting as many people know in as many ways as you can," Longmuir said.

The Department of Trust Lands is responsible for managing state-owned lands and minerals. The agency plans to continue posting digital notices of lease auctions on its website and through Efficient Markets, the company that runs the process for the state, to ensure potential bidders are aware.

Ending these notices in local newspapers will save the agency time and money, Land Commissioner Joseph Heringer said.

"We have a specific target market here, and the target market is oil and gas companies who will develop the

leases," Heringer said. "The goal is to get as many of those so you can get the most bids and the highest bids."

Opponents of the change said public notices should not be viewed as advertising for industry. Local communities, mineral owners, landowners and others all benefit from knowing if state-owned mineral acres in their area have been nominated for an upcoming lease auction, said Cecile Wehrman, executive director of the North Dakota Newspaper Association.

"This belongs to the people of North Dakota, and while it's the state government's job to manage these things, it's in all of our interest how that's managed," Wehrman said. "To have the minimum requirement that they let us know when that's happening is a very small ask."

She said this action is part of a trend of agencies attempting to eliminate requirements to publish public notices of government activity in local newspapers in recent years.

"If this same provision would have gone before the full Legislature, I do not believe it would have been successful," Wehrman said.

But the Department of Trust Lands' obligation to publish public notices was in the agency's administrative rules, not state law, and required the consent of the interim Administrative Rules Committee, not the full Legislature.

"This situation with the land board is unfortunate because the publication requirement was within their administra-

tive rule, and they amended that, and so it didn't go through the same legislative process that we're used to," said Katie Winbauer, a Bismarck attorney who serves as a lobbyist for the newspaper association.

The Legislature defeated proposals to eliminate requirements to publish requests for bids on highway construction and county commission minutes in local newspapers as recently as the 2025 legislative session.

"Over and over again, in the last session, we had strong support for continued publication of all kinds of notices in newspapers," Wehrman said.

It's possible the newspaper association will ask the full Legislature to amend state law in the 2027 legislative session to require the Department of Trust Lands to resume publishing notices of oil and gas lease auctions, Wehrman said.

The chair of the interim committee that allowed the agency to proceed with the rule change, Sen. Bob Paulson, R-Minot, noted this action will not affect other types of public notices. But he also said society is transitioning to more of an online culture and publication of public notices in newspapers "makes less and less sense."

"At what point does it become, you know, a burden for these organizations financially, where the return on investment just isn't there?" Paulson asked in an interview. "So that's one aspect of it."

Detractors of the rule change argue newspapers are still essential in many rural

communities throughout the state. Research by the North Dakota Newspaper Association shows newspapers reach at least 75% of households in a majority of the state's counties. A 2024 survey by the organization showed 80% of North Dakotans prefer public notices be published by an independent source, rather than the government, Wehrman said.

Longmuir said many of his constituents, especially the older generations, are not necessarily online and still prefer to get their news through physical newspapers.

"We want to keep all of our population informed, not just those that are tech savvy," the lawmaker said.

Wehrman said the Department of Trust Lands has paid an average of \$17,000 annually in the last three years for public notices, according to the newspaper association's system, which includes the cost of all public notices and not just oil and gas lease auctions.

The rule change will take effect April 1. The Department of Trust Lands will continue to publish public notices of planned auctions of surface land, as required by the state constitution.

*(Editor's note: Jacob Orledge was previously a reporter for Journal Publishing in Tioga.)*

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### Kid Scoop Puzzler

Each of the Bunny Buddies below has at least one look-alike, except for one. Can you find the unique bunny?

How do you catch a unique bunny? uu du dn anbuu

Standards Link: Reading Comprehension: Follow simple written directions.

### Double Double Word Search

Find the words by looking up, down, backwards, forwards, sideways and diagonally.

B	O	S	W	I	M	G	R	W	D
T	P	A	E	K	J	G	S	E	Y
L	A	S	T	A	Y	E	T	N	E
A	G	E	A	G	S	S	G	L	
E	E	G	A	Z	E	W	O	I	D
V	N	E	D	R	A	G	H	N	D
E	U	E	R	T	R	V	G	E	I
R	S	A	G	E	G	O	S	B	R
U	L	Y	N	N	U	B	T	A	K

Standards Link: Letter sequencing. Recognize identical words. Scan and scan reading. Recall spelling patterns.

### FROM THE Kid Scoop LESSON LIBRARY

#### Silly News Story

Mix and match news stories to create silly stories. Select a **who**, **what**, **when**, **where**, **why** and **how** from different stories. Write a silly news story with these facts. For extra silliness, use quotes from other news stories.

Standards Link: Writing Applications: Write in a variety of forms and genres.

#### Write On!

##### Easter Bunny Spotted

Imagine you are a reporter and someone has reported seeing the Easter Bunny in your neighborhood. Write a news article about this. Be sure to tell **Who**, **What**, **When**, **Where** and **Why**.

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