



THE Voice

December 2025

www.gochamber.org

Building Our Future GFPS Breakfast 2025

The importance of student attendance at Grand Forks high schools was a major focus of the recent GF School District Breakfast. More than 300 business leaders and educators gathered to hear updates from the superintendent and district staff. Many students and faculty members were also recognized for their outstanding accomplishments over the past year.

Not long ago, student attendance had been declining at an alarming rate, with a significant portion of the student body missing 18 days or more each semester. The district's increased focus on this issue has made a remarkable impact, resulting in a strong return to long-term, traditional levels of attendance.

It was inspiring to see so much success reflected in the achievements of our young people. The Chamber is proud to sponsor this important event and support the continued success of our schools.



Pictured, Terry Brenner,
Grand Forks Public
Schools



The first Range Hawk with all modifications completed rolled out of the hanger at Northrop Grumman at Grand Sky this week. Congratulations on this huge milestone for NG and Grand Forks.

CHAMBER NEWS

2025 Eggstravaganza

The 2024 Eggstravaganza was a tremendous success, and we are grateful for everyone who helped make it possible. From our Chamber members and Board of Directors to our dedicated staff, generous sponsors, and the team at the Blue Moose in East Grand Forks, MN—your support brought this community-building event to life.

Events like the Eggstravaganza strengthen local connections, spark collaboration, and highlight the spirit that makes our region such a great place to live and do business.

A heartfelt thank you to our event sponsors: The Blue Moose, Altru Health System, JR Simplot, ND Mill & Elevator, US Foodservice, and Hugo's. Your contributions were essential to the success of this year's event, and we appreciate your ongoing commitment to our community.



Tax Incentives Remain Critical for Grand Forks' Growth

In a recent Grand Forks Herald editorial, Mayor Brandon Bochenski highlighted the essential role tax incentives play in sustaining Grand Forks' strong growth trajectory. He pointed to projects such as Franklin on 4th, Agristo, and Memorial Village as major developments that likely would not have moved forward without these important tools.



To reinforce the value of incentives and ensure alignment among local leaders, Chamber and EDC Co-Chairs Mike McLean (JLG) and Shawn Gaede (AE2S) requested a joint meeting with the Mayor, School Board Chair, and County Commission Chair. The goal of this early-December meeting is to reaffirm the existing incentive process—or fine-tune it where needed—so the community can continue advancing major projects and economic opportunities.

Grand Forks must remain strategic, collaborative, and forward-leaning to maintain the momentum behind our community's growth.

CHAMBER NEWS

EERC to Conduct Comprehensive Review of Future Natural Gas Needs in the Northern Valley Growth

As North Dakota partners with WBI to advance a natural gas pipeline along the I-94 corridor—moving gas from the Bakken to Eastern North Dakota—the City of Grand Forks, The Chamber, and the EDC are taking proactive steps to understand the region’s long-term natural gas needs.

According to Chamber President/CEO Barry Wilfahrt, “We must ensure that any pipeline built with state support has the capacity to meet future natural gas demand in the Northern Valley.” An alternative option under consideration is an expansion of the Viking pipeline, which reaches our market from northern Minnesota.

A committee representing local stakeholders has met with key industry partners and has commissioned the EERC to prepare a white paper analyzing future demand and supply options. The report—expected by year-end—will become part of the state’s evaluation through the ND Pipeline Authority and Public Utilities Commission. The 2025 Legislature has already approved a \$500 million appropriation over the next decade to support moving natural gas from western to eastern North Dakota.

Local companies are currently being surveyed on projected growth and natural gas requirements. Additionally, Viking’s pipeline expansion is in an “open season,” allowing interested users to signal demand for capacity.

This work is vital to ensuring our region has the natural gas infrastructure necessary to support:

- Value-added agriculture projects
- Data centers connected to Grand Sky and GFAFB
- Expansion of the AI and technology



CHAMBER NEWS

Battle Lab Announced as New Mission for GFAFB

Senator John Hoeven recently announced that the Grand Forks Air Force Base has been selected by the U.S. Air Force Air Combat Command (ACC) as the home of the new Point Defense Battle Lab.

Hoeven worked closely with General Kenneth Wilsbach — former ACC Commander and now the newly confirmed Air Force Chief of Staff — as well as current ACC Commander General Adrian Spain to help advance Grand Forks' selection for this important mission.

