

## Borderland BRIEFS

### Meidinger retires after more than 35 years in law enforcement

Pembina County Sheriff Terry Meidinger has retired from law enforcement after more than 35 years of service to the region. Meidinger, who is not seeking re-election in the June 9 primary, announced his intention to retire during the May 19 meeting of the Pembina County Commission and officially stepped down May 31. Before becoming sheriff in January 2015, Meidinger served 24 years with the Walhalla Police Department. He then served 11½ years as Pembina County sheriff. The Pembina County Commission accepted Meidinger's resignation and expressed appreciation for his years of service to the county. Deputy Sheriff Cory Mortensen was appointed interim sheriff effective June 1. Mortensen is one of two candidates seeking election as sheriff in the June 9 primary. Former Chief Deputy Marcus Ramsay is also running for the position.

### ND free fishing weekend

North Dakota's free fishing weekend is June 6-7. All residents 16 and older can fish any North Dakota water without a license. Residents 15 and younger do not need a fishing license at any time of year. The weekend provides a great opportunity to try fishing for the first time or take someone new. Information on regulations, where to fish and what equipment is needed is available on the North Dakota Game and Fish Department's website at [gf.nd.gov](http://gf.nd.gov).

### Neché man sustained serious injuries on the evening of June 30 after his motorcycle overturned in Eddy County

A 58-year-old Neche man sustained serious injuries Saturday evening after his motorcycle overturned in Eddy County. According to the North Dakota Highway Patrol, the crash occurred just before 6 p.m. on Highway 15, approximately 11 miles northwest of McHenry. Authorities reported the man was traveling eastbound on a Harley-Davidson trike when the motorcycle struck an area of broken pavement and rolled over. The rider was not wearing a helmet at the time of the crash. He sustained serious injuries and was airlifted to Sanford Medical Center in Fargo for treatment. The crash remains under investigation by the North Dakota Highway Patrol.

### Saturday at Akra Hall returns June 13

The Northeast North Dakota Heritage Association will host its annual Saturday at Akra Hall event from 2 to 5 p.m. on Saturday, June 13, at historic Akra Hall in Icelandic State Park. The afternoon will feature entertainment by the Homestead Band, along with food and fellowship in the new pavilion adjacent to the hall. Lunch offerings will include BBQs, chips, cookies, lemonade, water and coffee. The event is open to the public and offered on a free-will donation basis. Organizers encourage attendees to bring family and friends and enjoy an afternoon celebrating local heritage and community. For more information, contact Katherine Lunde at 701-520-3441 or [klunde311@icloud.com](mailto:klunde311@icloud.com).

### Pisek pair charged with child abuse, drug possession

Two Pisek residents are facing child abuse and drug possession charges following an investigation that began Memorial Day at First Care Health Center in Park River. According to court records, security camera footage captured an argument between 22-year-old Alex Hill and 19-year-old Lilian Bertrand on May 25. During the incident, Hill allegedly threw a 4-month-old child and forcibly removed the infant from a car seat without properly supporting the child's head. The pair was arrested. Investigators also discovered the child had been living between two separate residences, one of which housed a registered sex offender and another that reportedly lacked running utilities. Hill and Bertrand made their initial court appearances on May 27. Both are charged with one count of child neglect or abuse and two infractions related to marijuana possession and possession of drug paraphernalia. Both remain incarcerated at the Grand Forks County Correctional Center. Bond for each was set at \$5,000 cash or surety. The case remains pending in Walsh County District Court.

### Moorhead couple under investigation after students ingest THC gummies

Moorhead police held a press conference Thursday regarding an investigation involving THC-infused gummies that reportedly sickened a dozen students at Horizon Middle School earlier

this month. According to authorities, the students became ill after ingesting THC gummies. While Minnesota law limits THC edibles to 50 milligrams per package, investigators said the gummies consumed by the students contained 300 milligrams each. Police traced the products to Martin and Amanda Hulst, who allegedly were selling illegally packaged THC products from their basement. Charges are pending. Law enforcement officials are reminding parents to remain vigilant and monitor items their children may be bringing home.

