

# Tornado Boys Are District 5 Basketball Champions



Photo by: Sonia Meehl

The Oakes Tornadoes boys' basketball team won the 2026 District 1 Championship on Tuesday, March 3, at the Valley City Public Schools Hi-Liner Activity Center, with a dominating win over the Hankinson Pirates.

The Tornadoes reached the district championship game with a 72-59 quarter-final win over Tri-State on Friday, February 27. The Tornadoes followed up with a 74-67 victory over Maple River on Monday, March 2, setting up the championship matchup with the number one seed Pirates on Tuesday.

After having lost to the Pirates 65-67 in Hankinson back in January, the Tornadoes knew they would have a tough challenge to defend their 2025 District 1 Championship. Things didn't look promising for the Tornadoes when leading scorer Beau Thorpe picked up his second foul early in the first quarter and spent the rest of the half on the bench.

Yet the Tornadoes were resilient, building up a lead of as

much as 17 points before giving up much of their advantage in the last two minutes of the half. The Tornadoes went into the locker room with a 37-28 lead. Hankinson's Raeshawn Earl had scored all but two of the Pirates' first half points.

With Beau Thorpe back on the court in the third quarter, the Tornadoes held their advantage and stretched their lead to ten going into the fourth. With a balanced scoring attack, the Tornadoes

dominated the fourth quarter and brought home the district championship with a 86-74 victory. Despite sitting most of the first half, Beau Thorpe finished with 30 points, including 6 of 8 three pointers. Also in double figures were Jyles Myer scoring 19, Reese Nitschke 18, and Andrew Udem 12. Rounding out the scoring was Jack Thorpe with 5 and David Bakke with 2. The Tornadoes drained 13 of 21 shots, an amazing 62% success rate from behind

the arc. Hankinson's Earl, who was named Senior Athlete of the Year for District 1, finished with an incredible 57 of the Pirates' 74 points.

Both Oakes and Hankinson advanced to the Region 1 Tournament, along with region qualifiers Sargent County and Wyndmere-Lidgerwood. The regional tournament was held at the VCPS HAC on March 9, 10, and 12.

District 1 #1 seed Oakes squared off against District 2 #4 Kidder County in the loser-out round on Monday. Monday winners played the semi-final round on Tuesday, with the championship game to be played on Thursday, March 12. Only the champion is guaranteed a spot in the state tournament, as the second and third place finishers must play in state tournament qualifying games at the Scheel's Center in Fargo on Saturday, March 14. The state tournament will be played at the Minot State Dome March 19, 20, and 21.

Submitted by Sonia Meehl

## Ryan Hermes Graduates From Marquette University!

This past fall, Ryan Hermes of Oakes, ND, graduated from Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Hermes earned a Master of Arts in Political Science.

Hermes was one of 453 students to graduate from Marquette last semester.

Marquette University is a Catholic, Jesuit university that draws over 8,000 undergraduate and 3,700 graduate and professional students from

nearly all states and more than 60 countries. In addition to its nationally recognized academic programs, Marquette is known for its service learning programs and internships as students are challenged to use what they learn to make a difference in the world. Find out more about Marquette at marquette.edu.

Contact Jack Goods in the Office of University Relations with questions.

## March 2026 Events and Activities Oakes Senior Center, 207 5th Street S. Oakes, ND 58474. Ph #: 742-3509

Thursday, March 12: Birthday Dinner Day! Let's celebrate the March birthdays! Call 742-3509 by 9:15 AM to sign up for lunch that includes cake and ice cream.

Tuesday, March 17: St. Patrick's Day - Wear green or get pinched! Activity with lunch.



Tuesday, March 24: Dickey County Health District will be offering foot care at the Oakes Senior Center. Call 349-4348 for an appointment. The fee for this service is \$30.00.

Wednesday, March 25: Join us for Brew Crew at 2:00 PM! Coffee and treats provided by the Senior Center. If you're not a coffee drinker, we have lots of teas to choose from as well, and the conversation.

Thursday, March 26: Craft day... We will be doing a craft at 1:00 PM. Decorating a flowerpot.

Tuesday, March 31: National Crayon Day - will be coloring color pages with crayons.

