

## USDA Issues Final Emergency Livestock Relief Program Payments For 2023 And 2024 Natural Disasters

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke L. Rollins last week announced U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) has issued final Emergency Livestock Relief Program (ELRP) payments totaling more than \$1.89 billion. Eligible applicants who applied for ELRP 2023 and 2024 Flood and Wildfire (ELRP 2023 and 2024 FW) assistance will receive 100 percent of their eligible calculated payment in a single lump sum. USDA is also making a second payment to producers who previously received their initial factored payment for ELRP 2023 and 2024 assistance for losses due to eligible drought and wildfires.

"Livestock operations across the country were disrupted in 2023 and 2024 by catastrophic floods, drought, wildfires, and poor forage conditions. President Trump has ensured our farmers, ranchers, and producers have the tools and assistance necessary to continue their operations after they were impacted at no fault of their own. If the men and women who feed America cannot continue their operations, then our national security is at risk. We are working every day to ensure America's food supply remains safe, stable, and secure," said Secretary Rollins. "Due to the program demand for drought and wildfire assistance, initial payments were factored to ensure total program payments did not exceed available funding. Additional funds remain so we are delivering on our Farmers First commitment to livestock producers and issuing a second payment in addition to making a full payment, with no factor, to eligible producers who applied for flood and wildfire recovery assistance."

At the direction of Congress, The American Relief Act, 2025, provides for \$2 billion in emergency relief payments to livestock produc-

ers suffering losses due to drought, wildfires, or flooding in calendar years 2023 and 2024.

### ELRP Drought and Wildfire Losses on Federally Managed Lands

Livestock producers previously received an initial payment for drought and wildfire assistance that was factored by 35 percent to ensure payments did not exceed available funding.

Now, FSA has issued an automatic second payment to eligible producers who received an initial payment for drought and wildfire losses. The second payment is equal to 8.2 percent of the eligible producer's 2023 or 2024 Livestock Forage Disaster program gross calculated payment, making the final payment factor 43.2 percent and total assistance provided more than \$1.289 billion.

### ELRP Flood and Wildfire (Wildfire Losses on Non-Federal Managed Lands)

After assessing ELRP 2023 and 2024 FW applications, FSA determined that a payment factor is not needed. Producers with approved ELRP 2023 and 2024 FW applications are receiving 100 percent of their calculated payment in a single lump sum, totaling \$604 million in recovery assistance.

#### Payment Limit

ELRP 2023 and 2024 and ELRP 2023 and 2024 FW have a combined payment limit of \$125,000 for each program year. Producers who already received the maximum payment amount from ELRP 2023 and 2024 for drought and wildfire losses will not be eligible to receive an additional payment. Eligible producers may submit form FSA-510, Request for an Exception to the \$125,000 Payment Limitation for Certain Programs, by November 2, 2026, to be considered for an increased payment limit of \$250,000.

## University Of Mary, CHI St. Alexius Expand Partnership With Five New Tuition-Free Scholarships

CHI St. Alexius Health has committed funding for five new full-tuition scholarships in the University of Mary's nationally recognized Respiratory Therapy (RT) program, expanding access to one of the nation's top programs while addressing a growing shortage of respiratory therapists.

The new awards bring the University of Mary's total number of tuition-free scholarships across high-need fields to sixty-one, reinforcing the university's long-standing commitment to removing financial barriers while meeting urgent workforce needs in health care and beyond.

"This partnership represents an innovative response to a critical workforce challenge," said Dr. Mary Dockter, vice president for medical education and partnerships and dean of the College of Health Professions at the University of Mary. "CHI St. Alexius Health's investment reflects our shared Benedictine mission to serve with compassion and excellence, while ensuring our region has highly skilled respiratory therapists prepared to care for patients with dignity and expertise."

