

Military Gallery Caravan visits Ellendale, explains new Heritage Center wing

Story & photo by Ken Smith

Last Wednesday a small but highly interested audience at the American Legion Events Center got an expert briefing on the state's latest large-scale public history project. It's a substantial new addition to the Heritage Center at the state capital, which will share the state's military history, with displays ranging from plains Indian warriors to Cold War missile officers to the present day drone controllers and everything in between.

The presenter was Dale Lennon, best known as one of UND's most successful head football coaches (1999-2007). Most recently, Dale has offered his public relations skills and enthusiasm to the state to promote the bold new development at the Heritage Center.

In a series of slides, Lennon detailed the plans for the multi-million dollar expansion, with its multiple wings. Besides raising general public awareness and cultivating potential donors to the multimillion dollar project, Lennon stressed that local communities can and should share their military-related history, including photographs and written history, with the state, as it will be welcomed into archival history and perhaps become material for displays.

Ellendale is just one of 48 communities around the state on Lennon's "caravan" schedule. The communities were chosen in part so that every legislative district would be well represented. The 69th Legislative Assembly endorsed the Military Gallery project by approving a fiscal package supporting its construction.



Dale Lennon, representing the North Dakota State Historical Society, walked attendees through a slide show detailing plans for the new military addition.

The Gallery's purpose: to honor, educate & inspire

North Dakota State Historical Society--The Military Gallery will highlight connections among military life, civilian life, and the people who continue to shape North Dakota's story.

It's a world-class history experience in the making. The Military Gallery construction has begun.

This 67,000-square foot (20,000 encompassing the Military Gallery) addition to the North Dakota Heritage Center & State Museum on the state Capitol grounds will be bursting with fascinating narratives to help us understand the military's and North Dakota's influence around the world. You will encounter the first Native American military societies, acts of bravery, secret missions, humanitarian aid, and pivotal moments in history.

Whether exploring humanitarian work or conflict-based missions, these stories of North Dakota's military role in the world can help us understand how the past continues to influence the present. We will invite visitors to think about how to create a safer world, learn how to spark respectful global conversations on diverse topics, and enhance understanding of inclusivity and cultural protection strategies. Personal accounts of North Dakota's hometown heroes will help guests reflect on the concepts of passion, honor, bravery, and peace as well as inspire action.

"Freedoms we enjoy today are due to sacrifices of those who have chosen to serve in our armed forces," says Brig. Gen. Jackie Huber, North Dakota National Guard, "by sharing our history, the great stories that need to be told, we will inspire a new generation to understand the importance of the military and service."

What's inside the entire state museum addition?

This approximately 67,000-square-foot building design includes a 20,000-square-foot Military Gallery plus ample space for large events, a North Dakota National Guard Regimental Room, expanded food service, and an outdoor courtyard and amphitheater.

blueprint of State Museum expansion, including the new military gallery

Within the Military Gallery, rich immersive exhibits and engaging experiences will tell stories of our military history from early Native American practices before statehood to today. North Dakota's servicepeople are at the heart of this gallery.

(Continued on page 4)

Fertilizer, diesel woes make for difficult spring planting decisions

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"It's important to recognize that in the case of fertilizer, costs were already at elevated levels," Perdue said. "It's a major challenge for producers in terms of what it means right now going into this growing season."

One of the biggest concerns is for farmers who did not secure contracts.

"The ones who have not purchased fertilizer yet are the ones who are most financially leveraged, and they're struggling to put together an operating budget that is going to work for them," Perdue said.

Even with supply constraints and potential shortages, pre-booked fertilizer doesn't necessarily mean it will get to the farm in a timely manner.

"Another issue we have to consider, just because you contracted that fuel and that fertilizer, unless you took possession of it at the time, unless you actually took delivery, you're not guaranteed the product," Wagner said.

"I've heard a lot of people concerned about whether or not they're actually going to be able to get in everything that they contracted because it just may not be available to them," she said.

A needed shift

Higher prices and potential shortages could mean less fertilizer use and lower crop yields.

