

Year in REVIEW

(Editor's Note: This week we start a look back at the stories we covered in the past year. We hope you enjoy this look back.)

January

The Stanley Park District announced their annual lighting contest winners with Gene and Jessica LeRohl taking first place; Dale and Mary Kilen, second; and Kelly and Dave Gustavson and Brooks and Heidi Stafslien tying for third in the residential contest. In the business category, Thoughtful Memories and the Mountrail County Promoter were winners.

Jason and Jill Wettstein of Bowbells and Heath and Kris Hetzel were named the annual NDSU Harvest Bowl honorees for Burke and Mountrail Counties respectively. The agricultural honorees are selected for success, dedication and hard work for each of the counties in North Dakota and six counties in Minnesota. 2024 was the 50th annual Harvest Bowl.

Stanley Chief of Police Kevin Litten recognized officers at a special ceremony. The two new officers, Joseph Rivers and Raphael Salinas, had their badge pinnings by their wives. A Medal of Merit was presented to Officer Samuel Pesik. A Life Saving Award was presented to Officer Brianna Dazell and Lieutenant Chris Jenkins.

Stanley High School's National Honor Society member Aryanna Camino's service project brought together elementary students and residents of Rosen Place Assisted Living. She worked closely for three weeks with fourth through sixth graders to plan a Christmas party for the residents. They organized an afternoon filled with festive activities including cookie decorating and games with the residents.

Mountrail County Ag Agent Jim Hennessy's meat classes returned to the South Complex in Stanley with a country sausage making class. These classes are popular with residents throughout the winter months. This year, Hennessy also scheduled two classes to be held in Plaza.

Harper's Hallway was completed at the Stanley Elementary School through the work of the Stanley Student Council which worked to raise funds for artist Bre Ware to turn the dream into a reality. The mural in the hallway uses Harper Stafslien's favorite things to honor her memory, serving as a permanent reminder of her joy and the love she shared with the world.

Residents across the state were being urged to apply for the primary residence credit established during the 2023 legislative session. This credit was set to provide North Dakota homeowners with a credit up to \$500 against their 2025 property taxes. The legislature in 2025 would later expand that to a \$1,600 credit in an effort to provide more tax relief for residents.

Stanley High School senior Drake Schlosser was invited to play at the All-American Blue-Grey game at the Dallas Cowboys Stadium in January. Each team was comprised of 50 top players from across the country, creating a competitive and fast-paced environment. The Stanley High School standout was selected to play safety and was named the MVP of the game. Schlosser had also recently committed to NDSU as a wide receiver.

Work was continuing to progress on the new nursing home at MCHC. Sheathing was underway, starting to enclose the new nursing home area, allowing workers to start the interior framing. This construction will be a new 36 bed nursing home, renovations on the hospital side, an extension to the ambulance bay and adding seven new apartments to Rosen Place.

White Earth Valley Saddle Club hosted their Winter Blues Draft Horse Challenge at the Mountrail County Fair Building. Fifteen drivers brought large and small horses to practice the art of driving horses in a friendly competition including the obstacle challenge, closest to the pin, and cloverleaf barrels. Winners of each challenge receive extra points which will go towards the final 2025 season prizes. The Saddle Club hosts the challenges in June and October as well.

In sports, the Blue Jay girls' basketball team dropped their games to Tioga, TGU, South Prairie-Max, New Town and Rugby. They posted a win over Hazen.

The Blue Jay boys' basketball team dropped games to Standing Rock, Thompson, and Dickinson Trinity. They posted wins over Watford City, New Town, Nedrose, Dunseith and Turtle Mountain during the month. They dropped their games to Central Cass and Shiloh

Christian at the Devils Lake Tournament.

Wrestlers returned to action after the Christmas break competing in Ruby for a triangular against Rugby and Velva. They also competed at the Williams County Tournament, taking home third as a team with a number of wrestlers placing in their weight classes. The girls were in action at the Bismarck Rotary Tournament. Wrestlers also were in action at Bishop Ryan with a triangular and then at the Panther Booster Tournament with several wrestlers placing in their weight classes. The Blue Jays met up with Kenmare in dual action. They were then at the Badlands Classic with several wrestlers placing in their weight classes. The girls were in action at the Panther Booster Girls Tournament, with wrestlers also placing in their weight classes.

