

Legislative Update

The Countdown to the End of the Session

Senator Janne Myrdal
North Dakota District 19

I have compared the legislative session to a basketball game that likely will go into overtime. Another comparison may be a Broadway show with three acts.

With “The Show Must Go On”, the last bills have moved from the standing committees, the third act - conference committees - has begun! Although only three of the last nine regular sessions have ended on a Saturday or Sunday, weekend and evening committee work, and floor sessions are inevitable during the final weeks of the session.

It is not uncommon to hear references to actions in other states and historical instances in our state where the allotted number of days for a session has been extended by covering a clock or a calendar. In 1976, by a slim margin of 442 votes, the voters of the state approved a constitutional amendment to increase the maximum length of a legislative session from 60 to 80 natural days. Since that change, the length of a regular session of the Legislative Assembly has reached 78 days twice, 79 days twice, and 80 days once (2013). Under our constitution, a natural day is defined as “a period of twenty-four consecutive hours.” Legislative rules provide a legislative day begins at 7:00 a.m. and a legislative day may not be shorter than a natural day - thus, a legislative day continues through the night until 7:00 a.m. of the next day. The 2013 legislative session adjourned sine die at 4:35 a.m., the closest we have come to the end of the 80th natural day. During the final day of the 2013 session, the two chambers combined for 21 separate floor sessions. While we all hope, and expect, the work of the Legislative Assembly will be

done before the end of the 80th legislative day, which under the current schedule would be Friday, May 9th, we also understand much work is left to be done. We have said our goal is to wrap up the session on April 30 or earlier, saving seven days of the allotted 80 days. This would allow us to meet in the interim and use those days to address potential unforeseen issues such as federal budget cuts and the property tax relief and reform the legislature is developing. The Governor can also request legislators to meet to address these matters, which would not impact the allotted 80 days. Long hours likely will ensue during these last weeks and days before the curtain comes down on the 69th Legislative Assembly, but until the clock runs out, the show must go on!

Today is day 65 of the legislative session. My report will not be lengthy due to the current process here in the capital.

North Dakota Senate defeated HB 1408, which would have required the Legislature to convene yearly rather than every two years. HB 1408 previously passed the House in a 64-26 vote but failed in the Senate 30-17. Currently, there are no restrictions on the legislature meeting annually, but the legislature has consistently used the 80 days to meet for one session every two years. Supporters of the bill said annual sessions would allow the state legislature to better address political changes that impact North Dakota and mitigate some of the impacts of legislative term limits. Those in opposition said the bill moves the legislature closer to a professional legislature and away from a citizen legislature, a point of pride for many in the state. I supported the Senate vote as I think we are the last true citizen legislature in existence and that is a good thing.

All bills are now voted out of

our committees and either awaiting a vote on the floor or in conference committees, so our schedule is quite hectic and kind of topsy-turvy. Due to these committees needing to iron out differences, it is hard to report on topics and bills. It may look like a bill will pass as I voted on it out of Senate, yet that could change in a the blink of an eye. Lots of discussions and debates. Some people are not happy with some of this so-called gridlock, yet I appreciate this process. It assures that we have the best product at the end of the day, with “iron against iron” debates and processes.

HB1540 was voted on this week. It is a bill that would create Educational Savings accounts, ESA's. I discussed this at length in a column a few weeks ago. It was a very lengthy and a bit testy debate on the floor. These were my words on the floor of the Senate:

“I’ve been weighing this very heavily because I fully support the concept of ESA's and school choice. I also support our public schools. Can we improve on just everything in any of our North Dakota public services? You bet, and we should strive to do so. But I cannot in good conscience stand here today and vote for a vehicle that does not give any power to the parents in my district.”

I believe there are other options yet to be considered that would serve all students in our state whether public, private, or home schooled. We owe it to every student to do our very best to accomplish this as we move forward. I appreciate all the pro and con emails and texts. It truly exemplifies our joint passions for excellence in education.

Now unto finalizing property tax relief and balancing the budget.

Hope you had a wonderful Easter. He is risen indeed.

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North Dakota Newspapers Thankful For Legislative Votes

By Cecile Wehrman,
NDNA Executive Director

On the whole, North Dakota legislators understand the importance of newspapers and their actions during the 2025 legislative session show it.

