

Bakken Briefs

Big mural for Ray restaurant

While renovations inside the future Trax 22 restaurant in Ray might not be apparent, residents can see noticeable changes outside as a large mural began taking shape, courtesy of Williston-based artist James Griffin.

Griffin, owner of Griffin Art-work and Custom Designs, is using spray paint to create a design on the building's entire north wall.

"I like painting big things," Griffin said. "The bigger they are, the cooler they are."

Griffin's previous projects include artwork in Williston at Safari Trampoline Park, the Williston Herald and Bill's Back 40.

The Ray project is a unique challenge, Griffin said, because of the building's exterior texture that in some areas requires more paint to be applied for the look he's trying to achieve.

--The Journal, Crosby

Stanley enrollment ticks up

Student enrollment numbers at Stanley schools are up this year as classes open.

Enrollment sat at 786 as of Aug. 29, up seven from last year. The first-day total Aug. 20 was above 800, but some families have moved to another district since then, school officials said.

The small increase is a continuance of the trend from the past few years. Enrollment was 779 at the same time in 2024. It was 776 in 2023, 758 in 2022, 745 in 2021 and 720 in 2020.

Compare that with the 480 students at the start of school in 2010, 429 in 2000 and 340 in 2005.

As of Aug. 29, 448 students were in the elementary school and 338 were in the high school. Last year's counts were 457 and 322, respectively.

The largest class is fifth grade, with 73 students. The smallest is the senior class, with 41.

--Mountrail County Promoter, Stanley

Principal returns to roots

Sometimes people change jobs because of location or salary and benefits. Other people change jobs to make a difference not only in their life but in the lives of many others.

Evan Meiers, the new principal of Berthold Public School, wants to make a difference.

Meiers grew up in rural Ross, graduated from Stanley High School and became well-known as a band teacher in Stanley and then Minot.

The catalyst for changing jobs again was his three daughters who attend school in Berthold.

"We live on a family farm south of Blaisdell," he said. "I maybe wasn't quite ready yet to make this change, but the opening became available."

And back to school Meiers goes, gaining his principal credentials through the University of Mary while on a three-year provisional

license.

--Kenmare News

Williston pool ends first year

Williston Water World wrapped up its inaugural season Aug. 17 after a busy 40 days.

The park opened on July 15 to chilly weather and just 17 guests, but attendance quickly picked up, according to Joe Barsh, executive director of the Williston Parks and Recreation District.

Williston Water World sold 14,500 day passes this season. This does not include members of the Williston Area Recreation Center, who were able to use their membership to access the park.

The park averaged between 325 to 375 visitors per day, said Barsh, who added that at times the park was near its capacity of 420 guests.

The concession stand sold 2,747 hot dogs, 1,746 pretzels and 999 orders of nachos this season. The stand was staffed by local groups who received a portion of the proceeds as a fundraiser.

--Williston Herald

Minot bridge repairs add up

The city of Minot has determined it will need to spend more money on the Third Street Bridge after additional piers were found to be failing.

The Minot City Council approved the repair of an additional pier on the bridge on Sept. 2.

The council previously approved a project to repair one pier after an inspection found serious flaking and chipping of the concrete.

After the project was bid, the city learned three other piers showed similar distresses in which concrete is chipping and exposing the rebar and, in some cases, affecting bridge bearings.

City staff obtained a \$160,000 price to correct the issues on one pier that is near the first one that's being repaired. The engineering consultant hopes to stretch its budget to accommodate the work if it is added to the project.

--Minot Daily News

Killdeer school gets facelift

Killdeer Elementary School completed a series of extensive renovations just in time for the new school year, including a new front entrance.

A majority of the classrooms received new carpeting and paint; all the bathrooms and locker rooms were renovated with improved accessibility for people with disabilities; and an entire asbestos abatement was completed in the building, according to Rhonda Zastoupil, the school district's business manager.

"The students were all excited to get into their newly renovated spaces," Zastoupil said, adding, "It's definitely an uplift in morale."

The project began in May and had a budget of \$3.1 million, according to the construction company, Kraus-Anderson, from Minnesota. Icon Architectural Group was the architect.

--Dickinson Press

Newspapers Have Bright Future

(Continued from Page 1)

have a local paper - Dunn, Sioux and Slope.

And in this age of potential misinformation and disinformation, original news from local newspapers was found to be the most trusted source of news, higher than local TV and much higher than social media or local radio.

"The public has a much more positive outlook than I would have expected, given the national attention there is on fake news and all the attacks on the press," Wehrman said.

One issue is newspapers may not be valuing themselves high enough, said former North Dakota journalist Teri Finneman, who is now an associate professor at the University of Kansas focused on the history of U.S. journalism.

