

February 2026



# THE Voice

[www.gochamber.org](http://www.gochamber.org)



## Drive Momentum is Chamber's Theme for 2026

Pictured Governor Kelly Armstrong

Governor Kelly Armstrong talked about the many great things happening in Grand Forks. For our communities there are many reasons to be optimistic.



2025 Chamber Board Chair Mike Mclean passes the gavel to 2026 Board Chair Derek Holt

Pictured Mike McLean, Derek Holt



The Chamber Ambassador of the Year 2025

Congratulations to Stacey Brorson, Grand Forks Park District and Norwex. This prestigious award is highly honored by The Chamber and The Chamber Ambassadors.

Pictured: Mike McLean, Stacey Brorson

# CHAMBER NEWS



## 2026 Henry Havig Award Recipient

John Oncken, CEO and owner of True North Equipment, is the latest recipient of the Henry Havig Award, the highest honor in Grand Forks' business community.

Oncken received the award Thursday, Feb. 5, at the Grand Forks-East Grand Forks Chamber of Commerce's annual meeting and dinner, held at the Alerus Center.

Pictured John Oncken and his family

**A SPECIAL THANK YOU**  
FROM YOUR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
Thursday, February 5, 2026, Alerus Center



Pictured: Governor Kelly Armstrong, Derek Holt



Pictured: Sponsors and guests.



Pictured: Kenny & The Classics.

Thank you to everyone who attended, participated and sponsored our wonderful event!

# CHAMBER NEWS

## Chamber & EDC Tax Abatement Policy Changes Discussed

The Chamber and EDC Board Chairs recently met with the Mayor, School Board Chair, and County Board Chair to discuss potential improvements to the tax incentive review process. The City Council has since adopted the Mayor's proposed approach, and the other units of government are also considering participation in a more unified process.

Tax incentives play an important role in supporting primary sector growth and housing development. To help inform future policy, the Chamber and the EDC have each appropriated \$5,000 to jointly hire a consultant to identify best practices from communities that successfully use incentives to attract new primary sector industries and housing developments—such as projects similar to Agristo, the Canad Inn, and potential housing initiatives. Many communities utilize scoring rubrics and clear policies to evaluate projects. Establishing a similar framework in Grand Forks would improve transparency and predictability, making the community more business-friendly by allowing developers and companies to understand expectations before bringing proposals forward.

This discussion will continue throughout 2026. The bottom line is that incentives are sometimes necessary for Grand Forks to remain competitive. The key focus moving forward will be on process, consistency, and appropriate levels of support.



# CHAMBER NEWS

## EERC Report Expected at Month's End

The Chamber and EDC continue to meet with the Energy & Environmental Research Center (EERC), the North Dakota Pipeline Authority, natural gas suppliers, and regional utilities to ensure Grand Forks has an adequate natural gas supply to support future major industrial and power generation projects, as well as the city's natural growth.



The EERC report is expected to be completed by March 1.

## STRATEGIC MARKETING WITH A LOCAL TEAM



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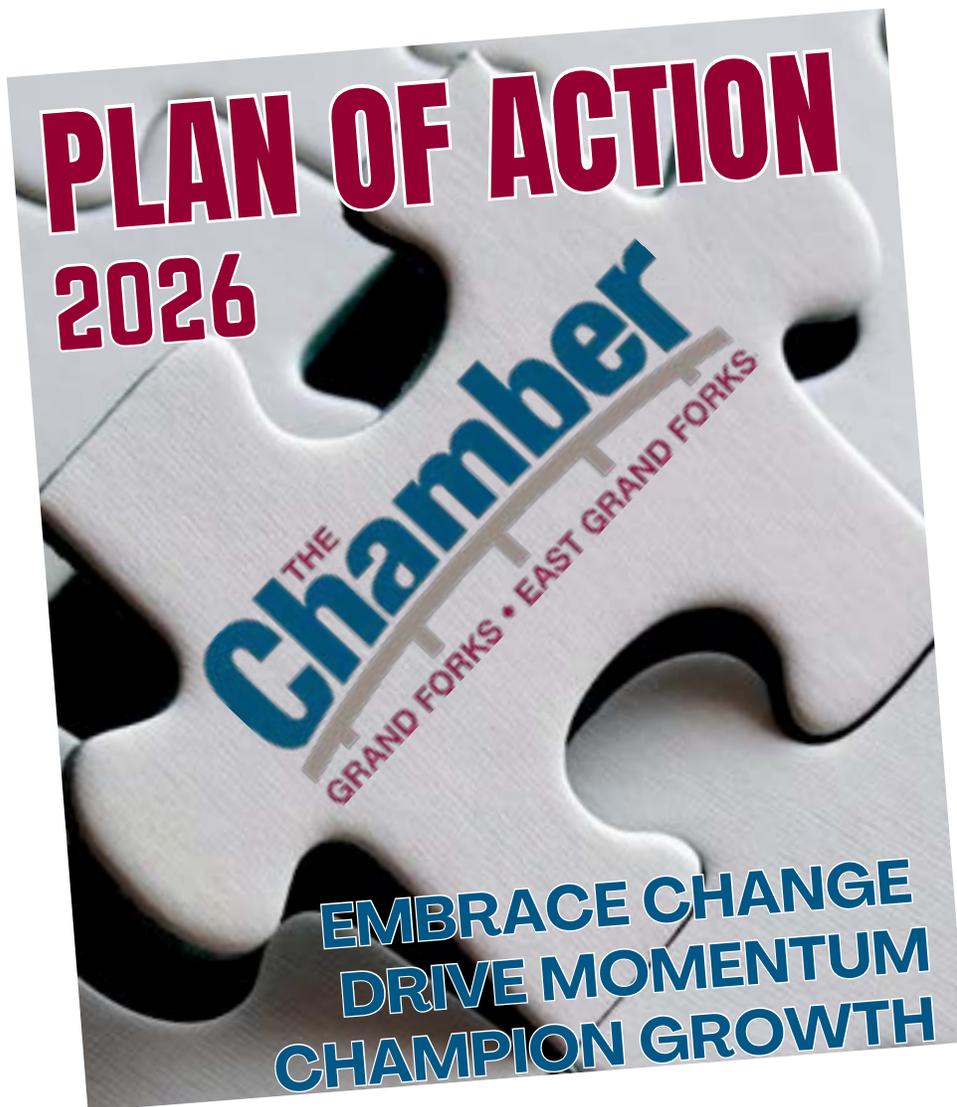


