



THE Voice

January 2024

www.gochamber.org

2024 Chamber Annual Meeting

Emerging Opportunities in the Grand Forks Economy

The program will feature two panels, Bioscience opportunities and will be facilitated by Todd Forkel, Altru CEO. UND President, Andy Armacost will facilitate the second panel on AI and Cyber opportunities.



Todd Forkel
Altru CEO



Andy Armacost
UND President

Thursday, January 25, 2024

Alerus Center

Social & Online Auction Display 5:30pm

Dinner & Program 6:30pm

[Click Here to Register!](#)

Plus 2023 Henry Havig Award Winner announced.

CHAMBER NEWS

GF/EGF Chamber Teams with GNDC to Oppose Proposed Property Tax Measure, Urges North Dakotans to Decline Petition

The GF/EGF Chamber has teamed up with the Greater North Dakota Chamber (GNDC) and other Chamber and organization across the state expressing strong opposition to the property tax petition currently in circulation, aimed at amending the North Dakota Constitution.

Arik Spencer, President and CEO of GNDC, voiced concerns about the proposed initiated measure, emphasizing its potential to restrict political subdivisions' authority to levy property taxes. According to the proposal, starting in 2025, the state would be mandated to provide replacement payments at 2024 levels indefinitely.

The petition, which requires 31,164 signatures, must be submitted before Feb 12 to be considered for the June Primary Election or by June 29 for inclusion on the General Election ballot in November.

This is not the first time your Chamber and GNDC has taken a stand against such measures. In 2012, our organizations joined a coalition that successfully defeated a similar effort. The local Chamber and GNDC now urge North Dakotans to decline signing the current petition, sending a clear message in support of local control.

MPO Keeps In Town Bridge Alive

Despite a split vote by the Grand Forks City Council two weeks ago the MPO kept both the Merrifield and in town bridges in the 2025 master plan. The Merrifield bridge is critical to route some of the Ag Truck traffic around the city. The additional in town bridge is necessary for public safety reasons and to provide EGF residents better access to the business community and hospitality options on Grand Forks south end. Grand Forks benefits greatly from EGF residents doing business in GF.

The Chamber will continue to support 42nd underpass at Demers, 47th and Merrifield interchange construction and expansion and both bridge options. These are long range plans and option must be kept in the plan to keep both communities moving forward.

CHAMBER NEWS

Welcome The Chamber Grand Forks/East Grand Forks new Board Members

We are thrilled to announce and extend a warm welcome to the newest members of The Chamber Grand Forks/East Grand Forks Board of Directors.

Please join us in welcoming:



Matt Bredemeier
Grand Forks Subaru Kia



Jon Fargo
Retrax Holdings, LLC



Todd Forkel
Altru Health System



Derek Holt
First Community
Credit Union



Phil Ring
McKinnon Company



Liz Savage
Hugo's Family
Marketplace

Congratulations to The Chamber Grand Forks/East Grand Forks Retiring Board Members

Please join us in extending warm congratulations to The Chamber retiring Board Members. Thank you for your ongoing support and commitment to the success of our Chamber of Commerce.



Tommy Kenville
iSight Drone Services
& T-Global, Inc.
Past Board Chair



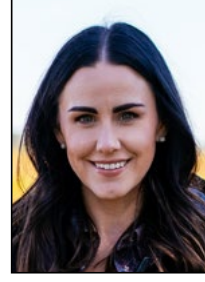
Meghan Compton
Altru Health System



Mike Dunn
Construction
Engineers



Torrie Enget
Hugo's Family
Marketplace



Annie Gorder
Three Farm
Daughters



John Schumacher
American Federal Bank

CHAMBER NEWS

Welcome The Chamber Grand Forks/East Grand Forks new Committee Members

We are thrilled to announce and extend a warm welcome to the newest committee members of The Chamber Grand Forks/East Grand Forks.