Perdue said options for producers include shifting to other commodities, including pulse crops, soybeans, lentils, and peas that may need less fertilizer.

"I think some producers are going to be making those decisions anyway, given the price pressure," Perdue said. "If there are significant shortages at the local level, you're going to see producers have to make some game time decisions on what they're planting and what their application rates are."

The Persian Gulf accounts for 36% of global supply of urea, 29% of anhydrous ammonia, 26% of diammonium phosphate (DAP) and 13% of monoammonium phosphate (MAP), almost all of which is shipped through the contested Strait of Hormuz.

"If we have fertilizer shortages, it's going to be impossible to make up for that shortfall," Perdue said. "There's no great plan B for covering that shortfall."

Looking further out, Perdue and others hope this can spur the U.S. industry to increase its domestic supply and production of fertilizers as well as more competition in the marketplace.

"The fertilizer market is heavily consolidated," Perdue said. "Four players control the vast majority of the nitrogen fertilizer market. Phosphorus, potash, those are even more heavily consolidated."

"There's been some positive movement with the federal administration investigating that, but ultimately we need to see real action to provide real relief. This level of consolidation is just leaving farmers exposed when we have market shocks like this," Perdue said.

While a shift to more domestic production would be welcome, it wouldn't happen overnight.

"Any time you can source domestically and not get caught up in any type of geopolitical or international disputes, that's better, but that's a long-term process," said Josh Gackle, chairman of the American Soybean Association.

"You don't start up a fertilizer plant in six months," Gackle said. "It's a big investment, it takes a lot of time. What we really need is just more certainty on the tradi-



Whether large or small, most farm equipment relies on ample supplies of diesel fuel to accomplish any tasks. Here, Valley Plains Equipment shows off one of its larger machines at the 2024 Applefest parade. (photo by Ken Smith)

tional supply of fertilizer and fuel products."

The addition of soybean crushing facilities in North Dakota and elsewhere has helped increase the domestic market for soybean producers and a push for more domestic production of renewable ethanol, diesel and other biofuels could also help.

"We're hoping that the industry, the crushing plants in North Dakota and others, can continue to keep their operations going and grow and expand and continue to build that domestic market for what we're growing here as farmers," said Gackle.

State support already at record levels

In mid-March, the North Dakota Industrial Commission allocated another \$100 million for the Bank of North Dakota's 2026 Farm Stability Loan Program on top of the nearly \$400 million already set aside for the program.

The total is more than double the record of \$190 million previously set aside for the program and fast approaching triple if more allocations are made.

The program helps producers restructure debts incurred in the past two years at lower interest rates.

"Producers are facing an unusual convergence of challenges, from severe weather last summer to high input costs, trade policy uncertainty and low commodity prices," said a joint statement from the Commission composed of Gov. Kelly Armstrong, Attorney General Drew Wrigley and Agriculture Commissioner Doug Goehring.

John Bitzan, Menard Family Director of the Sheila and Robert Challey Institute for Global Innovation and Growth at North Dakota State University, said the program was boosted both because of continued high input prices and also fallout from U.S. tariffs and trade retaliation from China.

"This means U.S. farmers are able to sell less of their products. That has put financial pressure on them. And now, with the current war, this is causing more distress to farmers and uncertainty as well for the future," Bitzan said.

Increased inflation also leads to producers putting off large purchases of machinery and other equipment, which impacts implement producers and dealers.

"Obviously the agricultural economy is an important part of North Dakota's economy, so negative impacts to the agricultural producers are not good for our economy," Bitzan said.