### Devils Lake man faces charges after allegedly impersonating trooper

A preliminary hearing is scheduled today in Northeast Central Judicial District Court for 39-year-old Bruce Laverdure of Devils Lake. According to authorities, Laverdure was stopped by law enforcement in Nelson County last month after he was observed driving a truck that had been reported stolen from the Fargo-Moorhead area. Court records allege that when questioned by officers, Laverdure claimed he was working undercover for the North Dakota Highway Patrol. Investigators were not convinced and subsequently arrested him. Laverdure faces charges related to possession of the stolen vehicle, impersonating a law enforcement officer and multiple drug offenses. He remains incarcerated at the Lake Region Law Enforcement Center, where his bond has been set at \$15,000 cash only.

### Region 3 listening sessions scheduled across northeast North Dakota

The North Central Planning Council will host a series of listening sessions throughout Region 3 in June, giving residents an opportunity to share perspectives on workforce challenges, community needs and potential future projects. Organizers say the sessions are intended to gather local input on issues affecting communities and to identify ideas that could realistically move forward as regional initiatives. Meetings are scheduled for June 15 in Ramsey and Towner counties, June 16 in Eddy County, June 17 in Cavalier County, June 24 in Rolette County and June 25 in Benson County. Additional information, including meeting times and locations, is available on the North Central Planning Council's webpage. Results from the listening sessions will be presented during the North Central Planning Council's State of Region 3 event in September.

### Beehive truck overturns on I-94; driver stung hundreds of times

A semi driver hauling beehives escaped serious injury Thursday after his truck overturned on Interstate 94 near Valley City. According to reports, the crash occurred when the driver took evasive action to avoid a collision with a 15-year-old motorist who was merging onto the interstate. The semi tipped over, releasing thousands of bees from the hives it was transporting. The driver survived the crash but was stung hundreds of times by the bees. Emergency responders and beekeepers spent approximately eight hours cleaning up the scene and recovering the hives.

### Kunkel transferred to Lake Region jail following vacated conviction

Werner Kunkel, whose 1995 murder conviction was vacated earlier this year, has been transferred from the James River Correctional Center in Jamestown to the Lake Region Law Enforcement Center in Devils Lake. Kunkel was sentenced to life in prison nearly 30 years ago in connection with the 1986 death of Gilbert Fassett. Earlier this year, a court vacated his conviction, reopening the case. At this time, no future court dates have been scheduled. The case continues to work its way through the court system.

## Don't overlook the June 9 Primary Election

North Dakota Secretary of State Michael Howe

Thomas Jefferson said, "We do not have government by the majority. We have government by the majority who participate."

On June 9, North Dakota will conduct its statewide primary election. If the past is any indication, "the majority who participate," as Jefferson mentions, may only be 11% of eligible North Dakota voters.

Since 2000, North Dakota has averaged a disappointingly sparse 22% turnout for the June primary election. Said a different way, nearly 80% of eligible North Dakotans have stayed home and remained silent when it comes to electing their mayors, their city councils or commissions, and deciding who shall serve on their park boards. Not all school board elections are on the primary ballot, but many are. An overwhelming majority are yielding their vote for local representation in their school districts to a fraction of the population.

Yes, there are partisan races on the June primary ballot. Nominations for statewide and legislative candidates

will make up the front page of your ballot. But on the other side of your ballot, you will find races that determine key local leaders: 728 city council and commission seats are up for grabs; 502 spots on park boards across North Dakota are up for a vote; and city mayors and commission presidents, the leading voices of our cities — 205 of them, to be exact — will be decided June 9.

In all, 1,500 races and measures will be on primary ballots in our state.

North Dakota offers several options to make participating in elections convenient for voters. Eligible North Dakotans can choose to utilize absentee voting, early voting or Election Day voting to cast their ballot.

Early voting begins June 1 in Sioux, Stutsman and Ward counties. Cass and Grand Forks counties will offer early voting beginning June 2. Burleigh County starts early voting June 3. Morton and Stark counties will launch early voting June 4.

If you are voting absentee, be sure to

get your ballot in the mail as soon as possible or drop it off at your county office before the polls close June 9. Ballots will not be accepted if they arrive after Election Day.

