

Letter to the Editor

The *Leader* welcomes well-written letters to the editor reflecting various points of view. Submissions under 200-300 words are preferred and are most effective; longer ones may be edited for space and brevity. The publication of a letter does not necessarily reflect the opinions of the staff or owners of the *Leader*. There is no charge for letters to the editor. Please do not send anonymous letters. Send to dcleader@drtel.net

No More NDAs

A data center is coming to your town. If North Dakota continues down the same path, you won't find out about it until it's too late to ask questions. A tactic multi-billion dollar out-of-state corporations use is to coerce elected officials into signing non-disclosure agreements (NDAs). Safeguards should be in place so that cities, townships, counties, and neighbors don't end up fighting over who gets the tax revenue from developments. NDAs legally prevent a person from discussing information with anyone not included in the NDA until it expires. If they break the NDA, they can be sued.

Why do data center companies need NDAs? To protect "trade secrets"? It's no secret that North Dakota is a prime location for data centers. Our weather is cold, our land and water is plentiful, and our township ordinances are relaxed or non-existent. Probably most appealing, the Industrial Commission is offering up hundreds of millions of YOUR dollars in incentives, with a neon sign on the capitol: "Open for Business".

Projects are best when the local community leads them, and successful projects work out community benefit agreements before ground is broken. Our communities and resources are taken advantage of when projects are rushed along in secrecy with public officials meeting behind closed doors. Multi-billion dollar out-of-state corporations should not be allowed to sign NDAs with your elected officials. As your Agriculture Commissioner and a member of the Industrial Commission, I will be transparent and honest with the people I am elected to represent.

Vern Thompson, 701-400-6767

Editor's note: Vern Thompson is seeking the office of North Dakota Secretary of Agriculture as the Democratic/NPL candidate. Doug Goehring, representing the Republican party, is seeking re-election to that office. We hereby invite Doug to also send us a letter for publication.

Do federal funds make up about one-third of North Dakota's state spending?

Yes. Federal funds made up about 31.3% of North Dakota's total state spending in fiscal year 2024, the most recent year for which full data is available.

The North Dakota News Cooperative is partnering with Gigafact to produce timely Fact Briefs, which are quick, evidence-based fact checks about trending claims relevant to North Dakota.

Data from the National Association of State Budget Officers shows that federal dollars accounted for nearly one-third of the state's total expenditures that year.

Federal funding supports major areas of state spending, including programs such as Medicaid, transportation, and education.

Nationally, federal funds accounted for about 34% of total state spending in fiscal year 2024, slightly higher than North Dakota's share.

Federal support levels vary from year to year, but federal funding consistently makes up a notable portion of state budgets across the country.

This fact brief is responsive to conversations such as this one. About Fact Briefs:

GIGAFACT

Fact Briefs are bite-sized, well-sourced explanations that offer clear "yes" or "no" answers to questions, confusions, and unsupported claims circulating online. They rely on publicly available data and documents, often from the original source. Fact Briefs are written and published by newsrooms in the Gigafact network. Each brief is limited to 150 words or fewer and is not intended to provide an in-depth analysis, but rather to deliver concise, definitive answers grounded in verified information.

Sources: National Association of State Budget Officers: State Expenditure Report

North Dakota Office of Management and Budget: Annual Comprehensive Financial Report

Congressional Research Service: Federal Grants to State and Local Governments, A Historical Perspective

KFF (state-reported SFY2024 data): Total State Expenditures by Fund (in millions)

Opportunities abound for women in agriculture in North

(Continued from page 1)

While growing up on a farm where her own mother took a very active role, and seeing her own operation as a 50/50 partnership with her husband, she did say she felt women are becoming more well received in ranching.

"Independent women who want to start their own operations, there's more of them all the time, so kudos to them," Feiring said.

Ashley Bruner, manager of Dakota Angus near Drake, said one of the reasons she and her husband Travis started the company was to potentially provide a future career pathway to some of their four children, three of whom are girls.

"We know that for all four to come back to the farm is not realistic in today's world," said Bruner, who sees her oldest daughter has the most interest in potentially working in the operation long-term.

"She loves being outside, being with the animals, she likes learning alongside her dad," Bruner said.

Active on the board of the North Dakota Angus Association, Bruner said she has seen more women taking on leading roles in operations during the past several years and is amazed at the work they do.

