

Programs Aim

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projected in 2023. Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in the state and around 30% of all North Dakotans have high blood pressure, North Dakota Health and Human Services figures show.

The second leading cause of death is cancer, which accounts for 17% of all deaths in the state in the most recent data. On the mental health side, 18% reported their mental health was "not good" eight or more days in a month, data from 2025 shows.

Walking together A total of 35 applications for community walking programs were submitted, Traynor said, with around 20 expected to be selected.

One hopeful applicant is First District Health Unit, which serves seven counties in the north-central part of the state.

Holly Brekhuis, Minot-based executive director of the unit, said their proposal centers on finding a coordinator who will then utilize the public health nurses in each community to create walking programs across the area.

"In those small communities, everyone knows the county nurse, so they're familiar, they know who lives there, they know what other organizations are in the community, so they would be our team leaders in each of these communities," Brekhuis said.

Proposals must include at least one community walk once per week and another two that can be individually done and logged, she said, with

nurses also able to provide nutrition guidance and ensure people are getting their normal health screenings.

"It would kind of vary by community," Brekhuis said. "If it's a tight-knit group, and they want to walk together three times a week, great."

Communities, no matter where they are, will likely need to collaborate with schools and other organizations that have indoor space that could be utilized for walking programs, particularly in deep winter or during other inclement weather periods, she said.

Gardening together For the community garden program, 45 applications have come into HHS, with around 10 to be selected as pilots.

Gina McKee, who runs Prairie Wild Garden Company, has submitted a grant request. Earlier in the year McKee had been contracted to set up the Towner Community Garden project through a grant from the local soil conservation district to use a vacant lot in the town.

Now that this has been established, a RHTP grant could help cover some operational costs and double the amount of raised beds, potentially add a high tunnel to allow a prolonged growing season, expand a pollinator section of the garden, and increase the ability to raise awareness in the community about the garden, McKee said.

She's hopeful the grant will come through, particularly since the grant materials requested already established plots of outlines for programs that could be scaled up soon.

"It was excellent timing with the grant availability," McKee said. "Had we not started yet, and already had some funding, it probably wouldn't have worked for us this

year." McKee said she hopes to work with NDSU Extension, which could hold educational workshops and training at the site, and sees potential collaboration with other groups like 4-H.

Julie Garden-Robinson, a nutrition and food safety professor at NDSU Extension, was already selected for an RHTP grant for just over \$500,000 as part of the ND Eats Well Together pillar.

Garden-Robinson is already familiar with many in rural communities across the state for the weekly column Prairie Fare that often runs in newspapers she's been penning for 28 years.

The grant will help NDSU Extension expand on existing outreach programs about nutrition and healthy eating and increase the ability to collaborate on projects across the state, like the community garden program.

This will be done by holding events and training from the Pre-K level to college age, public health officials, teachers, other adults all the way through retirees, she said.

Recent changes to the federal dietary guidelines require updates to curriculum, she said, which is another part of what the grant will help facilitate.

"We're excited to have this funding because there's a lot of things that we never could do because we have limited funding," Garden-Robinson said.

Zero-hour PE programs Another grant will support around 10 pilot programs for establishing "Zero-hour PE" initiatives at schools.

This would allow for the creation of structured 30-45 minutes of physical activity before school for middle and high school students with a

component for tracking that activity through fitness tracking wearable devices.

So far, 23 applications have been submitted, Traynor said.

"We know physical activity improves academic performance as well as gets people hooked on activity that otherwise wouldn't have this opportunity, because they might not be in a sport," Traynor said. "It's for everyone, but it also gets kids that otherwise wouldn't be in an organized thing."

One question that naturally arises is how this would conflict with busing or other transportation for kids going to school.

Traynor said funding for these programs will be available to ensure kids in rural areas can get to the sessions outside of the normal busing operations.

Recently hired to oversee the granting process and build out the Make North Dakota Healthy Again programs over the next five years is Nicole Benson, a Grand Forks native who helped get a segment of her city certified as a "Blue Zone" last year.

Blue Zones are areas around the world where people have been found to avoid some of the chronic diseases plaguing other parts of the world and where they have higher lifespans and healthspans. This includes parts of Sardinian, Okinawa, Greece, Costa Rica, and Loma Linda in California where healthy eating, movement and social connectedness are built into the lives of residents.

"We'll really be focusing on nutrition, movement, building resiliency, and a lot of that has to do with social connection and mental health," Benson said.

Benson said over the course of the five years the types of grants will likely morph as innovative ideas



Raised beds ready for planting at the Towner Community Garden. If selected for a grant as part of the Rural Health Transformation Program, the garden could double the number of beds and other improvements. Photo provided by Gina McKee.

come in from communities across the state about how they'd like to use the funding.

"I think we're just scratching the surface of what's to come," Benson said.

She sees deeper collaboration with school districts and potentially early childhood centers, both for increasing wellness of students and staff, as well as partnering with faith organizations to support well-being and elevate what's already being done.

