



Ellendale Area Foundation grants



Generously supporting the Ellendale Community Ambulance fund for a new ambulance, Foundation board members Monica Mertz, Lana Norton, Chad Durheim and Lori Young (Foundation board members) present a check to ambulance crew member Wade Anliker



Generously supporting the Ellendale Area Food Pantry, Foundation board members Lori Young, Monica Mertz and Jeff Glynn present a check to Pantry board members Dee Haugen and Shilo Comeau. This gift will help pay down the outstanding balance on the new addition to the food pantry building, which has significantly upgraded its ability to serve the area. These are only two of larger set of grants approved for 2026 by the Foundation. Other grants will be noted in subsequent issues of this newspaper. Our area is fortunate to have this resource to draw on to assist worthy nonprofit causes that have significant benefits.

After a year at EPS, Superintendent Jeff Ringstad shares update

Interview by Aidan Thurber

Last year, we had the privilege of interviewing and welcoming to the community EPS's new superintendent, Mr. Jeff Ringstad. It's been almost a year since the Ringstad's moved to Ellendale, and I'm sure there's many of us—not just school students—who can say we are thankful to have he and his wife around. They provide the community with not only great leadership and teaching in our local school, but Mr. Ringstad's hearty laugh and Mrs. Ringstad's kind heart have continually kept spirits high wherever they go.

Below, we interviewed Mr. Ringstad for a second time to share updates on his life, his job, and the future of Ellendale Public School. I began with asking him, **How was your first year in Ellendale?**

"It was great. A lot to learn about the school and how public schools function—from budget to policy to everything. There were times I felt like I was drinking from a fire hose, but good people around me helped guide me and kept me on the right track. Getting to know board members, principals, teachers, parents—everybody sharing the common goal of having a great school and educating kids. The people made it fantastic."

How does it compare to your previous superintendent jobs?

"It was different. I'm from a private Christian school where the first mission was not academics. That was there, but it was different. It's also different in how a public school functions with a school board. There we had a very large board that was mostly inactive. Some months we had meetings, some months we didn't. Here, it's a very supportive but active board. That was a learning curve for me—to trust and lean on my board."

What surprised you this past year?

"A few things. I've often said that one of the worst ways to lead a school is through a lot of initiatives, because schools often don't buy into them. So, when I was told we were a BARR school here, I thought, 'Here we go.'

"However, I was surprised. BARR was terrific. The data I saw, the evidence, and hearing from people about what BARR had done for the school—how everybody bought into the program—were all very good.

"BARR [Building Assests, Reducing Risk] is a method to create stronger community relationships: student to student, teacher to teacher, teacher to student. It strengthens relationships and builds community. I've seen it do good things. When community is built, students want to impress their teachers and give their all. They don't want to disappoint teachers because a relationship exists. BARR has done a good job at that.

"We see it in the data: improved attendance numbers, fewer



Jeff Ringstad outside his office at Ellendale Public School, wearing a red shirt fit for a Cardinal. (photo by Aidan Thurber)

failing marks or D's, and fewer behavioral issues. All of those numbers have improved compared to the year before we became a BARR school. Building community where we're relying on and trusting each other, and showing gratitude, makes the time spent very effective."

What is something you and your staff are looking to improve at EPS over the next couple years?

"What I say today will probably be the same in five years: communication. In every school and every walk of life, no matter how well you're communicating, there's room for improvement. For me, it's communicating with committees, staff, parents, principals, my office, the business manager—everybody. I want to grow in improving communication."

Is there anything you'd like to tell us about future EPS projects?

"As far as things in the school, we're going to have ag classes for the first time next year in-house, so I'm excited about that."

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Ellendale Historical Society to host Father's Day German Meal Sunday

The Ellendale Historical Society will present a Father's Day German-Russian family meal on Sunday, June 21 at the Ellendale Opera House from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

The event celebrates both Father's Day and the patriotic contributions of men and women from the area. Tickets are \$15 per plate, with children 5 and under admitted free.

The menu features traditional German-Russian dishes including wurst for Forbes Sausage, rindswurst (beef franks), kartoffel (mashed potatoes with beef gravy), sauerkraut, knoephla, and kuchen, along with wurzelbier



(root beer) and kaffe (coffee).

