

# Bakken Briefs

## Ray mulls more liquor sales

The Ray City Commission will consider revising the city's liquor ordinances after a request by the Trax 22 Lounge for an off-sale license.

Trax 22 Manager Lori Nowlan attended the commission's meeting April 8 to request the license, saying it would benefit not just the business but also the city as a whole.

"Off-sale liquor license brings additional immediate sales tax revenue to the city," Nowlan said. "Since we are a small town without much competition, this service fills a community need and has been requested almost on a daily basis."

The city's liquor ordinances were amended last summer to create a liquor license for restaurants, allowing them to operate a bar, which paved the way for Trax 22 to open for business after previously being denied a liquor license.

--The Journal, Crosby

## Williams OKs chip seal work

The Williams County Commission has approved the award of a \$4.5 million chip seal project to Asphalt Surface Technologies Corp.

County Engineer Brandon Ferrell told commissioners the low bid was roughly \$170,000 under the estimated cost of \$4.65 million.

In addition to approving the base contract, commissioners also authorized county staff to explore adding up to \$2 million in additional work to the project. Ferrell said the county has available funding due to other projects coming in under budget, creating an opportunity to expand chip sealing efforts this construction season.

The project will focus on chip sealing paved roads across the eastern half of Williams County. County Highway Superintendent Dennis Nelson estimated the total at about 100 miles.

--Western Dakota Energy Association

## Carpio family creates library

Emily Burkett's idea for a "Little Free Library" in her front yard in Carpio has grown into a shipping container on Main Street.

Emily and Austin Burkett own a business in Carpio called Coulee Services that offers shipping containers for rent as storage.

"I told my husband I wanted a little library," Emily Burkett said, "and Austin said, 'Why don't we just use a shipping container?'"

Cheryl Burkett, a former preschool teacher, and Samantha Burkett Cremers were instrumental in planning the interior of the library, and in thrifting for the books that fill the shelves.

The Carpio Kids Library has a wall of books for readers from ages 0 to 17. There are also benches and motion-activated lights, and the Burketts added a heating system to the building.

--Kenmare News

## Tribes help with health care

Getting answers about health care can be complicated, especially when someone is experiencing a crisis. So planning ahead and finding answers beforehand can relieve a lot of anxiety.

Some of the people with those answers gathered in Mandaree on March 31 for a health care and insurance Fair organized by Sherry Turner-Lone Fight, a member of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation's Tribal Business Council.

The fair brought in experts from the North Dakota Navigators, a program that helps people enroll in health insurance, and from the tribal programs of the Elbowoods Medical Center.

Some of the big questions involved the MHA Tribal Health Insurance Program, which is for uninsured tribal members who are not eligible for Medicaid, Director Charity Yessilth said.

--MHA Times, New Town

## Alexander school expands

The spirit of community and growth was on full display on March 31 as the Alexander Public School District held an official dedication for its completed \$18 million expansion.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony ended a two-year construction journey that has fundamentally transformed the school district's capacity to serve its growing student body.

For Superintendent Leslie Bieber, the day was about more than just the new square footage; it was a celebration of the resilience and teamwork required to reach the finish line.

"It was especially meaningful to celebrate not just the building, but the journey," Bieber said.

The project added 10 classrooms and expanded the cafeteria and kitchen, in addition to making HVAC and electrical upgrades.

--McKenzie County Farmer, Watford City

## Pipeline brings opportunity

By the end of the decade, a natural gas pipeline between Washburn and Underwood is expected to open more doors for Rainbow Energy, which already has seen opportunities with biofuel, coal ash byproducts and a data center.

Rainbow Energy produces electricity at its coal-fired Coal Creek Station south of Underwood for sale to distribution companies, said Jessica Bell, vice president of external affairs.

Bell said Rainbow Energy is looking to expand its generation capacity with natural gas.

"We have a lot of different growth opportunities," Bell said. "We can grow in opportunity."

Bell said Rainbow Energy expects to have 2.1 gigawatts of power available from the pipeline.