Landfill Hours : April – September

Monday & Wednesday: 3:00 PM – 8:00 PM
Tuesday & Thursday: 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM (noon)
Saturday: 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM

2026 Spring Cleanup Schedule

NO CONSTRUCTION DEBRIS, NO CURBSIDE PICKUP

| | | | |
|-----------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| Monday May 4 | 3:00 – 8:00 | Monday May 11 | 3:00 – 8:00 |
| Tuesday May 5 | 8:00 – 12:00 | Tuesday May 12 | 8:00 – 12:00 |
| Wednesday May 6 | 3:00 – 8:00 | Wednesday May 13 | 3:00 – 8:00 |
| Thursday May 7 | 8:00 – 12:00 | Thursday May 14 | 8:00 – 12:00 |
| Friday May 8 | 12:00 – 4:00 | Friday May 15 | 12:00 – 4:00 |
| Saturday May 9 | 10:00 – 4:00 | Saturday May 16 | 10:00 – 4:00 |
| Sunday May 10 | CLOSED | | |

PUBLIC NOTICES: ELLENDALE PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD MINUTES MARCH 12 & MARCH 31, 2026

ATTENTION!

THE 2026 EPS SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION WILL BE HELD TUESDAY, JUNE 2. BELOW IS A SAMPLE BALLOT. YOUR PARTICIPATION IS IMPORTANT!

Official Ballot

Ellendale Public School District No. 40
Dickey County
State of North Dakota
Tuesday, June 2, 2026

Vote for Two (2) Members for the ELLENDALE SCHOOL BOARD.

Area: WEST RURAL for a term of three (3) years.
Vote for ONE (1) name only!

Kaitlyn Kinzler

Write In
Fill In Name

AREA: CITY OF ELLENDALE for a term of three (3) years.
Vote for ONE (1) name only!

Lucas Van Zee

Kristi Gilbert

Write In
Fill in Name

MINUTES, MARCH 12, 2026

The Ellendale Public School Board met on March 12, 2026 at 8:00 p.m. with the following board members present: Michele Thorpe, Kristi Gilbert, Jeff Goehring, Val Wagner and Cresta Miller. Others present were Jeff Ringstad, Lana Norton, Cindy Rall and Allison Radermacher.

Mrs. Thorpe called the meeting to order at 8:00 p.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. She welcomed visitors Pam Cook, Randal Brockman and Dan Spellerberg. A letter of appreciation was shared from Ashley Glynn with the Kedish House. New Business i) Surplus Items and j) Business Manager Evaluations were added to the agenda.

Dan Spellerberg and Randal Brockman presented general Southeast Region Career & Technology Center information and financial facts. Information was presented on SRCTC increasing course offerings in Ellendale.

The consent agenda included the minutes, financial reports and bills as presented. Gilbert reviewed the bills and the following bills were presented for payment:

Payments

February Payroll DD 400-405, 7482-7544 Ck#16199-16212 \$305,696.03
27803 Bakken Area Skills Center 300.00 Online Coursework
27804 Rose Bennett 150.00 DOT Reimbursement
27805 Better Days Therapy and Wellness 1,225.00 Sept – Feb '25 Services
27806 Blumhardt Chevrolet 769.60 Service Vehicles
27807 Cenex Fleetcard 4,232.28 Gasoline & Diesel
27808 Central Business Systems Inc 107.00 Copier Staples
27809 Cole Papers Inc 2,254.44 Custodial Supplies
27810 Dakota Plains Credit Union 3,180.05 Books/Supplies/Safety Kits
27811 Dickey County Leader 255.75 Publishing
27812 Dickey Rural Tele Cooperative 1,553.45 Hosted Server/Phone
27813 Robert Downe 660.00 Tune Pianos
27814 Ellendale City of 1,830.48 Utilities
27815 Ellendale Community Ambulance 120.00 CPR/AED Training
27816 Ellendale Grocery 485.65 Lab Supplies
27817 Ellendale True Value 325.88 Custodial Supplies
27818 EPS Activity Fund 50.00 Pre-school Application Fee
27819 EPS Activity Fund 100.00 ND JH All State Band Meals
27820 Farmers Union Oil Co 303.35 Custodial Gas, Def, LP Tank
27821 James River Special Education 24,470.96 4th Qrt Assessment
27822 Jones School Supply Co Inc. 119.56 Graduation Cords
27823 Josten's Inc 155.95 Diplomas
27824 Leaf 448.00 Copier/Printer Lease
27825 Mackin Educational Resources 637.59 Library Books
27826 Mertz Lumber & Supply 78.92 Supplies
27827 Midamerica Books 469.67 Library Books
27828 Aubrey Middlestead 75.00 GUK Childcare