**Contact us today, and let's start the conversation.**  
[advertising.forumcomm.com](http://advertising.forumcomm.com)

# CHAMBER NEWS

## 2026 Plan of Action

*The 2026 Chamber Plan of Action will be mailed soon.*



The Plan of Action outlines major Chamber events planned for 2026, each Chamber committee's goals and initiatives, key influences impacting our community and the Chamber, and a high-level overview of Chamber partnerships, task forces, and special projects that will be addressed in the year ahead.

We encourage you to take a few minutes to review the Plan of Action and explore ways to engage with the Chamber in 2026.

The Chamber CEO's door is always open—please feel free to email me directly at [barry@gochamber.org](mailto:barry@gochamber.org) if you would like me to visit your business.

# THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING

# 2026 Silent Auction

The Chamber's Annual Online Silent Auction was a great success!  
We sincerely thank the Chamber members who donated items to the Auction.  
Also a big thank you to all who registered and who bid on the great auction items.  
We look forward to a fantastic 2027!

## Thank you for Donating to Our Auction

|                            |   |   |  |
|----------------------------|---|---|--|
| AE2S                       | DRIPBaR                                 | Morgan Printing                                 | Steamatic                                  |
| Agile Accounting Solutions | Express Employment Professionals        | ND Mill and Elevator                            | Sterling Carpet One                        |
| Alerus Center              | First Community Credit Union            | Network Center, Inc.                            | Sublime Aesthetic Professionals            |
| Altru Family YMCA          | Forks Freightliner                      | Nodek Electric Cooperative                      | Sugar Point Maple Syrup                    |
| Bass Pro Shops             | German Law                              | North Dakota Museum of Art                      | The Chamber                                |
| Bears Home Solutions       | Gerrells Sports Center                  | Northdale Oil                                   | The Golf Center                            |
| Bell Bank                  | GGFSO                                   | Northern Plains Rail Services                   | The Lighting Gallery                       |
| Bloom Beauty Bar           | Girl Scouts - Dakota Horizons           | Northern Roots Boutique                         | The Olive Ann Hotel                        |
| Blue Moose                 | Grand Forks Country Club                | Northrop Grumman Corporation                    | Three Farm Daughters                       |
| Bonzer's Sandwich Pub      | Grand Forks Park District               | Norwex – Stacey Brorson                         | T-Mobile                                   |
| Burian & Associates        | Greater Grand Forks Young Professionals | Pediatric Partners, a part of the Sevita Family | True North Equipment                       |
| Canad Inns                 | Happy Harry's Bottle Shops              | Probitas Promotions                             | Ultima Bank Minnesota                      |
| Centerspace                | Hugo's Family Marketplace               | Rachel's Property Solutions                     | UND Division of Marketing & Communications |
| Construction Engineers     | JLG Architects                          | Ralph Engelstad Arena                           | Valley Senior Living                       |
| Core Collective            | Kenny's Music                           | River Cinema                                    | Vilandre Heating, Plumbing, and HVAC       |
| Dairy Queen - Northend     | Mangata Medical Spa                     | Sanford Health                                  | West African Cuisine                       |
| Dakota Sales               |   | SimplyMaid                                      | Wy's Floral                                |
| Design Rich Architect, LLC |   |   |  |
| Down To Earth Counseling   |   |   |  |



## Visit with Barry

**Share your business challenges and success with Barry.**

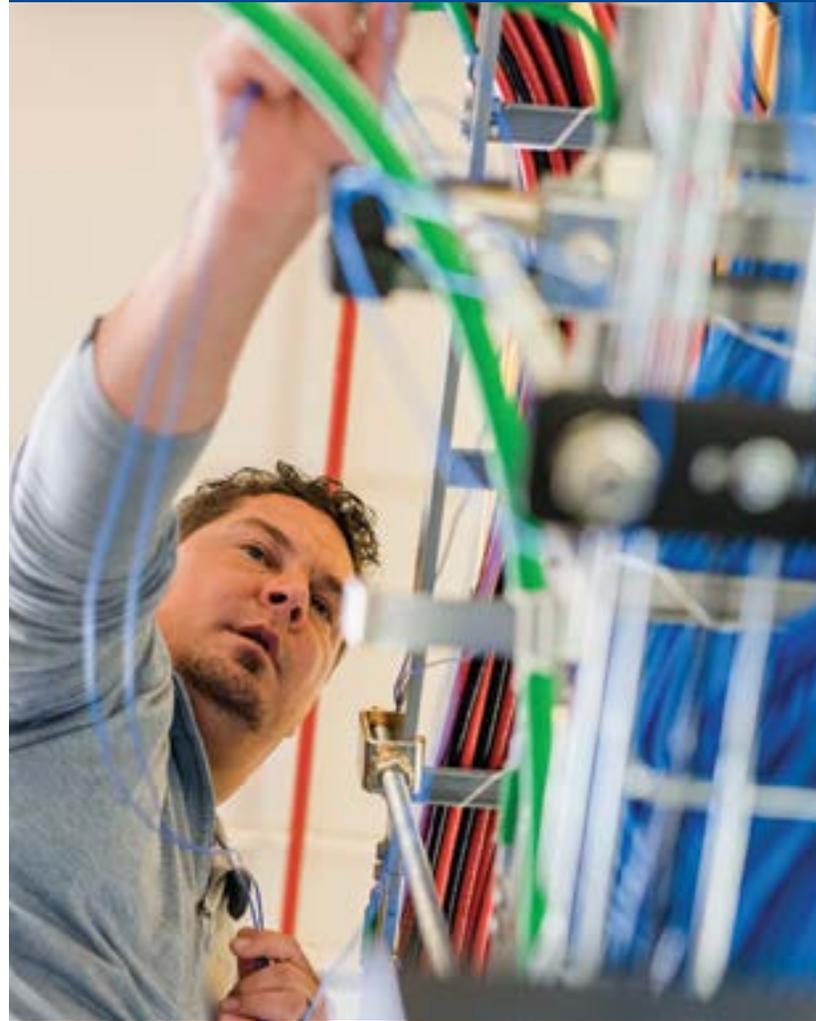
**Drop me an email. I would love to stop by your business for a visit.**

