

Public Notices

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Oakes Enhancement, Inc. 2026 Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of Oakes Enhancement, Inc. (OEI) took place on March 12, 2026. The meeting was held at the Oakes Community Center, Meeting Suite. Vice President Matt Hill called on Toni Ptacek of Ptacek Financial Services to review the 2025 financial compilation.

How does OEI use the dollars entrusted to them? Below are just a few of the programs benefitting Oakes businesses through OEI funding participation. BUMP: (Building Upgrade & Maintenance Program): Businesses assisted with funds under this program: Legion Sports Bar, Praska Hardware, Main Street Mini Mall, the Last Shot, Oakes Good Samaritan Center, Quilters Mercantile. Businesses shine with their improvements. Benefiting from Interest Buydowns where the Bank of North Dakota and OEI work together assist business with growing needs: CS Three Corp, BH Estates, Harris Machine, K&M Estates LLC, Home Grown Collective, Frontier Builders Supply, Cindy Bagley, Be Thou My Vision, BD Cabs LLC, JDG Holding LLC. Interest buy downs make it easier for businesses to expand, be purchased and remain viable into the future.

Charitable Gaming Contributions for 2025 totaled: \$78,089 and included the following recipients: Oakes Area Chamber of Commerce – Relocation Specialist, Tiny Tornadoes, Oakes Park and Recreation, Southeast Region Career and Technology Center – FCCLA, HOSA, DECA students, Oakes Community Foundation, Oakes Community Hospital Foundation, Stronger Together Foundation, Oakes Area Chamber of Commerce -city beautification, Oakes Public School Humanities Class, Oakes Public School event sponsorship, Bear Creek Roughriders, American Legion, North Dakota National Guard Foundation honoring veterans, City of Oakes water assistance program, Dickey County Fair, Growing Small Towns Rural Summit, Oakes Volunteer Ambulance, Friends of Fine Arts and Academics, National Child Safety Council. Over the years, OEI has donated well over one million dollars through their Charitable Gaming Contributions.

Elected to serve on the 2026 Board of Directors (BOD): Alison Peterson (CHI Oakes Clinic), Haley Moen (Heartshouse Vineyard and Winery). Rounding out the Board for 2026 will be: Jeff Forward, (NAPA and Forward Farms), Matt Hill, (Hill Family Business), John Zetocha (Starior Financial), Gary Schnell (Economy Oil), Douglas Sitzler, (City of Oakes Representative) and Haylee O'Brien (Oakes Area Chamber of Commerce Representative). Thank you to businesses for allowing these extremely talented individuals to serve Oakes through their positions on the OEI Board of Directors.

Serving in advisory capacity: Jeff Hoff (OtterTail Power), Cindy Bagley (Frontier Builders Supply), and as needed Toni Ptacek (Ptacek Financial Services), Zasha Johnson (City of Oakes).

Rounding out staff for OEI: TJ Roney (Relocation Specialist), Carol Oster (Gaming Manager), Lori Hoffman (Gaming Assistant), and Cindi Glander (Gaming Backup). An Economic Development Director is being sought.

At the annual meeting – bylaws were updated and approved in order to be in

compliance with the way business is currently conducted.

The OEI Board works diligently to best serve the needs and interests of Oakes and her residents, wisely using what has been entrusted to them.

Reporting: Audrey O'Brien, Secretary, Oakes Enhancement, Inc., PO Box 365, Oakes, ND 58474 (Submitted to the Oakes Times 03/26/2026)

Dakota State Line Regional Alliance (DSLRA) Annual Meeting

DSLRA met for their annual meeting in conjunction with the Oakes Enhancement, Inc. annual meeting on March 12, 2026. Oakes Community Center Meeting Suite. Gary Schnell called the meeting to order giving a breakdown of the funds in the DSLRA account. Doug Sitzer has been elected to serve as the Chairman of the alliance. Rounding out the board, Gary Schnell and Matt Hill. The bylaws have been reviewed, and updates were voted upon and adopted.

Reporting: Audrey O'Brien, Secretary, Dakota State Line Regional Alliance,, PO Box 365, Oakes, ND 58474 (Submitted to the Oakes Times 03/26/2026)

Oakes Fire District Board Meeting

Oakes Fire station April 9th at 7PM Open to the public (Submitted to the Oakes Times 03/26/2026)

CPEC Public Comment Period

Central Power Electric Cooperative, Inc. intends to seek financial assistance from USDA Rural Utilities Service(RUS) for the rebuild of an existing distribution substation. The proposed project consists of rebuilding the existing substation directly adjacent to the existing substation on property owned by Central Power. This property is located in the SW1/4, Section 8, T130N, R59W, Dickey County, ND. The location is 3/4 mile west of the intersection of 110th Avenue SE and 92nd Street SE. If implemented, the proposed project will convert Central Power's property at the site which is actively titled. In accordance with Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management and USDA Departmental Regulation 9500-3, Land Use Policy, the purpose of this notice is to inform the public of this proposed conversion or effect and request comments concerning the proposal, alternative sites or actions that would avoid these impacts, and methods that could be used to minimize these impacts. The public comment period is 14 days from the date of this publication. Please submit comments or questions via email to: ruspubliccomments@usda.gov (Submitted to the Oakes Times 03/26/2026)

LOVELL TOWNSHIP ANNUAL MEETING

The Lovell Township annual meeting will be held Tuesday, April 7th, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. at Dylan Stearns shop. Meagan Stearns, Clerk/Treasurer Lovell Township (Published in Oakes Times, March 26, 2026, April 2, 2026)

New Food Guidelines Continued From Page 1

A major shift
Jennifer Hehn, food service director at Lisbon Public School District, said the move away from processed food makes a lot of sense.

