

# FOCUS

The Official Publication of the North Dakota Recreation and Park Association

Winter 2024



# Building Quality Products, Preparing Quality People

Rough Rider Industries' (RRI) program objective is to provide adults in custody the opportunity to develop work skills that increase their chances of obtaining meaningful employment upon reentry. RRI provides training and learning opportunities in a variety of skill sets and trades, while utilizing the latest manufacturing technologies and production equipment. An individual's successful rehabilitation and reentry begins with hope. This hope can be traced back to customers who support our mission. If you are interested in any of our products or services, or would like to learn more about our rehabilitative mission, please contact us.

**RRI Mission Statement:** Provide adult individuals job skills training necessary for successful reentry while providing quality goods and services in a self-sustaining manner.



Recreational & Park Equipment • Signage • Dumpsters • Plastic Trash Bags  
Lockers • Office & Home Furniture • Seating • Mattresses • Sewing  
Upholstery • Gifts & Engravables • Name Badges • Metal Fabrication

**RRI** ROUGH RIDER  
INDUSTRIES  
BUILDING QUALITY PRODUCTS  
PREPARING QUALITY PEOPLE

3303 E. Main Ave. • P.O. Box 5521 • Bismarck, ND 58506-5521  
701-328-6161 • rri@nd.gov  
www.roughriderindustries.com  
Follow us on Facebook!



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy New Year! I hope everyone had a good holiday. Now that the new year is upon us, with new programs and leagues that have started, we all are working hard to keep the outdoor ice rinks and trails open and in good shape. I would like to extend a big thank you to all of those who work so hard to keep the trails and rinks open for our citizens to enjoy. Many times, I feel we take those staff members who must brave the cold for others to enjoy outdoor activities for granted.

Here at the Bismarck Parks and Recreation District, we are looking forward to our Flurry Fest. We have a lot of great activities for the community to take part in during the month of February. We are also looking forward to the opening of the third ice sheet at the VFW Sports Center. It is a project many people have been eagerly anticipating, and it will have a nice impact on the ice community. When that rink opens, Bismarck will have five indoor ice rinks to help fill the need for additional ice time for our user groups.

As we work hard on providing opportunities for those who have made New Year's resolutions to get back into shape or continue with the fitness programs they are currently on, we are also looking forward to and are planning for our upcoming summer activities. If you think about it, it really is just one big cycle that never slows down. We seem to get one season of programs and activities underway, and we must start planning for the start of the next

season. Remember to try to slow down and take some time for yourself and your family. Go out and enjoy those trails, outdoor ice rinks and sledding hills, or take advantage of the great fitness facilities we have in our communities.

Time for oneself is often just what we need to recharge our own batteries so we can be ready for the next season, which will be upon us before we know it.

Just a couple of dates to keep in mind for the upcoming months: the Certified Playground Safety Inspector Course (CPSI) will be held in Bismarck March 19-21, and the HR Collaborative Conference will also be held in Bismarck April 17-18. These are two great opportunities for your staff to continue to learn and interact with fellow parks and recreation professionals.

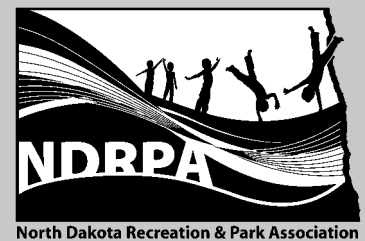
In closing, thank you for all you do for your respective communities. Remember to stay safe when working outside, and please take time for yourself and enjoy the many programs and facilities we all have to offer. Summer will be here before we know it.



## Mike Wald, 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

### APRIL 17-18

HR Collaborative Conference, Bismarck

### APRIL (EXACT DATE TBD)

NDRPA Member Meeting, Bismarck

### MARCH 19-21

Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI) Course, Bismarck

### APRIL 15

FOCUS Deadline

### SEPT. 10

Playground Maintenance Course, Watford City

### SEPT. 10-12

2024 NDRPA State Conference – 50th Anniversary, Watford City

### OCT. 8-10

NDRPA Conference, Atlanta, Ga.

