

# FOCUS

The Official Publication of the North Dakota Recreation and Park Association

Summer 2023



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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I have a potpourri of thoughts for my president's message this quarter.

While relaxing by the lake on a July morning, a group of people were blaring music two cabins away from us. Go for it. It's the Fourth of July. Though I enjoy good music, the constant need for sound from a speaker or headphones baffles me, especially during activities where nature and day-to-day life at our parks and outdoor facilities provide so many opportunities to hear sounds that we take for granted.

While playing golf early one morning, my playing partner asked if we pipe in chirping bird sounds. No, they are real. Sprinkle in the occasional sound of a well-struck golf ball, which is increasingly rare in my case, or the sound of a putt dropping into the cup, and it makes for a relaxing morning. I attended a baseball game in Fargo and the crack of a bat hitting a ball and the pop of a pitch caught in a catcher's mitt brought back fond memories. The whirr of a bike passing by and the patter of footsteps on the Greenway; kids laughing in the water splattering at a splash pad; or the muffled splat of a tennis ball on a racquet can all be music to our ears. Often, it helps to unplug our ears and listen.

During a meeting between our executive director and me, a new mother told us her goal for the summer was to take her daughter to visit every park in Grand Forks. What a wonderful idea. Perhaps you can turn this into a promotion in your community if you have not already.

On a recent trip to Duluth, Minn., I attended one of its movies-in-the-park events. Since the Duluth Airshow was the same weekend, the movie it selected was "Top Gun: Maverick." I already watched it in a reclining seat at a climate-controlled, indoor theater, thus the outdoor setting on a calm, glorious evening in the park was a significant contrast. Some North Dakota communities have provided movies in the park for years. If you have not attempted this in your community, try to find the means to give it a go.

I read an article about the rising medical costs due to injuries related to pickleball. It listed torn Achilles tendons as the number one injury. Okay, that makes

sense. Pickleball is one of the fastest-growing sports and many seniors are actively involved, increasing the risk of injury. On the other hand, participants are engaging in more exercise and social interaction, which is providing health benefits that outweigh the occasional accident or overuse injury.

It is construction season. Along with the hassle of road closures, new projects and renovations at various parks and facilities are in progress and our citizens look forward to their completion. In addition to new projects, it is important not to overlook our existing parks and facilities that need regular upkeep and maintenance. Thank you to all the parks and recreation personnel that make this possible.

Finally, the NDRPA State Conference is in Grand Forks Sept. 12-14, and the NRPA National Conference is in Dallas Oct. 10-12. I hope to see you at both events. Be well!

**Mike Orr, NDRPA President**



## Mission

Advancing parks, recreation and conservation for an enhanced quality of life in North Dakota.

## Strategic Goals

1. Member Services: Provide training, information and networking for parks and recreation stakeholders.
2. Policy Advocacy: Represent parks and recreation interests on public policy issues.
3. Public Outreach: Promote the benefits of parks and recreation and the importance of conservation, health and wellness, and access.



## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

**SEPT. 12-14**  
NDRPA State  
Conference,  
Grand Forks

**OCT. 10-12**  
NRPA Annual  
Conference, Dallas

**OCT. 15**  
FOCUS Deadline

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**Next *FOCUS* deadline:** Oct. 15, 2023

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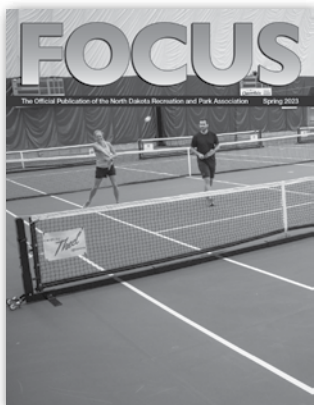
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## NDRPA Members Encouraged to Submit Articles



North Dakota Recreation and Park Association (NDRPA) members are encouraged to submit articles for inclusion in the *FOCUS* magazine.

The quarterly publication is the conduit to industry peers and decision-makers. NDRPA members can use it to inform others what their respective

districts are doing to enhance the quality of life and livability standards in their regions.

Take advantage of this FREE opportunity to promote activities, staffing or ongoing and planned infrastructure changes. Send your stories to [spursley@clearwatercommunications.net](mailto:spursley@clearwatercommunications.net) or contact NDRPA Communication Specialist Scooter Pursley at 701-355-4458 with questions regarding articles for upcoming issues.