The Battle Lab will play a central role in the Air Force's efforts to develop and test advanced technologies designed to defend installations from small unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) threats. This initiative is focused on rapidly evaluating and validating systems that can protect specific locations from emerging UAS challenges, and it aligns closely with Project ULTRA, which was previously announced.

Operational details of the Battle Lab will be refined in the coming months. Local leaders will work alongside ACC to ensure the mission fully leverages the strong partnerships and technical ecosystem already established in the region.

ACC Civic Leader and Chamber President Barry Wilfahrt noted that counter-drone efforts have become a top Air Force priority. "With so much happening in the UAS ecosystem in Grand Forks, GFAFB is ideally suited to lead this effort for the Air Force," Wilfahrt said. He added that the BRIC Committee, Base Enhancement Committee, and Chamber Military Affairs Committee all deserve recognition for their collective efforts, which helped position GFAFB as the clear choice for this new mission.

CHAMBER NEWS

LAST CHANCE

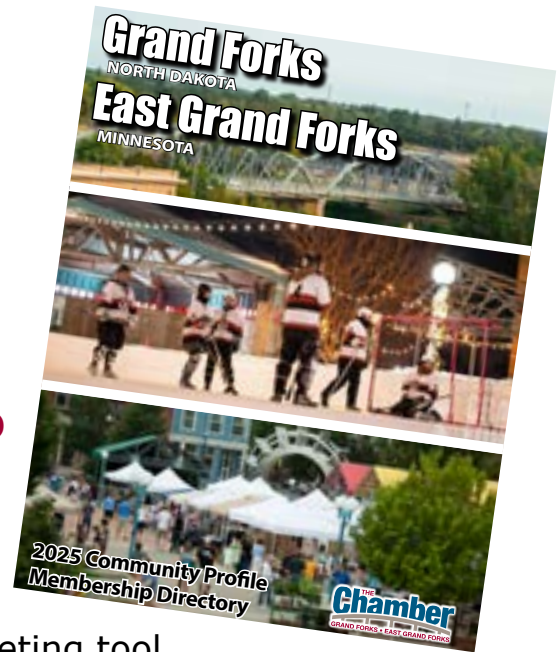
Time is running out to reserve your spot in The Chamber's award-winning Community Profile/ Membership Directory. If you haven't already done so, act now to ensure your business is included!

The Grand Forks/East Grand Forks Community Profile & Membership Directory is more than just a listing — it's our community's storybook, image piece, and marketing tool all in one. Here's what makes it stand out:

- **Written with Purpose** – Crafted by Pulitzer Prize winner Mike Jacobs, the magazine-style format reads like a story of our region, not a dry directory. It highlights the people, places, and spirit that make Grand Forks/East Grand Forks unique.
- **Strategic Distribution** – With copies placed in over 50 waiting rooms, plus distribution to advertisers and Chamber members, the publication serves as a year-round "coffee table book" showcasing our community to thousands.
- **Powerful Recruiting Tool** – Companies and organizations increasingly rely on the directory to attract new professionals to our market. It's become the Northern Valley's premier image piece.

Don't miss the chance to put your business front and center in this high-visibility publication.

To advertise, click here. See page 13 for more details.



Santa Village

FREE HOLIDAY EVENT!

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT: gfparks.org

Dec. 5 - Dec. 21

WEEKEND OPEN HOUSE

FRIDAYS Dec. 5, 12, 19
4:00 pm - 7:00 pm

SATURDAYS Dec. 6, 13, 20
10:00 am - 7:00 pm

SUNDAYS Dec. 7, 14, 21
12:00 pm - 6:00 pm

LOCATION:
Lincoln Clubhouse
260 Elks Drive

Presented by:

North Dakota

CHAMPIONS BALL

Saturday, April 25 | Alerus Center | 5-11 p.m.

Purchase tickets at ndchampionsball.com

THE SHORTCUT WORTH TAKING

At the Fork in the Road,
Choose Smarter • Choose GFK

Save Time
 Close to Home
 Stress-Free Experience

Every trip starts with a choice: drive hours to a distant, crowded airport—or take the smarter, smoother route right here in Grand Forks. Flying from Grand Forks International Airport (GFK) isn't just easier. It's better.