Please join us in welcoming:



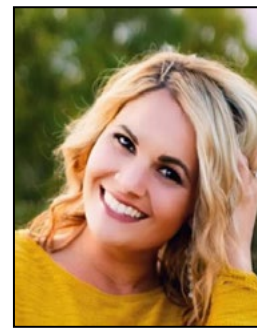
John Friend
PS Industries



Deon Wawrzyniak
Houston Engineering, Inc.



Tommy Kenville
ISight Drone Services



Megan Werven
Something Sweet

Congratulations to The Chamber Grand Forks/East Grand Forks Retiring Committee Members

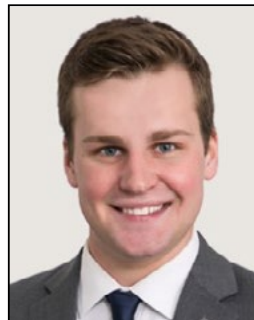
Please join us in extending warm congratulations to The Chamber retiring committee members. Thank you for your ongoing support and commitment to the success of our Chamber of Commerce.



Amanda Rengstorf
Grand Forks Senior Center



Josh Mason
UND EERC



Adrian Cummings
Alerus



Tom Swoyer
Grand Sky

CHAMBER NEWS

Klobuchar staffer Ben Lien meets with EGF leaders

Chamber President Barry Wilfahrt brought up several issues during a meeting with the NW MN representative for US Senator Klobuchar. First the postal services plan to consolidate mail sorting to Fargo and its inevitable impact on service given the fact that I-29 closes numerous times each year due to weather. The second issue was the need for funding for Merrifield and an in town bridge between Grand Forks and East Grand Forks to alleviate some of the farm to market traffic, safety and convenience reasons for residents of both cities.

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GFK
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CHAMBER NEWS

Annual Meeting Set for January 25th

Plan now to attend and watch for more details on the Chamber Annual Meeting coming up on January 25th.

Chamber Board Chair, Russel Crary will turn the gavel over to incoming Chair, Tony Hodny. The program will feature two panels on emerging opportunities in the Grand Forks economy. The first will be on Bioscience opportunities and will be facilitated by Todd Forkel, Altru CEO. UND President, Andy Armacost will facilitate the second panel on AI and Cyber opportunities.

The night will be capped off with the presentation of the prestigious Henry Havig Award for a lifetime of volunteer and community service.

[Click here to register](#)



CHAMBER NEWS

UAS Strategic Planning Slated for January



Tommy Kenville,
ISight Drone Services
CoChair



Michael Fridolfs,
Northrop
Grumman Corp.
CoChair



The Chamber UAS Committee will conduct 5 separate abbreviated strategic planning sessions the week of January 8th. The 5 sessions will be on Large Drones, Small Drones, Beyond Visual Line of Sight, UAS workforce recruitment and UAS Brand and marketing for Grand Forks and North Dakota.

All of the sessions will be 11:30 am to 1 pm the week of January 8th. Please register for any of the sessions you or members of your team are interested in via the links below. Registration is required and you must be a member of The Chamber Grand Forks/East Grand Forks UAS Committee to attend.

[Small UAS Subcommittee - Monday, January 8th, 11:30 am to 1pm](#)

[Large UAS Subcommittee - Tuesday, January 9th, 11:30am to 1pm](#)

[BVLOS Subcommittee - Wednesday, January 10th, 11:30am to 1pm](#)

[UAS Workforce Subcommittee - Thursday, January 11th, 11:30am to 1pm](#)

[ND/Grand Forks UAS Brand/marketing - Friday, January 12th, 11:30am to 1pm](#)

As a valued member of the Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) community, we appreciate your ongoing support and commitment to our organization.

Any business with an interest in UAS can join the group for \$125 a year. Members must be members of their respective local chamber to be eligible to be a member of the committee.

[Click here to join.](#)

CHAMBER NEWS

Minnesota's slow economic growth marred by an increasing cost of business



Doug Loon
President and CEO
Minnesota Chamber of Commerce

Did you know that Minnesota is the 22nd dog-friendliest state in the nation? It is also the 9th "most fun" state in America and the 13th "weirdest."