"There are some women who are the main breeders in their operation, it's not their husband," Bruner said. "I'm just in awe and think it is so great that they're the ones who came back to the ranch to take over from the previous generation and continue building that legacy for their future."

Many of the recent interns coming through the association internship program have been young women, she said.

"They're not afraid to do the work that's out there, they're not afraid to learn, they want to be involved," Bruner said. "Thirty, forty years ago, that wasn't a woman's job."

Amber Smith, co-executive director for the nonprofit Women in Ranching, who ranches in Eastern Montana, helped form the organization as part of an effort to provide skill-building programs and resources to new women ranchers, who make up about 60% of those they serve.

The organization came out of having been in other meetings with women farmers and ranchers 19 to 70 years old who were forward-facing or leading agricultural operations, but were voicing limiting beliefs about their own value.

"What women continue to articulate is we want more hands-on skill building, we want more opportunities to learn from one another, we want more opportunities to gather, we want more women ranching to be much bigger," Smith said.

New ranchers are faced with difficulties breaking in and finding it harder to get land of their own due to high land prices and large tracts being held by the very wealthy, but opportunities are there for leasing or working a ranch to gain valuable experience, Smith said.

And women appear most interested, she said, so it makes sense to serve that clientele.

"I'm hearing from colleges, universities and nonprofits and ranches that host internship programs and they're now trying to diversify their programs to include male students, because most of their applicants are women," Smith said.

Maggie Keith, a former PBS host who returned to Kentucky 20 years ago to start a regenerative beef operation, Foxhollow Farm, after concerns about how meat was being raised, said she had a "big learning curve" from not growing up farming day to day.

"The culture of agriculture is what really inspired me and I believe that's why women are so drawn to the regenerative movement," Keith said, adding she wished organizations like Women in Ranching existed when she started.

"It definitely was a lot of hands-on learning early on," Keith said. "I remember going to my first cattlemen's association meetings and not looking like anyone there and really feeling like an outsider."

Remarks that came her way saying she wouldn't last, that she was a rich kid playing this game, that she'd just have a freezer full of ground beef, didn't wear her down.

"That really motivated me, it didn't discourage me," Keith said. "It made me seek out more generational farmers to talk to and really made me committed to building this model and to share this model and prove that a regenerative process actually could work."

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.



EHS musicians earn Outstanding Performance awards at State Music

By Aidan Thurber

On Saturday May 2, a group of nine EHS musicians, along with music teacher Charlene Blondo, travelled to Bismarck State College for the North Dakota State Small Group Music Contest.

Out of the eleven performances our group of Cardinals sang or played, nine of them earned STAR ratings from the judges and two of them earned Excellent ratings. STAR ratings are the second highest you can achieve, with excellent ratings following after. However, those being performances by John Blondo and Eli Wagner.

John Blondo earned an Outstanding award for his Tuba solo, playing *Suite for Tuba* by Don Haddad. Eli Wagner earned an Outstanding award for his Alto Saxophone solo, playing *Neopolitan Tarantella* by Alfred Zambarano.



EPS musicians on the steps of the BSC National Energy Center of Excellence. Top row: John Blondo, Samuel Hawker, Eli Wagner; Middle row: Mackenzie Gunn, Carly Kuntz, Shaya Steinwand, Hannah Morehead; Bottom row: Katherine Preus and Natalee Schmidt.

Former UND professor part of group publishing book on ND Class B wrestling

By Tom Miller - Grand Forks Herald

As a senior in high school in 1974, Frank White went undefeated on his way to a North Dakota Class B state championship in wrestling for Walhalla High School. He later spent 34 years as a sociology professor at UND. One of his popular courses was Sociology of Sport.

Those two passions have met for his latest project. White, along with Kim Knodel and Rod Volk, are publishing a book titled *North Dakota Mat Legends* which covers human interest stories and the history of North Dakota Class B wrestling.

White, who's a Mayville State alum along with both of his coauthors, said the hope is to publish three books, with the next two covering Class A wrestling in North Dakota and the newly formed girls division. All profits from the books will be used to support youth wrestling around North Dakota with camps and scholarships.

"I've often thought about (this book) because I wrestled in high school, and I thought about writing a comprehensive book on the history of Class B wrestling," White said. "I thought with my networking I could do it, but it was always on the back burner because of teaching, speaking and everything else I was doing."