Your Chamber Working For You

I P A C E

Inform

We inform our members on important business and community information.

Promote

We promote our members, the business community and the GFK/EGF region.

Advocate

We advocate for our members and our business climate at the city, state and federal levels.

Connect

We provide opportunities for business to connect with other businesses.

Educate

We provide education opportunities for our business and employees.

SAND STEEL BUILDING CO.

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701-594-4435
www.sandsteelbuilding.com

Metal Building Construction
Steel Fabrication
Millwright Services

The Chamber Grand Forks/East Grand Forks

JOB BOARD

gochamber.org/community-job-board

Work Culture: It's Not Just Policies and Posters

Culture isn't something you set and forget it takes work, intention, and heart. In this session, I'll share how we've built a workplace where connection and celebration matter just as much as performance. We've hit highs, faced lows, and learned that culture doesn't build itself; it's created through the choices, traditions, and energy we bring every single day.



Wednesday, December 17, 2025

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

Brown Bag Seminar 

Presented by...



Alyssa Kaste, Owner, Express Employment Professionals

Alyssa Kaste is the owner of Express Employment Professionals in Grand Forks, alongside her husband, Darin. Under their leadership, the team has been recognized as the #1 Express office in the nation in 2023 and #2 in 2024. Alyssa is passionate about people, culture, and community—believing that great workplaces don't just happen. They're built, protected, and kept alive through connection, laughter, and celebrating the wins, big and small.

CLICK HERE TO REGISTER FOR SEMINAR

\$20/Member & \$30/Non Member (Includes Lunch)

If you have questions, please contact the Chamber. doug@gochamber.org or 701-772-7271

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Hammers Construction, Inc.

2813 Heartland Business Court, Grand Forks, ND 58201
www.hci-mn.com



Quality. Honesty. Integrity.

Since 1956, Hammers Construction has been a leading provider of commercial, industrial, and agricultural construction in Minnesota, North Dakota, and throughout the Upper Midwest. We are a full service Design-Build General Contractor with a full-time staff of around 65. We have the team, expertise, and resources to successfully plan and build your project from the ground up, with licensed architectural design services in-house. We understand the importance of every project, big and small, and we appreciate the opportunity to earn your business.

Hammer-Lok, a division of Hammers Construction since 2010, specializes in various types of Produce Storage Buildings. We are a leading provider of custom potato/produce storage buildings in the US and Canada, and the only provider based in the Upper Midwest. In addition to produce storage buildings, Hammer-Lok has built several produce packaging facilities and food processing facilities throughout the United States and Canada.

Our business thrives on innovation and teamwork. As an employee-owned company, we are able to retain our experienced team and develop new employees who have a commitment to getting the job done right, on time and on budget. With our new branch office in Grand Forks, ND, we will be able to better serve our clients in the northern valley with our wide range of construction services for years to come.

Your Vision. Our Team.

Grand Forks Subaru

4004 S Columbia Rd, Grand Forks, ND 58201
701-746-4335
www.grandforkssubaru.com



From the latest new Subaru models to carefully selected, locally sourced pre-owned inventory, Grand Forks Subaru is committed to providing exceptional customer service with a personal touch.

Whether you're in the market for a reliable vehicle, need service or parts, or just want a friendly, community-focused automotive partner, Grand Forks Subaru has you covered.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Grand Forks Spitfires

2534 17th Ave S, Suite D1, Grand Forks, ND 58201

857-248-7530

northwoodsleague.com/grand-forks-spitfires/

The Grand Forks Spitfires is a summer collegiate softball team part of the Northwoods League Softball. The team's mission is to use fun to make a difference, and we believe that when fun is done differently, it creates core memories, unforgettable experiences, and lifelong fans.



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.

BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

Hosted by Canad Inns Destination Centre at Playmakers

1000 S 42nd St, GF

Thursday, December 18, 2025

4:45pm ~ 7:00pm

Canad Inns Destination Centre invites all Chamber members and their employees to join them for a great Business After Hours event at Playmakers!

Complimentary hors d'oeuvres, 2 Drink Ticket & Cash Bar, Great door prizes.
Progressive cash drawing is at \$1900 (winner must be in attendance).

