

NDUS sees continued upward enrollment trend

Bismarck, N.D. – Spring enrollment across the North Dakota University System (NDUS) again climbed, showing a 1.9 percent increase in headcount from the spring 2025 semester. The headcount for the spring 2026 census stands at 45,726, while the 2025 spring headcount was 44,880. The most current NDUS enrollment reports were produced through census data validated by the system's 11 institutions.

"Our institutions' continued enrollment success tells us that students, parents and employers understand the transformative nature of higher education. In North Dakota, we offer a slate of post-secondary credentials, whether it's bachelor's, master's and doctorate degrees or certificates and apprenticeships," said NDUS Commissioner Brent Sanford. "These credentials are imperative to gaining a foothold into the workforce and thriving in the careers of the future."

Sanford highlights a recent national report published by Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce titled "The Future of Good Jobs." It says that by 2031, 72 percent of U.S. jobs will require post-secondary education or training, with a 5.25 million, college-educated worker shortage expected by 2032.

Additionally, this spring, the full-time equivalency, or FTE,

count systemwide increased by 2.7 percent compared to spring 2025. The total credit hour production also increased by 2.8 percent with 498,020 hours recorded for 2026, up from 484,388 in 2025.

Nearly all of the NDUS's 11 institutions reported enrollment gains for the spring 2026 semester.

In the fall semester for 2025, NDUS reported its highest enrollment since 2014. With a headcount of 47,552 students, the census was just short of the NDUS record in 2011, which was 48,883.

Further demographic data will be compiled for a 2026 Spring Enrollment Report, which will be available in March.

About NDUS:

The North Dakota University System is a unified system of higher education governed by the State Board of Higher Education. Organized in 1990, the system includes two research universities, four regional universities and five community colleges.

The mission of the State Board of Higher Education and the Commissioner of the North Dakota University System is to unleash the potential of higher education in the state to enhance the quality of life, and the social and economic vitality of all served by its public colleges and universities.

Amid chaotic times, Farmers & ranchers want their voices heard

(Continued from page 1)

Trade stability and export markets are critical to that sustainability, particularly for a landlocked state like North Dakota.

They want people to understand how foundational agriculture is to the economy, to food security, and to rural communities, but that it also remains widely misunderstood.

Public perception and misinformation about farming practices are rampant and create uncertainty. On the other end, policymakers on the coasts are often not directly engaged enough with agricultural producers, leading to further misunderstanding.

PolicyLink, which cut its teeth trying to address urban food deserts in places like Pennsylvania two decades ago, initiated the discussions as part of a series of listening sessions nationwide. The organization aims to help build a country that works for everyone by grounding policy in real experience, reducing polarization and reconnecting urban and rural perspectives.

Josh Kirschenbaum, a senior advisor at PolicyLink who initiated the gathering, said the biggest "aha" for him was how long it takes to build markets and how easily they can be destroyed.

"Even for me, on this quest about how to deliver democracy for all, the thread about the interplay between the market and democracy and how that shapes governing, that was extremely enlightening and powerful," Kirschenbaum said.

All the volatility impacts the generational transition of farming and ranching families across the state.

High land costs, debt, thin margins, and enormous financial risk can make it a daunting challenge to pass on a farm, leading to questions about who will continue farming in the future and what that means to food security and the communities farming supports.

While their communities know this, the wider public does not: farmers and ranchers are key to supporting local businesses, churches, schools and civic leadership. When farms disappear or consolidate, communities lose population, leadership and economic activity.

Fertilizer, fuel, machinery, insurance, and

labor costs have all increased significantly while commodity prices have stagnated or declined in recent years. These rising costs are steadily shrinking profit margins.

Attendees also raised concerns about rural health care access, rising health insurance costs, and the loss of rural hospitals, making it more difficult to sustain families in rural areas.

Policies like support for renewable fuels were cited as a major success but that growth had stalled and that policies need to evolve to support higher biofuel blends and new markets, while also addressing foreign competition.

Policies like crop insurance were also seen as essential, but incomplete. They provide a necessary safety net, but don't cover enough of a producer's potential revenue.