For more than 25 years, the University of Mary and CHI St. Alexius Health have partnered through a distinctive 2+2 consortium model that sets the program apart nationally. Students complete two years of undergraduate coursework on the University of Mary campus, followed by two years of immersive clinical and professional education conducted entirely at CHI St. Alexius Health.

"This structure unites academic formation with real-world clinical practice in a uniquely powerful way," said Dr. Chris Sperle, director and chair of respiratory therapy and associate professor at the University of Mary, who also serves as program director at CHI St. Alexius Health. "Because the professional phase of the program is located directly on the hospital campus, students train with the same advanced ventilators, monitoring systems, and technologies used in patient care every day."

The consortium model is rooted in a shared Benedictine heritage. The Benedictine Sisters who founded St. Alexius Hospital later established Mary College (now the University of Mary) in 1959, creating a common mission centered on service, hospitality, and respect for human dignity. That foundation continues to guide the partnership today, reinforced by rigorous accreditation standards and continuous program evaluation.

"Our program stands out because we hold ourselves to the profession's most rigorous standards," Sperle said. "CoARC's outcomes-based system affirms the strength of our curriculum, clinical partnerships, and mission-centered preparation. We form respiratory therapists who not only excel clinically, but who care for patients with integrity, compassion, and professionalism."

Graduates of the University of Mary-CHI St. Alexius Respiratory Therapy Program consistently achieve exceptional outcomes, including a 100 percent licensure success rate for graduates who have taken their respiratory therapy board examinations and a 100 percent job placement rate for those entering the profession.

The program has earned national

recognition, including the CoARC President's Award for Excellence in Credentialing Success and the American Association for Respiratory Care's (AARC) Apex Award for Education Excellence for the 2024-2025 cycle.

"These outcomes reflect rigorous academics, direct clinical immersion, and personalized mentorship," Sperle said. "They also reflect a shared commitment to forming clinicians who serve with skill, professionalism, and compassion."

Building on its nationally recognized outcomes, the University of Mary-CHI St. Alexius Respiratory Therapy Program has implemented a streamlined curriculum that reduces time to degree while maintaining academic rigor and clinical excellence.

Students can now complete the professional phase of the Bachelor of Science in Respiratory Therapy in four consecutive semesters, allowing for December graduation and earlier entry into the workforce. Updated prerequisite pathways also enable motivated students to complete the degree in as little as 3.3 years, increasing flexibility and affordability for first-generation and nontraditional students.

Demand for respiratory therapists continues to rise due to retirements, post-pandemic burnout, and the increasing prevalence of chronic respiratory conditions. National employment is projected to grow approximately twelve percent through 2034, with nearly 9,000 openings annually. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports a median annual wage of \$80,450 for respiratory therapists in 2024.

"Acting now is essential," Dockter said. "This partnership allows us to recruit, educate, and retain the next generation of respiratory therapists while strengthening the long-term health care capacity of our region."

Under the new scholarship agreement, selected students receive 100 percent tuition coverage, guaranteed admission into the professional phase of the RT program upon successful completion of prerequisites, and guaranteed employment at CHI St. Alexius Health after graduation.

Graduates fulfill their scholarship commitment through a three-year employment agreement with the hospital.

"For students and families, this provides clarity and peace of mind," Sperle said. "They can focus on learning, knowing they are entering an in-demand profession with a clear pathway from education to employment."

The new scholarships are expected to be available for students entering in fall 2026. Prospective students and high school seniors are encouraged to apply early through the University of Mary's Department of Admissions, as awards are limited.

Anyone who wishes to learn more about the University of Mary can do so at [www.umary.edu](http://www.umary.edu) or [online.umary.edu](http://online.umary.edu), or by contacting an admissions representative at [enroll@umary.edu](mailto:enroll@umary.edu), or by calling (701) 355-8030. The University of Mary is one of only twenty recommended Cardinal Newman Society Residential Colleges and Universities in the US.

