

# Business opportunities on the horizon

## Medora event designed to connect Southwest North Dakota businesses to tourism

By Gaylon Wm. Parker

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As recent and upcoming developments have created an impetus for residents to stay apprised of the growth expected to impact the area in the coming years, some local businesses will soon have a chance to see what tourism—whether international or domestic—can do for their bottom lines. The Great American West's International Roundup trade show will be hosted at the Medora Community Center from April 28 through May 1, with media also getting a chance to learn where economic growth can be generated and driven for the region's benefit.

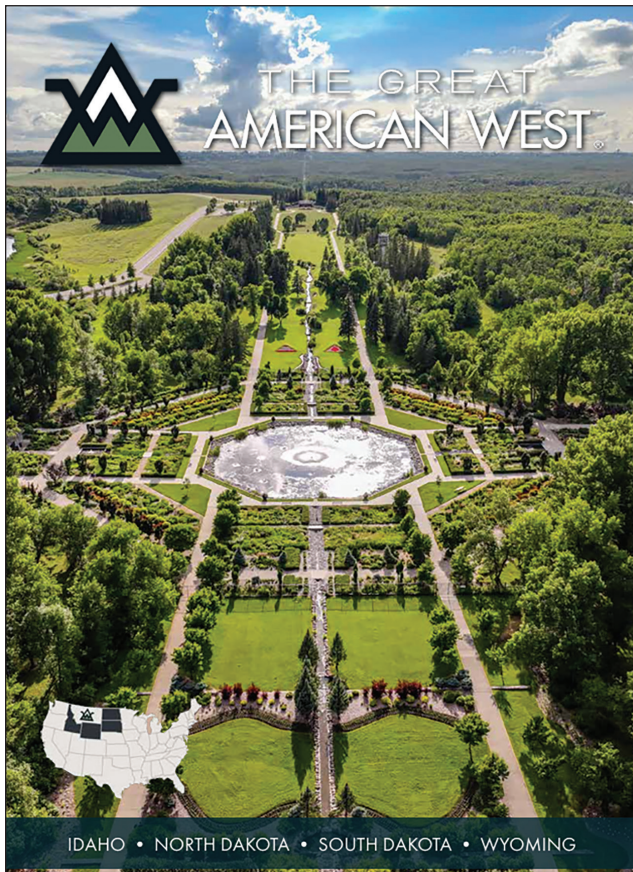
During the business-meeting segment of the show, 46 international and U.S.-based tourism buyers from 14 countries will participate in pre-scheduled meetings with more than 100 local travel suppliers. This dynamic creates a way to "strike deals that would normally take countless globe-trotting trips to achieve," according to a press release from the event, potentially generating \$100 million in future revenue for participating states.

"To be a part of this is a huge deal because if you were to travel overseas to meet with a few different people, it would cost hundreds or thousands of dollars in flights,

rental cars, and hotels," said Alyssa Seeley, marketing manager and public relations specialist for RMI Marketing. "We're putting on an event in Medora through the Theodore Roosevelt Foundation and North Dakota Tourism, bringing people into one place where they can meet with everyone there."

The trade show rotates annually among North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, and Idaho. As this region of the country continues to grow as a destination for U.S. and international travelers, its promotional value is significant. In North Dakota alone, it's estimated that more than \$7 million in future travel revenue could be generated, along with more than 12,700 hotel bookings, according to RMI.

This marks the 30th year of the International Roundup, with next year's event set to be hosted in Idaho Falls, Idaho. The event creates marketing opportunities in seven international markets. The 2025 event was held in Rapid City, South Dakota, and given the more rural nature of the region, the roundup provides a convenient way for the four states to collaborate. At each event, visitors also participate in tours of the host city and surrounding area to better understand the destination and share those experiences with future travelers who may be interested in explor-



ing parts of the United States beyond New York, California, and Florida.

"It's really the best bang for your buck—you can meet all the people you want to meet in the span of two days," Seeley said. "Pooling our resources and marketing together as a regional cooperative, rather than as individual states, really makes each dollar go farther for everyone."

"Medora is the crown jewel this year, and the hosts will be able to showcase many of the things happening in Southwest North Dakota so representatives can return home and talk

to travel agents, who in turn will connect with consumers interested in visiting our region."

Look for a wrap-up in the Billings County Pioneer in a future issue.

For more information about the Great American West, visit [www.greatamericanwest.co](http://www.greatamericanwest.co).

## DAKOTA DATEBOOK Wax King's Shining Display

Merry Helm

Bismarck businessman Harold Schafer is probably best remembered as the founder of the Gold Seal Company and for his restoration efforts in the town of Medora. But in the business world, he was famous for his stupendous marketing strategies.

For example, in 1945, a salesman pitched Schafer an emulsion that military pilots used in WWII to clean their windshields. Schafer was reluctant, saying his business was floor wax. But that night, he couldn't sleep, so he tried out a sample in his hotel room. By morning, he had given it a name: Glass Wax. He placed an order, insisted it be colored pink and be packaged in pink cans to appeal to the modern housewife. Three years later, sales for Glass Wax hit \$8.5 million dollars.

Companies eager to learn from Schafer did almost anything to get his attention. In April 1949, the Bismarck Tribune carried a photo of Schafer talking on the telephone. In front of him, on his desk, was a full-grown porcupine, sent to him by the South Dakota Junior Chamber of Commerce. The lively gift was intended to "needle" Schafer into giving a speech at their upcoming state convention. The fate of the porcupine is unknown.

On this date in 1955, Schafer outdid himself at a Super Market convention in Cleveland, OH. He put on display the largest num-

ber of silver dollars ever shown in public. He had previously used more than 400,000 coins – or what he called "cartwheels" – in a similar manner in a Chicago ballroom, but the weight of the money started to buckle the floor.