Research groups and news organizations rank states on everything, from the silly to the serious. The data they consider when comparing state-by-state performance is chosen to fit what they are trying to measure. These ranking reports are often over-simplified and used as a marketing tool for the organization promoting the study. They often include subjective analysis on which economic indicators are included, which can skew the results.

For nearly a decade, the Minnesota Chamber's Business Benchmarks report has served as a compass through the maze of rankings that range from the whimsical, such as 'weirdest' or 'most fun,' to the more substantial, yet conflicting, business climate indices.

Using data to define the "good" or "bad" in a business climate is complicated. The outcomes are clear, however: A good business climate is one that grows businesses, fosters innovation, builds a pipeline of talent and keeps tax, cost and regulatory burdens in check. It takes into account affordability and quality of life for employers and employees. Although the relative importance of these factors may vary by industry, company or geographic location, Minnesota businesses often report that a balanced approach is most important, with both cost and foundational competitiveness.

This year's report highlights a troubling trend: Minnesota lags behind national economic growth. Despite historical leading in growth, Minnesota now ranks 35th in GDP growth at 1.2%, notably below the national average of 1.9%. This extended decline spanning over two decades has seen the state slip from its former 17th position in overall GDP to the 20th, trailing behind states exhibiting robust growth.

Taxes continue to be a persistent concern for businesses, with Minnesota consistently ranking among the top 10 states in various tax categories. The state's high state and local taxes per capita surpass the national average. Particularly noteworthy is the burden from Minnesota's progressive tax system, boasting the nation's 6th highest individual tax rate and a forthcoming top corporate tax rate of 9.8%, predicted to be the highest nationwide.

While Minnesota maintains relative affordability in terms of cost of living, other expenses like electricity and health insurance hover around the national average. Nevertheless, these costs have been steadily rising, mirroring a nationwide trend.

Amidst these challenges, a glimmer of hope emerges from Minnesota's innovation index, ranking 6th in patents per capita. However, concerns arise from the state's 45th position in tech industry growth, prompting a closer scrutiny of Minnesota's strategies in this sector.

Minnesota's traditionally robust workforce faces challenges, evident in declining test scores, out-migration and a decreasing graduation rate. While the state maintains a 7th position in labor participation, this metric is on a downward trajectory, raising concerns about sustaining a skilled workforce.

The Business Benchmarks report provides a comprehensive analysis of Minnesota's economic terrain, delineating areas of strength and concern. We encourage you, as chamber leaders throughout the state, to share this report with your legislators and community leaders. This analysis is crucial in steering advocacy efforts on behalf of the business community, offering a roadmap to fortify the state's economy by addressing weaknesses and leveraging strengths.

Leadership Matters

The presentation will provide information for all on leadership. Elevate your leadership journey and ignite the spark of leadership for professionals at every career stage. We will cover overall leadership practices, including executive leadership, retention, and onboarding. Plus, Q&A!

Presented by:



BG Greg Bowen (ret)

Gregory S. Bowen has a proven track record of building and leading teams to achieve extraordinary results.

Greg is a recognized expert in space and missile defense operations, and has been a sought-after speaker on those topics as well as strategic deterrence. He has extensive experience in classified, highly sensitive programs operated by the Department of Defense and others.

Greg graduated from the University of North Dakota with a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Technology, as well as a Master of Science in Space Studies. He also holds a Master of Strategic Studies from the U.S. Army War College. Over the course of his career, he completed numerous military training and education courses in leadership, space, missile defense, and nuclear operations.

Wednesday, January 17, 2024 - 11:30am-1:00pm

The Chamber Board Room

\$20/person - Member (Includes Lunch)

\$30/person - Non-Member (Includes Lunch)

Registration Information

Limited seats available. Sign up today!

Registrations for this seminar are available online only.