# CONTENTS

President's Message .....	3
Mark Your Calendar .....	3
NDRPA News .....	5
Commissioner's Corner .....	6
Park District News .....	8
NDRPA Awards Highlights .....	12
People on the Move .....	14

# ADVERTISERS

Rough Rider Industries	2
The Tessman Company	7
Recreation Supply Company	7
Flex Fiber	9
Cunningham Recreation/GameTime	10
NDIRF	11
R.J. Thomas Manufacturing/Pilot Rock	11
Associated Supply Company, Inc.	15
MTI	16
Dakota Playground	17
ND State Procurement Office	17
Norby Golf Course Design	19
ACME Tools	21
Grondahl Recreation Inc.	23
Colliers	24

**Thank You to our *FOCUS* advertisers.  
We appreciate your business!**

*FOCUS* is the official newsletter of the North Dakota Recreation & Park Association (NDRPA). It is distributed quarterly to almost 900 parks and recreation professionals and posted on the NDRPA website. Submission of articles and photographs are encouraged in digital format to ndrpaoffice@gmail.com. Photographs should be high-resolution (300 dpi or greater). Advertising information is available online at [www.ndrpa.com](http://www.ndrpa.com).

**Next *FOCUS* deadline:** April 15, 2024

Cover photo: Sledding, Bismarck Parks and Recreation District

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**President Mike Wald**  
Bismarck Parks and Recreation  
400 E. Front Ave.  
Bismarck, ND 58504  
mwald@bisparks.org

**Past President Mike Orr**  
Grand Forks Park District  
420 Third Ave. SW  
Grand Forks, ND 58208-2429  
morr@choicehf.com

**President-Elect Joe Barsh**  
Williston Parks and Recreation  
822 18th St. E.  
Williston, ND 58502  
joeb@wprd.us

**Secretary/Treasurer Ashley Martinson**  
Valley City Parks and Recreation  
PO Box 422  
Valley City, ND 58072  
ashleyk@vcparks.com

**Public Policy Chair Cole Higlin**  
Mandan Park District  
2600 46th Ave. SE  
Mandan, ND 58554-4749  
chiglin@mandanparks.com

**Education Chair Amy Walters**  
Jamestown Parks and Recreation  
1002 2nd Ave. SE  
Jamestown, ND 58401  
amy@jamestownparksandrec.com

**Engagement Chair Dylan Thiem**  
Bismarck Parks and Recreation  
400 E. Front Ave.  
Bismarck, ND 58504  
dthiem@bisparks.org

## **STAFF**

**Executive Director**  
Shannon Schutt

**Communication Specialist**  
Scooter Pursley  
PO Box 1091  
Bismarck, ND 58502  
701-355-4458  
ndrpaoffice@gmail.com

## **FOCUS**

### **DESIGN AND EDITING**

**Shelly Duppong  
and Scooter Pursley**  
Clearwater Communications

## **WEBSITE**

[www.ndrpa.com](http://www.ndrpa.com)

## NDRPA 2024 Partner Webinars

NDRPA is excited to offer 2024 partner webinars, providing NDRPA members with access to virtual professional development opportunities.

## 2024 CPRP and CPRE Virtual Exam Preparation Programs

NDRPA is partnering with Illinois Park and Recreation Association (IPRA) to offer NDRPA members the 2024 exam preparation programs for Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CPRP) and Certified Park and Recreation Executive (CPRE) certifications. Each program includes six classes and will train and prepare participants to successfully sit for the exams. Each class will focus on a different aspect of the test found in the study guides. There will be a Series A and Series B for each program. Program space is limited. The registration deadline for Series A is Thursday, Feb. 15 or 40 registrants. Series B registration will be shared with members when it is available. NDRPA members may register with a discount code to save \$20 on course registration. Visit the NDRPA website at [ndrpa.com/resources/learning](http://ndrpa.com/resources/learning) for details.

## FRPA Virtual Education

NDRPA is happy to partner with the Florida Recreation and Park Association (FRPA) to bring members convenient virtual education sessions held January through April. Each session costs \$20 per NDRPA member. Topics include becoming a person of influence, how to deal with difficult people, understanding gender identity and expression, and more. For more information, visit the NDRPA website at <https://ndrpa.com/resources/learning>. The registration deadline is the Thursday before each webinar.

## IPRA Skills Development Webinar Series

NDRPA is excited to partner with Illinois Park and Recreation Association (IPRA) to offer members the Skills Development Webinar Series. The series features nationally known speakers and leaders in the field of parks and recreation. When you sign up for the series, you receive access to 11 one-hour webinars. This includes one live webinar per month from February through December and access to the previously recorded webinars for that year. Topics include leadership, growing beyond your comfort

zone, emerging technologies, delegating effectively, unconscious bias, and more. To learn more, visit the NDRPA website at [ndrpa.com/resources/learning](http://ndrpa.com/resources/learning).