Legislators protected the publication of county minutes in newspapers voting down a bill that would have given the option to post them only on county websites; voted to keep highway bid notices in newspapers rather than only posting them on trade or government agency websites; restored the historic practice of spreading publication of insurance abstracts across all newspapers in the state instead of just eight; passed a postal resolution asking for better delivery service for newspapers and consumers alike; and on Wednesday passed a bill that gives legal weight to www.ndpublicnotices.com, a website maintained by the North Dakota Newspaper Association.

SB 2069 was the first bill I testified on back on Jan. 9, and the last of the five bills passed among those we were most concerned about. The bill provides two backstops for legal notices in the rare instance a newspaper fails to publish a notice, counting a notice at ndpublicnotices.com as well as a notice on a state agency website, as fulfilling legal notice -- while leaving requirements for publication of print notices in place.

Because I wrote on this topic earlier in the session, it's important to let people know what is NOT happening.

The state will NOT be developing a public notice website capable of cutting newspapers out of public notice placements at some future point. It was, however, a discussion among some legislators who saw this bill as a way to take a step toward eliminating the costs of publishing notices in newspapers.

When you know there are people in government who feel notices in newspapers have no value, it can seem like your house is on fire.

But the votes on some of the bills I mentioned above show that, by and large, legislators support upholding newspapers as the vehicle for delivering public notices.

Just look at some of these tallies: HB 1380, the county minutes on the web bill failed in the House 80-13; HB 1398, restoring the historical abstract publication process, passed in the House 86-6; and SB 2069, though it had a closer vote in the Senate - possibly due to some confusion since we opposed it originally -- passed in the House 72-17; SB 2062, taking highway bids out of newspapers failed 89-4.

That feels, to me, like an incredible showing of support for the importance of public notices in newspapers.

Now, 73 privately owned businesses operating newspapers can breathe a sigh of relief, along with voters.

We know citizens give overwhelming support to the concept of a trusted third party like newspapers having oversight

of public notices.

SB 2069 as passed will now solve the issue of a public hearing needing to be rescheduled because one out of a dozen or more papers required to publish it had a miss.

I wish I could say newspapers are perfect, but every business occasionally has a hiccup due to illness, death, employee turnover -- heck, even a cyber attack -- which can cause highly consequential notices to be missed.

You'll still never convince me that a website alone is where public notices should be placed because the mechanism for people to see them is much different than for people sitting down with a newspaper delivering news about their community along with notices about the government actions that may impact them.

However, in the end, SB 2069 is a good compromise -- providing an alternate avenue for people to learn of a pending hearing when unforeseen disruptions impact newspapers, while leaving alone the printed newspapers' supremacy as the trusted place to access public notices in North Dakota.

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ND Courts 156

North Dakota Century Code 15.1-09-30
School boards - Meetings

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Agristo, haven't heard of it? It's a potato processing company based in Belgium that plans to build a huge processing plant in Grand Forks for making french fries! The plant will require 40,000 acres of potatoes to be grown in the Red River Valley to supply its needs. Many of those added acres of potatoes will be grown right here in Pembina County. Warehouses will need to be built, machinery will be purchased and employees added, which will result in considerable long term investment by farmers who do not need an additional burden of excessive property taxes.

Here is a touchy subject - topsoil - in the air instead of on top of the field. At the risk of being verbally abused I'm going to give it a whirl. There have been many discussions on the subject of how to minimize soil erosion on harvested potato ground though we can't leave out those guys who can't control their excessive recreational tillage practice on other croplands. There is some topsoil that takes to the airwaves after harvest in the fall but most airborne soil erosion takes place in the spring for all to see. With the price of farmland nowadays I can't imagine folks find it acceptable to see their topsoil piled up in the shelterbelts, in the ditches or worst of all, spread out nicely on their neighbors land.

Because of my interest in windborne soil erosion I observe and I inquire. Recently I had the pleasure of being schooled by an area farmer on the benefits of planting rye following potato harvest. He instructed me on the upsides and downsides of using rye for a late season after harvest ground cover. On a very windy day with topsoil on the move I went on a crop tour specifically to observe the results of using rye for a cover. Yup, it works.

“A Cleveland clinic study found, the chance of getting COVID increased with an increasing number of vaccine doses and boosters”. Let us never again be so deceived by our news media and government. The following is not a scam. The incidence of measles is on the rise so be sure to have your children vaccinated with a long time proven measles vaccine. “For a child who is not vaccinated against measles, no classroom, school bus or grocery store is safe. Nine out of ten unvaccinated people exposed to it will catch the measles”.