Finneman said many newspapers are stuck in a business model from the 1800s that kept costs low for news consumers because ad revenue supported most costs. That revenue source has dramatically changed without many newspapers catching up, she said.

"We need to adjust, and the public needs to do a better job of supporting journalism," Finneman said.

She gave the example of how going to the gas station, someone might buy a soda and a candy bar that costs two to three times what most people pay for their local newspaper.

One purchase is for something mass produced in seconds, and another is for a product which potentially takes hundreds of hours of labor to put together, but people often don't see the true value behind those purchases.

"So, we just really need to do a much better job explaining this to the public," Finneman said of the cost of producing news and the value to local communities. "People extremely support local news. They want local news, but the pricing no longer works."

Marianne Grogan, president of Coda Ventures who conducted the surveys, said it was heartening to see the dedication of newspapers and their staffs come through in the data.

"I'm very touched and amazed by the resilience of the newspapers as they face some big challenges," she said. "And what comes through is they are deeply committed to their communities."

The other side that's promising is how much community support there is for local news.

"What came through with the data is how much local newspapers mean to North Dakota residents, and it almost doesn't matter by age group," Grogan said. "They want them to be the watchdog for them. They want them to tell them about local events. They want them as productive members of their community."

Providing value to local communities

Currently, the steering committee for the initiative is coming up with a menu of solutions for local newspapers to review that could help them be sustainable, provide fulfilling careers for their editors and journalists, and give local communities more of what they want.

Some of that may require uncomfortable changes if local communities are willing to back their papers. For example, 20 of the 73 newspapers in the state are print only, meaning they don't have websites or digital editions.

"Economics is part of it, resistance to change is part of it," Wehrman said.

The news consumer surveys found 41% of people want both print and digital editions of their newspapers.

They also want newspapers every day and websites with daily updates, according to the data.

Among the dominant group of fu-

ture news consumers, pluralities of Gen Z (48%) and Millennials (45%) also want both print and digital editions, signaling the market changes going forward.

That desire for more news is at odds with the challenges most papers face, however, so finding a happy middle ground where communities deeply support their papers so they can get closer to what they want is important, those involved in the initiative said.

Part of that may take newspapers becoming more involved in their communities through public events and other engagement.

"Publishers we deem as some of the most successful, Pulitzer and Hearst, were huge on audience engagement," Finneman said. "I emphasize doing events by getting people from the newspaper office to reclaim that role of being the heart of the community and bringing the community together, not just through passively, through the news, but also actively, bringing the community together."

Ellen Huber, rural development services director at the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives, which also partners with the initiative, said the steering committee has created three groups - one to study revenue models, one on content, and another on operations - as part of that menu of solutions the group can provide papers and communities.

"Ultimately, why we're involved is we know local news is important to strong communities and community vitality," Huber said. "In healthy communities where you have strong local news you're going to have a more involved and engaged community and stronger community leadership."

Committee member Rob Keller, co-founder of the ND Public Information Officer Association, said local newspapers are "indispensable" for local, state, federal and tribal information officers to get information out to the public both during periods of crisis as well as providing that on a general basis.

"What we put out has to be timely, accurate, and has to be actionable information to everyone in the community," Keller said of the importance of local newspapers and how they are among the most trusted sources of information. "Without them, there's going to be a significant gap."

Keller said that one thing discussed in the steering committee is how even smaller newspapers need to have a strong social media presence so that even if information can't get out in a timely manner in a weekly newspaper, they could get that information out on social media platforms.

"This is especially important in times like, for example, in the western part of the state when the fires were happening," Keller said. "There's a lot of papers that don't have a social media presence, so one thing we've talked about is creating a team that could help with that. From our standpoint, it is extremely important. While we have only three news deserts now, maybe a few more are coming."

The North Dakota News Cooperative is a non-profit news organization providing reliable and independent reporting on issues and events that impact the lives of North Dakotans. The organization increases the public's access to quality journalism and advances news literacy across the state. For more information about NDNC or to make a charitable contribution, please visit newscoopnd.org.

Memorials Received By Ina Mae Rude Aquatic Center

In memory of Teresa Carico, Jerome Koppelsloen, and Orville Nyhus from Arlo and Faye Borud.

Put The Phone Away Or Pay: Protecting Lives On ND Roads

Law enforcement across North Dakota will have extra patrols on the road during September to remind drivers to stay focused and distraction-free as part of the national Put the Phone Away or Pay safety campaign.

Distracted driving is one of the fastest-growing safety issues on the road today, and it's not just a threat to the driver, it's a danger to everyone. Distraction is a common contributing factor in most crashes and near-crashes, and texting while driving is so dangerous that drivers are six times more likely to crash than someone driving under the influence.