Stop by...Enjoy the fun and take advantage of great networking opportunities.
You might even win **\$1900** 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, December 18, 2025 at Business After Hours!

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

Thank you to EAPC for hosting an eventful Business After Hours.



MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

November 2025 Renewals

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

'I Bistro Mediterranean Eatery
A Johnston Therapy, PLLC
A&H Vending CO. INC
Acme Equipment
Acres & Shares, LLC
Advanced Ag Services LLC
AE2S
Affinity Builders LLC
All About Moving, Inc.
All Embracing Home Care, LLC
Amber Waves Therapy PLLC
American Federal Bank
Anderson Steel Erection & Crane Service
aNew Health
Auto Finance Super Center
BBI International
Bell Bank
BeMobile Corporate Center
BeMobile Verizon Columbia Road
Best Western Harvest Inn & Suites
Black Ridge Construction
Blackpoint Building Group
Blue Cross Blue Shield of ND
Brady, Martz & Associates, P.C.
Bud & Ralph's Appliance Service
Bully Brew Coffee - Grand Forks
C & H Insurance
Camrud, Maddock, Olson & Larson Ltd
Circle of Friends Animal Shelter Medical Center
Columbia Mall
Community Options
Community Violence Intervention Center
Cornerstone Caregiving
Countryside Insurance Agency, Inc.
Crary Real Estate
Custom Stripes, Inc.
D.J. Burris Quality Carpet Cleaning
Dakota Fence
Dakota Mailing & Shipping Equipment Inc.
Dakota Medical Foundation
DeMers Dental
DHI Sweet Street
Docu-Shred, Inc.
Eagle Electric, Inc.
Eagle's Crest Grill
East Grand Forks Dental Care
East Grand Forks Education Foundation
East Grand Forks Public Schools
East Grand Inn
East Grand Storage
Economy Plumbing, Inc.
Edward Jones - Financial Advisor: Brian Emerson

EGF Blue Line Club
Face & Jaw Surgery Center
First Class Mortgage
First Community Credit Union
First Community Credit Union-EGF
First International Bank & Trust
First State Bank
Galstad, Jensen, and McCann, PA
Garon Corporation
GF Motor Vehicle Branch Office
Good Samaritan Society Heritage Grove
Grand Cities Celebrate Jesus
Grand Forks Growth and Support Center
Grand Forks Park District
Greater Grand Forks Human Resource Association
Greenberg Realty - Lynn Kvidt
Helm Enterprises
Hjelmstad Insurance
Holiday Inn Express & Suites
Horizon Health
iDigital Outdoor
Insight to Solutions, LLC
Insurance Benefits LLC
J & G Landscaping
Joe Black's
K.C. Inman
KBR
Korsmo Family Dentistry, P.C.
L & M Meats & Sausage
Landa Business Law PLLC
Las Delicias De La Abuela
Liberty Business Systems, Inc.
Little Bangkok
Livewire
LivWell
LTD Properties Inc
Luneth Plumbing & Heating Co.
Manke Family Dentistry
McKenna & Associates, P.C.
McKinnon Company
Meg-A-Latte Coffee House
Miller Motivations, LLC
ND Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Networking Specialists, Inc.
North Dakota CPA Society
North Dakota Museum of Art
Northdale Oil
Northern Plains Financial
Northwest Minnesota Multi-County Housing & Redevelopment Authority
Nutrien Ag Solutions
Opp Construction
Pearson Christensen, PLLP
Petcetera Animal Clinic