27829 Mission Mechanical, Inc 2,216.67 Preventative Maintenance
27830 ND Center for Distance Education 2,648.00 Online Coursework
27831 NDPSE – Mathcounts 80.00 Mathcounts Reg
27832 NDSBA Legal Direct 916.50 Jan-Feb Legal Services
27833 Macy Norton 75.00 GUK Childcare
27834 O.P.E.E.R.A, Inc. 300.00 Lobby Rental
27835 Oakes Truck and Trailer Center 2,167.92 # 2 Repairs
27836 Olson's Pest Technicians 175.00 Monthly Service Fee
27837 Performance Oils 235.20 DEF Fluid
27838 Petty Cash 25.15 Postage
27839 Price Plumbing 100.00 Clear Floor Drain
27840 Quadiant Finance 200.00 Postage
27841 Radisson Hotel Bismarck 454.00 Principal Conf Lodging
27842 Jeffery Ringstad 427.70 Nov-Jan Mileage
27843 Sanford Health Occupational Clinic 129.00 DOT Testing Admin.
27844 Southeast Region Career & Tech Center 13,154.00 4 Qrt Assessment
27845 Cassandra Taylor 143.92 Gear-up for Kinder.
27846 Us Foodservice 109.96 PT Conf Cookies
27847 Valley Plains Equipment 940.67 Repair Tractor Broom/Chain
27848 Verizon Wireless 443.15 Hot Spot Billing
20260227 MDU 15,745.51 Electricity
20260310 TMS 53.55 Monthly Service Fees
20260311 EPS 335.71 eFunds Fees
Total \$85,435.19

It was motioned by Goehring, seconded by Miller to approve the items on the consent agenda. On a roll call vote, all voted yes. Motion carried.

EPS Spotlight:

- Riley G sang the National Anthem on Thursday (3/5/26) night of the Class A Girls' Basketball Tournament
- Aubrey M has represented EHS at several state tournaments recently, handing out awards, as an NDHSAA Distinguished Student finalist and was named Honorable Mention to the ND Academic All-State team
- Madeline T, Max L, and Wes C for advancing to the state competition in April with their National History Day projects.
- The Cardinal Boys' Basketball All-Ac-

ademic Team which includes Landon S, Kaden L, DJ W, Samuel R, Griffin R, Eli W, Max L, Elijah G, and Aubrey M.

- Brian Vance for being named District 2 Boys Basketball Coach of the Year
- DJ W and Samuel R for being named to the District 2 All-District team
- Elementary teachers and students for kicking off Reading Month with a "Go for the Gold" theme
- The Thunder Wrestlers that placed at state - Ivan C (2nd), Walker M (4th), and Riffin S and Drew T (5th)
- Riffin S, Ivan C, Liam G and Annah T were named to ND Wrestling Academic All-State
- EPS students that placed at FCCLA Star Events - Charlie N silver in Career Investigation, Kendra B bronze in Professional Presentation, and Natalee S and Mackenzie G received silver in Event Management. All students will advance to the state competition
- The District 2 All-Academic Team for girls basketball named EPS students: Macy N, Madeline T, Kinsey M, Macyn G, Alivia K, Mya G, Sadie C, and Aubrey M. Mya G for being named to the All-District 2 Girls Basketball team
- Annah T and Liam G for qualifying to the ND State Wrestling tournament
- Aidyn B won the EPS Spelling Bee
- Brian Vance was name Region 1 Coach of the Year

The Collaborative Bargaining, Budget & Finance, School Safety and Student & Curriculum Committees shared details from the last meetings.

Ringstad shared Open Ed onboarding information as well as grants he is currently pursuing for district needs.

Rall reported on graduating class projections, incoming 6th grade enrollment, and attendance data. NDSA testing is being scheduled. She also shared an update on conference attendance and planning for the 2026-27 high school class schedule. Teacher observations and evaluations are in progress. The E-Rate application has been submitted, and Infinite Campus training is underway.