[Barry@gochamber.org](mailto:Barry@gochamber.org)

Barry Wilfahrt, Chamber President and CEO



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*Let's talk about effortless connectivity.*



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## CHAMBER NEWS

### 2026 Intergovernmental Retreat

The annual East Grand Forks Intergovernmental Retreat hosted by the EGF EDA and GF/EGF Chamber of Commerce was well attended by local leaders, business people and local officials. The EDA identified a site plan for the former Simplot property, educating local businesses on grant opportunities as strategic priorities for the EDA. The Chamber will continue to promote and focus on the need for MN to make some changes to its business climate to stay competitive with North Dakota. Border Cities Funding increases will also be pursued.



Pictured are East Grand Forks local leaders, business people and local officials that attended the retreat.

# LEARN. GROW. LEAD.

## Upcoming Chamber Trainings

**AI Advantage**  
for Small Business

The Chamber  
GRAND FORKS - EAST GRAND FORKS

Presented by The Chamber of Commerce GF/EGF

**Unlock the Power of AI for Your Business!**

**5-Week In-Person Training**  
Starts March 10 - Tuesday, 1PM-2:30PM  
In The Chamber of Commerce Board Room

**Limited Seats**

**Who Should Attend:**

- Small Business Owners
- Managers & Team Leads
- Non-Tech Professionals Curious About AI
- Businesses that want practical tools, not theory

**Learn to:**

- Save Time & Boost Productivity
- Improve Marketing & Communication
- Create Content with Ease

**Course Topics:**

| Week 1                         | Week 2                   | Week 3                       | Week 4             | Week 5              |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| AI Essentials & Custom Prompts | Email & Content Creation | AI for Marketing & Customers | Visuals & Branding | AI Workflow & Tools |

**No Tech Experience Needed! Practical Skills • Immediate Results**

- In Person Instructor
- Live, hands on sessions
- Small cohort, discussion driven
- Items to work on between Sessions

### Weekly Focus & Outcomes:

#### Week 1 – Build Your AI Foundation

Create a custom, business-ready AI “master prompt” and learn how to get useful, reliable results.

#### Week 2 – Write Faster, Communicate Better

Draft emails, responses, and content that still sound like you.

#### Week 3 – AI for Marketing & Customers

Support outreach, messaging, and customer communication.

#### Week 4 – Visuals & Branding

Create slides, visuals, and simple branded materials—no design skills required.

#### Week 5 – Your AI Workflow

Leave with a repeatable AI workflow you can

**\$795 Member**

**\$995 Non-Member**

**REGISTER HERE**

# CULTURE & MINDSET

A 4-HOUR INTENSIVE SEMINAR FOR BUSINESS LEADERS & SUPPORTING STAFF

Hosted by The Chamber Small Business Committee  
Featuring Think 3D: The Culture Coaches

April 15th, 2026 | 8am-noon  
@ Minkota Power Cooperative, 5301 32nd Ave S, GF

## Evolve Your Workplace Culture to Thrive

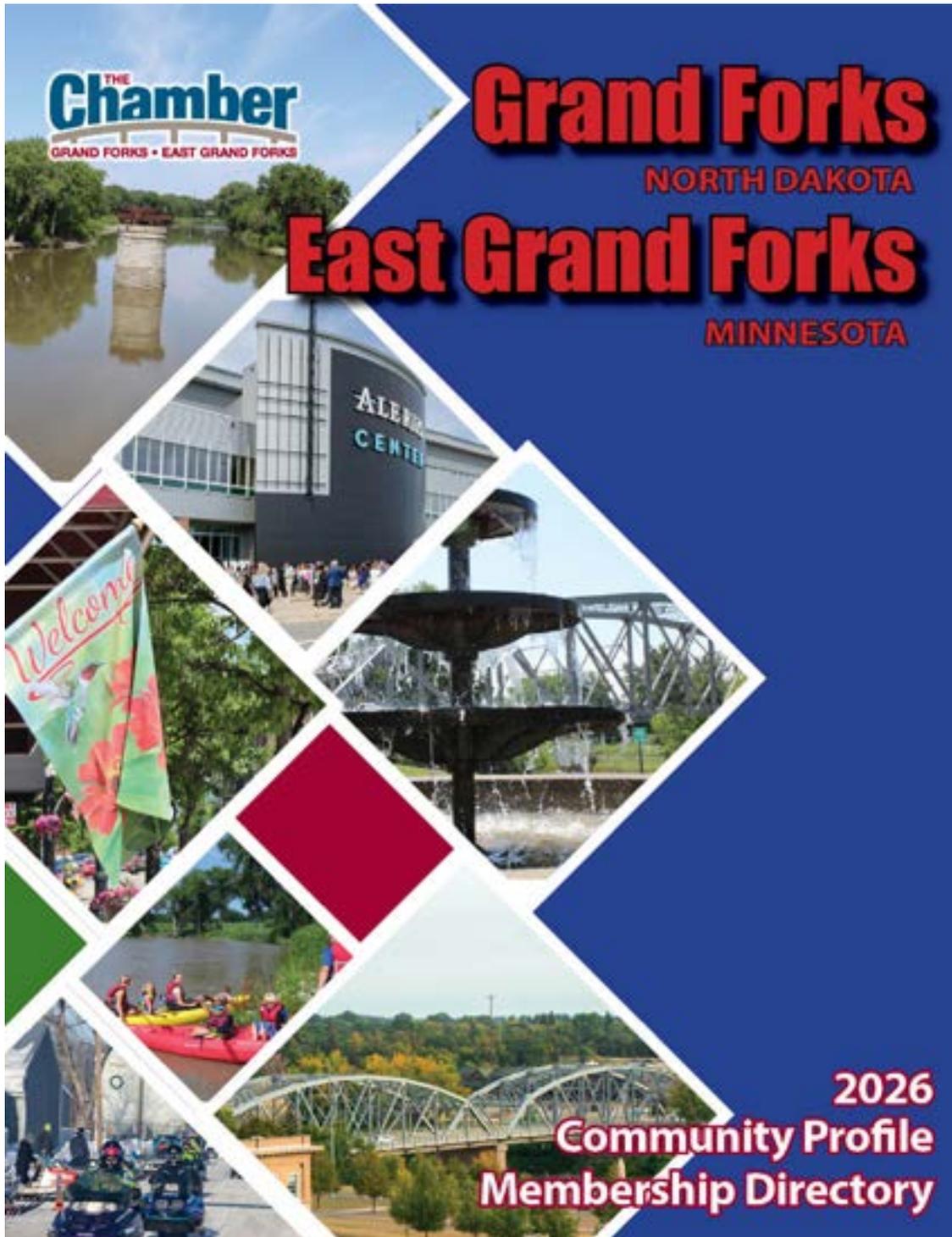
This 4-hour intensive session is designed to provide business leaders, managers, and teams with expertise and practical frameworks needed to move beyond “culture by default” and start building a Culture by Design.

