

# Roosevelt AI avatar ready for your questions - but stick to the past

## AI among many interactive exhibits at new library

By Michael Standaert  
North Dakota News Cooperative

It comes straight from the man himself - or at least an artificial intelligence, avatar version - so it must be true.

Former president Theodore Roosevelt never did like being called "Teddy."

"Teddy was never a name I called myself, not in private, not among my family," said a terse AI Theodore Roosevelt, one of the most interactive features at the just-opened Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library on the bluffs above Medora.

"At my own table among friends or kin I went by Theodore or Colonel," the AI continued. "A man has a right to the name he chooses. Still in the world beyond these walls, Teddy clings to me like burrs after a ride through the brush."

Roosevelt's ranking of the top three U.S. presidents? Easy, as the mountain they're all carved into alongside him in South Dakota.

"Washington, Jefferson and Lincoln," said AI Roosevelt. "Each changed the shape of America."

The avatar is no oracle, however. Ask him to comment on living presidents or future predictions, the AI avatar demurs.

"I'll leave today's politics to the living," he said. "I know what it is like to feel the weight of that office."

While remarkably eloquent, AI Roosevelt

is still a baby, so sometimes mumbles or fails to respond to questions until asked a second or third time.

He's still learning, according to Michael Bakalars, a technical director at Microsoft ISE working on building out the AI system.

That process will improve as he answers more questions, Bakalars said, leading to less stumbling and repeating of questions.

The learning curve so far has included using AI to read all of Roosevelt's writing, his handwritten and typed correspondence, and then vetting it with historians knowledgeable about his thoughts and opinions.

"We've had around 50 different historians that can access this and they look at his responses and try to confirm it," Bakalars said.

"Every time someone comes up and asks him something, we check back with them to see if it's true because we want the most accurate version we can get," he said.

That includes current US president Donald Trump, who asked AI Roosevelt several questions during his visit on July 1 as part of the rolling opening of the TRPL, including about the Panama Canal, about when you should and shouldn't go to war, and about coming to North Dakota.

If no one in the room asks questions, the loquacious Roosevelt avatar pipes up with a string of stories, or, if you're standing in the

right spot, it/he may call on you to step up to field a query.

Outside of the Medora area, where Roosevelt lived and ranched on and off over the course of several years in the 1880s, the avatar said he had a particular affinity for the Missouri River valley.

"The Missouri River cuts through North Dakota like a blade," the AI Roosevelt said, waxing poetic. "I spent days riding along its bluffs, watching the sun burn off the mist. That land always felt alive. Cottonwoods whispering, the grass moving in waves. I found a kind of peace out there that was different from the Badlands wildness."

Asked about why people should come to the library dedicated to his life and work, AI Roosevelt said he doesn't want people to come to a museum thinking of a president as just a figure in bronze or stone.

"I want people to leave with fire in their belly," the AI avatar said. "For the notion that citizenship requires you to do something, to stand up, to get your hands dirty, make things better. You ought to see how one person

can wrestle big problems, sometimes win, sometimes not, and still keep at it. That's what matters most."

Doris Kearns Goodwin, a historian and presidential biographer, got a firsthand look at the interactive features on her way through the library, including a representation of herself in period dress in the badlands.

She said the wait for creating a library like this honoring Roosevelt's life may actually make it more impactful.

"The great thing, in a way, waiting 107 years for this makes sense when you look at the interactive technology they have here that you don't have in a normal presidential museum," Goodwin said.

"What he wanted more than anything was to be an example for young people, so if they can feel Teddy Roosevelt here, which I think they will be able to, then it's really splendid," she said.

*The North Dakota News Cooperative is a non-profit news organi-*



Photo | TRPL

**A VIEW OF THE AI AVATAR** of Theodore Roosevelt from inside the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library ready to answer questions from visitors or relay stories regaling his exploits. Just don't call him Teddy.

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STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA  
COUNTY OF  
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IN DISTRICT COURT  
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In the Matter of the Estate of  
Mary Anne Ulfers, Deceased.  
Probate No.  
17-2026-PR-00013

#### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the undersigned has been appointed Personal Representative of the above estate. All persons having claims against the said deceased are required to present their claims within three months after the date of the first publication of this notice or said claims will be forever barred. Claims must either be presented to the Personal Representative of the Estate or filed with the Court.