## 2023 NDRPA State Conference and Business Meeting

NDRPA will hold its annual business meeting during the NDRPA State Conference on Sept. 14 in Grand Forks. Agenda items include election of board members and review of association activities. An agenda and associated materials will be distributed to members via email prior to the meeting. All members are encouraged to attend.

## Plan to Attend the 2023 NPRA Annual Conference in Dallas

The 2023 NPRA Annual Conference, the largest gathering of park and recreation professionals in the world, is Oct. 10-12 in Dallas. This year's conference will include keynote speakers, dynamic education sessions, an exploration-worthy exhibit hall, and

many ways to network and connect with peers from across the country.



## North Dakota Park Board Manual and Commissioner Training Webinar

The "North Dakota Park Board Manual" equips both new and experienced park board commissioners and staff with the information necessary to effectively carry out their authorities, roles and responsibilities. The manual also includes sample documents such as a joint use agreement and board member job description.

The latest edition of the "North Dakota Park Board Manual" (2022) is available as a FREE downloadable PDF to NDRPA members. Email [ndrpaoffice@gmail.com](mailto:ndrpaoffice@gmail.com) for access to the manual.

NDRPA also has an ND Park Board Commissioner Training Webinar available, which is an introduction to the topics and material provided in the manual. The training is a great resource for park board members and staff. Access the webinar recording on the NDRPA website at [ndrpa.com/resources/publications](http://ndrpa.com/resources/publications).



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# COMMISSIONER'S CORNER

## Scott Karsky – Dickinson



For Scott Karsky, ascending to the position as Dickinson Park Board president was much like climbing a ladder. He started on the first rung and slowly worked his way to the top.

"In one way or another, I have been a part of Dickinson Parks and Recreation since I

was a child," said Karsky, who owns an insurance and financial services business in his hometown. "I loved all the activities from playing in the park, to youth baseball, flag football, swimming lessons, and many others. I think my mother had me in so many activities just to get me out of the house!"

Karsky's involvement in recreational activities never waned, even after leaving Dickinson for 11 years to reside in Arizona and Bismarck before returning home with his family. It wasn't until he returned, however, that he considered running for the park board.

"My father worked for the city of Dickinson for 39 years and was very proud of this city," Karsky said. "So, when I was asked to run for park commissioner, I felt it fit right in to what I wanted to be a part of."

That request came in 2014 at the urging of North Dakota Representative Mike Lefor, who also is a former Dickinson Park Board president. With that, Karsky went all in and now is serving his third term on the board. He still finds time to enjoy golf at Heart River Golf Course, pickleball, walking, and curling.

"As parks and recreation is the heart and soul of our community, I want to be fiscally responsible with our taxpayer and user group dollars and provide as many opportunities as possible for all ages to enjoy recreation and activities at an affordable level," Karsky said.

Karsky is especially proud of the city's 17-mile Crooked Crane Trail, West River Community Center and the new all-inclusive Friendship Park. The district also replaced the turf at Dakota Community Bank and Trust Field and is beginning work on Heroes Park near the community center and a playground at the new Dickinson State University Sports Complex.

In 2022, the district was a National Gold

Medal Award finalist in its population category.

"There were four finalists, and we did not come out on top, but we'll be back and we're very proud to be chosen to be a finalist," Karsky said. "That is a credit to the amazing team that works for our park district!"

Even with all the success the district has had during Karsky's time on the board, there are challenges, some unique to western North Dakota.

"One of our biggest challenges is to recruit and maintain employees for the district," Karsky explained. "We must be competitive and offer a great place to work. We have an outstanding team, very cohesive, talented and motivated. (But) the wages offered in the oil industry and others in western North Dakota make it a challenge which we must overcome."

The district also made a smooth transition following the retirement of longtime Executive Director James Kramer. "We found an outstanding new leader in Benjamin Rae, and I'm very proud of our entire park board and staff and the work they went through for that accomplishment," Karsky said.

Karsky and his wife of 30 years, Erica, have two grown sons, Gannon and Logan. Gannon is a University of North Dakota graduate and lives in Grand Forks, while Logan is a Dickinson State University graduate who works with Karsky. Both sons grew up playing hockey and still compete in men's leagues. Logan is an assistant football coach at Dickinson Trinity and JV hockey coach at Dickinson High School.