"We are looking for someone to sign up for a power purchase agreement," Bell said.

--Minot Daily News

### City Council Meets:

## City Holds Public Input Meeting For CIP4

By Mary Kilen  
Stanley City Council held their regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, Apr. 14. Highlights of the meeting included a public input meeting for the next capital improvement phase, the annual tax equalization meeting and discussion on water sales.

**Public Input Meeting**  
Patrick Carabello and Paul Holtzer of Brosz Engineering presented information on CIP4, the next phase replacing aging infrastructure in some of the older parts of the city. This phase would include areas previously identified in the original project including areas between 3rd and 6th Ave. The project would include watermain, sewer main and street replacements.

They discussed the issues found as they investigated each of the areas, the options for payment and total estimated costs. That includes an estimate total between \$5.5 and \$6 million including the identified storm sewer replacement needs, sanitary sewer, water main ad street work. They said this project is about the same scale as CIP3. Based on recent biddings, they are estimating costs at around \$500,000 per block.

Once completed, this will mean that nearly everything on the east side of Main Street will be complete. The council discussed some concerns that were found on 7th Avenue, asking if this could be included in the project or at least considered. Carabello said that is possible, but it will mean the need for a second public input meeting to address that addition.

The current schedule includes a public comment period of 30 days, preliminary engineering completed by July. Final design would be completed in December with call for bids in January for the 2027 construction season.

The council did ask for those areas of 7th Avenue to be considered, so a second public input meeting will open the May council meeting.

**Tax Equalization Meeting**  
City Assessor Amanda Dennis presented the council with the tax equalization hearing information. With legislative changes in 2026, all property owners were sent a letter of assessment, showing any changes from 2025 to 2026. Changes were based on the sales ratio study which looks at the market value and current sales from Mountrail County.

There were 51 valid sales in the county in 2025 and 33 in the City of Stanley. The sales ratio median for the city was at 90.32% and 89% for the county. A 5% structure only increase for all residential property was implemented for 2026. No across the board increase was placed on commercial property. This increase will bring the city within the state mandated range.

Dennis said that she had received one appeal from the Cass Oil Company, owner of the Circle K station. The property value decreased by \$148,400 as she removed the car

wash equipment and vacuum station as these are recognized as personal property by the State of ND.

With the residential increase, new construction, improvements to existing property, appeals and abatements approved earlier this year, the valuation in the city will increase \$322,000 to \$13,488,730.

Kier Jackson was at the meeting, disagreeing with the valuation on their fireworks building. City Assessor Dennis will look into this request for a recommendation.

As a result, the council recessed the equalization meeting and will reconvene at the May 12 meeting at 7:00 p.m. to accept the equalization for the city.

**Planning & Zoning Recommendations**  
Planning and Zoning committee chairman Todd Heidebreder reported on the committee's meeting the previous evening.

They received a mobile food permit from Emmanuel Villa for a mobile food unit on the Sonshine Car Wash property. He will need to submit his health department license and sales tax identification paperwork before the public hearing scheduled for May 11 at 5:30 p.m.

They received a variance permit request from David and Claudia Faulkner to allow a rear setback of 10 feet from the property line for a garage addition at 306 4th St. SE. Zoning ordinance calls for a 20 foot setback. The committee recommended that any cement apron remain at least two feet from the property line. The council moved to concur with the committee and approve the variance.

A second variance permit request was received from Heath Hetzel to allow a rear setback of 8'9" for a new garage at 716 6th St. SE. The committee had the same recommendation for any cement apron. The council moved to concur with the committee and approve the variance.

The committee also welcomed newly appointed member Tom Johnson to the board.

Planning and Zoning Administrator Amanda Dennis presented the council with a list of permits for this month. There are two new houses in the list that lie within the city's extraterritorial jurisdiction. The council moved to approve the following building permits: 6201 84th Ave. NW, new house with attached three-car garage; 8403 62nd St. NW, new house with attached two-car garage; 8101 61st St. NW, gazebo; and 6161 Highway 8, new addition, restrooms. They also approved the following demolition permits: 615 6th St. SE, demolish older wings of nursing home; and 524 4th St. SE, demolish existing detached garage.