Bingo: Every Monday after lunch at 1:00 PM. Play for cash and other prizes! The more people that play, the greater the cash prizes. Come Join Us!

Bone Builders: Every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 10:00 AM. On the first Wednesday of every month, we will be joined by Jamie, from BEYOND THE FLEX, who will observe, teach, and share helpful tips with us OPEN TO EVERYONE!

## SUDOKU

No. 794 Tough

8	2	7			5		6
3	6		2	4			
5		4	7	6			
		1		2		7	
				9	3	4	8
			9	2		3	5
2	3				8	9	7

Previous solution - Medium

1	9	2	6	5	8	3	4	7
6	3	7	2	1	4	8	9	5
5	8	4	3	7	9	2	1	6
9	7	5	1	8	2	6	3	4
8	4	1	7	3	6	5	2	9
3	2	6	9	4	5	7	8	1
2	1	9	8	6	7	4	5	3
4	6	3	5	2	1	9	7	8
7	5	8	4	9	3	1	6	2

To complete Sudoku, fill the board by entering numbers 1 to 9 such that each row, column and 3x3 box contains every number uniquely.

For many strategies, hints and tips, visit [www.sudokuwiki.org](http://www.sudokuwiki.org)

If you like Str8ts check out our books, iPhone/iPad Apps and much more on our store.

The solutions will be published here in the next issue.

# Bitz Awarded Highest Honor in North Dakota Cooperative Community

MANDAN, N.D. — Connie Bitz, an electric cooperative leader and champion of rural co-ops, from LaMoure, was named the 2026 Gaylord Olson Cooperator by the Quentin Burdick Center for Cooperatives (QBCC). She is the first woman to win the award, which is the highest honor in the North Dakota cooperative community. The award recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions to ensure the continued success of cooperatives for generations to come. Bitz's legacy was honored at a Feb. 10 ceremony held during the North Dakota

Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC) annual meeting in Mandan, where her family accepted the award. Bitz died Jan. 2 after battling advanced cancer.

Bitz was the granddaughter of the first members of James Valley Electric Cooperative, now Dakota Valley Electric Cooperative (DVEC), to receive electricity, and she eventually became the first woman to serve on the DVEC board of directors. She was elected to the DVEC board in 2008 and the NDAREC board in 2012. At the time of her death, she was serving as NDAREC secretary,

a position she held since 2016. "Connie will be remembered as a tireless advocate for rural cooperatives and a dedicated board member. If it was in her board packet, Connie read it. If there was an error in the minutes, Connie caught it. She only missed one board meeting, even amid cancer treatments, only because she forgot her iPad at home that day," says Josh Kramer, NDAREC executive vice president and general manager.

In addition to her rural electric cooperative leadership, Bitz served on the LaMoure Credit Union board of directors, was a North Dakota Farmers Union youth director for 40 years and led LaMoure's Cloverleaf 4-H club for 38 years.

"Connie showed us the true success of cooperatives isn't found in bylaws or budgets — it is found in people. In stronger leaders. In empowered families. In the young people who carry the cooperative values into tomorrow because she taught them how," says Kristi Schweiss, QBCC assistant director.

"She was a remarkable person. She gave generously of her time and talents. She

cared deeply. Her leadership and heart for community made a lasting impact," Kramer says. "There is no doubt NDAREC, Dakota Valley Electric and our entire cooperative family are stronger and better because of Connie Bitz. Her example of service and commitment will continue to inspire us all."

The Quentin Burdick Center for Cooperatives promotes the importance of cooperatives and strives to provide education, research and outreach to strengthen North Dakota cooperative operations, while working to expand employment and economic opportunities through cooperatives.

NDAREC is the statewide trade association for 17 electric distribution cooperatives and five generation and transmission cooperatives operating in North Dakota. The distribution cooperatives provide electricity to nearly 250,000 North Dakotans. NDAREC services include legislative advocacy, lineworker safety training, cooperative business and rural development, professional development and communication services, including publication of the North Dakota Living magazine.