"It represents how me and my family eat and I think how a lot of families eat," Hehn said of the new guidelines. "We shouldn't be eating so much processed foods, and I think we have a lot of health issues because of all the processed foods."

While bigger changes likely won't come fast, the challenges will eventually mount.

"We're a small community," Hehn said. "The biggest challenges are going to be staffing, budget and equipment for these new guidelines."

Most schools do not have large kitchens nor the ability to cook whole foods from scratch on site, if that is eventually the end goal.

Without funding for more staff, more equipment and larger kitchens, those constraints may limit the ability to deliver what the guidelines aim for.

Schools will need bigger kitchens and bigger staff sizes if a fundamental shift in school nutrition is expected to be made, Johnson said.

Current federal reimbursement rates for free school lunches currently stand at \$4.69 per meal. Around \$1.50-\$2.00 of that goes to just covering labor costs, she said.

"I'm all for not eating processed foods," Johnson said. "But when you think about it, if you have an elementary school with 400 kids, and you've got to serve them in 20 minutes at 11 a.m., and you have to do all that for \$4 per kid, that's the position that schools are in."

Johnson gave an example of using whole potatoes rather than highly processed instant potatoes that include preservatives, stabilizers and other additives not in the whole food potato they are derived from.

"Who's going to peel and boil those potatoes?" she asked. "When I say these things, I sound like I'm advocating for processed foods. I'm not, I'm just talking about the reality of the situation."

Anything requiring more whole foods would likely mean adding more staff, Hehn said.

Even procuring locally for scratch cooking can be a challenge.

Hehn said her district was able to bring in a lot of local ground beef this year but is trying to get funding for a tilt skillet that would allow for better cooking of a raw protein like that.

Freezer and cooler space would also likely need to be increased if more whole foods and cooking on site is required, she said.

Michelle Wagner, child nutrition program director at Bismarck Public Schools, said costs have "definitely gone up" due to manufacturers having to reformulate products to meet the last guidelines focused on reducing sugar, sodium and increasing the use of whole grains.

Wagner also said the complexity of the guidelines and keeping within the parameters makes it harder to do more cooking from scratch.

"Does this count for two meats and two grains? Does this count for, you know, half a cup of vegetables?" she said of the questions she has to ask. "Do we have to add a breadstick? Do we need to take something out because we're over our calories now?"

Schools processing raw beef would also need grease traps, and most don't have those, Wagner said.

Wagner uses a nutritional analysis program that helps, but even things like ranch dressing, ketchup and other condiments have to be factored in, largely because of their higher sugar and sodium content.

Schools also need to meet minimum and maximum calorie requirements for each day and for each week, as well as meet vegetable subgroup categories throughout the week.

"You have to offer five components, and out of all the vegetables, you've got to hit all these vegetable subgroups within a week," Hehn said. "It's like a big puzzle."

Additional increases for protein likely to come from the latest guidelines could also be an issue.

"That's obviously going to be our highest cost item," Wagner said. "Who's going to pay for that? Is the federal government going to give us higher reimbursement rates to cover that cost?"

Wagner said Bismarck schools are currently looking at the possibility of a central kitchen, which would decrease labor costs and increase efficiency.

Farmers Want Voices Heard, Resumed From Page 1

Livelihood impacts
What came out of the discussion was telling for those not steeped in the daily lives of farmers and ranchers.

Trade actions make long-term markets uncertain and volatile, inflation keeps input costs rising, a fresh war increases prices on petroleum products and strains fertilizer supplies, they say.

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 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.

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

Wednesday, April 1st : Tom Foolery Day! Just a quick reminder to double-check everything you read/hear/see today

Thursday, April 2nd: We will be decorating Easter Eggs after lunch... using different techniques

Monday, April 6th: National Caramel Popcorn Day will have Caramel popcorn with BINGO

Wednesday, April 8th: Join us for Brew Crew at 2:00 PM! Coffee and treats provided by Senior Center. If you're not a coffee drinker, we have lots of teas to choose from as well, and conversation.

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

Monday, April 13th: National Peach Cobbler Day will have peach cobbler for lunch.

Tuesday, April 14th: National Wear Your PJs to Work Day...

Wednesday, April 22nd: Join us for Brew Crew at 2:00 PM! Coffee and treats provided by Senior Center. If you're not a coffee drinker, we have lots of teas to choose from as well, and conversation is always plentiful! Open to EVERYONE!

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

Thursday, April 23rd: Craft day... We will be doing a craft at 1:00 PM. Craft yet to be determined.

Tuesday, April 28th: Dickey County Health District will be offering foot care at the Oakes Senior Center. Call 349-4348 for an appointment. The fee for this is \$30.00

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!

Wii Bowling: Tuesdays at 1:00 PM

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!

Monthly shopping trips to Aberdeen will be on the third Friday of each month, beginning on Friday, April 17th. Call 742-3509 to sign up. Space is limited. The driver may take you anywhere in Aberdeen. Pick-up times are 7-7:30 AM in Oakes, and 8-8:30 AM in Ellendale. Any appointments should be made between 9:45AM-2:00PM. Return home starts by 3:30 PM, or earlier. The fare for this trip is \$10.00.

Oakes Lions Winners

3/4-3/10	
Karen Vandeventer	\$50
Darcy Rehovsky	\$50
Maddie Bopp	\$50
Amanda Harris	\$100
Mikayla McClean	\$100
Terry Andersen	\$50
Conner Juelfs	\$50

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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

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