Radermacher reported on enrollment and attendance. Behavioral Health services continue to support students. Conference attendance was strong at both locations. ACCESS testing has been completed, with NDA+ summative testing scheduled. Staff are continuing social studies curriculum review and colony teachers are reviewing CLE curriculum alignment with state standards.

Teachers also participated in Learning Walks with support from SEEC staff. She shared upcoming events.

Vance provided a written report which included on coach openings and spring sport participation.

There was discussion regarding potential offerings through SRCTC to expand available courses. It was moved by Goehring and seconded by Gilbert to continue formulating a contract with SRCTC and bring it back to the board for consideration. On a roll call vote, all voted yes. Motion carried.

Motioned by Wagner, seconded by Gilbert to approve the Public School Change Request Form-Reconfiguration for a K-8 Virtual Academy. On a roll call vote, all voted yes. Motion carried.

Wagner motioned, seconded by Miller to approve the 2026-2027 Master Negotiated Agreement and to release the presented teaching contracts for the 2026-2027 school year and approve acceptance upon signed receipt before the deadline set forth in NDCC. On a roll call vote, all voted yes. Motion carried.

Motioned by Miller, seconded by Goehring to table the Tech Support Specialist contract to next month's school board meeting.

It was motioned by Miller, seconded by Goehring to approve these June 2, 2026 school board election workers; Joyce Grueneich-Clerk, Lori Mattheis-Clerk, Betty Martin-Judge and Arlene Steiger-Judge. On a roll call vote, all voted yes. Motion carried.

Gilbert motioned, seconded by Wagner to sponsor an Ellendale Chamber Table for the April 9th event. On a roll call vote, all voted yes. Motion carried.

Upon review of the individual evaluations, all board members have rated superintendent Mr. Jeff Ringstad as satisfactory for the performance areas of Relationship with the Board, Recruitment/Retention of Staff, Supervision of Licensed & Non-Licensed Staff, Identification & Implementation of Board Policy Needs, Financial Management Skills, Educational Leadership, Relationship with Students & Parents, Relationship with Community, Effective Records Management and Supervision of Building & Grounds, Transportation, and Student Safety. It was motioned by Miller, seconded by Wagner to approve the above performance areas as satisfactory. On a roll call vote, all voted yes. Motion carried.

Wagner moved, seconded by Miller, to approve payment of invoices from Co-op Architecture for \$8,588.00 from

the building fund, Foerster Testing for \$6,030.00 from the building fund as well as the Olaf Anderson Construction invoice for \$97,366.50 using loan proceeds. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

Ringstad presented a list of surplus items from the Maple River Colony School. Miller moved, and Wagner seconded, to declare the items surplus property and authorize their sale or disposal as appropriate. A roll call vote was taken, and all members voted in favor. Motion carried.

Discussion was held on the completion timeline for the Business Manager Evaluation.

Next Regular School Board Meeting is Monday, April 13, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.

Since there was no other business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 10:50 p.m.

Lana Norton, Business Manager Formally Approved by the Board

(April 23, 2026)

MINUTES, MARCH 31, 2026

The Ellendale Public School Board met in special session on March 31, 2026 at 7:00 a.m. with the following board members present: Kristi Gilbert, Jeff Goehring, Cresta Miller and Michele Thorpe. Absent was Val Wagner. Cindy Rall, Allison Radermacher, Lana Norton and Jeff Ringstad were also present.

Mrs. Thorpe called the meeting to order at 7:01 a.m. Pledge of Allegiance. There were no communications or visitors.

Ringstad shared financial and scheduling information from SRCTC. It was motioned by Gilbert, seconded by Goehring to offer an in-house ag program through SRCTC, maintain our membership and offer courses through the center in Oakes without providing transportation. On a roll call vote, all voted yes. Motion carried.

Miller motioned, seconded by Gilbert to approve two open enrollments from the Williston School District as well as one from the Harvey School District. On a roll call vote, all voted yes. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:32 a.m.

Lana Norton, Business Manager Formally Approved by the Board

(April 23, 2026)