February

New Town high school and middle school students competed at the NW Regional Science Fair in Williston with students earning several awards. Angel Lockwood received the Chord Energy Award and was named a ND State Science Fair alternate.

Stanley National Honor Society member Elizabeth Salgado completed her service project titled The Power of a Dream. Her project focused on empowering elementary English Language Learners by fostering confidence in their bilingual abilities and encouraging them to pursue their dreams. They created dream jars to visualize their future aspirations.

Honor Society member Drake Schlosser completed his service project organizing an event that brought the high school varsity basketball team to the elementary school for a fun-filled recess with the younger students. With the support of his teammates, they were able to promote teamwork, exercise and fun.

Mountrail County planning and zoning members continued their work on the county's ordinances relating to data centers and battery energy storage systems. They held their second meeting in February, working on how to move forward with policy that will address the concerns along with the possibility of development. The February meeting was to present the initial draft. They took public comment and also tackled committee concerns. Work continued with the next meeting set for May. The schedule set for the process looked for a final draft in August sending the policy to the planning and zoning committee and then the county commissioners for final approval.

Madilyn Hunting completed her National Honor Society service project, bringing birthday joy to families in need. Her project was creating Birthday Bags for the Mountrail Community Food Pantry. Each bag contained a cake mix, frosting, balloons, candles, a Squishmallow and a Whirla Whip gift card.

Mountrail County Ag Improvement Association held their annual Farm and Ranch Day on February 12 at the Mountrail County South Complex. The day included speakers Josh Dippipo of Spotters Ag Service and Brandon Bock of the Bock Family Farm. The day also included the annual dessert contest which raises funds for the Mountrail County Ag Improvement Association's scholarship program. The Stanley FFA helped serve the lunch. The association also recognized Barb DeLienne for her 18 years of dedication to the board.

The ND Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives honored Bob Grant, board chairman of MWECC, with the Cooperative Leadership Award, recognizing four decades of leadership and devotion to duty. He was honored at an awards ceremony in conjunction with the NDAREC's 82nd annual meeting.

The Wabek School was listed in the ND State Historical Sites Registry. Located about four miles south of Plaza, it was established in 1917. In the 1930s, the school served over 100 students, offered high school courses and had its own baseball team. This physically consolidated school is one of the few remaining in the state.

The Mountrail County Spelling Bee was held in Stanley with fifth through eighth graders competing from North Shore/Plaza, New Town, Parshall and Stanley. First place went to Bobbi Young Bird of New Town with Marc Guevarra of New Town in second. Slade Stout of Stanley was third place. Young Bird would represent Mountrail County at the State Spelling Bee with Guevarra serving as the alternate.

Fire destroyed a Main Street building on February 22. A Stanley police officer detected a strong odor of smoke and initiated an investigation to find the source. The smoke was coming from the building owned by Jordan Kannianen with commercial businesses on the main level and apartment units on the second level. Fire crews from Stanley, Tioga, Powers Lake and New Town responded along with other emergency services. The building appears to have been a complete loss for the renters and the businesses on the main level. Benefit dives were underway to help those affected by the fire. The building had previously been the home of Gambles Hardware, MTI and had served as Stanley City Hall.

The next generation was taking over at Prairie Ford in Stanley in a sale that was completed at the end of January. Gary and Vicki Evans sold their shares to Matt Evans, who has been with Prairie Ford since 1993. Gary and Wayne Evans purchased the shares of the original shareholders over the years. Matt, the son of Wayne and Diana Evans, and his wife Sara are now in a family partnership with Wayne and Diana.

Jenell Bear, principal of Edwin Loe Elementary School in New Town, was named the ND Association of Elementary Principals National Distinguished Principal. The program recognizes outstanding elementary school principals for their leadership, dedication and commitment to student success. She has spent over 20 years at Edwin Loe and under her leadership the school

has seen remarkable improvements in student achievement, particularly in reading and math scores.