Although distracted driving is a vastly underreported as a factor in crashes, preliminary data for 2024 shows there were 936 distracted driving-related crashes in North Dakota, including twelve fatalities and forty-three serious injuries. Even a moment of distraction, whether it's glancing at a phone, adjusting the radio or talking to passengers, can lead to a crash. Distraction can also lead to lane departure crashes, which are among the most severe because they often occur at high speeds. Last year, land departure crashes resulted in 1,561 injuries

and forty-eight fatalities in the state.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, sending or reading a text takes your eyes off the road for five seconds. At 55 mph, that's like driving the length of a football field with your eyes closed.

"Last year in North Dakota, lane departure crashes claimed forty-eight lives. Many of those tragedies started with a driver losing focus, even for a moment," said Lauren Wahlman, public information manager of the NDDOT Highway Safety Division. "Put your phone away, limit distractions and stay in your lane, because one quick glance away can change everything."

In conjunction with the distracted driving enforcement campaign, Vision Zero is asking all North Dakotans to take the Buckle Up Phone Down pledge and commit to wearing a seat belt and driving distraction-free every trip, every time.

This campaign is part of the Vision Zero strategy to eliminate motor vehicle crash fatalities and serious injuries on North Dakota roads.

Visit the North Dakota Crash Memorial Wall to view memorials built on the hope of preventing another death on North Dakota roads.

NDSU Extension To Offer Fall Nourish Series

North Dakota State University Extension, partnered with NDSU Health, Nutrition, and Exercise Sciences, is offering programming focused on physical well-being in fall 2025.

Nourish is a free program that provides information and strategies about nutrition and health. The program has been offered as live classes in many North Dakota counties and as self-paced online modules, and it's now offered via live webinars as well.

"Good health is important for enjoying a high quality of life and for maintaining independence in later life," says Sherri Stastny, NDSU professor and project co-director. "This program offers the tools to help us enhance our overall well-being."

Nourish is aimed at adults living in rural North Dakota, but any adult is welcome to participate. Participants in the series will learn to promote health and well-being by eating more nutritiously and being more physically active, plus other lifestyle tips and ideas.

Participants who choose the Zoom webinar-based classes will begin September 30. The classes, held every Tuesday at 2 p.m., will be about 45 minutes long and will include time for questions. Each webinar will be recorded. Participants are asked to register for and complete the entire series of classes.

Participants who choose the in-person classes can find their county's schedule at ndsu.ag/nourish - courses as dates become available.

Participants who choose the online modules will receive prerecorded lessons and interactive activities. This Nourish series will focus on well-being, finding accurate health information, cooking for one or two, maintaining muscles, how pets impact health, building up the immune system, smart medication usage and

staying well. Prizes and certificates will be provided for those who complete at least six classes.

The classes have been held since 2023, and they have proven to be popular.

"Our previous participants have been enthusiastic about the information they have learned and their progress on personal health goals," says Julie Garden-Robinson, NDSU Extension food and nutrition specialist and professor. "The colder season of fall is an excellent time to learn something new and to set health goals before the new year."

Registration for the webinar series is open until September 29. Participants are asked to only register for one format.

Visit www.ag.ndsu.edu/nourish to register and for more information. There is no cost to participate.

The project is supported by a Rural Health and Safety Education program grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

In addition to the classes, anyone can sign up for the free monthly Nourish newsletter by visiting the Nourish website. Participating NDSU Extension offices also have Facebook pages catered to their areas.

Multi-Party
GARAGE SALE
Saturday, Sept. 13
from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.
603 Wagon Trail Ln., Stanley
Baby furniture; baby girls clothes, birth to 18 months; dishes and miscellaneous!

Say Cheese of Minot, ND
will be in Stanley during
Grapes and Grains
on Saturday, Sept. 13, starting at 5:00 p.m.
Freshly back from Wisconsin with over 100 items: 50 cheeses, 27 cheese spreads, fresh cheese curds and mozzarella sticks, fry bread cheese and 8 flavored butters.
Check out Say Cheese Minot on Facebook!



NOTICE TO TAXPAYERS
2026 BUDGET HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the preliminary budget for the City of Plaza, ND, for calendar year 2026 has been received by the City Council and is on file in the office of the City Auditor, where it can be examined by any taxpayer. Notice is also given that the City Council will meet in the City Office, on Monday, September 15, 2025 at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers to hear any objections to the budget and to adopt the final budget and make the annual tax levy for the 2026 calendar year.

Pemina Yellow Bird, City Auditor

Lutefisk & Meatball
Dinner
Dinner Includes Desserts and Lefse served family style

Where: Zion Lutheran 1800 Hiawatha St.
Minot, ND
When: Saturday, September 20, 2025 from 3pm-7pm
Tickets: \$20 per person, \$10 Child (6-12), Under 6 free



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lutheran


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