Dated: June 30, 2026

/s/ Lynn M. Ulfers  
Lynn Ulfers,

Personal Representative  
c/o Christina M. Wenko,  
Attorney

Mackoff Kellogg Law Firm  
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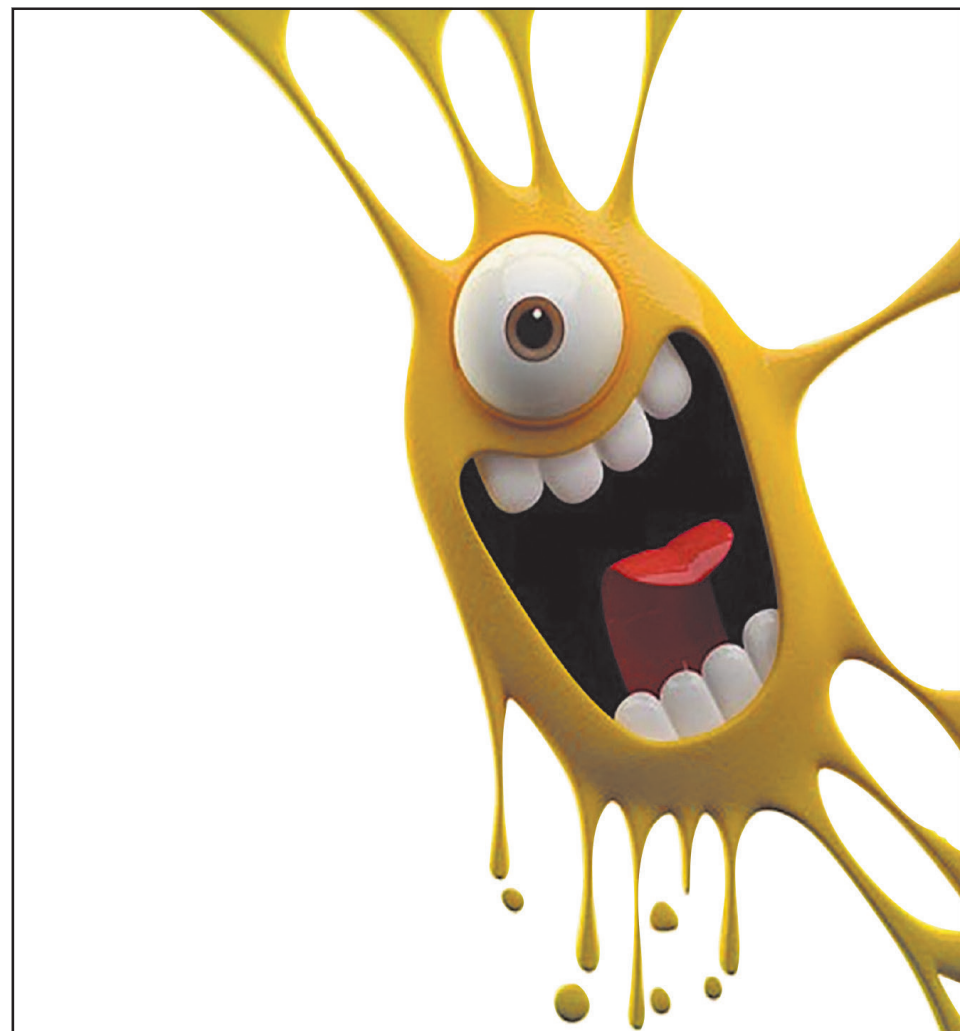
#### ABBREVIATED NOTICE OF INTENT TO AMEND ADMINISTRATIVE RULES RELATING TO N.D.A.C. CHAPTER 75-02-13 FAMILY PAID CAREGIVER PROGRAM

TAKE NOTICE that the North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services will hold a public hearing to address proposed amendments to N.D. Admin. Code chapter 75-02-13 relating to definitions, application and eligibility, and administration at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, August 12, 2026, in Bismarck, N.D. in Room 210, located on the second floor of the Judicial Wing of the State Capitol. The proposed changes are effective June 29, 2026, as interim final rules under North Dakota Century Code § 28-32-03(2)(c) to avoid a delay in implementing an appropriations measure (section 2 of 2025 Senate Bill No. 2305); the rules are required for the Department of Health and Human Services to comply with the opinion and order of the Supreme Court for the State of North Dakota in *Ferderer v. North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services*, 2026 ND 81, 34 N.W.3d 168 (N.D. 2026).

Copies of the proposed rules are available for review at human service zone offices and at the state-operated behavioral health clinics. Copies of the proposed rules and the regulatory analysis relating to these rules may be requested by telephoning (701) 328-2311. Written or oral data, views, or arguments may be entered at the hearing or sent to: Rules Administrator, North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services, State Capitol - Judicial Wing, 600 E. Boulevard Ave., Dept. 325, Bismarck, ND 58505-0250. Written data, views, or arguments must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on Monday, August 24, 2026.

ATTENTION PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: If you plan to attend the hearing and will need special facilities or assistance relating to a disability, please contact the Department of Health and Human Services at the above telephone number or address at least two weeks prior to the hearing.

Dated this 29th day of June, 2026.



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