In sports, wrestlers wrapped up regular season action with the East-West Tournament with wrestlers Cohen Bell, Trey Bohmbach, Griffin Wilhelmi and Levi Uran placing in this tournament that often provides a glimpse of what the state tournament will look like. The Blue Jays also hosted the 4 Bears Invitational in New Town with both junior varsity boys' and girls' wrestlers competing. A number of Blue Jays also placed at this tournament. Stanley was host to the region duals with Velva and Williams County earning the right to represent the region at the State Dual Tournament. Eight wrestlers qualified for the State Tournament, including Loudon Haugen, Regan Gustafson, Cohen Bell, Kane Keep, Colter Fladeland, Trey Bohmbach, Griffin Wilhelmi and Levi Uran. Bell placed second, Bohmbach fourth, Wilhelmi sixth and Uran eighth at the State Tournament.

The Blue Jay boys' basketball team dropped their game to the DLB Lakers before posting wins over Nedrose, Hazen, Powers Lake, Dunseith, New Town, South Prairie and Bottineau. The Blue Jays' coach Kory Anderson earned his 200th career win on February 21 when the team posted their win in Bottineau.

The Blue Jay girls' basketball season continued with losses to Turtle Mountain and DLB before posting a win over New Town. They dropped their games to Dunseith, Bottineau and Nedrose before facing Dunseith at a region play-in game. The Blue Jays dropped that game to end their season.

Three Blue Jays signed their letter of intent in February on National Signing Day for football. Caleb Mortensen signed to play for the University of Mary as a defensive lineman. Drake Schlosser signed to play for NDSU as a wide receiver. Jonathan Chavez signed to play for the ND State College of Science as a kicker.

Stanley's cheer team competed in their Winter State Competition, taking first place in their timeout routine and their cheer and dance routine. Laney Jackson took first place in the Jump Off competition, with Lizzie Nelson taking fifth. River Nardacci placed fourth in the top sideline with Rylee Littlecreek placing fifth. The stunt group Barbies in the Books took first place in the group routine, while Stranger Danger took second.

North Dakota Game And Fish News

Holen Named Employee of the Year

Ben Holen, aquatic nuisance species coordinator, Jamestown, received the agency's Director's Award for professional excellence at the department's annual staff meeting in December.

Since stepping into the role of ANS coordinator, Holen has demonstrated exceptional leadership, technical expertise, and commitment to protecting North Dakota's aquatic resources, said Jeb Williams, Game and Fish Department director.

"What truly sets Ben apart is his leadership style. In a program that is often thankless and rarely acknowledged, he maintains an unwaveringly positive attitude," Williams said. "This positivity is reflected in his team and in the army of temporary staff who feel supported, informed, and valued under his guidance. Ben has become the department's go-to source for all things ANS, providing clarity, insight, and stability in a volatile and high-stakes program."

Johnson Earns Two Awards

Drew Johnson, North Dakota Game and Fish Department district game warden in Finley, is the state's 2025 Wildlife Officer of the Year. Johnson was honored by Shikar Safari Club International, a private conservation organization that annually recognizes wildlife officers in each state.

Scott Winkelman, department chief warden, said Johnson started at the newly created post in Finley in 2019 and his patrol district includes Griggs, Steele and Traill counties.

"Drew spends a great deal of his time patrolling in and around his patrol district by vehicle, boat, snowmobile and ATV. His value to the enforcement division is felt year-round as he patrols his district with enthusiasm for game law enforcement. His patrol district includes Griggs, Steele and Traill counties. Winkelman said. "Warden Johnson's work ethic and can-do attitude are exemplified in his commitment to becoming more skilled and efficient with each passing year and is a very deserving recipient of this award."

Johnson was also named North Dakota's Boating Officer of the Year for 2025.

"Drew's prior work experience on Devils Lake seasoned him into a more successful boat and water safety officer as he had worked extensively on Devils Lake, one of North Dakota's busiest natural lakes," Winkelman said. "Warden Johnson is dedicated to boat safety enforcement of both recreational boaters and anglers alike."