## Save the Date for the HRC Conference

The HR Collaborative for Local Government's Biennial (HRC) Conference is scheduled April 17-18 at the Bismarck Hotel. The conference is designed to support local government employees who perform human resource-related functions, including HR professionals, supervisors and those interested in employee management and growth. All local government employees are welcome to attend.

Learn more about the HR Collaborative at its new website [www.ndirf.com/hr-collaborative](http://www.ndirf.com/hr-collaborative), including conference registration and cost. If you have any questions regarding the upcoming conference, please contact the HR Collaborative at [HRCollab@ndirf.com](mailto:HRCollab@ndirf.com).



## Reminder to Renew Your NDRPA Membership

Don't forget to renew your NDRPA membership. Renewal notices were mailed in December and NDRPA membership investments cover a calendar year. The renewal deadline is Jan. 31. Call 701-355-4458 or email NDRPA at [ndpraoffice@gmail.com](mailto:ndpraoffice@gmail.com) with questions.

# COMMISSIONER'S CORNER

## Brent Hysjulien – Hazen Park Board Commissioner



For Hazen Park Board Commissioner Brent Hysjulien, taking on the added responsibility of public service was a natural fit. His mother and father were active in community organizations in his hometown of Surrey; he was active in parks and recreation activities in his youth

before going to the University of Mary where he played football and baseball (he was a member of the Hall of Fame 1995 team); and his four daughters are following in his footsteps.

After several years of coaching youth parks and recreation programs, Hysjulien felt it was time to take the next step. He was elected to the park board in 2022. "I wanted to bring a voice for those that have had the hands-on experience and bring those opinions to the monthly meetings," Hysjulien said. "Our director, Dan Frei, has been great at giving the back story of what our previous boards thought processes were and has been open to new ideas from the new board members. As a new board



member, it is nice to trust other board members if they have that knowledge in an area that may be in a different scope than I may have."

With four daughters, Hysjulien has been active coaching summer girls fastpitch, and in 2022, was part of a local group that formed a booster club to upgrade and enhance amenities at the local youth softball field. He also has worked to enhance several parks with a wide variety of updated playground areas that his, and other, families have enjoyed. "We also enjoy lake activities and enjoy the amenities at Hazen and Beulah Bay, to which both cities' parks and rec departments have invested much time and money."

Hazen Bay Recreation Area on nearby Lake

Sakakawea is among many other neighborhood parks supervised and maintained by Hazen Parks and Recreation Department. It also oversees fastpitch softball, youth basketball, Babe Ruth and Legion baseball, adult softball, midget football and golf camps, and supports the local archery club.

It helps to have community support, Hysjulien noted. Voters recently approved a mill levy increase for the department which has alleviated worrisome funding issues that past boards have dealt with. "I believe this really changes our scope from providing basic parks and rec activities to being more open to various new trends that maybe the larger cities are implementing," he said.

Hysjulien emphasized the importance of having a director with vast knowledge of day-to-day operations to hand down to the next generation of board members as they transition into their roles.





“Trying to please everyone is an impossible task, but listening to and understanding the public’s thoughts and wishes is important,” he said.

In his brief time on the board, Hysjulien has taken an interest in engaging with young people. “I believe youth interaction with others is a very important part of growing up, especially in today’s electronic world,” he noted. “I also want to bring an objective opinion to issues that arise regardless of which individual or entity comes to us to provide feedback or ideas to implement.”

Hysjulien turned to the North Dakota Park Board manual for a history and basic understanding as to why boards were created and responsibilities that come with being on the board. “At this point, our board is tackling local issues and hopefully in the future we can further utilize NDRPA for additional resources to help determine if projects can fiscally become a reality,” he said.

Outside of the parks and recreation realm, Hysjulien is the billing coordinator at Roughrider Electric Cooperative in Hazen, where he has worked for 20 years. He and his wife moved to Hazen after her graduation from U-Mary and they have no plans to leave, he said.