Telling their story

On the public misconceptions side, examples included confusion about GMOs, pesticides, fertilizers and organic farming, with producers saying they've struggled to tell their story and have allowed misinformation to fill the gap.

Most emphasize that they already prioritize stewardship and sustainability because their livelihoods depend on protecting soil, water, and land for future generations taking over their operations.

Schneider of Ashley said farmers need to get more active if they want their voices heard.

"If you've got grain or livestock and you've got a commodity in your operation that's making you financially sound, you've got to get involved and get on boards," he said.

"You've got to be at the table, not on the table, for that commodity and that makes a difference. That's the most important thing they can do."

Kirschenbaum said most people don't think that deeply about food and connect that to the policies that impact the people producing it and



Participants discuss current and future issues impacting agriculture and rural communities at a roundtable held by North Dakota News Cooperative with PolicyLink representative Josh Kirschenbaum, seated to right of Sabrina Halvorson (NDNC CEO, in orange). Photo Rusty Halvorson.

the communities they live in.

"The vulnerability and the volatility that all the externalities can have on our food systems is tremendous," he said. "I don't think Americans know that, and being able to tell that story is important."

Other attendees included Carson Klosterman, a farmer and representative of the North Dakota Corn Council; Lance Gaebe of the North Dakota Farmers Union; Dallas Loff, a farmer and representative of the North Dakota Soybean Council; Dr. Greg Lardy of NDSU; David Boehm, director of the Northern Crops Institute; generational farmer and rancher Garrett Bladow; agricultural reporter Rusty Halvorson; Monte Peterson representing the Soybean Growers Association; Jed Brazier and Tony Richards of NorthHarvest Bean Growers Association.

The event was moderated by Cally Peterson, co-chair of NDNC, and NDNC CEO Sabrina Halvorson.

The North Dakota News Cooperative is a non-profit news organization providing reliable and independent reporting on issues and events that impact the lives of North Dakotans. The organization increases the public's access to quality journalism and advances news literacy across the state. For more information about NDNC or to make a charitable contribution, please visit newscoopnd.org.

The American Legion Birthday Party!

March 27, 2026, 5:00pm

at the Legion Events Center

For all...

- Legion Members & Spouses
- Sons of the Legion & Spouses
- Auxiliary Members & Spouses

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-- PRESIDENT HARRY TRUMAN



Landfill Hours Dec. 1 - March 31
Saturdays: 10am-4pm

OPENING FOR ELLENDALE PUBLIC WORKS EMPLOYEE

The City of Ellendale is looking to hire a Public Works Employee to oversee the following maintenance to keep the City in good working order and sound condition:

- Streets
- Alleys
- Water system
- Sewer system
- Landfill areas
- General maintenance of equipment
- Mowing
- Cutting and trimming trees
- Cemetery
- Perform a variety of manual labor duties which will include all maintenance, heavy equipment operations, snow removal and other duties as required.
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationship with other employees, public officials and the public.
- The employee must occasionally lift and/or move up to 75 pounds or more.
- This job typically works 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM Monday – Friday and will be required to be on call during scheduled evenings and weekends.
- Must be legally authorized to work in the United States. No sponsorships

considered.

• A valid ND Driver's License is required and the ability to obtain a Class B CDL.

• A high school diploma/GED is required; the ability to pass and obtain all required ND State licensing and certification requirements when eligible.

• Successful applicants will be highly motivated and self-directed.

• Successful applicant will require a background inquiry.

• Experience preferred; and essential that the public works employee be service oriented.

• Must live within 30 minutes of the city limits.

• Wages DOE

Applications/Resumes will be accepted until filled, please submit to City Hall (P O Box 267 - 55 3rd Ave S - Ellendale ND 58436).

Benefits included: BCBS - Health, Vision, Dental, Retirement, Vacation, Sick Leave, On-Call pay, Overtime past 40 hrs, Garbage/Water discount if live in city limits

For further details, please contact Mayor Don Flaherty; Council Member Justin Meidinger or City Hall -701-349-3252.