Agency Employees Recognized

Jeb Williams, North Dakota Game and Fish Department director, recently honored employees with performance-based awards. The following special recognition awards were presented during the

department's staff meeting in December.

Blake Riewer, enforcement division investigator, Grand Forks, was recognized for consistently providing assistance on complex investigations and handling a significant amount of the behind-the-scenes technical work that is essential in today's digital investigative environment.

Brian Frohlich, fisheries biological technician, Riverdale, was recognized for stepping in when the Riverdale office was understaffed to oversee all fall sampling for the fisheries district. Frohlich not only met but exceeded expectations by ensuring that sampling was conducted on every district lake that required survey work.

Shane Wegner, data scientist, Colin Penner, private land biologist/GIS specialist, and Kevin Kading, private land section leader, all Bismarck, were recognized for reducing the extensive amount of administrative work required in delivering private land programs in North Dakota. The private land technical teams worked together to optimize workflows by, for example, integrating electronic signatures for contracts and management plans.

Amanda Anstrom, assistant licensing manager, Bismarck, was recognized for her exceptional leadership, dedication and service by skillfully leading the licensing staff, overseeing complex front-end operations including licensing, lotteries and registrations.

Jeff Long, education coordinator, Brian Schaffer, hunter education coordinator, and Amber Schroeter, administrative assistant, all Bismarck, were recognized for their outstanding contributions to the department's education section by consistently executing large, complex events essential to the agency, such as NASP tournaments, volunteer banquet and volunteer training.

Sperling Earns Warden Award

Shawn Sperling, North Dakota Game and Fish Department district warden in Minot, was named the National Wild Turkey Federation's Wildlife Officer of the Year for 2025.

"Warden Sperling's district contains portions of Ward, Renville and McHenry counties. This area of the state historically boasts a strong population of wild turkeys. Shawn has a passion for turkeys both professionally and personally, as he is an avid turkey hunter himself. Shawn diligently patrols for turkey hunting activity and addresses violations accordingly," Turkey Federation officials said. "He is also a skilled investigator and has used his talents to make strong cases involving illegally taken turkeys. Warden Sperling's dedication to the wildlife resources in his district, as well as his district's constituents, make him a great fit for this award."

ND Researchers Look To Skies, Data On Hail Mitigation

By Mike Moen,
Prairie News Service

North Dakota is no stranger to a scientific effort known as "cloud seeding" to minimize the impact of hailstorms but regional researchers said a broader set of data is needed to guide future decisions and better protect communities and property owners.

The University of North Dakota said for several decades, the state's project has allowed pilots to fly into selected storms and release tiny particles into the clouds, creating many small ice particles instead of fewer large hailstones. In the western half of the state, the approach was meant to reduce hail damage to crops.

Marwa Majdi, assistant research professor of atmospheric sciences at the university, said the time is right for her team to see what's working and what is not.

"It'll then help communities to understand what the evidence supports and whether hail suppression efforts are actually reducing the most damaging hail," Majdi explained.

Majdi noted questions increasingly arise when an intense storm harms livestock, homes and lo-

cal businesses. She emphasized the university values collaborating with the state on weather science. Nationally, it has been a hot-button issue with online disinformation fueling theories about the government controlling the weather for political reasons, prompting the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in 2024 to debunk several claims.

Majdi stressed by providing clear and independent information, decision makers can determine how to reshape the program, giving agricultural towns the best tools in their fight for economic survival.

"That can mean more stable farm income and fewer catastrophic losses," Majdi added.

The university said when a hailstorm results in extensive damage, communities face higher repair bills and insurance costs.

Project officials said part of their effort will involve looking over a detailed database of storms from 2016 through 2024. An artificial intelligence system will also be developed to aid the scientific work. If they get all the funding needed, researchers hope to provide study results four years from now.