"During one of my classes at UND, we talked about culture, leadership and program building. What I noticed is that was one of the most popular units. Like we see football is kind of religion in Texas, basketball in Kentucky and Tobacco Road ... well, North Dakota, Class B, I wouldn't say it's a religion, but it's a pretty close-knit family."

White and his partners spent the last year traveling the state and collecting stories — from wrestlers, coaches, statisticians, cheerleaders and more.

"I wanted to do the human interest side," White said. "I didn't want to write just another sports book on statistics. I want to do the culture, which is my strength. I want to do human interest stories, so it's not just ex-wrestlers that would read it but maybe parents, younger wrestlers. I want to include inspiring stories that people would pick it up and read through several stories."

White, who had a background in publishing writings in academic journals, said there was a lot to learn on the fly as the group learned the ins and outs of publishing a book. "I've given two years of my retirement to this project, as (Knodel and Volk) have as well," White said. "But it's a labor of love. It's been exciting. It's been fun to reconnect with these guys. We had to learn about writing in the type of journal. We wrestled back and forth about it. In the end, we came up with a format that we're very pleased with, and it's very, very eclectic. It's not one format but a lot of different styles. It'll be an easy read and the subjects change quite a bit."

Books can be purchased online at ndmatlegends.com.

ABBREVIATED NOTICE OF INTENT TO AMEND ADMINISTRATIVE RULES RELATING TO N.D. ADMIN. CODE CHAPTER 33-44-01 MEDICAL MARIJUANA

TAKE NOTICE that the North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services will hold a public hearing to address proposed changes to the N.D. Admin. Code chapter 33-44-01, related to definitions, expiration of registry identification cards, compassion center certification fees, dispensary premises, manufacturing facility labeling, and standards for concentration compliance testing, at 1:30 p.m. on Friday, June 19, 2026, in Bismarck, N.D. in AV Room 210, located on the second floor of the Judicial Wing of the State Capitol.

Copies of the proposed rules and the regulatory analysis relating to these rules may be requested by telephoning (701) 328-2311. Written or oral data, views, or arguments may be entered at the hearing or sent to: Rules Administrator, North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services, State Capitol - Judicial Wing, 600 E. Boulevard Ave., Dept. 325, Bismarck, ND 58505-0250. Written data, views, or arguments must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on Monday, June 29, 2026.

ATTENTION PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: If you plan to attend the hearing and will need special facilities or assistance relating to a disability, please contact the Department of Health and Human Services at the above telephone number or address at least two weeks prior to the hearing.

Dated this 30th day of April, 2026.

PUBLIC NOTICES

FULLERTON CITY COUNCIL

CITY OF FULLERTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING
Wednesday, April 1st at 8:01 p.m.

The City Council met at 8:01 pm at Fullerton City Hall. Present: D. Hahn, B. Peterson, S. Peterson, P. Peterson, J. Glynn.

New Business
First reading of Crew Housing Facility Ordinance was read. JG made a motion to accept the first reading, DH seconded the motion. Mayor Peterson did a roll call vote with a unanimous yes vote.

Next Meeting
Second reading of Crew Housing Facility Ordinance will be held APRIL 9TH, 2026 AT 5:00 PM. AT CITY HALL.

Agenda will include a second reading of Crew Housing Ordinance.

SP moved to adjourn at 8:25 p.m., JG seconded motion.

Respectfully submitted,
Jordan Schoneman
City Auditor

(May 14, 2026)

CITY OF FULLERTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING
Thursday, April 9th, 2026 at 5:00 P.M.

The City Council met at 5:00 pm at Fullerton City Hall. Present: D. Hahn, B. Peterson, S. Peterson, P. Peterson, J. Glynn.

New Business
Second reading of Crew Housing Facility Ordinance was read. JG made a motion to accept the new ordinance, PP seconded the motion. Mayor Peterson did a roll call vote with a unanimous yes vote to approve the new ordinance.

JG moved to adjourn at 5:12 p.m., SP

seconded motion.

Respectfully submitted,
Jordan Schoneman
City Auditor

(May 14, 2026)

CITY OF FULLERTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING
Tuesday, April 7th, 2026 4:00 p.m.

