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Wednesday, January 14, 2026

Koppelsloen Appointed Commissioner

by LISA THOMAS
Kurt Koppelsloen was appointed on Jan. 6 to serve as a Burke County commissioner, filling the vacancy left by the recent resignation of Commissioner Rick Owings. The appointment was made after the county held interviews to fill the seat on an interim basis until the November election. Commissioners Jarret Van Berkom and Shannon Holter selected Koppelsloen to assume the position for the remainder of the term.

Kurt and his wife, Dawn live just north of Columbus on their family farm. Recently retired from farming, Koppelsloen is filling his time by serving the area in many aspects. He currently serves on the Burke-Divide Electric Coop Board as well as the Burke Central School Board, and has been a township officer since the 1980's.

The 1979 Columbus graduate spent a year in college at Wiliston before diving into work in the oilfield during the 1980 oil boom before getting into farming. It wasn't long into his "retirement" when his wife recruited his talents to work at

the Duty-Free America shop in Portal.

He explained, "She's the manager there and they needed a maintenance person, and well, I'm it," he laughed. He now spends his days traveling to and from work with Dawn. "It's fun," Kurt said.

The Kopplesloens have been married for 28 years and have three grown children, Disa, Dani and Koby. They have a two-year-old granddaughter and three more grandchildren on the way in the coming months as all their children are expecting babies at once, adding to the excitement at the Kopplesloen's.

Kurt said he's looking forward to "getting in there and learning" the ins and outs of the county commission and the duties of those who serve.

His plan is very straight forward, "I always tell people, 'Don't bring an agenda, there's plenty already,'" meaning he isn't joining the commission with a specific axe to grind. "I'm coming in with an open mind."

Koppelsloen is happy to field concerns and questions from residents in District 2 and the



Kurt Koppelsloen

county, and is eager to hear what the needs are. He said he hasn't worked with either of the two commissioners before but is "looking forward to it."

Koppelsloen was sworn in and said he's "going to listen and take it all in and then find out where I can help."

He will have to register for the Primary Election in June to be on the official ballot, and be elected at the November 9 election to serve out the rest of the term that was vacated.

Vote for Attley

Burke Central Student State "I Voted" Finalist

by LISA THOMAS
Attley Greenfield, a freshman at Burke Central School, is among five individuals statewide selected as finalists in a contest sponsored by Secretary of State Michael Howe. Greenfield submitted his drawing as part of a group of entries from Burke Central's FBLA members, earning him a place among the top five finalists chosen from across the state.

According to the SOS office, 478 entries from 72 communities were reviewed. Entrants were all ages from kindergarten students to grandparents.

Secretary Howe said, "I was impressed by the number of entries we received and the variety of designs. It was a true reflection of creativity and civic pride from across our state."

Greenfield came up with his drawing of a gopher standing up on a side hill, proclaiming that "I VOTED" because "I see gophers everywhere in the hills."

He's familiar with the North Dakota prairie, growing up on his grandpa, Mike Greenfield's farm, helping Mike and his uncle, Ryan with their cattle operation.

Attley enjoys ranching and seeing all of the wildlife on the property including moose, deer, waterfowl and even muskrats, but especially gophers.

The 15-year-old has spent a lot of time enjoying the outdoors and his accurate depiction of the gopher shows that.

Attley is excited to be among the finalists chosen. He enjoys his FBLA class and being with his friends at school is a favorite for him, "FBLA is pretty cool."

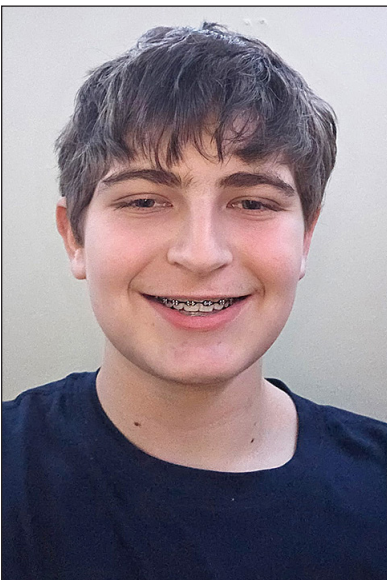
Outside of school, Attley said he enjoys drawing sometimes, but prioritizes playing video games with friends and helping his grandpa on the farm.

His favorite food is steak, and while the family is known for producing top quality black Angus cattle, he said, "as long as it's cooked right" he's not picky about the breed on his plate.

In addition to FBLA, Attley participates in band and choir and loves all genres of music.

The winning design will be announced in March and will debut at the polls during the 2026 Primary Election on June 9. In addition to having their sticker on display statewide when worn by North Dakota voters, the winner will receive a professionally framed copy of their winning design and recognition from Secretary Howe during the official sticker unveiling ceremony that will take place in Bismarck.