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Bear Arms Brewing Company

Stephen Miller

BearArmsBrewing.com

Bear Arms Brewing Company is a veteran-owned and operated brewing company dedicated to crafting exceptional beer for those who love America. We believe in the power of free market capitalism to do good in the world, and that's why a portion of our profits goes to support our nation's veterans, police officers, first responders, and their families. With every sip of our beer, you're not just enjoying a delicious beverage, you're also making a difference in the lives of those who serve our country.

Jewelry On The Run

Cheryl Tupa

321 Thompson Ave.,

Fisher, MN

www.jewelryontherun.com

cheryltupa@aol.com

A boutique that originally began with only selling costume jewelry at various pop locations it has evolved into a brick & mortar. Not only does the store sell costume jewelry but also name-brand women's clothing and other gifts. Items change from season to season. They continue to do pop-ups outside of the store. Since this store is located at 321 Thompson Ave, Fisher, Minnesota, there is no sales tax on clothing. Please visit Facebook for updates on hours of operation.



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MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

December 1, To December 31, 2023

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

Absolute Refrigeration, LLC.
Advanced Business Methods
Advanced Drainage Systems, Inc.
Affinity Builders LLC
Agassiz Associates, PLLC
America's Best Value Inn
Amundson Family Funeral Home
Anderson Steel Erection & Crane Service
Area Community Credit Union
Arvig
Avis Rent A Car
Bank of North Dakota
Bell Insurance Services LLC
Bert's Truck Equipment, Inc
Brady, Martz & Associates, P.C.
Brick & Barley
Brockmeyer Tile & Stone, Inc.
Brown Corporations
Budget RV
Burian & Associates, LLC
C'Mon Inn
C.L. Linfoot Company
Camrud, Maddock, Olson & Larson Ltd
Carrington Court Townhome Apts.
Caulfield Studio
Century Electric, Inc.
Coca-Cola Bottling Company High Country
Comeau Electric, Inc.
Community Contractors, Inc.
Community Violence Intervention Center
Cost Cutters
Cost Cutters - Grand Cities Mall
Countryside Insurance Agency, Inc.

Custom Stripes, Inc.
Dakota Fence
Dakota Fire Protection
Dakota Peat & Equipment
Days Inn
EAPC Architects Engineers
East Grand Forks Public Schools
East Grand Inn
EGF Blue Line Club
EGF Rod & Gun Club
Elle Interiors
Evergreen Insurance
Fairfield Inn & Suites East Grand Forks
Finest Auto Trim, INC
Forks Lath & Plaster, Inc.
Frandsen Bank & Trust - East Grand Forks
Frandsen Bank & Trust - Grand Forks
Galstad, Jensen, and McCann, PA
Garon Corporation
Gate City Bank - 24th Ave S
Gate City Bank - DeMers Ave
Gate City Bank - So. Washington
GF Board of Realtors
GGF Symphony Orchestra
Girl Scouts - Dakota Horizons
Grand Forks County Soil Conservation District
Grand Forks Region Economic Development Corporation
Grand Forks Regional Airport Authority
Greenberg Realty, Inc.
H&S Electrical Services LLC
Hampton Management