## Proceedings Of The Stanley City Council

### MINUTES OF THE STANLEY CITY COUNCIL JANUARY 13, 2026

Mayor Marlin Ranum called the January 13, 2026, regular meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. The following Council Members were present: Darren LeRoh, Jesse Weyrauch, Ty Taylor, Randy Jarmin, George Littlecreek and Chad Hysjulien. Others in attendance were City Auditor, Ada Arneson; Planning & Zoning Administrator, Amanda Dennis; Chief of Police, Samuel Pesik; Public Works Director, David Brown; City Attorney, Ryan Sandberg from Pringle & Herigstad Law Firm; and City Engineer, Patrick Caraballo with Brosz Engineering.

### 7:00 P.M. - CITY ASSESSOR - ELECTRIC PROPERTIES LLC ABATEMENT

City Assessor, Amanda Dennis, presented an abatement for Parcel #61-0013100 for property owned by Electric Properties, LLC (Jordan Kannianen). City Assessor Dennis is recommending removal of the structure true and full value of \$158,000 for the months of March-December 2025 as the property burned down in late February 2025. The land true and full value of \$17,500 and special assessments will remain on the property.

Motion made by Hysjulien, seconded by Taylor, to approve the abatement for Parcel #61-0013100 as recommended by City Assessor Dennis. ON ROLL CALL VOTE, the following Council Members voted "AYE": LeRoh, Weyrauch, Taylor, Jarmin, Littlecreek and Hysjulien; and no "NAYS". Motion carried.

### 7:05 P.M. - CITY ASSESSOR - STANLEY AIRPORT AUTHORITY ABATEMENTS

City Assessor Dennis presented an abatement for Parcel #61-0051112 and abatement for Parcel #61-0051113 for properties owned by the Stanley Municipal Airport Authority. City Assessor Dennis is recommending the taxes be abated for the 2025 tax year for both parcels as the Airport Authority took ownership in May 2024 and the property is exempt from taxation.

Motion made by Hysjulien, seconded by Taylor, to approve the abatement for Parcel #61-0051112 as recommended by City Assessor Dennis. ON ROLL CALL VOTE, the following Council Members voted "AYE": LeRoh, Weyrauch, Taylor, Jarmin, Littlecreek and Hysjulien; and no "NAYS". Motion carried.

Motion made by Hysjulien, seconded by Taylor, to approve the abatement for Parcel #61-0051113 as recommended by City Assessor Dennis. ON ROLL CALL VOTE, the following Council Members voted "AYE": LeRoh, Weyrauch, Taylor, Jarmin, Littlecreek and Hysjulien; and no "NAYS". Motion carried.

Motion made by Hysjulien, seconded by Taylor, to approve the abatement for Parcel #61-0051112 as recommended by City Assessor Dennis. ON ROLL CALL VOTE, the following Council Members voted "AYE": LeRoh, Weyrauch, Taylor, Jarmin, Littlecreek and Hysjulien; and no "NAYS". Motion carried.

Motion made by Hysjulien, seconded by Taylor, to approve the abatement for Parcel #61-0051113 as recommended by City Assessor Dennis. ON ROLL CALL VOTE, the following Council Members voted "AYE": LeRoh, Weyrauch, Taylor, Jarmin, Littlecreek and Hysjulien; and no "NAYS". Motion carried.

Motion made by Hysjulien, seconded by Taylor, to approve the abatement for Parcel #61-0051113 as recommended by City Assessor Dennis. ON ROLL CALL VOTE, the following Council Members voted "AYE": LeRoh, Weyrauch, Taylor, Jarmin, Littlecreek and Hysjulien; and no "NAYS". Motion carried.

Motion made by Hysjulien, seconded by Taylor, to approve the abatement for Parcel #61-0051113 as recommended by City Assessor Dennis. ON ROLL CALL VOTE, the following Council Members voted "AYE": LeRoh, Weyrauch, Taylor, Jarmin, Littlecreek and Hysjulien; and no "NAYS". Motion carried.

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