**Unified Vision • Shared Language • Immediate Impact**

Walk away with actionable strategies your team can implement the very next day.



# The Chamber Community Profile and Membership Directory



The Chamber Membership Directory and Community Profile will be mailed to each primary member contact in mid-February—watch for yours in the mail. Chamber staff will also be distributing copies to waiting rooms throughout the city.

The Community Profile tells the story of Grand Forks, showcasing what makes our community special and offering a compelling snapshot for current and future residents alike.

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**GFK**  
Grand Forks International Airport

**More Flights. Better Options. Choose Smarter • Choose GFK**

- Save Time
- Close to Home
- Stress-Free Experience

GFK offers our community more flexible schedules, smoother connections, and a simpler travel experience from start to finish. Flying local from Grand Forks International Airport has always been the shortcut worth taking. Now, it's *even better*.



# IT'S GIVING HEARTS DAY!

Give the **GIFT of PLAY** ON GIVING HEARTS DAY

FEBRUARY 12

FUNDS RAISED SUPPORT GF PARKS & REC FOUNDATION YOUTH SCHOLARSHIPS, HELPING EVERY LOCAL CHILD STAY ACTIVE

Scan to donate!



Valvoline Tire One Auto Center  
**TOUGHEST MONSTER TRUCK TOUR**  
MARCH 28  
DOZER  
ALERUS CENTER

The Valvoline/Tire One Toughest Monster Truck Tour presented by Baymont by Wyndham returns to Alerus Center on March 28 for the 2026 Championship Event, where the toughest trucks on dirt battle it out for the title!

Tickets available at the Alerus Center Box Office or online at <https://bit.ly/47VIQ11>

**The Chamber**  
GRAND FORKS • EAST GRAND FORKS

The Chamber Grand Forks/East Grand Forks  
**JOB BOARD**  
[gochamber.org/community-job-board](http://gochamber.org/community-job-board)

# Paid Family Medical Leave: What Every Employer Needs to Know

Minnesota's Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) program, which began January 1st, is bringing significant changes for employers, and those changes reach farther than many businesses realize. Now, eligible employees will be entitled to paid time off for certain family, medical, and military-related reasons through a state-administered program funded by payroll contributions.

While the law is based in Minnesota, its impact extends across the river. North Dakota employers may also be subject to PFML requirements if they have employees who work in Minnesota or whose work is considered "localized" there, even if the business itself is headquartered in North Dakota. For many employers, understanding when the law applies, how payroll contributions work, and how to properly manage leave requests is critical to staying compliant and avoiding costly mistakes.

In this Brown Bag seminar, PRO Resources consultants Megan Johnson and Jacob Johnson (no relation) will break down what PFML means for employers on both sides of the river. Attendees will walk away with a clear understanding of employer responsibilities, practical guidance on navigating payroll and HR considerations, and insight into how to prepare now, whether you are just getting started or need to catch up.

This session is ideal for business owners, managers, HR professionals, and payroll staff who want clarity, confidence, and actionable next steps as these new requirements take effect.



**Wednesday, February 18, 2026**

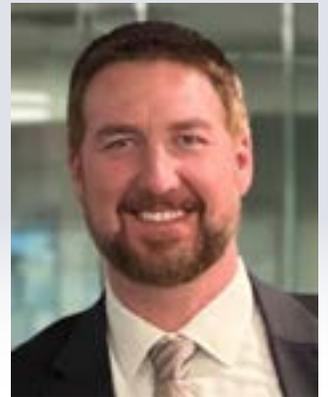
**11:30 am - 1:00 pm - Chamber of Commerce Board Room**

**Brown Bag Seminar**  **THE Chamber**  
GRAND FORKS • EAST GRAND FORKS

*Presented by...*



*Megan Johnson,  
Pro Resources*



*Jacob Johnson,  
Pro Resources*

**CLICK HERE TO REGISTER FOR SEMINAR**

**\$25/Member & \$35/Non Member (Includes Lunch)**

If you have questions, please contact the Chamber. [doug@gochamber.org](mailto:doug@gochamber.org) or 701-772-7271

# WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

## GovCom Solutions, Inc.

410-695-6181

<https://www.govcomsolutions.com/>



*GovCom Solutions is a technology and consulting firm helping government agencies and enterprise organizations modernize the way they operate through trusted AI, intelligent automation, and digital transformation. With a mission-focused approach, GovCom partners with clients to move from readiness to real results — delivering secure AI consulting, workflow automation, fine-tuned models, and domain-driven agent solutions designed for complex, compliance-driven environments.*