PROPERTY FOR SALE ON BIDS

NOTICE IS HERBY GIVEN, that the City of Stanley, North Dakota (Seller) is calling for interested qualified persons to submit sealed bids for the sale of City owned real estate situated in Mountrail County, North Dakota which is legally described as follows:

PARCEL #, LEGAL DESCRIPTION, ACRES, STREET ADDRESS

61-0093937, LOT 27, REPLAT OF JOHN RIAN ADDITION, PHASE 1, CITY OF STANLEY, .52 ACRES, 131 PRAIRIE DRIVE

61-0093939, REPLAT OF LOT 28 OF THE REPLAT OF JOHN RIAN ADDITION PHASE 1, CITY OF STANLEY, .66 ACRES, 121 PRAIRIE DRIVE

61-0093943, LOT 30, REPLAT OF JOHN RIAN ADDITION PHASE 1, CITY OF STANLEY, 1.38 ACRES, 11 PRAIRIE DRIVE

61-0093945, LOT 31, REPLAT OF JOHN RIAN ADDITION PHASE 1, CITY OF STANLEY, .23 ACRES, 198 ADELINE DRIVE

61-0093955, LOT 41, REPLAT OF JOHN RIAN ADDITION PHASE 1, CITY OF STANLEY, .21 ACRES, 302 ADELINE DRIVE

61-0093956, LOT 42, REPLAT OF JOHN RIAN ADDITION, PHASE 1, CITY OF STANLEY, .29 ACRES, 301 ADELINE DRIVE

1. The property will be sold at auction to the highest bidder. Upon award of bid to the highest bidder, cashier's check must be deposited with the Stanley City Auditor as set forth in the terms in Section 8. Any questions of legal nature should be discussed with an attorney.

2. The descriptions provided are based on the Official Records of the Mountrail County Recorder's Office and are presumed to be correct.

3. **BID SUBMITTAL:** All bids must be submitted on a form provided by the City of Stanley. Bid packets are available from the Stanley City Auditor, 221 South Main Street, Stanley, ND 58784. All bids must be in a sealed envelope, and the face of the envelope shall be clearly marked "**SEALED BID FOR PARCEL**" (Identify Parcel #) with the name and phone number of bidder. If bidder is submitting bid for more than one parcel, each parcel must be submitted in a separate envelope. All bids must be submitted as follows:

City of Stanley
Attn: City Auditor
P.O. Box 249
Stanley, ND 58784
Or hand delivered to:
City Auditor
221 South Main Street
Stanley, ND 58784

A minimum bid is required as follows:
Parcel #61-0093937 - Lot 27 - \$12,384
Parcel #61-0093939 - Lot 28 - \$16,978
Parcel #61-0093943 - Lot 30 - \$19,658
Parcel #61-0093945 - Lot 31 - \$6,440
Parcel #61-0093955 - Lot 41 - \$6,165
Parcel #61-0093956 - Lot 42 - \$7,115
Bids must include:

a. Bidder's full name, address, telephone number and email address;

b. If bidding as a business entity, proof of authority to submit bid;

c. Bid amount in US Dollars;

d. Cashier's check in the amount of 5% of the minimum bid required as a guarantee to purchase if awarded bid

e. Disclosure of the following relationships:

i. If they currently serve as Mayor or City Council Member of Stanley (collectively "City of Stanley Governing Board")

ii. If they are a family member or relative of any current City of Stanley Governing Board member

iii. If they are employed by the City of Stanley

iv. If the bidder is a business entity (corporation, LLC, partnership, or other organization), it must disclose if any owner, officer, director, or principal has any of the relationships described above with the City of Stanley Governing Board or their family members/relatives; and

f. Bidder's signature and date.

Sealed bids must be delivered before **1:00 P.M. on Monday, February 2, 2026**. Any bids received after the deadline will be returned unopened.

4. **BID OPENING:** Bids will be opened **Monday, February 2, 2026, at 4:00 P.M.** in the City Council Chambers at City Hall (221 South Main Street, Stanley, North Dakota). The Stanley City Council will take appropriate action on bids at their February 10, 2026, regular meeting.

