



photo Visit Minot /ND Tourism

ARMORED WARRIORS face each other in a battle demonstration at the Norsk Høstfest in Minot in 2024

Norsk Høstfest ceases operations due to rising costs, declining attendance

By Michael Achterling
North Dakota Monitor

The board of a Scandinavian heritage festival in North Dakota with a nearly 50-year history announced Thursday it has ceased operations and will not host a festival in 2026.

The nonprofit board of Norsk Høstfest said in a social media post the annual event in Minot had become “financially unsustainable,” citing increasing costs and declining attendance.

“In recent years, the festival has faced significant increases in the cost of nationally recognized performers, as well as insurance, facilities, labor and logistics,” festival leadership said in a statement. “At the same time, attendance levels have not rebounded to pre-pandemic levels, creating ongoing financial challenges that cannot be responsibly overcome.”

The board indicated in the social media post that members and staff would not comment beyond the statement.

The Norsk Høstfest festival was founded in 1978 by Minot civic leader Chester Reiten and a group of his friends who wanted to celebrate Nordic heritage, according to the festival nonprofit.

Fred Walker, global marketing manager for the North Dakota Tourism and Marketing Division, said the festival was a time for Scandinavians and others to come together to talk about food, customs and try to keep the culture alive on the other side of the world from where it originated.

The event drew Scandinavian dignitaries and celebrities including the Norwegian royal family, actress Tippi Hedren and crab fishing captain Sig Hansen from TV’s “Deadliest Catch,” Walker said. Many of the high profile guests were inducted in the Scandinavian-American Hall of Fame that was established at the festival in

1984, he said.

Walker said many people in Norway knew about the festival in North Dakota and he also helped bring Norwegian media members to Minot to cover the event.

“I truly believe that the people of Minot and the people on the committee aren’t trying to get rid of it,” he said. “But things change and, unfortunately, that’s progress whether we like it or not.”

Stephanie Schoenrock, executive director for Visit Minot, said ending the festival will have an economic impact in Minot.

“For decades, the festival brought visitors, filled hotel rooms, supported local restaurants and retailers, and generated meaningful activity for our community,” Schoenrock said in an email.

She added the economic impact has steadily declined over the past 10 years as fewer people attended the festival, which she said mirrors national trends in group travel and changing audience demographics.

Sara Otte Coleman, director of the North Dakota Tourism and Marketing Division, said the department was sad and disappointed to learn this legacy event in the state was shutting down.

“We have been consulting with them for the last five or six years on how to really try to appeal, and diversify, and market, and it’s just been a little bit of a struggle,” Otte Coleman said. “Consumers are changing and expectations are kind of shifting. Dollars are tight in this economy and people don’t have as much discretionary income as they once did for entertainment.”

She said the department did not have any funds available to help support the event.

“We’re just really hopeful that the Scandinavian Heritage Foundation and the people of Minot will figure out another way to embrace that Nordic culture because it really is what sets them apart,” Otte Coleman said. “And maybe it just needs a little breather and it’ll come back in a different way that appeals to different and unique audiences. That’s our hope.”

GRANT COUNTY School News



Schedule of Events

Fri., Jan. 6: No School - Teacher Professional Development Day; JV girls’ basketball tournament at Elgin, TBA.

Sat., Feb. 7: JH boys’ basketball tournament at New Salem/Almont, TB; JV girls’ basketball tournament at Elgin, TBA; Varsity boys’ basketball at Wilton/Wing, 3:00 p.m.; Speech meet at Dickinson Trinity, TBA.

Sun., Feb. 8: Open swimming 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.; Adult Water Aerobics 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.

Mon., Feb. 9: Varsity boys’ basketball vs. Flasher at Elgin, 4:00 p.m.

Tues., Feb. 10: Varsity girls’ basketball vs. Linton/HMB at Elgin, 4:30 p.m.; Speech Meet at Beulah, TBA; No open swimming.

Wed., Feb. 11: Adult Water Aerobics 3:30 - 4:30 and 5:30 - 6:30 p.m.; School Board meeting, 6:00 p.m.