Phil Thompson & Associates
Playmakers All American Lounge
Praxis Strategy Group
Probitas Promotions
PS GARAGE DOORS
PUCKS Commercial Cleaning
Red River Children's Advocacy Center
Red River Land Company
Red River Watershed Management Board
ReMax Grand, LLC
Right Choice Electric Inc
Rivard's Turf & Forage Inc
River Cinema 15
Ron & Nick Adams Farms
Rydell Honda Nissan of Grand Forks
S & S Promotional Group, Inc.
S-Y Commodities
Service Credit Union
Southern Estates, INC.
Spare Husband, Inc.
Spray Advantage
St. Joseph's Social Care and Thrift Store
St. Michael's Catholic Church
State Farm - Andrew Bergee
Steamatic Total Cleaning & Restoration
Steve Erlandson, D.D.S.
Street Is Neat Custom Bikes and Trikes, Inc.
Success Unlimited
Sunrooms Plus, Inc.
Tavern United
Thales
The Golf Center
The Hub Pub
The Title Team FKA Grand Forks Abstract
The Toasted Frog
Thrivent Financial - Chad Erickson
TLC Cleaning, LLC
Todd's Trailer Sales & Rentals
TruHome Property Solutions
Unique Auto Body & Sales, Inc.
United States Postal Service - Grand Forks, ND
Up North Window Cleaning
Valley Broadcasting LLC
Vigen Construction Inc
Viking Track Services
Vreeland Remodeling, Inc.
Wall's Medicine Center
Webster, Foster & Weston Consulting Engineers, Inc
Whalen's Moving & Storage
White Water Truck Wash LLC

"WEIRD AL" YANKOVIC

BIGGER & WEIRDER

2026 TOUR

SATURDAY, AUGUST 29
ALERUS CENTER

LIVE NATION

SPECIAL GUEST
PUDDLES
PITY PARTY

Tickets are on sale for Weird Al's **BIGGER & WEIRDER** 2026 Tour at Alerus Center on August 29!

Don't miss this incredible multimedia show with a super-sized 8-piece band and special guest Puddles Pity Party!

Tickets available at the Alerus Center Box Office or online at <https://bit.ly/3LK77NG>

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4700 S Washington St Suite A
Grand Forks, ND 58201
701-772-9243

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 enjoying an evening social at Downtown Axe.

2026 Advertising Community Profile/ Membership Directory OPPORTUNITY

LAST CHANCE

**CLICK HERE TO
ADVERTISE**

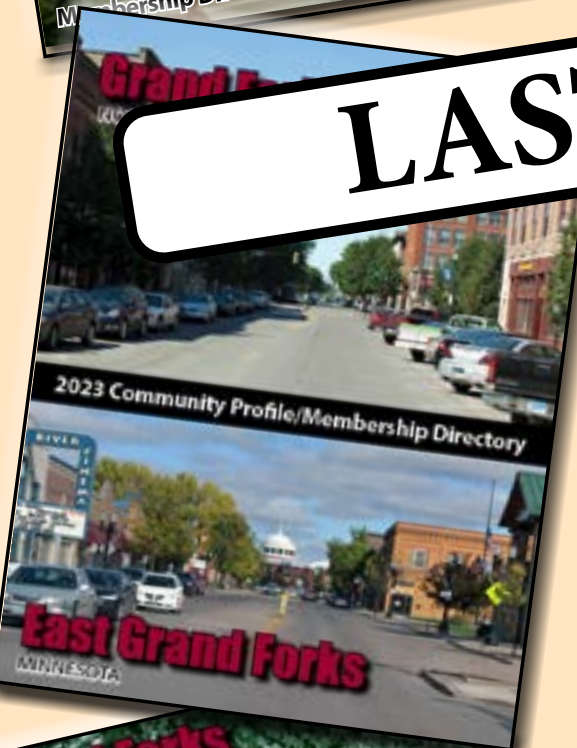
SPACE IS LIMITED!

Click Here For More Information

or Contact Tina at the Chamber

772-7271 or e-mail: tfetsch@gochamber.org

**THE
Chamber**
GRAND FORKS • EAST GRAND FORKS



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** to schedule a ribbon cutting event.

Las Delicias de la Abuela

601 University Dr, Grand Forks, ND



Pictured are Las Delicias de la Abuela employees, guests and The Chamber Ambassadors.

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

Barry Wilfahrt, Chamber President and CEO



MEMBER NEWS

2024-2025 Representative Senior 4-H Member Award

The recipients of the 2024-2025 Representative Senior 4-H member award have been selected for their involvement in leadership responsibilities, observable gains in personal development, active participation in 4-H events and activities, acquisition of presentation skills learned through talks, reports and demonstrations, along with committee and group involvement during their total 4-H career.

Linus Carlson



This young man graduated from high school this spring, but you may still have seen him around, doing what he does best- sharing his tremendous love of learning with our 4-H youth. Whether it's a club lesson on welding or a Funworks photography class, he's always ready to share his enthusiasm on highly technical topics.