5. **DELINQUENT TAX OATH:** North Dakota state law requires all bidders to qualify by completing an affidavit certifying that you have no previous or current delinquent property taxes in any ND County. No individual, corporate entity, beneficial owner, agent or employee of a corporate entity having delinquent property taxes at any time may qualify to place a bid. The Stanley City Auditor will review

the Delinquent Tax Oath of potential bidders. If the Stanley City Auditor does not verify the Delinquent Tax Oath, the bidder will be disqualified from purchasing the Property and the City may award the bid to another bidder.

6. **NO WARRANTY OF TITLE:** The Seller DOES NOT WARRANT TITLE. The City does not warrant the condition of any aspect of the properties, makes no representations with respect to the title or use of the properties, and will sell the properties in "where is" and "as is" condition. Prospective Purchasers are urged to examine the title, location and desirability of the Property available to their own satisfaction prior to the sale. The Seller makes no guarantee, expressed or implied, relative to the title, location or condition of the properties for sale. The Seller assumes no liability for any other possible liens, encumbrances or easements, recorded or not recorded.

7. **LIENS:** Prospective bidders are advised that some assessments which are levied by agencies or offices other than the Seller may still be outstanding after the sale. When property is sold at public auction on which the IRS holds a tax lien, the United States has the right of redemption for 120 days from the date of such sale according to 26 USC 3712(g) and 7425(d). The IRS will pay the actual amount paid for the property by the bidder, plus interest at 6.00% per annum from the date of sale, plus the expenses of sale that exceed any income received from the property. Seller has no knowledge of liens or the Property and assumes no liability for any possible liens.

8. **PAYMENT:** The successful bidder must make payment in full by certified cashier's check within ten (10) business days of notification of award. Quit Claim Deed will not be signed and delivered by the City of Stanley until payment is made. Successful bidder forfeits bid deposit and any/all rights to the property for failure to provide payment within the designated timeframe.

9. The sale of this property should not, in any way, be equated to real estate sales by licensed salesmen, brokers or realtors. The City of Stanley cannot guarantee the condition of the property nor assume any responsibility for conformance to codes, permits or zoning ordinances. Prospective Purchasers are encouraged to inspect the property before investing. The burden is on the Purchaser to thoroughly research, before the sale, any matters relevant to his or her decision to purchase. Your bid is an irrevocable offer to purchase the asset.

10. To inspect the property, prospective bidders must contact the Planning and Zoning Administrator, Amanda Dennis, to set up an appointment. Prospective bidders are not permitted to enter the property without prior approval from the Planning and Zoning Administrator. Amanda Dennis can be reached at (701)628-2225.

11. To determine the amount of real estate taxes or special assessments, prospective bidders must contact the City Auditor, Ada Arneson.

12. Successful bidder shall state in writing the name(s) and address(es) in which the Quit Claim Deed shall be issued. Note that the property will be deeded in the name of the bidder unless the bidder has written, signed permission from another party to record the deed in their name. (There is a recording fee of \$20.00 per document).

13. An original Quit Claim Deed will be mailed to the Purchaser to sign and return to the City Auditor, who will have the Mayor of the City of Stanley sign after the completion of the terms. The City Auditor will then have the Mountrail County Recorder send the original deed to the owner after recording is completed.

14. All future Real Estate Taxes, including special assessments, shall be paid by Purchaser.

15. The successful bidder shall not take possession, make improvements, or make any alterations to the property until such time as they have received a fully executed Quit Claim Deed which has been recorded.

16. The Purchaser agrees to ensure that all construction, renovations, repairs, or improvements to the Property in the future will comply with all applicable state and local building codes, zoning regulations, health and safety requirements, and occupancy standards. The Purchaser must obtain all necessary permits, inspections, and certifications as required by law.

17. For a Bid Form and other documents necessary to submit a bid, please contact the City Auditor at ada@stanleynd.us or 701.628.2232.

18. *The City of Stanley reserves the right to reject any and all bids for any or no reason, to hold bids for thirty (30) days before awarding, to waive irregularities, to modify the manner of sale, and to accept any bid whenever it is in the best interest of the City of Stanley. Bidding requirements are set forth in Chapter 1, Article 8 of the City of Stanley Ordinances.*

Jan. 7, 14, 2026