Voting will be open until Jan. 23. To cast your vote go to www.sos.nd.gov and click on



Attley Greenfield



Greenfield's "I Voted" Submission

the circle below the submission of your choice. You will be prompted to fill in your email address and which county you live in. It takes just a couple of minutes and might make a locally created gopher and its artist's day.

Sweem Joins Burke NDSU Extension



Cathy Sweem

Cathy Sweem has joined North Dakota State University Extension as the administrative office manager in Burke County. In this role, Sweem provides administrative support for the Extension county office, including filing, answering phones and assisting with day-to-day operations. She also supports the county's 4-H program, assists with weed board testing and helps with various Extension office duties.

"I have prior pest control experience, and my children were involved in the 4-H program in high school, so I am very familiar with the program," Sweem says. "I'm excited to support the Extension office and serve

the community."

Prior to joining NDSU Extension, Sweem worked for Bevis Pest Control in Texas City, TX, serving the greater Houston-Galveston area.

Through on-the-job training, she gained extensive knowledge of commercial pesticide application practices to better assist customers, although she was not licensed as a pest control technician. She also coordinated and hosted community and charity events, including mixers and large-scale events.

Outside of work, Sweem enjoys diamond painting and traveling. Cathy is currently living in Noonan.

Taking a Look Back at 2025

JULY
Mark Larson was recognized for his 50 years of service to the Lignite Fire Department. Cohen Seime and Peyton Helwig (K-B) and Connor Lindberg and Matthew Jacobs (R-PL) participated in the Shrine Bowl football game.

Obituaries: Jerome Koppelsloen, 82 (June); Kenneth Tetrault, 61, of Bowbells (June); Kenneth Knight of Wisconsin (June); Silas Lee McHenry Jr., 81, of Fargo; Hazel "Hubby" Ostrom, 86, of Minot.

Northgate Dam was the place to be to watch a terrific show on the Fourth of July with Casey Lucy providing the fireworks.

The Burke County Commissioners have approved an ordinance for a battery energy storage system

Approximately 150 people

took part in the annual Suicide Prevention and Awareness Fun Run held in Lignite.

McKenna Wrestling, freshman at Powers Lake High School, was selected to attend the Minot Rural Fire Department Youth Camp.

With a grant from the ND Community Foundation, the Powers Lake Park Board has put in walkways at Lake Park.

Isabelle Breeding celebrated her 101st birthday.

School boards address the new cell phone ban in North Dakota schools.

Karon Dixon of Lignite won the State Fair Demolition Derby.

Bianca Sagness of rural Bowbells was awarded Grand Champion Jr. Poultry Showman at the ND State Fair.

AUGUST
A total of 394 students are attending county schools—Bow-

bells 90, Burke Central 87, and Powers Lake 217.

A large storm system carrying heavy rain and damaging wind and hail went through most of Burke County with the Powers Lake area taking the brunt of the impact this time.

Obituaries: Kathleen Nisila of Oregon; Kamron Brenno, 92, of Columbus; Alvey Benshoof of Arizona.

Casey Beeter of Bowbells shot a hole in one at the Bowbells Country Club on hole #6, a par three hole.

SEPTEMBER
Bowbells Post Office has a new permanent post clerk, Cathy Hall.

Rickey Bolden, a former tight end for the Cleveland Browns, headlined an event at the Powers Lake School.

Powers Lake Homecoming

(Continued on Page 5)

Powers Lake School Hosts State School Superintendent Levi Bachmeier

State School Superintendent Levi Bachmeier continues his planned visits to the state's schools in earnest on Wednesday, with scheduled trips to seven districts in northwestern and north-central North Dakota.

Bachmeier, who succeeded Kirsten Baesler as state superintendent on Nov. 24, has promised to visit each of the state's 165 operating school districts.

Thursday, Bachmeier traveled to the Divide County district based in Crosby, Powers Lake, and the Mohall-Lansford-Sherwood Public School in Mohall.

While at Powers Lake School, Bachmeier was given a tour, interacted with many staff and students, and observed a chemistry class.

Superintendent Bachmeier concluded his visit by meeting with stakeholders who represented the School Improvement team, Strategic Planning Committee, student representatives and School Board members.

Bachmeier said each district's hosts set the agenda for his visits. His goals are to directly



Ally B., Olivia W., and Gage J. narrated a tour of the Powers Lake School for State School Superintendent Levi Bachmeier.

observe classroom teaching in each school, tour the facilities, and meet with district and community leaders, such as school board members, teachers, parents, community members and state lawmakers.

"It is important for the state superintendent to be familiar with the realities of each school district, to hear the concerns and ideas directly from students and educators, and to learn from teachers,

administrators and community members about how we can best work together to lead the nation with America's best schools," Bachmeier said. "I am grateful that our school administrators have been so receptive and welcoming."

Twenty-one additional school district visits have been scheduled so far through March 27, and others will be added within that time frame.