At 12:30 p.m. Ken Smith will deliver a slide presentation and talk on German-Russian heritage, with special emphasis on the patriotism of the German-Russian Americans, including their history of military service.



Election results for June 9 Primary



Once again, the Ellendale Church of the Nazarene offered its spacious, centrally located facilities for a whole day of polling. (photo by Ken Smith)

By Ken Smith

Poll workers had a busy day last Tuesday, as a steady flow of residents came to cast votes for city and county officers, and to help determine their party's candidates for statewide office for the November 3 election. Incumbents dominated overall with a few exceptions.

For Ellendale, Mayor Don Flaherty received a vote of confidence, running uncontested. Bruce Crabtree and Wade Anliker won City Council seats, as did Thomas Tiegs, who received 138 write-in votes.

On the county level, Kacey Holm and Brandon Carlson were re-elected as commissioners, while Adam Roney came out ahead of longtime commissioner John Hokana. Kim Radermacher edged challenger Jeff Diemert for State's Attorney for the primary, while Treasurer Wonada Lematta won fewer votes than Amy Mittleider. These candidates will be on the fall ballot.

On the measures ballot, county voters approved Constitutional Measure 1, which limits to one the number of subjects that can be placed on a ballot initiative. In this, they agreed with the majority of North Dakota voters. Oakes voters approved a \$6.3 million investment to update their public school.

On the party ballot, Dickey County's status as a Republican stronghold was again confirmed, with nearly three times as many voting the Republican column as in the Democratic or nonpartisan column.

On the state level, turnout was low at about 20.8% (roughly 125,000 votes out of 600,000 eligible voters). Republicans dominated most races with several key contests decided.

The U.S. House incumbent Representative Julie Fedorchak, endorsed by President Trump, easily defeated challenger Alex Balazs, winning 72.8% (59,667 votes) to Balazs's 27.1% (22,182 votes). On the Democratic side, Trygve Hammer ran unopposed. Fedorchak remains heavily favored for November.

Incumbent Michael Howe (R) was unopposed for Secretary of State. Democrat Ryan Braunberger also advanced unopposed.

Other statewide offices saw mostly uncontested or incumbent-favored Republican primaries: Attorney General Drew Wrigley, Agriculture Commissioner Doug Goehring, and Tax Commissioner Brian Kroshus cruised through. Public Service Commission races featured incumbent wins, with Sheri Haugen-Hoffart (64.4%) and Jill Kringstad (54.3%) prevailing over challengers.

For State Superintendent of Public Instruction (nonpartisan), incumbent Levi Bachmeier led with 55.5% (59,268 votes), advancing alongside Tracy Layne Foss (29.9%). Charles Tuttle took 14.4%.

Constitutional Measure 1 (single-subject rule for initiatives & amendments) passed decisively with 66.4% Yes.

The primary featured some incumbent legislator upsets in legislative races, but statewide results reinforced Republican strength heading into the November general election.

2026 Dickey County Primary Election

Unofficial results Courtesy of the Dickey County Auditor
Ballots Cast: Republican 890, Dem-NPL 231, Nonpartisan 78, Total 1,199

Republican Primary Section

Representative in Congress: Julie Fedorchak, 603, Alex Balazs, 269 Write-Ins 2, Total 874
Secretary of State: Michael Howe 815, Write-ins 3, total 818
Attorney General: Drew Wrigley 815, Write-Ins 1, total 816
Agriculture Commissioner: Doug Goehring 820, Write-Ins 8, Total 828
Public Service Commissioner: Sheri Haugen-Hoffart 502, Deven Styczynski 327, Write-Ins 1 Total 830
Public Service Commissioner (2-Year) Jill Kringstad 445, Chris Olson 400 Write-Ins 2, Total 847
Tax Commissioner: Brian Kroshus 805, Write-Ins 2 Total 807

Democratic Primary Section

Representative in Congress: Trygve Hammer 225, Write-Ins 0
Secretary of State: Ryan Braunberger 225, Write-Ins 1, Totals 226
Attorney General: Tim Lamb 222, Write-Ins 0
Agriculture Commissioner: Vern Thompson 225, Write-Ins 0
Public Service Commissioner: John M. Pederson 223 Write-Ins 0
Public Service Commissioner (2-Year), Scott Kelsh 229, Write-Ins 0
Tax Commissioner: Mark Nelson, 224, Write-Ins 0