"One of the lessons I learned from the Blue Zones project in Grand Forks is that people were al-

ready doing amazing things," Benson said. "So part of it is understanding what is already happening and to support those initiatives, to amplify and build upon those things."

The North Dakota News Cooperative is a non-profit news organization providing reliable and independent reporting on issues and events that impact the lives of North Dakotans. The organization increases the public's access to quality journalism and advances news literacy across the state. For more information about NDNC or to make a charitable contribution, please visit newscoopnd.org.

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Stephanie A. Pappa Mountrail County Auditor

NOTICE OF PRIMARY ELECTION

Notice is hereby given that on **Tuesday, the 9th day of June, 2026**, at the voting centers in the various listed precincts in the County of Mountrail, an election will be held for the election of federal, state, district, county and city officer(s), and state-wide measure(s) and applicable local measure(s), which election will be opened at **8:00 a.m.**, and will continue open **until 7:00 p.m.** of that day.

Dated this 19th day of May, 2026.

Stephanie A. Pappa Mountrail County Auditor

PRECINCTS

- *STANLEY CITY
*NEW TOWN CITY
*NORTHERN NEW TOWN CITY
*PARSHALL CITY
*PALERMO CITY
*WHITE EARTH CITY
*PLAZA CITY
*ROSS CITY

*TOWNSHIPS OF SIDONIA, CROWFOOT, LOWLAND, CLEARWATER, REDMOND, STAVE, PALERMO, MCGAHAN, EGAN, DEBING, ALGER, PURCELL, BURKE, MCALMOND, KICKAPOO, RAT LAKE, BROOKBANK, SIKES, AUSTIN, OAKLAND, OSLOE, KNIFE RIVER, CRANE CREEK, WAYZETTA, SHELL, SPRING COULEE,

*TOWNSHIPS OF PLAZA, MOUNTRAIL, MODEL, BANNER, PARSHALL, FERTILE, VAN HOOK, LIBERTY, OSBORN, HOWIE, BIG BEND, UNORG 152-93, UNORG 150-93 & UNORG 150-92

*TOWNSHIPS OF BICKER, POWERS LAKE, POWERS, LOSTWOOD, WHITE EARTH, SORKNESS, COTTONWOOD, JAMES HILL, MYRTLE, MANITOU, ROSS & IDAHO