*Their team supports organizations through strategic planning, operational excellence, data analytics, and change management, while also offering innovative digital solutions such as low-code/no-code development, mobile app development, UI/UX design, and business process services.*

*With a commitment to future-ready technology and strong customer experience, GovCom Solutions works alongside public and private sector leaders to accelerate outcomes, strengthen systems, and create meaningful, sustainable transformation.*

## Haugen Performance Consulting

3535 S 31st St, Suite 201, Grand Forks, ND 58201

<https://www.haugenperformance.com/>



*Founded in 2022 by Dr. Erin Haugen, Haugen Performance Consulting (HPC) is a woman-owned firm based in Grand Forks, ND, specializing in education, training, and performance psychology solutions for sport organizations, corporations, and professionals. We are a team of mental health professionals who offer resilience workshops & keynotes, mental health certification courses, executive coaching, corporate training, and continuing education courses.*

*Our team has over 100 years of combined experience working within high performing industries, and we use our expertise in healthcare, higher education, and collegiate and professional sport to promote high performance in any occupation. Our practical, research-backed tools assist clients who are ready to invest in mental readiness so they can perform their best when it matters most.*

*At HPC, we are committed to excellence and would love to partner with you for any education, training, and performance psychology needs.*

# WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

## Firefly Medical Group PLLC

2860 10th Ave N, Suite 350, Grand Forks, ND 58203  
701-757-1440  
<https://fireflymedical.net/>

*Firefly Medical Group is a patient-centered healthcare provider in the Grand Forks region dedicated to helping individuals and families look, feel, and live their best through personalized, evidence-based care. Founded with a vision to move beyond quick-fix treatments, Firefly delivers advanced services ranging from hormone therapy and direct primary care to specialized wellness solutions, esthetics, health coaching, and more — all tailored to support long-term health and wellbeing.*

*With a focus on whole-body wellness, cutting-edge technology, and a team committed to genuine, long-term patient relationships, Firefly Medical Group stands apart for the way they deliver care right here in our community.*



## Barb Jorgenson, Realtor

218-280-3961  
<https://realtorbarbjorgenson.my.canva.site/>

*I was born and raised in Philadelphia, Pa and moved to the family farm in Fisher, MN in 2011. We decided that farm life was more than we could handle and really missed the city life, so we moved to Grand Forks in 2022. For the past 3 ½ years, I am the full-time Administrative & Media Assistant at Sharon Lutheran Church. When I am not working, I enjoy spending time with my family & friends.*



*As a new dedicated real estate agent, I will help clients turn their home ownership dreams into reality. I am passionate about making the process smooth and rewarding, whether you're buying your first home or selling your current one. My approach focuses on providing clear communication and expert guidance at every step.*

*Contact me to get started on your exciting real estate journey!*

## Media Ranch Productions

311 Kittson Ave, Suite B. Grand Forks, ND 58201  
701-757-0270  
<https://www.mediaranchproductions.com/>

*Media Ranch helps businesses leverage video to solve real problems. We create video tools that not only look good but increase sales, recruit talent, and train your team.*

*Our proven process is designed to take work off your plate. We take the lead on strategy and production so you don't have to manage the project. You get a professional video plus a clear playbook on how to use it to maximize results. That is what sets us apart.*

*To learn more about how video can help your business, contact us today.*



# BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

## BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

**Hosted by Old National Bank**

3100 S Columbia Rd, GF

**Thursday, February 19, 2026**

**4:45pm ~ 7:00pm**

Old National Bank invites all Chamber members and their employees to join them for a great Business After Hours event in the spacious lobby of their bank!

**Complimentary hors d'oeuvres, 2 Drink Ticket & Cash Bar, Great door prizes. Progressive cash drawing is at \$2000 (winner must be in attendance).**

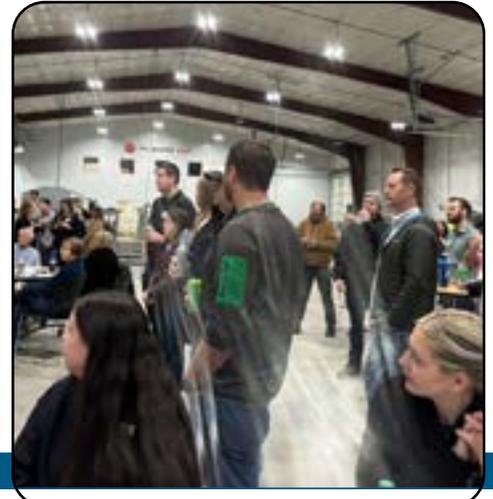
Stop by...Enjoy the fun and take advantage of great networking opportunities. You might even win **\$2000** in our Progressive Cash drawing!

Remember, BAH is FREE for all Chamber members! Is your employer a Chamber member? That means YOU ARE TOO!

See you Thursday, February 19, 2026 at Business After Hours!

\*Because of the nature of this event, no children under 18 may attend.

**Thank you to Intergrated Steel for hosting an eventful Business After Hours.**



# MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

## January 2026 Renewals

The following businesses know the value of their Chamber Membership and have renewed their membership in The Chamber GF/EGF.