Spring has sprung and farmers are stirring. There is machinery on the road, some of it quite large. There are those three wheeled fertilizer spreaders, one of those coming at you is a bit intimidating. You would be wise not to hog the center line while meeting one. Those four wheel drive tractors with dual wheels take up a lot of space but the machinery they are pulling is usually even wider. Slow down a bit and move over. Avoid passing this big equipment on an intersection and when you do pass, slow down and be cautious. Whether it's the operator of the big equipment or the driver of the car, if someone does something stupid, it's the car driver who is going to the hospital. It's agriculture that drives our economy here in Pembina County so be courteous and cautious when sharing the road with large and slow moving agriculture equipment. Those big trucks that are seen only seasonally are being operated by part time or occasional drivers so be a defensive driver and don't trust their blinkers and brake lights. They may not be working properly or that blinker may not have canceled so make sure before you depend on anything that big truck may or may not do! Don't be an offensive driver, just be a defensive driver and when you give a finger wave, do it with the index finger.

For all who drive our state and paved county roads in Pembina County, if you notice more agriculture traffic, it's the bridges. You know, those bridges on township roads that you didn't think affected you because you don't drive those roads anyway. Because of closed bridges on the township roads those farm trucks and equipment have no choice but to drive the main roads in order to get to where they need to go.

Clyde at Stokesville 701-202-5000

Mayor's Corner

From Lacey Hinkle, Cavalier Mayor

Greetings

I was not able to attend our regular monthly meeting in April, but still want to give you an update of a few things that have been going on at the City of Cavalier.

The state recently approved and passed HB1522 which allows golf carts to be driven on city streets **effective August 1st, 2025**. This is a request that we have heard from many of our constituents through the years and have not been able to override ND Century Code to allow it. Now that the state has passed this bill, the council advised City Attorney Fleming to draft a city ordinance that will allow golf carts on the city streets of Cavalier. Once the ordinance is written it will need to be read and approved at the May and June council meetings before it will take effect **August 1st, 2025**.

There are some stipulations that will be included in the new ordinance. The golf carts can be driven along the side streets of Cavalier, but not on either state highway (5 & 18) that goes directly through town. They are allowed to cross the highways to continue travel within the city. The golf carts cannot be driven on sidewalks in Cavalier. And you must hold a ND driver's license to drive the golf carts within the city. If anyone has any questions or concerns regarding this new ordinance, please reach out to City Administrator Krieg at 265-8800.

City Administrator/Auditor Krieg turned in her notice of resignation at the April council meeting. The council accepted her resignation and motioned to advertise her position. She will continue to work for the City of Cavalier until May 25, 2025. We are sad to see Casey leave, but wish her the best! If you or someone you know is interested in her position, please call the Administration office at 265-8800 for more information.

The council held the annual Tax Equalization meeting on April 7. Again, I was not in attendance for this meeting but can report that City Assessor Krieg presented her Equalization report for 2025. There were no constituents in attendance with questions regarding any changes. The council approved the report. If you have any questions regarding your tax assessment, please reach out to Ms. Krieg at 265-8800.

I know there's been some discussion in town lately about the stoplights. I will personally say and agree with what I've heard most are saying, I like the stop lights blinking. It does seem to make the flow of traffic move faster. However, it's not always safer; and that has to be the main priority. Also, the City of Cavalier has a contract with the ND DOT that requires us to have the stop light at the intersection of their two state highways, due to the jagged nature of the intersection. The City is required to maintain the stop lights. So when the lights are blinking, please know that replacement bulbs or parts are on order and it will be fixed as soon as possible. The stop lights are aging so sometimes we have the parts on hand and sometimes they can be hard to find and need to be ordered. Everyone's cooperation and understanding is appreciated.

Once again, planning for the for All Class Reunion and 150th Anniversary continues. For any and all information, please refer to the following website, <https://sites.google.com/cavalier/k12.org/schoolreunion>. Or the Facebook page, Cavalier All-Class Reunion 2025. As mentioned in previous months, there are many people involved in making this celebration happen. Including city employees, school employees, and many volunteers. We anticipate the event will bring a lot of visitors to town and we are actively working to make sure Cavalier looks its best. We encourage everyone to help in this effort and make sure private properties are looking their best as well.

As always, if anyone has any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to me (265-4914), or any of your council representatives. Have a great day and #createthelifeyoulloveincavalier



Lacey Hinkle

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