

## U.S. Supreme Court sends North Dakota tribal redistricting case back for review

by Mary Steurer  
**North Dakota Monitor**  
The U.S. Supreme Court on Monday, May 18 ordered an appeals court to reconsider a North Dakota tribal redistricting case under new legal standards set in the high court's recent Voting Rights Act ruling.

The Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa, Spirit Lake Nation and three tribal citizens filed the lawsuit against the North Dakota Legislature in 2022, arguing that its new legislative map shifted district lines in a way that diluted tribal representation. The tribes filed the case under Section 2 of the federal Voting Rights Act, which outlaws racially discriminatory voting practices.

North Dakota U.S. District Court Judge Peter Welte in 2023 sided with the tribes and soon after ordered that a different map be put in place.

The 8th Circuit Court of Appeals last year came to a much different conclusion. It found that the tribes didn't have the right to bring the lawsuit because compliance with Section 2 may only be enforced by the U.S. Department of Justice. The 8th Circuit is the only federal appeals court to make this finding.

The tribes in September officially asked the U.S. Supreme Court to weigh in on the 8th Circuit's decision

and answer whether private citizens can bring Section 2 cases.

The Supreme Court on Monday decided 8-1 to void the appeals court's ruling, ordering the 8th Circuit to review the lawsuit again in light of its April decision in a separate racial gerrymandering case, Louisiana v. Callais.

The court did not issue an opinion explaining the reasoning behind its decision in the North Dakota case.

North Dakota Attorney General Drew Wrigley said the district map ordered by Welte will remain in place for this fall's election.

Attorneys for the tribes applauded the court's decision to vacate the 8th Circuit's ruling.

"The Supreme Court was correct to vacate the Eighth Circuit's decision, which wrongly prevented Native voters and Tribal Nations from vindicating their rights under the Voting Rights Act," Lenny Powell, a staff attorney for the Native American Rights Fund, said in a statement.

Mark Gaber, senior director for redistricting at the Campaign Legal Center, said he believes the decision affirms private citizens' ability to bring suits under Section 2.

"Today, the Supreme Court agreed that courts cannot slam the courthouse

doors on plaintiffs seeking equal representation," Gaber said in a statement.

Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson was the lone dissenting justice in Monday's decision. In a note included with the decision, Jackson wrote she sees "no basis for vacating" the 8th Circuit's ruling. Jackson said the high court's decision in Louisiana v. Callais did not touch on the question central to the Turtle Mountain case - whether private citizens can file suit under Section 2 - so there are no new legal standards that would change how the 8th Circuit analyzes it.

Jackson wrote that she would instead reverse the 8th Circuit's ruling.

Welte's map remained in place while the tribe's request was pending before the high court.

The North Dakota Secretary of State's Office also must finalize maps by the December before an election year, according to legal documents the state filed in the lawsuit.

Attorneys for the state have previously said they agree with the 8th Circuit's decision dismissing the tribes' case, and have maintained that the Legislature's 2021 map is not discriminatory.

The U.S. Supreme Court's decision in Louisiana v. Callais makes it much harder to challenge district maps for

alleged racial discrimination.

Previously, courts had interpreted Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act to forbid states from adopting any maps that reduce minority groups' voting power, whether deliberate or accidental. The Supreme Court in Louisiana v. Callais found that in order to be found in violation of Section 2, there must be sufficient evidence that a state chose the map with the intent to discriminate based on race.

The Native American Rights Fund, Campaign Legal Center and other groups condemned the previous decision as a blow to voting rights.

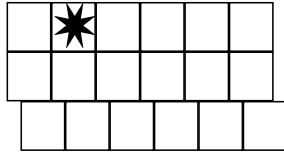
North Dakota Attorney General Drew Wrigley told the North Dakota Monitor previously that he supports the ruling, saying it "strengthens North Dakota's position that the Constitution is colorblind."

Mary Steurer is a reporter based in Bismarck. A native of St. Louis, Steurer most recently worked as the local government reporter for the Casper Star-Tribune newspaper in Wyoming. Steurer can be reached at msteurer@northdakotamonitor.com.

North Dakota Monitor, online at northdakotamonitor.com, is part of States Newsroom, the nation's largest state-focused nonprofit news organization.