**RecSupply.com**  
The Commercial Pool Supply Specialists!™

**LOCATED IN  
BISMARCK!**



**Chemicals & Testing • Pool Paint & Repair • Safety & Rescue  
Cleanup & Maintenance • Aquatic Fitness • Deck Equipment**

**FREE SHIPPING ON QUALIFYING ORDERS OF \$100 OR MORE!**

**Request a catalog or shop online!**

**1.800.437.8072 • www.recsupply.com**

Recreation Supply • 4314 Centurion Dr • Bismarck ND 58504



**FARGO, ND**  
(701) 232-7238

**ST. PAUL**  
(651) 487-3850

**TEA, SD**  
(605) 368-2586

**LANDSCAPE • GREENHOUSE • LAWN CARE • TURF • WINTER EQUIPMENT**

## Fargo Staff Participates in Sensory and Inclusive Training

With the goal of fostering greater inclusion and representation across events, programs, activities, and facilities, several Fargo Park District staff members recently participated in a Sensory and Inclusive Community Partner Training with the North Dakota Autism Center. The training offered valuable information on autism and other developmental disabilities, promoted sensory awareness, and offered advice on building a more inclusive and welcoming community.

The Fargo Park District events team immediately implemented the training into Santa Village, an annual holiday event which spans several weekends during November and December. Sensory kits, which included noise cancelling headphones, fidget toys, sunglasses, and more were available to check-out free of charge each day of the event. A quiet space was also designated, which offered a peaceful place for participants to escape the hustle and bustle of the event. Upon recommendation of the North Dakota Autism Center, a social story was also created and available to participants online and in-person. Social stories are an easy and effective way to help children understand appropriate behaviors by using written or visual cues that help guide those who struggle to navigate unfamiliar social situations.

This year's Santa Village also included an entire sensory-friendly night to ensure everyone who wanted to enjoy the event would have an opportunity

to do so in a way that was comfortable to them. The special evening featured softened lights, gentle music and a quieter environment to meet Santa and Mrs. Claus. More than 400 community members attended the two-hour event. The success of these initiatives has inspired the Fargo Park District events team to extend practices to all future events.

Inclusivity and accessibility in facilities is also an important aspect of being considered a Sensory and Inclusive Partner. The Fargo Parks Sports Center, a 390,000-acre indoor sports and recreation facility under construction in south Fargo, includes plans for sensory-friendly respite rooms which will offer quiet and peaceful spaces to escape the sometimes-overwhelming environment of a busy community facility. The rooms will offer fidget toys, comfortable seating, low lights, and quiet music. As inclusivity work continues, it is the desire of the Fargo Park District to include initiatives like these at other facilities across the community.

Whether it be events, programs or facilities, the Fargo Park District is committed to moving forward with inclusivity and accessibility at the forefront of its efforts. The North Dakota Autism Center offers the Sensory and Inclusive Community Partner Training free of charge across the state. Park districts interested in providing training for staff should visit [www.ndautismcenter.org](http://www.ndautismcenter.org) for more information.

---

## Moving Forward on Grand Forks Indoor Complex Project

Grand Forks residents voted on Nov. 14, 2023, to extend a city sales tax that is expected to lead to a new sports facility on the city's western edge. The revenue from the tax will be used to construct the proposed Altru Sports Complex, a new indoor-turf and aquatics facility expected to be built south of the Alerus Center. A total of 3,552 votes were cast, with "yes" votes totaling 2,358 and "no" votes totaling 1,190. Altru Health Systems announced it will commit \$10 million to the project, to be paid over 25 years. The commitment was contingent upon the voters' approval. In return, Altru will have naming rights.





## Susan Faus Named Fargo Park District Executive Director

The Fargo Park District Board of Commissioners has named Susan Faus executive director of the Fargo Park District. Faus, who has served as interim executive director since September 2023, brings a wealth of experience and a proven track record in strategy, leadership, and parks and recreation administration.

“Susan has demonstrated exceptional leadership during her time as both interim executive director and deputy director of administration,” Fargo Park Board Commissioner Jerry Rostad said. “This paired with her extensive experience in parks and recreation make her an ideal candidate for this important role. The Fargo Park Board is confident in her ability to guide the Fargo Park District to new heights and continue the tradition of providing outstanding recreational opportunities for our community.”

As executive director, Faus will provide strategic leadership and vision for the entire Fargo Park District. Her position will include a broad range of responsibilities spanning leadership, administration, community outreach, staff engagement, strategic planning, and more.

“I am honored and excited to take on the role of executive director,” Faus said. “I am committed to ensuring the Fargo Park District remains a vital contributor to the well-being and vibrancy of our city. I look forward to working collaboratively with the community, our partners and our talented staff to continue the important work of providing exceptional parks, facilities and recreational opportunities for every resident to enjoy.”