Schafer evidently chose a more sturdy setting for his Cleveland display, because this time he had to support 36 tons of cartwheels. It took three semi-trailers trucks to transport the coins from the U.S. Treasury, a delivery made in total secrecy and guarded by armored cars.

Securing the money had been no easy task, and Schafer had to secure special permission through Senator William Langer to borrow the coins. Northwestern National Bank in Minneapolis acted as the receiver, and Schafer, in essence, "rented" the money from the bank.

The cartwheels were transported in large canvas bags – \$1,000 per bag – and were dumped into a huge glittering pile surrounded by armed guards throughout the convention. Schafer's point was to dramatize the profits made by retailers from his third product, Snowy Bleach, the previous year.

The number of coins? 1,200,000. As one newspaper story explained, "...if piled up in one stack, it would reach 1,368 feet into the air, or about as high as New York's Empire State Building."

## REQUEST FOR BUSING CONTRACT BIDS

The Billings County School District is requesting sealed bids to transport school children on the following routes for the 2026-2028 school year:

- Route #1: Beginning at School closest to the route, running south of Belfield and throughout south Fryburg area, to South Heart school, and ending back in Belfield. Bus capacity is approximately 19; Route miles approximately 160 miles per day but start and end locations may vary so actual miles driven per day will be adjusted once established.
- Route #2: Beginning at School closest to the route, running east of Medora to Fryburg and surrounding areas north and south of Fryburg, ending in Medora. Bus capacity is approximately 28; Route miles approximately 132 miles per day but start and end locations may vary so actual miles driven per day will be adjusted once established.
- Route #3: Beginning at Prairie Elementary School in Fairfield running south of Fairfield to county line and ending back at Prairie Elementary School. Bus capacity approximately 27; Route miles approximately 78 per day but start and end locations may vary so actual miles driven per day will be adjusted once established.
- Route #4: Beginning at Prairie Elementary School in Fairfield running north to furthest north bus stop and then south on Highway 85 stopping at various bus stops along the way dropping at Belfield High School and ending back at Prairie Elementary School. Bus capacity is approximately 29; Route miles approximately 116 miles per day but start and end locations may vary so actual miles driven per day will be adjusted once established.
- Route #5: Beginning at Prairie Elementary School in Fairfield running north and east of Highway 85 and ending back at Prairie Elementary School. Bus capacity approximately 19; Route miles approximately 90 miles per day but start and end locations may vary so actual miles driven per day will be adjusted once established.
- Route #6: Beginning at Prairie Elementary School in Fairfield running northwest and southwest of Fairfield and ending back at Prairie Elementary School. Bus capacity is approximately 19; Route miles approximately 87 miles per day but start and end locations may vary so actual miles driven per day will be adjusted once established.

\*\*\* ROUTE IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE BY THE BOARD. Official route mileage\*\*\* will be set by the Board in the fall. It will be the responsibility of the contractor to provide a bus of adequate capacity to meet the needs of the route.

Bids must be on a per mile basis, and the outside of the envelope must be marked "Bus Bid" and the route number. The bid must include the description of the bus to be used and the name of the driver and substitute driver(s). This information will become part of the contract if awarded the bid. Each successful bidder must submit with signed contract, a bond in the amount of \$1,500.00 payable to the Billings County Public School District 1 and conditioned for the faithful performance of the duties set forth in the contract. The bid base price will be the amount of gas and diesel prices obtained from West Dakota Oil in Belfield, ND, on May 1, 2026. All drivers and substitute drivers need to undergo a criminal background check if one was not done for the Billings County School District in the past. Submit sealed bids to Billings County School District, Box 307, Medora ND 58645 by 4:00 PM MT, Wednesday, May 13, 2026. Bids will be opened and awarded at approximately 5:15 p.m. on Wednesday, May 13, 2026, at the Prairie School at 12793 20<sup>th</sup> St SW in Fairfield, ND, during the regular school board meeting. Bidders can direct questions prior to bidding to Shae Peplinski, Superintendent, at 701-623-4363 or by emailing [shae.peplinski@k12.nd.us](mailto:shae.peplinski@k12.nd.us).

A copy of the contract requirements and route details is available by contacting the District office at 701-623-4363. The Board reserves the right to waive irregularities, and to accept or reject any or all bids. Preference may be given to current contractors who have a satisfactory history with the District.

By Order of the Billings County School Board on April 8, 2026

Published April 23 & 30, 2026

## NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Billings County Commission will hold a Public Hearing during the regular meeting of the County Commission on Tuesday, May 5, 2026 at 10:00 AM. The hearing will take place in the Commissioner's Room at the county courthouse, Medora, ND. The purpose of the hearing is to consider the approval or denial of the following amendments to the Billings County Zoning Resolution No. 1:

### Amendments

- 2.3(106) Definition of Temporary Use (UPDATE)
- 5.1.2 (t), (u), (v), & (w) Conditional Use Permits for Ag Districts (UPDATE/NEW)
- 5.3.2 (f) & (k) Conditional Use Permits for Recreational Districts (UPDATE/NEW)
- 5.4.4 (h), (i), (k) Conditional Use Permits for Commercial Districts (UPDATE/NEW)
- 6.17 Temporarily Permitted Uses (UPDATE/NEW)

The proposed amendments are related to commercial and special event temporary uses that often cater to the traveling public or the tourism industry surrounding the Medora area.

The proposed amendments were recommended for approval by the Planning & Zoning Commission hearing held on Thursday, April 16, 2026.

Copies of the proposed amendments are available for review on the Billings County website at [www.billingscountynnd.gov](http://www.billingscountynnd.gov) or during regular office hours at the Billings County Courthouse.

Dated at Medora this 17<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2026.

Stacey Swanson  
Zoning Director

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