Friendship Park in Dickinson





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## Fargo Park District Receives Urban Pollinator Plots Grant

The Fargo Park District was recently awarded a grant from the North Dakota Industrial Commission's Outdoor Heritage Fund for the Urban Pollinator Plots Project, which will assist in establishing small urban pollinator plantings in local parks. The plantings will concurrently grow native pollinator-friendly plants and help to build community understanding of the importance and needs of pollinators.

The Urban Plots Project is a collaboration between the Fargo Park District, Audubon Dakota and North Dakota State University. The grant will be used to plant and maintain small urban

pollinator gardens and tracts of native prairie with an emphasis on forbs and wildflowers at six Fargo parks, including Heritage Hills, Forest River, Unicorn Park, Iwen Park, and others.

"We value any opportunity to restore our natural prairies and create critical pollinator-friendly habitats in our parks," Fargo Park District Forester Sam DeMarais said. "We are honored to have received funding to continue our restoration work and are grateful for our partnership with organizations like Audubon Dakota, NDSU and the Outdoor Heritage Fund who share our vision."

Since 2014, the Fargo Park

District has partnered with Audubon Dakota on habitat restoration at 15 different sites impacting more than 400 acres of land. These projects have included planting and restoring native prairies, managing invasive species and planting pollinator friendly gardens. Several areas across the park district have been converted from turfgrass to environmentally rich habitat for wildlife and pollinators. Planted pollinator gardens and restored areas include Forest River, Orchard Glen, Eagle Valley Pond, Golden Valley Pond, Mickelson Fields, North Softball Complex, and Urban Plains.



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## Mork Appointed Fargo Parks Sports Complex Director

The Fargo Park District has appointed Kali Mork as the first director of the Fargo Parks Sports Complex. With an exceptional track record and extensive experience in the sports and tourism industry, Mork brings a wealth of expertise to the new facility. She assumed duties on July 24.



Kali Mork

As director, Mork is responsible for the strategic vision and overall management and operation of the Fargo Parks Sports Complex, the first phase of which is slated to be completed in early summer 2024.

"It has been a high priority to ensure that an exceptional leader was brought on staff to guide the sports complex and the park district into this new and exciting chapter," Fargo Park District Deputy Director of Operations Dave Bietz said.

Mork holds a bachelor of science in business administration and mass communication from North Dakota State University and boasts extensive experience in sports and recreation leadership. Most recently, she served as director of sports at the Fargo-Moorhead Convention and Visitors Bureau, a longtime partner of the Fargo Park District. Throughout her career, she has successfully managed major sports programs, organized large-scale events and successfully fostered relationships with the recreation and sports community across the region.

"I am honored to join the Fargo Park District as director of the Fargo Parks Sports Complex," Mork said. "I look forward to working closely with staff, partners and the entire community to create exceptional sports and recreation experiences for all ages."

The Fargo Parks Sports Complex will be a 380,000-square-foot facility in south Fargo that includes turf, hardwood courts, ice sheets, pickleball courts, an indoor playground, walking track, community gathering spaces, and more. The facility is expected to attract more than one million annually and hold more than 60 community events and sports tournaments a year.

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## Minot's Scheels Complex Opens

The Minot Park District and Magic City Girls Fast Pitch have opened the renovated Scheels Complex after completing a new press box, concession stand, locker rooms, and safety netting. These upgrades are beneficial not only to the athletes that call Scheels Complex home, but also to the many spectators, fans and visitors that enjoy the complex.

The project was made possible by a \$200,000 Scheels donation, as well as other community donations and fundraising efforts by Magic City Girls Fast Pitch. "A project like this is made possible because of our amazing partners in Magic City Girls Fast Pitch and the generous support of our community," Minot Park District Executive Director Elly DesLauriers said.

The Scheels Complex is home to the Magic City Girls Fast Pitch, Minot High School girls

fast pitch, Minot State University women's fast pitch, and Bishop Ryan High School fast pitch. The Scheels Complex is also used by Minot Park District baseball and T-ball leagues throughout the summer. Additionally, the Dream Catchers field for all ages and abilities is located at the South Hill Complex.