The City Council met at 4:19 pm at Fullerton City Hall. Present: D. Hahn, S. Peterson, P. Peterson, & J. Schoneman.

Minutes & Reports, PP moved, DP second to approve minutes and reports as presented, carried.

New Business
Received Liquor License back from Ranch House Redemption – gave them the license and collected fee

Second reading for the Record of Franchise Proceedings for Montana-Dakota Utilities Co was done and approved by governing body – DH moved, PP second to approve, carried

Board approved tax equalization assessments

Bills: PP moved, DH second to pay bills as listed, carried:
MDU \$485.52

Waste Management	\$1279.76
Fullerton Fire Dept.	\$500.00
DC Leader	\$30.45
DC Treasurer	\$378.50

PP moved, DH second to adjourn the meeting at 4:41 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Jordan Schoneman
City Auditor

(May 14, 2026)

ELLENDALE CITY COUNCIL

City Council Special Meeting
April 27, 2026

6:00 pm – City Hall and Zoom Virtual
This meeting was held at City Hall and virtual Zoom Meeting option was also available.

Council members in attendance: Lee, Denison via zoom, Crabtree, Belgarde and Meidinger. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Absent: Langeliers.

City Employees present: Mayor Flaherty; Auditor Gunn; Deputy Auditor Schmidt; Wade Senger, Interstate Engineering and Attorney Kelly via zoom.

Others attending: Separate sign-in sheet available

Public Comment: None

Wade: EMS Building: Construction winding down, completing punch list items. Change order for moving a fire hydrant, epoxy floors, and DRN door access and networking equipment for a total of \$74,052.59. Denison moves, Lee seconds to approve change order #4. Roll call vote: Meidinger, Lee, Denison, Belgarde, Crabtree- yes. Absent: Langeliers. Motion carries.

Wade-City Wide Street Project: Details of city street project discussed. Meidinger moves, Crabtree seconds Resolution of Inefficiencies of Protest. Roll call vote: Lee, Denison, Belgarde, Crabtree, Meidinger- Yes. Absent-Langeliers. Motion carries. Lee moves, Crabtree seconds to approve Resolution Approving Planning and Specifications. Roll call vote: Denison, Belgarde, Crabtree, Meidinger, Lee- yes. Absent: Langeliers. Motion carries. Lee moves, Belgarde seconds to approve Resolution Directing Advertisement for Bids for St. Improvement District 2026-1 of the City of Ellendale. Roll call vote: Belgarde, Crabtree, Meidinger, Lee, Denison- yes. Absent: Langeliers. Motion carries.

Respectfully submitted,
Jordan Schoneman
City Auditor

(May 14, 2026)

Langeliers arrives at 6:43 PM
Cemetery Mowing: Insufficient bids turned in for mowing cemetery received. Attorney Fallon and Auditor Gunn to work on proposal advertisement to go out with a deadline of submitting proposals by May 8, 2026, to City Hall ahead of the regular May 11, 2026, meeting that following Monday.

Senior Center Remodel Update: City of Ellendale received grant from Applied Digital Cares in the amount of \$15,000 for this project. Discussion with J. Elliot on the specifications of remodeling Senior Center building. Meidinger moves, Belgarde seconds to hire Jason Elliot to do a thorough inspection of the building to identify the materials of the roof decking up to \$5000. Roll call vote: Crabtree, Meidinger, Lee, Denison, Belgarde, Langeliers- yes. Motion carries. Belgarde moves, Meidinger seconds to have energy assessment report completed to apply for a grant. Roll call vote: Meidinger, Lee, Denison, Belgarde, Langeliers, Crabtree. Motion carries.

Statement of Support: A statement of support stating that the City of Ellendale supports hiring individuals who have Veteran background and if they work for Reserves or the Guard and they were to be activated that we would keep their position for them. Denison moves, Crabtree seconds to sign Statement of Support. All in favor, aye. Motion carries.

Next Regular Meeting: April 13, 2026, at 6 PM.

Meeting adjourned at 7:27 PM

Donald Flaherty, Mayor
Nicole Gunn, Auditor

(Minutes subject to corrections and approval at the next regular meeting.)

(May 14, 2026)

Regular Landfill Hours : April – September
Monday & Wednesday: 3:00 PM – 8:00 PM
Tuesday & Thursday: 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM