

ACDC:

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will contact Nathan to complete the audit and taxes for 2024 and 2025. Rebecca recommended having Nathan work on just one year at a time.

The contracts between the three entities utilizing the Community Promotions Office building and personnel were signed stating how much each entity would put towards the cost of maintaining the office and personnel.

According to February's meeting minutes Rae's Boutique applied for the ACDC Loan Collateral Microgrant Program. Rae's Boutique will receive the 12-month line of credit from Dacotah

Bank in the amount of \$5,000.00. The CD renews in the 12 months but the program allows for renewal up to three years. As with The Rustic Orchid, the board stated depending upon how each year goes will determine if they continue the program with the individual businesses.

The bulk of the meeting was discussion on businesses that are needing to be filled. Again this month, there was nothing to report on the dental office. The 4As car wash is on their radar and discussion on the progress of the selling of The Peacock.

At February's meeting the bowling alley

subcommittee updated the board on ongoing bids received for various aspects of the project. Trevor shared quotes for new bowling equipment, a new roof, paving the north side of the building and mock dig sites which would include molds/castings and exhibits. The group is still waiting on additional quotes for construction related projects. In February's meeting, the board voted to allow the subcommittee spend up to \$488,000 on new Brunswick equipment and lanes which would include removal and disposal of the old equipment and lanes, up to \$220,000 on an existing quote for the roof, up to \$10,000 for mock dig sites including the mold, castings and

exhibits from the ND State Historical Society. However, the subcommittee waiting to receive quotes from more than one vendor for each step. The group has not received any money to pay for anything as of yet. It seems the longer they wait, the lower some of the quotes are going. Dalton informed the group that he visited with the owners of the Bowman bowling alley and he told Dalton they didn't have to take up the whole alley floors. They took up only 8 feet and placed the new alley over the top of what they left. The group is hoping this will save some money. They now have a couple of contractors showing interest in the remodel of the bar, kitchen and dining

areas. Several ideas of design have been provided to the subcommittee.

The board moved to sign the vacate of the alley in the event the alley vacation moves.

In February the office reported they had received notification the insurance coverage on the two vehicles leased by ACDC to Commercial Bee Supply was about to lapse. Once contacted, Erin Timm sent the office copies of updated insurance cards. At March's meeting Rebecca reported there was correspondence requesting an update on the loan balance Commercial Bee Supply took out through ACDC.

There also was not much to report on for the American Legion project. In February

the Legion reported they were to meet with Melana Howe to apply for grant opportunities to help that organization purchase the KMM building. The Legion is currently waiting to hear on those grants.

The group was in support of student director Sammie Salazar's and Chamber student director Katie Buckmier's idea for advertising which is to expand upon the Wide Open Wonder campaign by asking young people to make videos of the things they do in the area.

On that note, and with no more business to discuss, the ACDC March meeting was adjourned. The next meeting was set for April 15th at 7:00 p.m. at The Rural Collective.

TRANSPARENCY:

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nate because the publication requirement was within their administrative rule, and they amended that, and so it didn't go through the same legislative process that we're used to," said Katie Winbauer, a Bismarck attorney who serves as a lobbyist for the newspaper association.

The Legislature defeated proposals to eliminate requirements to publish requests for bids on highway construction and county commission

minutes in local newspapers as recently as the 2025 legislative session.

"Over and over again, in the last session, we had strong support for continued publication of all kinds of notices in newspapers," Wehrman said.

It's possible the newspaper association will ask the full Legislature to amend state law in the 2027 legislative session to require the Department of Trust Lands to resume publishing notices of oil

and gas lease auctions, Wehrman said.

The chair of the interim committee that allowed the agency to proceed with the rule change, Sen. Bob Paulson, R-Minot, noted this action will not affect other types of public notices. But he also said society is transitioning to more of an online culture and publication of public notices in newspapers "makes less and less sense."

"At what point does it become, you know, a burden for these organizations financially, where the return on

investment just isn't there?" Paulson asked in an interview. "So that's one aspect of it."

Detractors of the rule change argue newspapers are still essential in many rural communities throughout the state. Research by the North Dakota Newspaper Association shows newspapers reach at least 75% of households in a majority of the state's counties. A 2024 survey by the organization showed 80% of North Dakotans prefer public notices be published by an independent source, rather than the government, Wehrman said.

Longmuir said many of his constituents, especially the older generations, are not necessarily online and still prefer to get their news through physical newspapers.

"We want to keep all of our population informed, not just those that are tech savvy," the lawmaker said.

Wehrman said the Department of Trust

Lands has paid an average of \$17,000 annually in the last three years for public notices, according to the newspaper association's system, which includes the cost of all public notices and not just oil and gas lease auctions. Heringer said he believes all the agency's public notices are published through the newspaper association.

A member of the agency's staff has previously estimated the department spends between \$30,000 and \$40,000 annually to publish public notices, half of which is for notices of oil and gas lease auctions.

"Even so, I would argue that even \$30,000 is a very small amount of money to pay to keep local mineral owners somewhat abreast of the types of oil activity that is going on, especially when we're dealing with an industry where it is so hard to find any public information," Wehrman said. "If the general public is going

to be required to go out of their way to even find out when those auctions are happening, that's going to be a real disconnect for the people who live in oil country."

Heringer said there is a "broader, ongoing public debate" on the utility of publishing notices in newspapers as society becomes more digital and acknowledged the agency has had internal discussions on how to continue reaching demographics of the public, especially the older segment of the farming and ranching community, who may not keep tabs on the agency's website.

"That's been something we've kind of gone back and forth with and debated internally as an agency," Heringer said.

The rule change will take effect April 1. The Department of Trust Lands will continue to publish public notices of planned auctions of surface land, as required by the state constitution.

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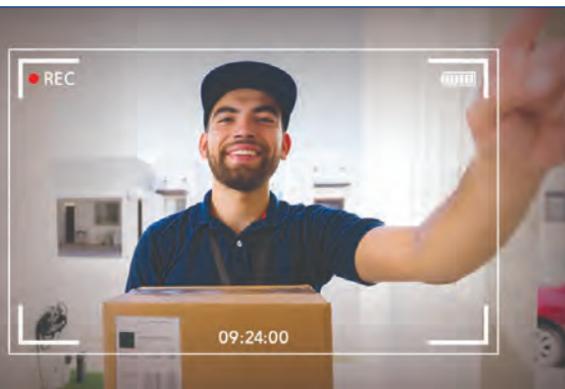
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