## Sheyenne

by Patti Clifton



The slate of candidates for the City of Sheyenne election on June 9: Bob Hanson for mayor; Jeff Labrensz, Elvis Thumb and Kim Brown for two council positions; and Amy Bachmeier, Tara Hanson and Ian Gilley for two park board seats. Sheyenne city election only at Ostby Hall. For county, state and national candidates, vote at the Brown Memorial in New Rockford on June 9, or at the Eddy County Courthouse or by mail.

School board election is at the lobby of NR-S gym.

The annual Memorial Day program and dinner will be held at Ostby Hall Monday, May 25 at 11 a.m.

After some very windy, dry, dusty days, Sheyenne

welcomed the rain on Sunday. It meant that Main Street clean-up needed to be changed to later in the week.

The 34th Annual Devils Run Car Show includes a day trip to Sheyenne this year for interested participants. At 1 p.m. on Friday, May 29, classic cars will drive to the newly-restored Sinclair Station in Sheyenne. A professional photographer will be on hand to take individual photos of their car under the station pump awning. Free taco and beverage at the Sheyenne Bar for those who bring a classic car. Farmers Grocery provided local beef and fresh vegetables for the tacos.

Koy Zieman took first at

the regional track meet in Rugby on Saturday in triple jump and 400-meter; Emmie Belquist was also first place in the region in the 300 hurdles and 400-meter. Good luck at state!

Kelsie Belquist won the Big 10 400 hurdles in 56.11 seconds in Nebraska over the weekend.

Steph Loe called bingo for the Sheyenne Fire Department last Saturday night. Dave Chenze and Julianna Millang sold cards while Dianne Hanson and Darlene Kolstad served lunch. May 23 blackout was \$175 in 57 numbers, hosted by Sheyenne GRIT.

The Circle Trail Riders summer ride will be centered at Hendrickson Park,

Sheyenne, on June 19-21. All are welcome to stop by. Friday and Saturday rides begin at 9 a.m. Call Cory at 701-391-9754 or Diane at 701-652-5724 for more information.

Congratulations to Dominick Swinland and the NR-S Class of 2026 who will graduate on Sunday, May 24, at 2 p.m.

Tyler Zieman and Lane Erickson placed first in team roping at the N.D. Junior Rodeo finals in Bowman on Saturday. Nice job, boys! They qualify for Nationals in Guthrie, Okla., on June 21-27.

Patti Clifton was a Devils Lake shopper last Wednesday afternoon.

### OFFICIAL BALLOT CITY OF SHEYENNE JUNE 9, 2026

#### MAYOR-4 year term Vote for ONE (1) only

BOB HANSON

#### COUNCIL MEMBER-4 year term Vote for TWO (2) only

JEFF LABRENSZ

ELVIS THUMB

KIM BROWN

#### PARK BOARD MEMBER-4 year term Vote for TWO (2) only

AMY BACHMEIER

TARA HANSON

IAN GILLEY

#### PUBLICATION OF CITY GOVERNING BOARD MINUTES

According to state law, once every four years, each city must place on its ballot the question of whether or not the minutes of the governing body be published in its official city newspaper. If approved the minutes will be published until disapproved by the voters at a succeeding election.

A "yes" vote means you want the City of Sheyenne to publish its city minutes.

A "no" vote means you do not want the City of Sheyenne to publish its official minutes.

YES

NO

Published May 25 & June 1, 2026



## 701 Rundown

by Leasa A. Lura

The counties and cities within the state of North Dakota hold many interesting news stories.

Here are just a few of the feature stories that others are reading in communities around the state.

### Young Dunseith boy found dead, missing since March

The family of 12-year-old Abrium Swain confirmed recently that a body found in Dunseith is that of the boy who had been missing since March 15. The cause of death appears to be exposure.

Abrium went missing from a child welfare center on the Turtle Mountain Reservation and was reported missing on March 15. The family organized searches and made repeated public pleas for help during the weeks he was missing.

Legal counsel for the Turtle Mountain Tribe told media that Abrium had been staying at the center but had run away.

The boy's mother died several years ago and his father is currently incarcerated.

A person who knew Abrium said he was "a sweet, kind boy."

At this time, foul play is not suspected, but the boy's death remains under investigation by the FBI.

(Story taken from the Turtle Mountain Star)

### Council discusses fallout of ineligible member

Grafton City Council recently discussed the fallout from former at-large council member Brian Sieben's unauthorized votes from November 2024 to his resignation before the April 13, 2026 city council meeting.

The City of Grafton previously determined that Sieben had declared his residency in Fargo when he voted in the 2024 General Election. While declaring his residency in Fargo by voting in said election, he remained an active voting member of Grafton City Council.