## New Videoboard at Bismarck Municipal Ballpark

Bismarck Parks and Recreation District installed a new videoboard and scoreboard at Bismarck Municipal Ballpark, home of Dakota Community Bank & Trust Field, for the 2023 baseball season. The LED



display on the new videoboard is 24 feet high and 43 feet wide, making it nearly four times the size of the previous display. The project was completed with

support from a 2022 Park District Facility Renovation Grant from the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department.

The new video display is capable of variable content zoning, meaning it can show one large image or multiple zones of content, including live video, statistics and graphics. Fans will be able to see themselves on the big screen between innings, watch instant replay and view a variety of player statistics to get them more into the game.



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## Dickinson Friendship Park Project Completed

The opening of Friendship Park in June 2023 marked a significant milestone for the community of Dickinson,



as it introduced a playground that embraces inclusivity and accessibility. The park was carefully designed to accommodate individuals of all abilities, ensuring everyone can enjoy the play features and facilities it offers.

One of the notable attractions at Friendship Park is the zip line, which caters to the comfort level of children and adults. Additionally, a sensory wall has been incorporated into the playground, providing a multisensory experience that engages individuals with various sensory needs.

The park also features a variety of swings equipped for added safety and support. To further enhance accessibility, Friendship Park includes a ground level merry-go-round that is wheelchair and stroller accessible to ensure individuals using wheelchairs or strollers can actively participate in the park's activities alongside their peers.

The city of Dickinson, Stark County and Dickinson Parks and Recreation all contributed to the fundraising efforts, along with individual and business donations playing a significant role in financing the park's construction. The project also received funds from the Land and Water Conservation Fund matching grant program through the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department.



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## Fallen ND Soldiers Recognized at Heroes Park in Bismarck

Six local soldiers who died in military service in Iraq and Afghanistan were recognized during the dedication of a Fallen Soldier Battle Cross and Memorial Wall at Heroes Park in Bismarck on June 10.

Heroes Plaza features a Memorial Wall recognizing the 14 North Dakota National Guard soldiers who died in service during the global war on terrorism; a Battle Cross statue depicting a rifle, boots and helmet with plaques honoring six Bismarck soldiers; and a flagpole. This was the seventh memorial built across the state by the North Dakota Heroes Foundation, which was founded in 2011 to complete this recognition effort, with support from the North



Dakota Patriot Guard.

The event also included the ribbon cutting ceremony for Heroes Park, located in the Clear Sky Addition in southeast Bismarck. In addition to Heroes Plaza, park

amenities include an accessible playground and picnic shelter, along with an open play space. The 3.89-acre park was donated to Bismarck Parks and Recreation District in 2022.

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## Fargo Announces Emerald Ash Borer Mitigation Plan

With Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) confirmed within Moorhead, Minn., city limits, the Fargo Park District is actively working with city and state officials to help slow the spread of the invasive species throughout Fargo's parks, trails and green spaces.

The Fargo Park District currently cares for more than 26,000 trees, of which roughly 3,500 or 14 percent are ash trees. For the past 10 years, the Fargo Park District Forestry team has been actively removing ash trees in poor condition and diversifying park tree species to help mitigate possible EAB infestations. There have been no confirmed EAB detections in Fargo city limits or the state of North Dakota.

The Fargo Park District will continue to monitor ash trees closely and remove those in poor condition or at risk of infestation. Should infestation be detected within city limits, Fargo Park District Forestry staff will work closely with city and state officials to develop treatment and/or removal plans.

## Bismarck's Promontory Point Park Dedicated



Bismarck Parks and Recreation District dedicated Promontory Point Park on June 14. The 2.3-acre neighborhood park features the longest slide in the park district on the tower-style accessible playground. Other features include a sand play area, swing set, multi-person swing, accessible picnic shelter, and trail loop.

Promontory Point Park in northwest Bismarck was established as part of the city of Bismarck's Neighborhood Park and Open Space Policy in partnership with Wachter Development Inc.

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## Pump Track Coming to Minot

Minot Area Community Foundation's Give360 Giving Circle and Minot Park District are collaborating to bring a pump track to the Minot community.

A pump track is a loop that consists of a series of rollers (bumps or small hills in the track) and berms (corners). The "pump" part is the pushing-down and pulling-up action performed by riders in accordance with the structure's design as the main source of propulsion. Pump tracks are designed to be ridden completely without the need for pushing and pedaling, making it relatively simple to use to cater to a wide variety of rider skill levels and accessible to wheelchair users.