As he begins his secondary education in agriculture, a love which has been very much supported by his involvement in 4-H, he is well-prepared by his years-long 4-H career.

He has honed his written communication and record keeping skills by meticulous attention to detail in his yearly 4-H record books. He's also become much more proficient at writing thank you notes to 4-H sponsors, after his first halting efforts as a 10 year old.

He has practiced his oral communication skills as a club officer, in his many excellent expos, and of course in the communication arts event, where he once shared his topic with such enthusiasm that the judge memorably commented that he could speak a little quieter!

4-H has given this young man the perfect platform to explore deeply some of his many and varied interests, such as poultry, photography, welding, woodworking, engineering, digital technology, 3D printing, silk screen printing, entrepreneurship, and of course gravel biking. Linus Carlson has definitely used his head for clearer thinking, his heart for greater loyalty, his hands for larger service, and his health for better living for his club and his community. Now that he's a young adult, look out, country and world!

Michael Komprood



Now at the end of his 4-H career, this 4-H alum is reaping the benefits of hard work in projects and events. His first demonstration was "How to Sand" and he has expanded on his woodworking skills with his own designs and builds and teaching younger members in project meetings. Now working toward a career in residential construction, through 4-H he has gained valuable teamwork and leadership skills for future success. He has grown his organizational and communication skills through holding several club offices, including president. Speaking of communication, he participated in Communication Arts all ten years, successfully presenting in nearly every category at county, district, and

state. It has been a joy to see this 4-H'er grow his abilities and confidence in many life skills. Through several Battle of the Forks competitions and ten years of cooking, he can plan and cook delicious meals.

Although believing he was terrible at Consumer Decision-Making, his ability to reason and prioritize earned him a top-ten place at state and now serves him well in his personal financial decisions. Shooting Sports became a passion, giving him skills to participate in trap shooting as well as start and lead an airsoft group. He has internalized the 4-H spirit of service through many volunteering activities in his community and beyond. The 4-H program and his hard work in it have enabled Michael Komprood to gain essential and useful knowledge, skills, and abilities for a successful career and adult life.

MEMBER NEWS

Award-Winning Agent Celebrated For Outstanding Production

Grand Forks area professional celebrated by EXIT Realty Corp. International.

After a remarkable year in real estate defined by grit, innovation, and change, EXIT Realty Corp. International is proud to announce their 2025 award winners who are a testament to outstanding performance, professionalism, and excellence in a challenging time for the industry.

"At EXIT, we set a high bar for award qualification, and in today's evolving market, it's incredibly inspiring to see our people not just meeting the challenge but exceeding it. Their commitment to excellence, our brand, and the real estate industry truly stands out, and we couldn't be prouder," shared EXIT Realty Co-Chair, Tami Bonnell.

During the company's multi-stop regional event this fall, Marc Hedlund, Associate Broker with EXIT Realty Metro in Grand Forks, received one of EXIT Realty Corp. International's most prestigious accolades, Sapphire Circle, in recognition of 250 Sides Accumulated, illustrating their outstanding career-spanning performance and consistent drive to exceed even their own past successes, as well as the distinguished Bronze award, in recognition of 25+ Sides Closed during EXIT's production year from July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025.

With incredible agent loyalty and individual agent success, new award level categories have been added over the years. From Sapphire Circle to the Pinnacle Diamond Circle in recognition of anywhere from 250 sides all the way up to 5,000 sides accumulated in a career span, along with Bronze to Titanium Elite Prime awards for closing a minimum of over 25 sides all the way up to 300+ sides in the company's production year, these accolades shine a light on true professionals leading the way in the business.



81%
of U.S. adults agree that their local chamber of commerce is a **trusted resource and partner** for businesses.



91%
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**.



88%
say that their local chamber has an impact on **addressing challenges** within their community.

MEMBER NEWS

Northland Community & Technical College Celebrates \$3.28 Million Renovation with Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony



Major Renovation Creates Modern Labs for Healthcare and Technology Programs

Northland Community & Technical College hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Thursday, November 20, to celebrate the opening of newly renovated and expanded learning labs on its East Grand Forks campus. The event marked the completion of a \$3.282 million Minnesota State legislative investment that modernized spaces for high-demand programs, including Early Childhood Education, Radiologic Technology, Respiratory Therapy, Pharmacy Technology, and Computer & Networking Technology.