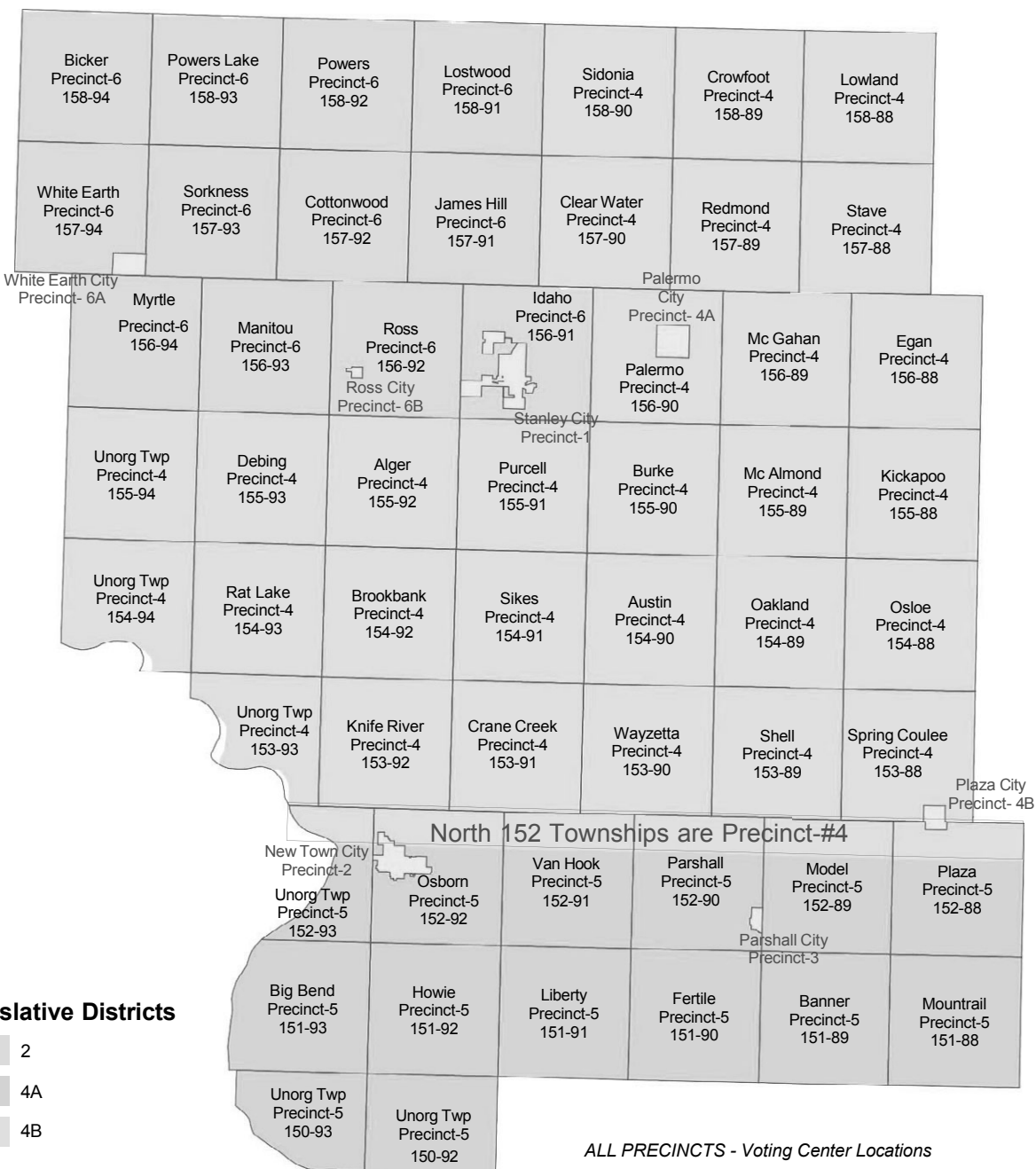
VOTING CENTERS

STANLEY HIGH SCHOOL COMMONS AREA 109 8th Ave SE, Stanley ND 58784
NEW TOWN CITY 945 Eagle Dr Ste 105, New Town ND 58763
PARSHALL AMERICAN LEGION BLDG. 16 Main St N, Parshall ND 58770
PALERMO CORPORATION BLDG. 339 Broadway St., Palermo ND 58769

ROSS COMMUNITY BUILDING 203 Main St, Ross ND 58776
PLAZA MOUNTRAIL COUNTY R&B COMPLEX 4161 64th Ave NW, Plaza ND 58771
WHITE EARTH CITY HALL 301 McTavish Ave, White Earth ND 58794
MOUNTRAIL COUNTY SOUTH COMPLEX 8103 61st St NW, Stanley ND 58784

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Mountrail County Election Precincts and Voting Centers As of June 9, 2026



ALL PRECINCTS - Voting Center Locations

- STANLEY CITY - Stanley High School Commons Area
NEW TOWN CITY - New Town 945 Eagle Dr Ste 105
PARSHALL CITY - American Legion Building
PALERMO CITY - Palermo City Hall
STANLEY - Mountrail County South Complex
PLAZA CITY - Mountrail County Plaza R&B Complex
ROSS CITY - Ross Community Building
WHITE EARTH CITY - White Earth City Hall

STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA MOUNTRAIL COUNTY
CONSOLIDATED PRIMARY ELECTION BALLOT
PRIMARY ELECTION JUNE 9, 2026
ATTENTION! READ BEFORE VOTING POLITICAL PARTY BALLOT
In a Political Party Primary Election, you may only vote for the candidates of one political party. This ballot contains two political parties; one in each section. If you vote in more than one political party's section, your Political Party Ballot will be rejected; however, all votes on the No Party and Measures Ballots will still be counted.
To vote for the candidate of your choice, you must darken the oval (●) next to the name of that candidate. To vote for a person whose name is not printed on the ballot, you must darken the oval (●) next to the blank line provided and write that person's name on the blank line.
REPUBLICAN
Representative in Congress
Vote for no more than ONE name
Julie Fedorchak
Alex Balazs
Secretary of State
Vote for no more than ONE name
Michael Howe
Attorney General
Vote for no more than ONE name
Drew Wrigley
Agriculture Commissioner
Vote for no more than ONE name
Doug Goehring
Public Service Commissioner
Vote for no more than ONE name
Deven Styczynski
Sheri Haugen-Hoffart
Public Service Commissioner
Unexpired 2-Year Term
Vote for no more than ONE name
Chris Olson
Jill Kringstad
Tax Commissioner
Vote for no more than ONE name
Brian Kroshus
DEMOCRATIC-NPL
Representative in Congress
Vote for no more than ONE name
Trygve Hammer
Secretary of State
Vote for no more than ONE name
Ryan Braunberger
Attorney General
Vote for no more than ONE name
Tim Lamb
Agriculture Commissioner
Vote for no more than ONE name
Vern Thompson
Public Service Commissioner
Vote for no more than ONE name
John M Pederson
Public Service Commissioner
Unexpired 2-Year Term
Vote for no more than ONE name
Scot Kesh
Tax Commissioner
Vote for no more than ONE name
Mark Nelson
Official Ballot MOUNTRAIL COUNTY June 9, 2026
All ballots, other than those used to vote absentee, must first be initialed by appropriate election officials in order to be counted.
Election Official Initials
Typ:01 Seq:0001 Spl:01