Give360 is working with Minot Park District to develop property west of the Jack Hoeven Park baseball fields to include two pump tracks. One will be designed for all ages and abilities, ensuring an inclusive experience for everyone. The second will feature a fully accessible loop and a dedicated "safety town" section tailored for the youngest riders.

In addition to the pump track announcement, Give360 has received a matching grant of \$100,000 toward the project from the Minot Junior Golf Association. Contributions will be matched dollar for dollar now until the first \$100,000 is met. "We are incredibly excited to partner with Minot Parks on this unique concept. With the matching grant from Minot Junior Golf, we hope to meet our fundraising goal by the end of the year to prepare for the 2024 construction season," said Jason Zimmerman, president of the Minot Area Community Foundation.



An aerial photograph of a golf course, showing a large green, sand traps, and surrounding trees. The image is used as a background for the Norby Golf Course Design advertisement.

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# 2022 NDRPA Awards Highlights

## PARTNERSHIP AWARD

*The Partnership Award honors organizations for outstanding contributions to the park, recreation and conservation movement. Recipients must be an agency or organization that has developed a successful partnership to create a project or program that benefits the community, region or state and increases awareness of the importance of parks, recreation and leisure services in quality of life. The 2022 NDRPA Partnership Award recipient is the **Wings on Strings Kite Club** of Jamestown.*

Jamestown Parks and Recreation, in partnership with the Wings on Strings Kite Club, has hosted 28 annual Kite Festivals at Meidinger Park in Jamestown. The annual festival attracts hundreds of attendees and kite fliers from across the United States.



Mike Gee and Chris Dodson are two founding members of the Wings on Strings Kite Club. Their knowledge and relationships with each other and surrounding communities have enabled the kite flying community to flourish and are integral to the success of the Jamestown festival. In addition, Gee and Dodson have worked with corporate donors to ensure the festival can be attended free of charge by the community.

Members of Wings on Strings literally do everything for the festival from teaching staff how to help children build their own kites to organizing kite fliers travel, lodging and meals; promoting the festival with local and regional media sources; and flying their own kites during the festival.

The annual kite festival has become one of Jamestown's most iconic events, attracting visitors from across the United States and Canada. All skill levels are welcome, from beginners building their own kite to experienced flyers with complex designs or visitors just wanting to watch the impressive display.

## IMPACT AWARD

*First presented in 2022, The Impact Award recognizes an NDRPA member agency or organization that demonstrates creativity and innovation in the promotion of diversity, equity and/or inclusion. The award celebrates the impact an agency or organization has made to increase awareness, further understanding and assist in reducing the barriers of diversity, equity and/or inclusion within their community or organization. The 2022 NDRPA Impact Award recipient is West Fargo's **Maplewood Park Renovation Project**.*

As part of the Maplewood Park Renovation project, the West Fargo Park District had a vision for a playground that would be an engaging experience to challenge children, while also giving children and adults of all abilities an opportunity to play.



Designed with the expertise of the park district staff, West Fargo School District's Director of Special Education and speech and assistive technology professionals, Maplewood Park playground was carefully planned. It includes a wheelchair-accessible swing, merry-go-round, shade structures, non-verbal communication board, and poured rubber surfacing for accessibility. It is the largest inclusive playground in the area, and the first park to include more than 75% inclusive play. It also is connected to accessible city bikeways and trails through the park and offers ease of access from the playground to the parking lot and accessible bathrooms.

The West Fargo Park District reported that since its official opening in spring of 2022, it has been filled to capacity on a daily basis, no matter the weather. The addition of Maplewood Park's inclusive playground has filled a longtime need in the West Fargo community and given people of all ages the ability to play side-by-side with their peers and friends, regardless of their ability levels or challenges.

The overall project was awarded to Gast Construction of Fargo with Dakota Playground providing the design and equipment for the playground. Landscape Structures of Delano, Minn., provided the design and equipment choice of Smart Play Billows and the Smart Play Breeze play structures for ages 2-5 and ages 5-12, a wheelchair accessible swing, a merry-go-round, shade structures, and several other play features. The total cost of the 12,000-square-foot inclusive playground was \$475,000. A portion of a \$202,300 grant awarded to the West Fargo Park District by the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District was utilized in funding the project.