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| A & L Potato Co. Inc.  | DCN (Dakota Carrier Network)                     | Inc.   |
| Achieve Therapy & Fitness                                      | Design Rich Architect, LLC                       | Northern Valley Federal Credit Union               |
| Acme Rents (Tailgate)  | EAPC Architects Engineers                        | Northland Community & Technical College            |
| Advanced Drainage Systems, Inc.                                | FOB NoDak  | Northlands Rescue Mission                          |
| AgCountry Farm Credit Services                                 | Frandsen Bank & Trust - East Grand Forks         | Northside Cafe                                     |
| Alluma, Inc.   | Global Cleaning Services LLC                     | Norwex - Stacey Brorson                            |
| Alzheimer's Association MN - ND                                | Grand Forks Herald                               | Old National Bank                                  |
| American Family Insurance-Larson and Associates Agency, LLC    | Grand Forks Public Library                       | PCL Construction Services, Inc                     |
| American Legion Post 6   | Great Clips                                      | Pifer's Auction & Realty                           |
| Anderson Brothers Auto Body Shop                               | Gregory J. Norman Funeral Chapel                 | Precision Plumbing Inc.                            |
| Avis Rent A Car  | H & R Block - S. Washington                      | R.J. Zavoral & Sons, Inc.                          |
| Axiom Solutions, LLC   | Houston Engineering, Inc.                        | RDO Equipment Company                              |
| Bears Home Solutions   | Jersey Mike's Subs                               | Reliance Telephone Systems Inc.                    |
| Bell Insurance Services LLC                                    | Keith's Security World                           | Rydell Toyota of Grand Forks                       |
| Big Sky Kennel   | Leighton Broadcasting 1310 KNOX/97 KYCK/1043     | Sanford Health 929 Central Ave Clinic              |
| Burian & Associates, LLC                                       | Cities FM/Rock 95/Z947                           | St. Michael's Catholic School                      |
| Capital Resource Management                                    | Little Miracles, Inc                             | Steffes Company - Grand Forks                      |
| CF Industries Distribution Facilities, LLC                     | Love In Action                                   | Stegman Holdings LLC DBA Studio South              |
| City of Grand Forks  | McCarty's Heating & Welding, DBA Mac's Pool Pros | Stones Mobile Radio Inc.                           |
| Community Foundation of Grand Forks, East Grand Forks & Region | McDonald's - S. Washington                       | Texas Roadhouse                                    |
| Core Scientific, Inc.  | Midco Advertising                                | TIAA-Scott Roche                                   |
| Dakota Commercial & Development, Inc                           | Minnkota Power Cooperative, Inc.                 | True North Resource Center                         |
| Dakota TV & Appliance  | ND Division of Vocational Rehabilitation         | UND Office of the President                        |
| David Thompson - Attorney At Law                               | ND Division of Vocational Rehabilitation         | United Way of Grand Forks, East Grand Forks & Area |
|  | ND Small Business Development Centers            | Valley Vision Clinic                               |
|  | Newman Outdoor Advertising                       | Waterfront Kitchen & Bath                          |
|  | Nodak Electric Cooperative,                      | WelCore Health LLC                                 |

# Top **TEN** Chamber Membership Benefits

**1.** *New Business Contacts* – Networking and new business contacts will help your business grow. With more than 100 chamber programs and events, you'll have no problem adding to your contact base.

**2.** *Credibility* – Make a statement that you are committed to the future of the Grand Forks/East Grand Forks region.

**3.** *Leadership Development* – The Chamber offers learning and professional development opportunities to help you run a smarter, more profitable business.

**4.** *Community Commitment* – Community involvement benefits you and the community and shows your commitment to helping our region grow.

**5.** *Referrals* – The Chamber's referrals of our members are a great return on your investment.

**6.** *Publicity and Exposure* – Publicity and heightened name recognition as a Chamber Member shows your customers and potential customers who you are.

**7.** *Marketing & Advertising* – Targeted and affordable advertising offered by The Chamber help you promote your business effectively on a small budget.

**8.** *A Healthy Local Economy* – Be a part of a group that is committed to creating a strong local economy to keep our business momentum moving forward.

**9.** *Gain a Voice in Government* – The Chamber is your representative on a local, regional, state and national level. With over 1100 members representing thousands of area employees, The Chamber speaks with a strong voice for our business community on issues affecting your business.

**10.** *Partnership* - You will be a part of an organization whose mission is to create an environment that encourages business success while enhancing the quality of life in our region.

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# CONGRATULATIONS

## to the 2025 Chamber Leadership Class Graduates

The 2025 Chamber Leadership Class completed the program on December 10th. After 3 months of classes they have learned a lot about themselves, our community and improved their leadership skills. They also have made new friends and contacts. Congratulations on completing the program!