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Hampton Management
Hampton Management
Happy Harry's Bottle Shops
Happy Harry's Bottle Shops - 2
Helm Enterprises
Innes Construction Company
Integrated Steel Inc.
Ironhide Equipment
J.R. Simplot
Jeff's Landscaping
Job Service North Dakota
Knights Inn and Suites
L & M Meats & Sausage
La Quinta Inn & Suites
Lifestyle Storage
Lighting Gallery, Inc.
Local Ace Hardware
LTD Properties Inc
Lunseth Plumbing & Heating Co.
Make-A-Wish Foundation of North Dakota
McFarlane, Inc.
McKinnon Company
Mikkelson Consolidated, L.L.P
Modern Auto Body, Inc.
Moore Engineering Inc
MyAlly Health
ND Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
North Dakota Ballet Company
North Dakota Eye Clinic
North Sky Construction LLC
Northern Plains Rail Services
Northern Plumbing Supply
Northland Community & Technical
College
Northridge (Hospitality & Construction)
Northrop Grumman Corporation
Northside Cafe
Northwest Tire
Olson, Juntunen, Sandberg & Boettner
Opticare-Forks Vision Clinic
Peterson Veterinary Clinic
Polk County DAC
Prairie Harvest Mental Health
Praxis Strategy Group
Quality Inn Columbia Mall
Right Choice Electric Inc
RML Trading, LLC
Rodeway Inn
Rosenquist Law Office
S & S Promotional Group, Inc.
Sacred Heart Catholic School
South Hampton Townhome Apts.
St. Anne's Guest Home
St. Michael's Catholic Church
Steeple Apartments, LLC
Steve Erlandson, D.D.S.
Stone's Security Systems Inc
Stones Mobile Radio Inc.
Success Unlimited
T-Global, Inc.
Tecta America Dakota/Greenberg Roofing
The Hub Pub
The Title Team FKA Grand Forks Abstract
Times Square Townhomes, I, Inc.
Times Square Townhomes, II & III, Inc.
Times Square Townhomes, II & III, Inc.
Total Skin Dermatology and Aesthetics
TRUWEATHER SOLUTIONS, INC.
University of Mary
University of Minnesota Crookston
University of North Dakota School of Law
USAF & Space Force Civic Leader
Valley Golf
Valley Senior Living
Valley Truck Parts and Service, Inc.
Vigen Construction Inc
Vreeland Remodeling, Inc.
Wall's Medicine Center
Waterfront Kitchen & Bath
White Water Truck Wash LLC
Winsupply Grand Forks
Yorhom Medical Essentials
Zimney Foster P.C.



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AMBASSADORS MEETING

The Chamber Ambassadors welcome new Chamber members and businesses.

We welcome new chamber members and businesses with ribbon cutting ceremonies. We assist with registration and greeting at Chamber functions and we participate in The Chamber's annual Membership Drive.

If you are interested in becoming an Ambassador please contact Tina, info@gochamber.org or call 701-772-7271.

The Chamber Ambassador Committee held their yearly Christmas Social at Red Ray Lanes. The Committee has a tradition of selecting a charity for donations during the Christmas Social. This year they contributed to the Red River Valley Community Actions Food Pantry. It's evident that the Ambassadors play a crucial role in supporting the Grand Forks/East Grand Forks Community, especially during the holiday season when the need for assistance is often heightened.

Thank you to everyone on the Ambassador Committee for their dedication and efforts in making a positive impact on the community. Acts of generosity like these contribute significantly to fostering a sense of solidarity and support for those in need.



Pictured are members of The Chamber Ambassadors.

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 Tina at **772-7271** or **info@gochamber.org** to schedule a ribbon cutting event.



Pictured are employees of Crisp & Green and The Chamber Ambassadors.

Crisp & Green

2712 S. Columbia Rd, Grand Forks, ND 58201



Pictured are 322 Hospitality Group and employees of Sweetwaters Coffee & Tea.

Sweetwaters Coffee & Tea

1850 47th Ave S., Grand Forks, ND 58201

RIBBON CUTTING



Pictured are 322 Hospitality Group, Phil Gisi and members of Olive Ann's family.

The Olive Ann Hotel

14 N 4th St, Grand Forks, ND 58201

MEMBER NEWS

ALERUS RETAIL BANKING DIRECTOR MIRANDA MYERS NAMED TO PRAIRIE BUSINESS MAGAZINE'S TOP 40 UNDER 40 LIST



Miranda Myers

Alerus is pleased to announce Prairie Business magazine has named Miranda Myers as one of the top 40 professionals under 40 in 2023. The publication's annual list recognizes outstanding young professionals in the Dakotas and western Minnesota for their professional achievements, leadership, and community contributions.

Myers serves as the director of retail banking at Alerus, where she is responsible for all retail bank offerings, including deposits, consumer lending, teller line services, and branch services across all Alerus locations in Grand Forks and Fargo, North Dakota, the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro, and Phoenix and Scottsdale, Arizona.