**Untreated Water Sales**  
Chris Barke, WAWSA executive director, was at the meeting to discuss the city's agreements for treated and untreated water sales. As a member of R&T, the city falls under the policy for industrial sales. Barke

said that the city receives a monthly baseline payment from WAWSA for those sales.

Mayor Ranum discussed the water sales point the city has with DSI, noting that the city has questions about the expenses for upkeep and maintenance. Joan Hollekim had researched the issue including identifying expenses, noting that the city is going backwards when it comes to income and expenses for the untreated water sales.

Tony Russell from DSI also discussed those concerns, saying that the untreated sales were fairly minimal last year as companies look at options. They will track all of the costs and income to determine if it is worth it if they are not recouping the costs. They also discussed the age of the system and more costs possible in the future.

Barke said this is worth a second conversation, including the baseline set for industrial sales. He said they need to evaluate the agreements so that all parties involved are not losing money. The council suggested a meeting with the public works committee as they move forward.

**Special Assessment Appointment**  
The council moved to reappoint Tara Uran to another six-year term on the city's special assessment committee.

**EDC Report**  
Brandi Larson presented the council with one application acted upon by the EDC at their March 17 meeting.

Josh Nichols had submitted an application for an interest buy-down of \$37,353.67 as he is looking to purchase the storage units from Joe Lucy. The committee had researched the requirements from the Bank of North Dakota regarding his loan and they recommended approval of the requested amount in the form of a five-year forgivable loan. Like recent applications, this would mean that the loan would be forgiven as long as the business is open for five years. The council moved to approve the recommendation.

Larson also reported they are still working on updating their application process. They will then send it to the city attorneys for review before presenting it to the council.

Visitor's Committee Request  
Brandi Larson reported they had one application this month. The council moved to approve the committee recommendation of \$7,500 for outdoor furniture for Flickertail Village.

**Gaming Permit**  
The council moved to approve the gaming permit for the North

Dakota Equine Association for a raffle on September 19 and 20 at the Mountrail County Fair Building.

**Brosz Service Contract**  
City Attorney Ryan Sandberg reported he has been working with Brosz Engineering on the master service contract that is part of every project the city does with Brosz. If this is approved it would just become part of the project contracts. It sets the general conditions for each project. The council will read through this and then revisit it at the May meeting.

**City Engineer Report**  
City Engineer Patrick Carabello reported on current and pending projects.

Kemper plans to resume work next week on CIP3. They were set to meet on Thursday to discuss the work remaining.

Looking at CIP4, they have completed review of the television of the sewer. Documents were submitted to DWR for cost share for preconstruction costs, but the fund had more applications than funding so Stanley's request was deferred. They are hoping there will be more funds available, but that is not guaranteed. The city was approved for \$390,000 in construction funds. The city also received notification that the recent request for SRF funding was denied. The next application phase is anticipated to begin in October and the city could reapply. Phase 4 is in the planning stages thus far.

The lead line service project continues. They still have 180 unknown service lines. They have 12 inspections scheduled to be performed. They have found 7 lead lines in this survey, bringing the total to 19 including those found during CIP phase one.

Potential projects have been submitted to the Department of Water Resources and State Water Commission for their 2027-2029 development plan.

Prep work has been completed for the transition to the GIS system. Once access is received, they will begin the transfer.

**Police Report**  
Chief of Police Sam Pisek reported that SRO Dazell is doing an awesome job in Stanley schools. Other agencies are reaching out to Stanley for information as they build their own programs.

He also reported the department has been busy with narcotics, driving under suspension, driving under the influence, warrant, and domestic arrests.

**Public Works Report**  
Public Works Director Dave Brown discussed the contracts with Maguire Iron for the new water tower, old water tower and clear well. These contracts cover the cleaning  
(Continued on Page 7)

**Dr. Susan Asheim**  
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