Kinley Anderson  
GF Region EDC



JoLain Anderson  
Alerus Center



Jessica Anglebrandt  
Red River Stepping  
Stones



Jessica Baumgarten  
Valley Senior Living



Jake Bellmore  
RealTruck



Kayla Brassy  
Alerus Center



Daniel Campos  
Hugo's



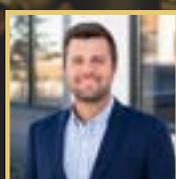
Gon Carson  
GGF Young  
Professionals



Jennifer Dusek  
City of Grafton



John Ferguson  
Grand Forks  
Senior Center

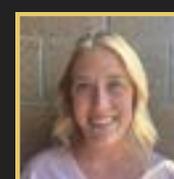


Erik Hove  
Houston  
Engineering



Photo  
Unavailable

Carter Hunter  
City of GF



Jordin Innes  
Innes Construction



Doug Iverson  
The Chamber



Lonny Jacobson  
UND EERC



Michael Jennings  
GF Police Dept



Ronald Johnson  
UND EERC



Carli Jordan  
Alerus Center



Nicholas Kalenze  
UND EERC



Chelse Kippley  
Gate City Bank



Matt Klockmann  
United Valley  
Bank



Jeremy Lee  
City of GF



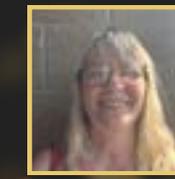
Ed Liberman  
City of GF



Ben Linck  
Ideal Aerosmith



Emily Litzinger  
NW MN Multi-  
County Housing



Karen Lunak  
NW MN Multi-  
County Housing



Shannon Morley  
CVIC



Nick Nelson  
Hugo's



Jasmine Oleksik  
UND EERC



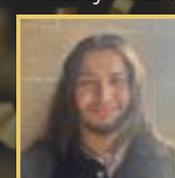
Madison Riopelle  
GF Public Health



Charlie Rognerud  
Ideal Aerosmith



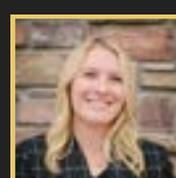
Suraya Rooker  
City of GF



Tomas Silva III  
Red River Stepping  
Stones



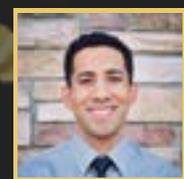
Cody  
Soderstrom  
City of GF



Tianna Stanek  
Hugo's



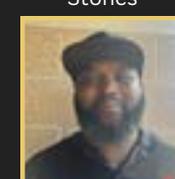
Jenelle  
Swenberger  
GF Park District



Justin Walker  
Hugo's



Whitney  
Weisenberger  
Bell Bank

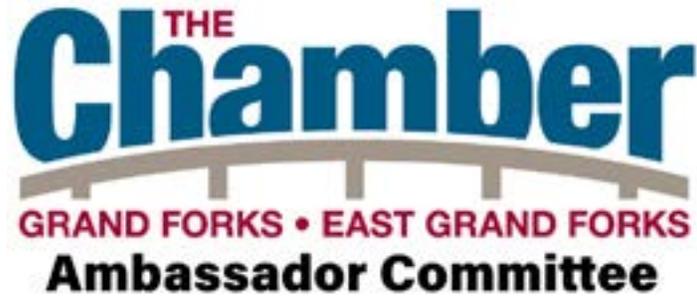


Michael West  
Integrated Steel  
Solutions



Joshua Wretling  
RealTruck

# AMBASSADORS MEETING



The Chamber Ambassadors extend a warm welcome to new businesses, actively participate in celebrating grand openings and special events, and engage in various Chamber activities.

*The Chamber Ambassadors play a crucial role in fostering a vibrant business community by actively encouraging and supporting new and fellow members. Their mission is centered around creating opportunities for businesses to thrive while simultaneously contributing to the community's well-being.*

*Their dedication involves promoting The Chamber to potential members, highlighting the benefits of membership, and showcasing the community as an excellent place to live and do business. Ambassadors commit to attending monthly meetings and participating in diverse events throughout the year, such as Ribbon Cuttings, Business After Hours, and Chamber activities. Through their commitment and positive representation, Ambassadors actively contribute to the success and growth of The Chamber and its members.*

*The Ambassadors meet on the 3rd Monday of the month.*



Pictured The Chamber Ambassadors held their January meeting at Northside Cafe.

# RIBBON CUTTING

The Chamber Ambassadors would love to meet you and celebrate your business with a ribbon cutting ceremony.

If you are interested, please contact Doug at **772-7271** or [Doug@gochamber.org](mailto:Doug@gochamber.org) to schedule a ribbon cutting event.



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**CARRY BLUE. CARRY ON.**

# MEMBER NEWS

## KLJ Announces Retirement of Aviation GIS Specialist Allan Schafer



Allan Schafer

KLJ Engineering LLC (KLJ) announces the retirement of Allan Schafer, a GIS specialist following more than 25 years of professional experience.

Based in North Dakota, Schafer served as a planner, GIS and CAD specialist, providing technical expertise across a wide range of projects. His experience included base map and LiDAR compilation, coordinate systems, map exhibit creation, and the development of 2D and 3D airspace surface layers. He also supported runway safety area planning, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and airport layout plan obstruction mapping, and the creation of 3D terrain models and fly-through visualizations. Throughout his career, he supported aviation planning municipal, transportation, oil field services, survey, water resources, environmental, and telecommunications services at KLJ.

Schafer holds FAA Airports GIS-Integrated Distance Learning Environment (AGIS-IDLE) Level 3 certification and earned an associate degree in architectural drafting and estimating technology from North Dakota State College of Science and was a graduate of the Dale Carnegie Course.

"Allan's technical depth, attention to detail and commitment to quality have had a lasting impact on our aviation team and the clients we serve," shared Curt Cady, KLJ aviation team leader. "His contributions have helped elevate our GIS capabilities, and he will be greatly missed by colleagues and partners alike."

KLJ thanks Schafer for his dedication, expertise, and years of service and wishes him the very best in his retirement.



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## Ashly Hall | Engineering Assistant



Ashly Hall

Ashly Hall has joined Burian & Associates as an Engineering Assistant, based in the Grand Forks office. She recently earned her Master of Science in Geological Engineering from the University of North Dakota, focusing on hydrology, drought resilience, and environmental stability. Ashly has experience in hydrological modeling, GIS, remote sensing, and community-focused water resource research.



# MEMBER NEWS

## Valley Senior Living Communities Earn Gold Status on North Dakota Antimicrobial Stewardship Honor Roll

Valley Senior Living on Columbia and Woodside Village at Valley Senior Living on 42nd are proud to announce that they have been recognized by the North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services as Gold Awardees on the 2025 Antimicrobial Stewardship Honor Roll in the long term care category.

The Antimicrobial Stewardship Honor Roll recognizes health care organizations across North Dakota that demonstrate excellence in the responsible use of antibiotics. The honor roll was developed to recognize facilities that meet all seven core elements of antimicrobial stewardship established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). These elements promote optimal antimicrobial use, help prevent the emergence of antimicrobial resistance and *Clostridioides difficile* (*C. difficile*) infections, and provide an opportunity for facilities to showcase their commitment to best practices.

Valley Senior Living's Infection Preventionists Kayla Porter, MSN, RN, CIC, LTC-CIP, and Sarah Jacobson, RN, LTC-CIP, together with Medical Director Chris Henderson, MD, CMD, play key roles in implementing stewardship strategies at Valley Senior Living. Antimicrobial resistance is a growing public health concern nationwide. Programs like North Dakota's Antimicrobial Stewardship Honor Roll encourage healthcare professionals and organizations to use antibiotics only when necessary and in the most effective manner possible. Gold Awardees demonstrated advanced stewardship practices, ongoing education, and measurable improvements in antibiotic use.



of U.S. adults agree that their local chamber of commerce is a **trusted resource and partner** for businesses.



feel that their local chamber has an impact on **growing businesses locally**.