Nonpartisan Section

Superintendent of Public Instruction: Levi Bachmeier 593, Tracy Layne Foss 292, Charles Tuttle 136, Write-Ins 3, Total 1,024
Justice of the Supreme Court (10-Year): Jerod Tufts 631, Ariston E Johnson 336, Write-Ins 4, Totals 971
Justice of the Supreme Court (8-Year): Douglas A Bahr 988, Write-Ins Totals 2, Total 990
Judge of the District Court No. 1 SE Judicial District: James T Shockman 1,012, Write-Ins 1, Total 1,013
County Commissioner District 1: Kacey Holm 1,018, Write-Ins 21, Total 1,039
County Commissioner District 3: Brandon Carlson 1,039, Write-Ins 15, Total 1,054
County Commissioner District 5: John M Hokana 446, Adam Roney 675, Write-Ins 3, Total 1,124

County Auditor: Wanda Sheppard 1,054, Write-In 6, Total Votes Cast 1,060
County State's Attorney Kimberly J Radermacher 598, Jeffrey Diemert 534, Write-Ins 2, Total 1,134
County Recorder: Kelly K Schmidt 1,057, Write-Ins 0
County Treasurer: Amy Mittleider 557, Wonada Lematta 538 Write-Ins 6, Total 1,101
County Sheriff: Chris Estes 1,003, Write-Ins 56, Totals 1,059
County Official Newspaper: Dickey County Leader 1,049, Total 1,049
Ellendale Mayor: Donald Flaherty 193, Write-Ins 47, Total 240
Monango Mayor: Austin Smith 3, Write-Ins 1, Total 4
Oakes Mayor: Douglas Sitzler 348, Write-Ins 12, Total 360
Forbes Council Member (2): Ty Bertsch 13, Dennis Schrum 12, Write-Ins 9, Total 34
Fullerton Council Member (2): Steven R Peterson 5, Jacob Glynn 7, Write-Ins 1, Total 13
Ellendale Council Member (3) Bruce Crabtree 162, Wade Anliker 224, Write-Ins 138, Total 524
Oakes Council Member: Dylan Hollingsworth 332, Write-Ins 74, Total 406
Ludden Council Member: Charles German 6, Write-Ins 8, Total 14
Monango Council Member (1): Jasmine Smith 3, Write-Ins 1, Total 4
Oakes Council Member 2-Year (1): Write-Ins 35, Total 35
Oakes Park Board Member 2-Year (1): Write-Ins 24, Total 24
Ellendale Park Board Member (2): Kerry Waldo 251, Write-Ins 74, Total, 325
Fullerton Park Board Member (3): Deborah Hahn 7, Blake Peterson 7, Christine K Peterson 7, Total 21
Oakes Park Board Member (3): Jason Paradis 263, Andrew Brewer 295, Ed Wentworth 301, Write-Ins 14, Total 873
School Board Member Rural West of Highway 1 (1): Drew Courtney 405, Sheila Nagel 242, Write-Ins 0, Total 647
School Board Member Rural at Large (1): Brian Seyer 541, Write-Ins 28, Totals 569
Constitutional Measure No. 1: Yes 749, No 364 Total 1,113
Oakes School District #41 School District Measure No. 1: Yes 405, No 251, Totals 656

Duo bikers' 'Whooper Highway' to document whooping crane's plight

Two bicyclists passing through North Dakota around June 16

By Michael Staadaert, North Dakota News Cooperative

Andy Caven often describes a common reaction to seeing a whooping crane in the wild. For the average person, seeing the rare bird is akin to witnessing a full solar eclipse, he said.

"Once you see one, you definitely want to go see another one, and you'll work really hard to do it," said Caven, vice president of the International Crane Foundation.

Most people never end up seeing one of these five-foot tall, ghostly-white birds with wingspans like NBA players, the rarest of cranes.

Caven, along with conservation photographer and videographer Mike Forsburg, is currently cycling the 2,500-mile migration corridor from the south to the north, documenting the condition of the habitat along the route and sharing stories of the cranes in visits with locals.

Once abundant across the Great Plains, the whooping crane almost went extinct. In the 1940s, only 15 birds lived in the wild.

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	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
A		1	2	3	4	5	6
B	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
A	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
B	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
A	28	29	30				