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# CONFERENCE SET LIST

## TUESDAY | SEPTEMBER 12, 2023

- 11:00 AM LUNCH & ATTENDEE REGISTRATION – King's Walk Course
- 12:00 PM GOLF TOURNAMENT – King's Walk Course
- 1:00 PM RALPH & DOWNTOWN BREWERY TOUR – Shuttle departing from Canad Inn
- 5:30 PM "ROCK THE PARK" SOCIAL & DINNER – Live Band & Food at Lincoln Dr. Park

## WEDNESDAY | SEPTEMBER 13, 2023

- 7:30 AM ATTENDEE REGISTRATION | BREAKFAST/PAST PRESIDENT'S BREAKFAST
- 8:00 AM CONFERENCE WELCOME
- 8:15 AM KEYNOTE | "LIVING & LEADING ABOVE THE LINE"  
Chris Langei | National Motivational Speaker, Skating Coach, Certified PT, and Founder of Langei Edge
- 9:15 AM BREAK WITH EXHIBITORS
- 10:00 AM ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS
- 11:30 AM LUNCH
- 12:15 PM BREAKOUT SESSIONS
  - Risk Management - Corey Olson, NDIRF
  - Turf Maintenance - Sam Bauer, NCTGA
  - Communicating Across Generations - The Village
- 1:30 PM BREAKOUT SESSIONS
  - Bonding - Brian Osowski, AMKO Advisors
  - Facility & Event Management - Jody Hodgson, REA General Manager
  - Adaptive Programming
- 2:30 PM BREAK WITH EXHIBITORS
- 3:30 PM GF PARK DISTRICT FACILITIES TOUR
- 5:30 PM BREAK
- 6:15 PM SOCIAL
- 7:00 PM AWARDS BANQUET

## THURSDAY | SEPTEMBER 14, 2023

- 7:30 AM BREAKFAST & NDRPA ANNUAL MEETING
- 8:30 AM WAYS TO CONNECT WITH NDRPA
- 9:00 AM BREAKOUT SESSIONS
  - Feasibility Studies - Pat O'Toole, Manager at BerryDunn
  - Mental Health in the Workplace - Andrew McLean, MD, MPH
  - Updates in Aquatics - TBD
- 10:00 AM BREAK & HOTEL CHECKOUT
- 10:30 AM KEYNOTE & GUEST PANEL | "THE FUTURE OF PARKS & REC"  
Pat O'Toole | Manager at BerryDunn - Pat has also held various positions at GreenPlay, PROS, Leon Younger, and OATS, and has served as Director and Assistant Director for Parks and Recreation agencies in Kansas, Missouri, Ohio, and Indiana.
- 12:00 PM GRAB & GO OR GRAB & STAY LUNCH





**2023 NDRPA  
STATE CONFERENCE**



**SEPT. 12-14, 2023  
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# CONFERENCE LODGING



## THE ALERUS CENTER

1200 SOUTH 42ND STREET | GRAND FORKS, ND

All conference education sessions, the Awards Banquet, and the Exhibitor Showcase for the 2023 NDRPA State Conference will take place at the Grand Forks Alerus Center.

## HOTEL ROOM BLOCKS

Room blocks have been reserved at the Canad Inns Destination Centre, Staybridge Suites, and Expressway Suites. Special room block rates are available September 12-14, 2023. **To book, call the hotel directly and reference Group ID: "NDRPA State Conference Block"**  
*Deadline to book accommodations under room block: Aug. 12, 2023*

### CANAD INNS DESTINATION CENTRE (CONNECTED TO THE ALERUS CENTER)

1000 South 42nd Street | 701-772-8404

Special Block Rate: \$88.20 / night

### STAYBRIDGE SUITES

1175 42nd Street South | 701-772-9000

Special Block Rate: \$129 / night for Studio Queen | \$139 / night for 1 Bedroom Suite

### EXPRESSWAY SUITES

4040 11th Avenue South | 701-757-7000

Special Block Rate: \$98 / night

## OTHER LODGING OPTIONS

Grand Forks has a variety of additional lodging options conveniently located within two miles of the Alerus Center!

**BAYMONT INN & SUITES** - 951 South 42nd Street | 701-757-2345

**COUNTRY INN & SUITES** - 3101 South 42nd Street | 701-757-2200

**HILTON GARDEN INN** - 4301 James Ray Drive | 701-775-6000

**HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS** - 4051 32nd Avenue South | 701-772-7700

**SLEEP INN** - 1350 South 42nd Street | 701-757-2900





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# PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

## Fargo Park District



**Tyler Becker** has been hired as a park maintenance employee. Becker loves to be outside and enjoys riding motorcycle. He likes anything with technology, including building computers. Becker is married and has three cats.



