

THE LEADER-NEWS

Website: www.nordaknorth.com
 607 Main St. | PO BOX 340 | Washburn, ND 58577
 Tel: 701-462-8126

PUBLISHER
 Kelsey Majeske

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER
 Kelli Ameling

NEWS REPORTER
 Phaidra Yunker

SPORTS EDITOR
 Ethyn Williams-Calvert

GRAPHIC DESIGN
 Hunter Kamrath

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 We will not print letters we judge libelous or of an advertising nature.
 Letters should not be more than 250 words in length. Mail: Leader-News, PO Box 340, Washburn, ND 58577; E-mail: leadernews@nordaknorth.com or drop off your letter at 607 Main Ave., Washburn.



NORDAK NORTH PUBLICATIONS



CHICAGO

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Members of the Washburn High School band and choir pose for a group photo at Chicago's Buckingham Fountain during their six-day enrichment trip, a reward for years of performances and fundraising efforts.

the Bean followed, and the day closed with deepdish pizza at Gino's East and a Wendella river architecture cruise that drifted past the skyline at sunset.

Chaperone Carissa Klabunde said the cruise was her favorite moment.

"It was a well-planned trip, and we got to see so much," she said. "The kids were surprised at how beautiful the city is. They were so appreciative. These are really, really great kids."

Thursday brought another round of firsts: the Shedd Aquarium, Navy Pier, Buckingham Fountain and the Lincoln Park Zoo. But the night belonged to Medieval Times, where students ate tomato soup from metal bowls, tore into roasted chicken with their hands and cheered for jousting knights.

"It was the best tomato soup I've ever had," said senior flute player Hannah Klabunde, who graduated just days before the trip. "You don't get utensils. You just pick up the chicken and eat it. They did give us wet wipes."

For her, the trip was more than entertainment.

"It was the best way to end my senior year," she said. "We're all kind of in our own separate friend groups, and it brought us together as a band and as a school."

She said the river archi-

ture tour stood out — the stories behind the buildings, the history woven into the skyline — but the real impact came from the shared experience.

"It was more fun and more memorable because I was with my best friends," she said.

Moe saw that, too. He said the trip gave him a chance to know his students outside the hour he sees them each day in class.

"I force them to play at all these events," he said. "But on this trip, we get to bond. They get to bond with each other. It's a cultural trip as much as anything."

He watched students navigate packed days that ran from breakfast to late-night returns, something many had never experienced.

"They were worn out," he said. "It's a very full schedule, but they handled it."

By the time the bus rolled back into Washburn around 11 p.m. on May 30, the students were tired in the best possible way — the kind of tired that comes from doing more, seeing more and learning more than they expected when they boarded the bus six days earlier.

For Moe, that's the point. "This is enrichment," he said. "This is giving kids an opportunity they might never have. It's a way to say: you've worked hard, you've shown up, you've given so much of yourselves — now here's something just for you."



SUBMITTED PHOTOS | DUSTIN MOE

Washburn High School band members kick off their Chicago adventure with a stop at Six Flags Great America, celebrating the park's 50th anniversary in style. From left: Aubrey Gardner, Hannah Klabunde, Jada Vetter, Elizabeth Neumiller and Lily Gardner enjoy a giant chair photo op before hitting the rides.

**McLean/Mercer
Regional Library Board**

There is one (1) position on the McLean/Mercer Regional Library Board from McLean County with a term expiring on June 30, 2026. The term is for three (3) years ending June 30, 2029. Eligible members must be residents of McLean County. If interested, please send a letter of interest to:

McLean County Auditor
 P.O. Box 1108
 Washburn ND 58577-1108
 Or Email: baknutson@nd.gov
By June 30, 2026