90%

believe that their local chamber has an impact on **growing the local economy**.



say that their local chamber has an impact on **addressing challenges** within their community.

Source: Harris Poll survey; fielded Sept. 5-9, 2004 among 2,075 US adults

# MEMBER NEWS

## GRAND FORKS SPITFIRES ANNOUNCE HEAD COACH FOR INAUGURAL SOFTBALL SEASON

### *Spitfires Softball Announce Aaron Alvarez as Head Coach*

The Spitfires Softball team is proud to announce the hiring of Aaron Alvarez as the team's head coach, marking a major milestone as the franchise prepares for its inaugural season. Alvarez brings a strong background in collegiate athletics, summer collegiate baseball, military service, and community leadership, a combination that aligns seamlessly with the Spitfires' mission.



"I am more than excited and honored to be the head coach of this exciting new program," said Alvarez. "I look forward to helping players develop to become the best version of themselves for their respective school programs."

Alvarez's playing career includes collegiate baseball experience at Reedley College in California and York University in Nebraska. He also gained valuable summer collegiate experience as a pitcher and bullpen coach with the Hastings Sodbusters in Hastings, Nebraska, and spent time pitching with the Alaska Goldpanners of Fairbanks.

In addition to his baseball background, Alvarez has built a strong foundation as a collegiate softball coach. He took over the softball program at York University just two weeks before the start of the 2024 season. The upcoming 2026 season will mark his third year leading the program, highlighting his ability to adapt quickly and lead with confidence.

Beyond athletics, Alvarez is deeply committed to service. He serves as a Volunteer Firefighter with the City of York Fire Department and is currently a Staff Sergeant in the Nebraska Army National Guard. Over six years of military service, his roles have included firefighter with the 281st Firefighter Detachment, Recruiting and Retention Non-Commissioned Officer, and his current position with the Nebraska Medical Detachment as a Dental Technician. He recently signed a three-year extension with the Guard.

The Spitfires Team believes Alvarez's leadership, discipline, and dedication to personal growth make him the ideal choice to lead the team as it enters its first season. Full schedule details, including game times, are now available at [SpitfiresSoftball.com](https://SpitfiresSoftball.com). Follow us on social media to stay up to date on games, news, events, and [FUN! @GrandForksSpitfires](#).

# MEMBER NEWS

## UND SCHOOL OF MEDICINE & HEALTH SCIENCES ANNOUNCES ADMINISTRATIVE FACULTY PROMOTIONS

The Dean's Office at UND's School of Medicine & Health Sciences (SMHS) is pleased to announce the promotion of administrative faculty across multiple units.

Moving into the role of **Senior Associate Dean for Health Sciences is Dave Relling, P.T., Ph.D.** The former chair of UND's Department of Physical Therapy, Relling has been with the School since 1996. This title gives Relling responsibility for all non-medical training programs at the SMHS, including physical therapy, occupational therapy, physician assistant studies, medical laboratory science, athletic training, the School's programs in population health and public health.

"The health sciences programs at the SMHS have excellent leadership, faculty, staff, and students," Relling said. "The interprofessional and collaborative educational opportunities prepare graduates to be knowledgeable, compassionate and effective healthcare providers for North Dakota and the nation. I am honored to step into the role of Senior Associate Dean to support the department chairs and programs as they serve the people of North Dakota through education, research, and service."

A veteran clinical professor in the SMHS Department of Pediatrics, **Susan Zelewski, M.D., has been named Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education (GME)** for North Dakota's only comprehensive school of medicine and health sciences. After serving as the School's Assistant Dean for Phase 2/3 and Associate Dean for Clinical Medical Education for years, Zelewski is expanding her portfolio to focus on the School's many post-graduate medical residency and fellowship programs.

"I am excited to start this new role as Associate Dean for GME and for the exploration and learning it brings," said Zelewski. "I look forward to the opportunity to continue contributing to our School's efforts to expand healthcare for the people of North Dakota in a new setting."

Housed in communities across North Dakota, these residency and fellowship programs, which can run from one to seven years, provide physicians with advanced training in their chosen medical specialty. UND manages residency programs in family medicine, internal medicine, neurology, psychiatry, surgery (including orthopedic surgery), pediatric medicine, and a transitional year program. UND also coordinates in-state fellowship programs in cardiovascular medicine, geriatrics, hospitalist medicine, hematology-oncology, forensic pathology, and surgical critical care.

Down the road in Fargo, **Dinesh Bande, M.D., M.B.A.,** chair of the School's Fargo-based Department of Internal Medicine, has been named **Associate Dean for Academic & Clinical Integration.** In this role, Bande will focus on building collaboration between academic institutions like UND and clinical teams within the state's many health systems to drive better health outcomes. By aligning education, research, and practice, the new position will help bridge gaps between evidence-based care and population health, while fostering innovation and excellence in healthcare delivery.

# THE CHAMBER

## **Executive Committee**

**Chair: Derek Holt**, First Community Credit Union

**Chair Elect: Anna Rosburg**, Alerus Center

**Past Chair: Mike McLean**, JLG Architects

**Russel Crary**, Crary Real Estate

**Chris Jordheim**, Widseth

**Daren Muscha**, Bass Pro Shops

**Barry Wilfahrt**, Chamber GF/EGF

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**Matt Bredemeier**, Grand Forks Subaru Kia

**Mylo Einarson**, Nodak Electric

**Jon Fargo**, RealTruck

**Todd Forkel**, Altru Health System

**Dean Gorder**, General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc.

**Tony Hodny**, H&S Electrical Services, LLC

**Meloney Linder**, University of North Dakota

**Keith Lund**, GF EDC

**Emily O'Brien**, ND Human Services Agency

**Shari Olson**, Northland Community & Technical College

**Scott Reck**, Northdale Oil

**Curtis Regan**, Dakota Commercial & Development Inc.

**Andy Schneider**, Dakota Concealed/GF County Sheriff

**Andrew Vigen**, Vigen Construction

**Tyler Wilson**, Vilandre Heating, Air Conditioning & Plumbing

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