**Austin Fraase** has joined the park district in a park maintenance role. He has a twin brother and plays fastpitch softball for the Bombers. Fraase went to school at North Dakota State University in Fargo and loves to spend time at the lake on weekends wake surfing and wake boarding. He has a dog named Kirby.



**Nick Gulsvig** has been hired by the district to work in park maintenance. Gulsvig grew up in Dilworth, Minn., and graduated in 2012. An avid musician, Gulsvig enjoys singing and playing guitar. He also enjoys walking and playing golf and disc golf. Gulsvig is engaged to his fiancée, and they have been together for almost seven years. They welcomed their first child in October 2022.



**Shelby Larsen** has joined the district as an administrative specialist. She has a bachelor of arts in business from Concordia College and a master of science in educational leadership from Minnesota State University Moorhead. She loves to learn, try new things, attend community events, travel, and read.

## Grand Forks Park District



**Scott Nordin** is the new membership services coordinator at Choice Health & Fitness. He has been a membership services specialist at Choice Health & Fitness for more than 10 years and will transition to leading the membership department effective Aug. 31. Nordin and his team will be responsible for helping regain memberships

that declined during the pandemic and working to improve member retention.



**MJ Kjelshus** is the new specialty services coordinator at Choice Health & Fitness and after serving as a membership services specialist for more than 10 years. As specialty services coordinator, she will be responsible for childcare, deli, birthday parties (in cooperation with aquatics and other departments), and various aspects of the internal/external culture at Choice Health & Fitness. Part of Kjelshus' role will include managing deli supplies and working with beverage vendors effective Aug. 31.



**Seth Tennyson** has been hired as maintenance/housekeeping specialist at Choice Health & Fitness. He has been with the maintenance department as a part-time assistant for the past two years but recently took on the role full-time. Originally from Alabama, Tennyson moved to the Grand Forks area 11 years ago and enjoys exercising, martial arts and spending time with his family.



**Kevin Middleton** is the district's new facility assistant supervisor at ICON Sports Center/Altru Wellness Village. A Grand Forks native, Middleton has worked part-time at both Purpur and ICON Sports Center for the past two years. He enjoys hiking, being active and anything outdoors with his dogs, Outie and Libby.

## Mandan Park District



**Sierra Jacobsmeyer** has been hired as a recreation supervisor. A Mandan native, Jacobsmeyer graduated from Mandan High School in 2018 and is pursuing a bachelor's degree from Minot State University. She has worked various jobs at the Mandan Park District for the past eight years. In her free time, she likes hiking, being on the lake or being with friends and family.

## Valley City Parks and Recreation



**Phoebe Francis** has been hired as aquatics supervisor. Francis previously served as a lifeguard for Valley City Parks and Recreation while in college and has moved back to the area. She oversees the lifeguards, the indoor and outdoor pools, and the cashiers. This fall, she plans to become a certified pool operator and lifeguard instructor. In her free time, Francis enjoys taking her daughter to different activities and playing with her dogs at their family farm.



**Brandyn Heck** is the district's new parks specialist. He is a Valley City native who recently moved back with his wife and daughter. Heck currently helps with park maintenance, snow removal and various programs. He recently became a Certified Playground Safety Inspector. Heck enjoys being with his family, camping, playing sports, and just being outside in the summer.



**Lance Lukes** joined the district as the Gaukler Family Wellness Center maintenance supervisor. He transitioned from part-time staff in the parks department to taking over the full-time role at the wellness center. Lukes oversees the maintenance staff, parts ordering, fitness equipment repairs, air handling units maintenance, and general maintenance. When he is not working, Lukes enjoys going to officiating camps for football and basketball or, more recently, officiating fastpitch and slow-pitch softball games.



**Kelly Myers** is the district's new customer relations supervisor. She oversees front desk staff, helps patrons that come into the Gaukler Family Wellness Center, assists with bookkeeping/financial paperwork, and helps with the scholarship program that provides reduced program fees and reduced wellness center memberships. In her free time, Myers likes to travel, ride her horse, Buddy, and go to the lake with her husband and their dogs.

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