Myers joined Alerus as a teller in 2006 and has served in a variety of roles throughout her nearly 20-year career at the company, including customer service supervisor, retail trainer, and branch services manager. She holds a bachelor's degree in English and mass communications from Minnesota State University Moorhead and is an active member of Fiserv's Signature user group. She is based in Fargo.

MEMBER NEWS

VICTORIA HAYNES NAMED UND SCHOOL OF MEDICINE & HEALTH SCIENCES ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

The UND School of Medicine & Health Sciences (SMHS) has named Victoria Haynes, DNP, APRN, PMHNP-BC, FNP-C, the School's new Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) following the relocation of Don Warne, the prior associate dean, to Johns Hopkins University. Dr. Haynes assumed her new role earlier this month.

"I believe in the value and power of building community and providing opportunities for meaningful dialogue among constituencies," said Dr. Haynes, noting how excited she is to be joining UND. "Connecting with each other on our similarities and embracing our differences will help build that community and increase a sense of belonging for everyone. In the words of Chief Seattle, of the Suquamish and Duwamish people in the Pacific Northwest, 'All things are connected like the blood that unites us all.'"

Coming to the SMHS from Kansas, Dr. Haynes earned her Doctor of Nursing Practice degree from the University of Missouri-Kansas City in 2009 and a post-doctoral certificate in multicultural education from the University of Missouri-Columbia in 2013. After earning a certificate in psychiatric mental health nursing in 2021 from the University of New Hampshire, she founded Haynes Health & Wellness, LLC, a psychiatric mental health practice, in 2022.

Long interested in DEI efforts as they apply to health education, Dr. Haynes brings over 16 years of institutional experience with DEI to UND. She has experience facilitating difficult conversations and helping promote meaningful dialogue on topics related to race, equity, and bias. She has also moderated multiple panels and provided customized workshops on cultural awareness and diversity issues in higher education and healthcare.

BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

Hosted by **Minnkota**

5301 32nd Ave S, Grand Forks, ND 58201

Thursday, January 18, 2024 - 4:45pm ~ 7:00pm

Minnkota invites all Chamber Members and their employees to join them for a fun Business After Hours event!

Free Admission – Minnkota Swag for first 100 people in the door

Complimentary hors d'oeuvres, drink ticket & cash bar

Great door prizes including 2 Zach Bryan concert tickets

Progressive cash drawing is at \$800.

Stop by...Enjoy the fun and take advantage of great networking opportunities.

You might even win **\$800** in our Progressive Cash drawing!

We'll draw the name of one Chamber Member business. If someone from that organization is present, they win!!

Forward this message on to your friends and colleagues.

See you Thursday, January 18, 2024 at Business After Hours!

Thank you to Circle of Friends for hosting an eventful Business After Hours.



THE CHAMBER

Executive Committee

Chair: Tony Hodny, H & S Electrical Services LLC

Chair Elect: Mike McLean, JLG Architects

Past Chair: Russel Crary, Crary Real Estate

Mike Fridolfs, Northrop Grumman Corp.

Kay Derry, Northern Roots Boutique

Pat Boppre, Blue Moose Bar & Grill

Barry Wilfahrt, Chamber GF/EGF

Board of Directors

Matt Bredemeier, Grand Forks Subaru Kia

Jon Fargo, Retrax Holdings, LLC

Matt Fischer, Probitas Promotions

Todd Forkel, Altru Health System

Derek Holt, First Community Credit Union

Tarek Howard, Auto Finance Super Center

Meloney Linder, University of North Dakota

Keith Lund, GF EDC

Matt Norby, Norby's Work Perks

Emily O'Brien, Bioscience Association of ND

Scott Reck, Northdale Oil

Phil Ring, McKinnon Company

Liz Savage, Hugos Family Marketplace

Andy Schneider, Dakota Concealed/GF County Sheriff

Penny Stai, River Cinema

Tyler Wilson, Vilandre Heating, Air Conditioning & Plumbing

Sr. Military Advisor to the Board

Col. Timothy Monroe, GFAFB

Chamber Staff

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President/CEO

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