# Public Notices

[www.ndpublicnotices.com](http://www.ndpublicnotices.com)

**DIVIDE TOWNSHIP ANNUAL MEETING**  
Divide Township annual meeting will be held at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 17, 2026 at the Shay Nelson residence. Election of Township Officers.  
Peg Nelson, Clerk  
(Published in the Oakes Times March 5 & 12, 2026)

**JAMES RIVER VALLEY TOWNSHIP ANNUAL MEETING**  
The annual meeting for James River Valley Township will be held Tuesday, March 17, 2026 from 1:00-4:00 p.m. at the home of Allyn Reiser.  
Allyn Reiser, Clerk  
(Published in the Oakes Times March 5 & 12, 2026)

**MAPLE TOWNSHIP ANNUAL MEETING**  
The annual meeting for Maple Township will be held Tuesday, March 17th, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. at the home of the clerk.  
Ruby Gramlow, Clerk  
(Published in the Oakes Times March 5 & 12, 2026)

**NORWAY SPUR FARMERS CO-OP ANNUAL MEETING**  
Notice is hereby given that the annual meeting of the Norway Spur Co-op will be held on Tuesday, March 17, 2026 at the Verona School in Verona, North Dakota beginning with a 12 o'clock meal.  
1. Annual audit report  
2. Election of two directors  
3. Any other business to properly come before the meeting.  
By order of the board of directors  
Tony Gebhardt, Secretary  
(Submitted to the Oakes Times, March 12, 2024)

**CLEMENT TOWNSHIP ANNUAL MEETING**  
Clement Township will hold its Annual Meeting on Wednesday, March 18 at 6:00 p.m. at Our Saviors Lutheran Church.  
Kalli Bruhn, Clerk  
Clement Township  
(Published in the Oakes Times March 5 & 12, 2026)

**WRIGHT TOWNSHIP ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING AND ELECTION**  
Notice is hereby given to the qualified voters of Wright Township, Dickey County, North Dakota, that the Annual Township meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 17, 2026 at 5:30 PM at the Joey & Trista Gemar residence.  
**Purpose of the Meeting:** Review and approval of previous year Annual Financial Report, elect one supervisor for a 3-year term, elect one Clerk/Treasurer for a 1-year term, set the annual budget and levy for the ensuing year, review/approve gravel, blading and snow removal contracts and conduct any other business properly brought before the electors.  
Trista Gemar, Clerk  
(Published in the Oakes Times March 5 & 12, 2026)

**HUDSON TOWNSHIP ANNUAL MEETING**  
The Hudson Township Annual meeting will be held Tuesday, March 24, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. at the Mary Ann Kunrath home.  
Ryan Forward, Clerk  
(Published in the Oakes Times, March 12 & 19, 2024)

**VERNER TOWNSHIP ANNUAL MEETING**  
The annual meeting for Verner Township will be held Tuesday, March 17, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. at the Dave & Deb Ehrlin residence.  
Deb Ehrlin, Clerk  
(Published in the Oakes Times, March 12, 2026)

**RIVERDALE TOWNSHIP ANNUAL MEETING**  
The annual meeting for Riverdale Township will be held Tuesday, March 17, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. at 810 7th St S in Oakes (Dickey-Sargent Irrigation office).  
Linda Visto, Clerk  
(Published in the Oakes Times March 5 & 12, 2026)

**Legals - It's Your Right to Know**

**OAKES TIMES**  
SUBSCRIPTION RATES  
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**LETTER POLICY**  
The Oakes Times welcomes letters to the editor on issues of public interest. To be published, letter must:  
- Be signed and include your address. Unsigned letters will not be considered. Letters may not be used to thank specific people or organizations.  
- The Oakes Times reserves the right to edit for length, taste and libel considerations. Letters must be 250 words or less and deal with only one topic.  
- Be legible.  
- Preference will be given to letters from the Dickey County area. Letters from outside the area will be considered if they are of sufficient interest.  
**BUSINESS HOURS**  
Mon-Thurs: 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Fri: 8:30 am to 2:00 pm  
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**BRIAN SCHMITZ BENEFIT**

MARCH 28TH 5-PM  
THE LEGION SPORTSBAR  
OAKES ND

**PLEASE JOIN US FOR**

- \*FREE WILL MEAL
- \*LIVE AUCTION
- \*SILENT AUCTION ENDS 8PM
- \*RAFFLE TICKET DRAWING 8PM

To support Brian in his ongoing battle with pancreatic cancer.