City Attorney Rob Fleming said city staff is looking into the motions and seconds Sieben made along with the two ties he was part of that had to be broken by votes from Mayor Chris West.

"Under Robert's Rules of Order 12th edition, an ineligible person voting or holding office invalidates any action if the vote could have changed the result. If it's 5-to-1 it doesn't matter," he said. "The votes that he made a motion on or a second on will have to be readdressed from Nov. 24, 2024 on."

Fleming said there is a lot of information to go through. "He made a lot of motions and he made a lot of seconds. He did a lot of business when he was here. It obviously takes a little bit to get through 16 months worth of stuff."

Fleming said the city looked at the appeal period, which has run out of virtually every vote that was taken involving Sieben; however, just like with the special assessments if a motion was made by an invalid member, there is no motion.

(Story by Todd Morgan, the Walsh County Record)

### Johnsrud Paleontology Laboratory

Today's story has its roots, so to speak, in the subtropics that covered most of North Dakota 60 million years ago. It was the Paleocene Epoch, during which time palm trees, redwood trees, sycamores, magnolia and bald cypress trees provided habitat for turtles, crocodiles, champsosaurs, alligators and many other exotic animals.

Fast-forward to modern-day North Dakota. For several years, a sugar beet farmer escalated a hobby into a consuming passion. In 1981, the Bismarck Tribune reported "Sixty-five-year-old Clarence Johnsrud had been a farmer all his life, but had since 1978 switched from working the land to working in the land."

About 16 miles southwest of Williston, Johnsrud walked down the road to his neighbors' hill every morning and began digging. In three years, Johnsrud had found 34 varieties of fossilized plant life, including a petrified redwood tree.

Six years after that story ran, a road construction crew was rebuilding a rural road running between Williston and Fort Buford. As bulldozers dug into what's known as the Sentinel Butte Formation, they excavated a substantial deposit of hard, cream-colored mudstone. When fossils were discovered, someone contacted Johnsrud. For the next several days Johnsrud used a farm loader and truck to deposit several tons of rocks into his barn.

Hand-splitting the rocks with a hammer and chisel, his efforts soon began yielding what would become some of the finest plant fossil specimens in the world.

Some 13 years later, Johnsrud estimated he had cracked open some 20 tons of stone, exposing several hundred exquisite fossils.

He donated several specimens to UND-Grand Forks, UND-Williston and Minot State. He also donated several specimens to the Denver Museum of Natural History and The Florida Natural History Museum.

He then donated the bulk of his collection to the North Dakota Geological Survey State Fossil Collection at the North Dakota Heritage Center. He and his family also included a gift of \$200,000 to create a permanent exhibit for the fossils and to help renovate the Geological Survey's paleontology lab at the Center. The North Dakota Geological Survey thereafter named the modernized facility the Johnsrud Paleontology Laboratory.

(Story taken from the Ransom County Gazette)

## Senior Meals

May 25 - 29

**Monday:** Senior Meals and Devils Lake Transit closed due to Memorial Day holiday.

**Tuesday:** Tangy meat-loaf, mashed potatoes with gravy, vegetable blend, bread and fruit or sauce.

**Wednesday:** Sweet and sour chicken, mashed potatoes, low sodium vegetable, a bun and fruit crisp with topping.

**Thursday:** Chicken tenders, macaroni and cheese, low sodium vegetable, bread and fruit or sauce.

**Friday:** Chicken fried steak, mashed potatoes with gravy, creamed vegetables, bread and fruit crisp with topping.

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## HAY AUCTION

The Garrison Diversion Conservancy District will be offering approximately 206 acres of hayland on the New Rockford Canal to the highest bidder during a competitive open bid auction to be held at 3 p.m. on June 9, 2026. The auction will be held at the New Rockford District Field Office located at 205 3rd Street SE, New Rockford, N.D. Five (5) individual fields will be bid and hayed separately. Actual figures are subject to change before the bid date.

No haying will be permitted before July 15 or after August 15 and the bales must be removed by October 15. Payment must be received at the date of auction. A taxpayer ID# or Drivers License number is required. Bids will be accepted on a per-site basis. Minimum bid price is set at \$10 per site and minimum raise of \$50 per site. Interested bidders may obtain maps of fields from the New Rockford Field Office or the Garrison Diversion website: [www.garrisondiversion.org/news](http://www.garrisondiversion.org/news). Questions can be directed to the New Rockford Field Office at 947-2001.