Thurs., Feb. 12: Varsity boys’ basketball at South Heart, 4:00 p.m.; Open Swimming, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Breakfast Menu

Fri., Feb. 6: No School.

Mon., Feb. 9: Eggs, toast, juice, fruit, cereal, toast, and milk.

Tues., Feb. 10: Pancakes, juice, fruit, cereal, toast, and milk.

Wed., Feb. 11: Breakfast wrap, juice, fruit, cereal, toast, and milk.

Thurs., Feb. 12: Breakfast pizza, juice, fruit, cereal, toast, and milk.

Fri., Feb. 13: Caramel rolls, juice, fruit, cereal, toast, and milk.

Lunch Menu

Fri., Feb. 6: No School.

Mon., Feb. 9: Hot ham and cheese sandwiches, whole wheat products, fruit and vegetables, salad bar, milk.

Tues., Feb. 10: Marty’s hotdish, whole wheat products, fruit and vegetables, salad bar, milk.

Wed., Feb. 11: Sausage, knoephla, whole wheat products, fruit and vegetables, salad bar, milk.

Thurs., Feb. 12: Sub sandwich, whole wheat products, fruit and vegetables, salad bar, milk.

Fri., Feb. 13: Chili and cornbread, whole wheat products, fruit and vegetables, salad bar, milk.

ELGIN & NEW LEIPZIG SENIOR meals menu

Fri., Feb. 6: Meatball sundae, mashed potatoes with gravy, harvard beets, fresh fruit, milk, coffee.

Mon., Feb. 9: Hot beef, mashed potatoes with gravy, coleslaw, rhubarb dessert, milk, coffee.

Tues., Feb. 10: Hamburger steak, oven brown potatoes, peas and cheese salad, zucchini treat, milk, coffee.

Wed., Feb. 11: Baked ham, sweet potato bake, scalloped corn, pineapple rice, milk, coffee.

Thurs., Feb. 12:

Beef enchilada, Spanish rice, house salad, whipped Jell-O with fruit, milk, coffee.

Fri., Feb. 13: Turkey, mashed potatoes with gravy, mixed vegetables, Valentine treat, milk, coffee.

For meal reservations in Elgin, call Our Place Café, 584-3150. In New Leipzig call Nancy Grade at 584-2351 by 9:00 p.m. the day prior to the meal.

All menus subject to change due to availability of foods.

HISTORIC BRIDGE AVAILABLE FOR ADOPTION AND PUBLIC INPUT SOUGHT

Grant County, in cooperation with the North Dakota Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration, is proposing work on one bridge along 52nd Ave SW, south-southwest of St. Gertrude, ND. The Project Number is BRJ-0019(026); NDDOT # 23711.

1) Bridge 19-131-47.0 is a single-span, Warren, pony truss bridge constructed in the 1920s and relocated to the current location between 1957 and 1970. It is approximately 82 feet long and 21 ft wide (curb to curb). The bridge crosses Cedar Creek approximately 16 miles south and 6 miles west of St. Gertrude, ND. This bridge will be removed and replaced with a new bridge. Since this bridge is listed in the National Register of Historical Places, FHWA has determined that its removal constitutes an Adverse Effect on it, and for the project as well. Hence, public comment is sought on both of these Adverse Effect determinations.

Further, since this historic bridge could be relocated while maintaining historic integrity, it must be offered for adoption to any responsible state, local, or private entity willing to take over, relocate, and preserve the bridge at a new location (23 U.S.C. 144). Any entity willing to “adopt” the bridge would have to agree to maintain it and assume all future legal and financial liability, as well as liability for the structural integrity and safe use of the structure. The bridge needs to be relocated prior to road closure work, scheduled to begin in the 2026 construction season.

Any parties interested in adopting Bridge 19-131-47.0 or wishing to comment on the National Register and/or Adverse Effect determinations above should respond by February 14, 2026 to John Sauber Jr., PE/PLS, Project Manager, Sauber Engineering Inc., phone -(701)751-5993, email - jsauber@sauberengineering.com, or mail - 2401 46th Ave SE, Suite 110, PO Box 399, Mandan, ND 58554.

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