The celebration drew community leaders, industry partners, faculty, staff, and representatives from the Minnesota State system office, including Terry Olson, Program Manager at Minnesota State Colleges and Universities. Guests enjoyed guided tours of the new labs and classrooms, light refreshments, and a photo slideshow showcasing dramatic before-and-after images of the remodel.

"These renovations provide real-world classrooms and lab spaces that meet accreditation requirements and incorporate active teaching and learning environments to support student success," said Dr. Shari Olson, Northland President. "This project is about investing in the future of our students and the communities we serve."

Faculty shared how the upgrades will transform teaching and learning:

- Don Campbell, Computer & Network Technology Instructor, highlighted the impact on technology programs: "This remodel is more than a facelift — it's an investment in our students, our programs, and the future of our college. Efficient lighting, improved climate control, and noise-reducing walls create spaces where collaboration and concentration thrive. These changes, combined with vibrant design elements, make the environment conducive to learning and help students feel engaged, motivated, and ready to tackle complex challenges."
- Heather Kolland, Respiratory Therapy Instructor, emphasized the benefits for healthcare education: "This investment is not just about creating a new space—it's about transforming the way we teach and prepare future healthcare professionals. For years, we've recognized the need for a learning environment that truly reflects the hospital setting, and now, thanks to your support, our students will gain hands-on experience in a realistic, high-tech space before they ever step into a patient's room."

The upgrades include transforming some of the original 1975 AVTI classroom spaces for Computer & Networking Technology and refreshing areas dating back to 1993 for other programs. The project reflects Northland's commitment to creating student-centered environments that prepare graduates for workforce readiness.

Northland extends its gratitude to the Minnesota State legislators whose support made this investment possible, as well as the facilities planning team, faculty, staff, and administrators—past and present—and system representatives who brought this project to life.

For more information about Northland's programs and facilities, visit www.northlandcollege.edu.

MEMBER NEWS

TEAM NAME REVEAL ANNOUNCED

Grand Forks Softball Officially Becomes the Grand Forks Spitfires

The wait is over! The Northwoods League Softball team coming to Grand Forks officially unveiled its team name, logo, and colors. With an energetic crowd of supporters, community partners, and team members in attendance, the team proudly introduced itself as the Grand Forks Spitfires at an event last night. The event marked the start of a new and exciting chapter for softball in the region.

The announcement concluded months of enthusiastic participation from fans through the Team Name Contest, presented by Farmers Union Insurance. Hundreds of name submissions poured in from across Grand Forks, reflecting both the area's history and the passion of the community. After a fantastic voting phase featuring six finalist names, Flying Aces, Spitfires, Spudniks, Sweet Beets, Voodoo, and Wingnuts, the winning choice emerged loud and clear.

"The goal in choosing our name was to find something our fans would be proud to cheer for in the stands and wear on their shirts," General Manager Roberto Lemus shared. "The 'Spitfires' name captures the strength, energy, and forward momentum we'll bring to the field, and it also reflects the spirit of the people here in Grand Forks."

The Name Unveil Event, presented by Farmers Union Insurance, offered guests the first look at the team's blue, orange, green, and grey color palette, as well as exclusive Spitfires merchandise. Attendees heard from Lemus and other local leaders and got a sneak peek at what's ahead for the inaugural 2026 season.

"In every way, this team belongs to Grand Forks," Lemus added. "The Spitfires represent not only our players, but every fan, sponsor, and young athlete who believes in the power of women's sports. Our mission goes beyond the game, we want to make a lasting, positive impact in the community we will call home. Tonight is just the beginning."

The Grand Forks Spitfires will make their debut in June 2026 at Albrecht Field. Fans can be part of the excitement early by securing tickets now for exclusive opportunities and first access to team merchandise. Learn more and join the crew at SpitfiresSoftball.com or by following @SpitfiresSoftball on social media.



THE CHAMBER

Executive Committee

Chair: Mike McLean, JLG Architects

Chair Elect: Emily O'Brien, Dist. 42 Legislator, Bioscience Association of ND

Past Chair: Tony Hodny, H & S Electrical Services LLC

Mike Fridolfs, Northrop Grumman Corp.

Derek Holt, First Community Credit Union

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