Farm bankruptcies jumped 46% in 2025, debt loads & costs rise

By Lauren Cross, Investigate Midwest, February 25, 2026

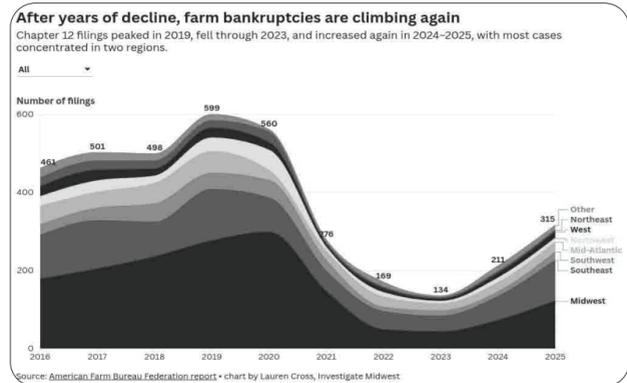
Chapter 12 farm bankruptcies rose 46% in 2025 — to 315 filings compared to 216 in 2024, marking the third year in a row that filings increased, according to the American Farm Bureau Federation.

The Midwest accounted for 121 filings, followed by the Southeast with 105, and together representing more than two-thirds of cases nationwide. Filings in both regions increased by roughly 70% compared with the previous year, based on the AFBF's analysis of U.S. courts data.

The increase comes at a time of expanded borrowing, too: Operating loan volumes rose sharply in 2025, and the average size of farm operating loan increased by 30% from the year before, according to a survey conducted by the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City. The survey found that farmers took on more credit as production costs rose and cash on hand tightened.

The rise in filings follows a period of historically low farm bankruptcies. Chapter 12 bankruptcy rates in 2022 were the lowest recorded since 2004, according to the USDA's Economic Research Service. As borrowing increased and costs remained elevated in subsequent years, the rebound in filings points to growing pressure for producers heading into 2026.

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CHEER! CONSTRUCTION IS UNDERWAY ON THE NEW FRONT OF THE HISTORIC ELLENDALE OPERA HOUSE.

(MARCH 4, 2026 PHOTO BY KEN SMITH)

NOTICE OF HEARING BY CITY OF ELLENDALE

The City of Ellendale Zoning Commission will hold a public hearing after two consecutive weekly publications of this Notice to discuss Zoning Amendments covering the City of Ellendale and relating to the change Hasz Family Subdivision, an addition to the City of Ellendale from its current zoning of Commercial to Residential-1 (R-1). The hearing shall be held the 30th day of March, 2026 at 5:50 p.m. at City Hall located at 55, 3rd Ave South, Ellendale, ND 58436. The property involved includes Hasz Family Subdivision, an addition to the City of Ellendale, located within the City of Ellendale, North Dakota, a map of which is available for inspection during the City's regular business hours. The nature, scope and purposes of the proposed changes are to change the zoning in the affected area from its current zoning of Commercial to R-1. The proposed zoning amendments are available for public inspections during the City's regular business hours at the auditor's office at 55, 3rd Ave. South, Ellendale, ND 58436. Following the public hearing, the city council shall consider holding a second reading of the proposed ordinance amendments at a city council meeting immediately following the public hearing.

BY ORDER OF THE CITY COUNCIL
(March 19 and March 26, 2026)

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2026 SUMMER BUS TOURS

- *NEW* The Ark Encounter April 27 - May 3
- Yellowstone May 31 - June 5
- Mystery Tour June 22-25
- Calgary Stampede July 6-13
- Medora/Black Hills August 4-8
- Folklorama/Winnipeg August 12-15

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St. Jude Novena

To St. Jude, Holy St. Jude, Apostle and Martyr, great in virtue and rich in Miracles, near kinsman and Jesus Christ, faithful intercessor of all who invoke your special patronage in time of need.

To you I have recourse from the depths of my heart and humbly beg to you God has given such great power to come to my assistance.

Help me in my present and urgent petition. In return I promise to make known your name and cause you to be involved. St. Jude, Pray for us and all who invoke your aid.

Amen

Say three (3) Our Fathers, three (3) Hail Mary's and Glory Be. Publication must be promised. My request has been granted. Say this Novena on nine (9) consecutive days.

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