The June primary isn't a warmup for November. The election results in June will have an impact on your everyday activities and quality of life.

The next election is always the most important election. Don't sit this one out.

To find a sample ballot, polling locations, early voting locations and hours, visit [vote.nd.gov](http://vote.nd.gov).

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## North Dakota launches \$40 million grant opportunity to help rural hospitals expand lifesaving care close to home

Bismarck, N.D. - North Dakota Health and Human Services (HHS) is launching a new \$40 million funding opportunity designed to help rural hospitals upgrade clinical equipment, strengthen emergency and specialty care services, and keep more healthcare close to home for North Dakotans.

For many rural communities, limited and aging equipment can mean patients must travel hours for emergency care, advanced imaging, cancer treatment, obstetric care or specialized procedures. State leaders say the funding is designed to help hospitals provide faster diagnoses, improve outcomes and strengthen the long-term future of rural health care in North Dakota.

"This investment is about helping rural hospitals continue delivering high-quality care in the communities people call home," said HHS Commissioner Patrick Traynor. "When hospitals have the tools they need locally, patients and families spend less time traveling for care and communities are better positioned to remain healthy and strong."

The Rural Hospital Clinical Equipment funding opportunity will support eligible rural hospitals in purchasing equipment ranging from advanced imaging and emergency stabilization tools to surgical, obstetric and oncology technology. The funding opportunity

is part of North Dakota's broader Rural Health Transformation Program, a statewide effort focused on improving access to care, strengthening the rural health workforce and helping communities build sustainable health care systems.

Approximately 20 awards of about \$2 million each are expected to be distributed to eligible rural hospitals across North Dakota. Funding may support clinical equipment purchases, installation costs and minor renovations directly tied to patient care improvements.

### Eligible projects may include:

- MRI, CT and ultrasound equipment
- Emergency and trauma stabilization tools
- Surgical and minimally invasive procedure technology
- Labor and delivery and neonatal equipment
- Cardiology and respiratory care systems
- Rehabilitation and post-acute care equipment
- Oncology treatment technology
- Infection prevention and patient safety systems

A full list of eligible projects can be found in the funding opportunity guidance at [www.hhs.nd.gov/rural-health-transformation/funding](http://www.hhs.nd.gov/rural-health-transformation/funding).

Applicants must be critical access

hospitals, rural emergency hospitals or ambulatory care units located in rural North Dakota, including non-federally operated Indian Health Service hospitals. Applications are due June 30, 2026, at 5 p.m. CT. A technical assistance call for interested applicants will be held June 8, from noon to 12:45 p.m. CT.

More information about the funding opportunity, including application materials and technical assistance resources, is available at North Dakota Rural Health Transformation Program webpage.

The Rural Health Transformation Program is supported by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$198,936,969.55, with 100% funded by CMS. The contents are those of North Dakota Health and Human Services and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement by, CMS, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services or the U.S. government.

### Where to Apply

[www.hhs.nd.gov/rural-health-transformation/funding](http://www.hhs.nd.gov/rural-health-transformation/funding)

## Why is the Borderland Press on the ballot?

By Borderland Press staff

As voters review their ballots ahead of the June 9 election, some may notice a question asking them to designate an official county newspaper.

What does that mean? An official county newspaper serves as the publication of record for local government. Required public notices — including county commission proceedings, election notices, budget hearings, tax-related notices, legal publications, bids, ordinances and other important government information — are published in the designated newspaper so they are available to the public. Public notices are an important part

of government transparency. They provide residents with information about decisions, meetings, expenditures, elections and other actions that may affect their communities.

The designation of an official county newspaper is determined by voters and appears periodically on the ballot. The Borderland Press has long served readers throughout Cavalier County by providing local news, sports, community coverage and public notices that

help keep citizens informed about the issues and events shaping our area.

Whether voting in person, absentee or through early voting, we encourage all eligible residents to participate in the June 9 election and to take time to review their ballot before heading to the polls. An informed community begins with informed citizens, and public participation remains one of the most important parts of local government.





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