Faus joined the Fargo Park District in November 2022 as deputy director of administration, previously serving as the deputy director of parks and recreation for the city of Bloomington, Minn., and assistant parks and recreation director in the city of Edina, Minn. She holds a master of science in sports management from the University of Kentucky and a bachelor of science in corporate and community fitness from North Dakota State University.

### IS YOUR PLAYGROUND COMPLIANT?



CONTACT US FOR A FREE QUOTE:  
**855-268-PLAY**  
info@buyflexfiber.com



## FLEX FIBER

### ENGINEERED WOOD FIBER

- ✓ IPEMA CERTIFIED (ASTM 1292, 2075 & 3351)
- ✓ ADA COMPLIANT (ASTM 1951)
- ✓ SHIPPED LOCALLY (reduced freight costs)
- ✓ HIGH IMPACT ABSORBING and ECONOMICAL

[www.BuyFlexFiber.com](http://www.BuyFlexFiber.com)

# PARK DISTRICT NEWS

## Hay Creek Park Dedicated in Bismarck

Bismarck Parks and Recreation District (BPRD) dedicated Hay Creek Park on Oct. 20, 2023. The 26.6-acre neighborhood park features a playground, picnic shelter, restrooms, and parking lot. The park also serves as the trailhead for the Hay Creek Trail. The development of Hay Creek Park was supported by a Land and Water Conservation Fund grant administered by the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department.



## Elevate Your Outdoor Space

Enhance your parks, schools, community centers, and outdoor areas with turnkey solutions from the company you trust. Our park and playground equipment offer endless opportunities for imaginative play, physical activity, and social interaction. Provide play areas and seating with our shade and shelter options, creating inviting spaces for relaxation and social gatherings. Plus, our site furnishings add functionality and style, completing the overall look of your outdoor environment.

Ready to elevate your space?



800.438.2780 | [cunninghamrec.com](http://cunninghamrec.com)

# Pilot Rock®

## PARK • STREET • CAMP SITE PRODUCTS

Across our different product lines we offer hundreds of choices in style, size, features, materials and colors.

Commercial quality products able to withstand years of use and exposure.

Made in the USA since 1959.



RJ Thomas Mfg. Co., Inc.  
Cherokee, Iowa  
800-762-5002  
[www.pilotrock.com](http://www.pilotrock.com)  
[customerservice@rjthomas.com](mailto:customerservice@rjthomas.com)



FOR NORTH DAKOTA.  
FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT.  
FOR YOU.

[www.NDIRF.com](http://www.NDIRF.com)

NORTH DAKOTA  
**NDIRF**  
INSURANCE  
RESERVE FUND



# 2023 NDRPA Golden Egg Award

Through its annual awards program, the North Dakota Recreation and Park Association recognizes parks and recreation professionals, organizations and projects who have provided exceptional contributions to parks, recreation and conservation in North Dakota. The 2023 awards were presented at the state conference in September in Grand Forks. More detailed stories will follow in subsequent *FOCUS* magazines.

The Golden Egg Award was established in honor of former Fargo Park District Superintendent Bob “Goose” Johnson and recognizes outstanding and innovative park projects in North Dakota. The award is presented to the agency that manages an innovative park or facility serving as a model facility or park in its inclusiveness and responsiveness to the needs of the local community or region.

This year’s recipient was Mandan Park District’s Dale Pahlke Rodeo Arena.

The Mandan Park Board approved construction



of a permanent rodeo arena in September 2021, and the Mandan Rodeo Committee took on the responsibility for covering the cost of the new arena at Dakota Centennial Park. The committee initially secured a \$1 million donation, spread over 10 years, from Dakota Community Bank and Trust and a \$1 million verbal commitment from the city of Mandan to directly benefit infrastructure improvements at Dacotah Centennial Park.

The grand opening for the Dale Pahlke Arena at the Dakota Community Bank and Trust Rodeo Grounds was held June 1, 2023. The grounds feature a larger arena with covered grandstand seating for 4,000 spectators, improved drainage, new fencing and gates, new announcer stand, audio visual system, livestock pens, contestant warm-up area, and space for a future exhibit hall. Dacotah Centennial Park updates include accommodating ADA upgrades to bleachers and LED lighting throughout the facility.

The arena is home to Mandan Rodeo Days, the Mandan Horse and Saddle Club and high school, youth and family rodeo events. The arena draws spectators and participants from across the country. More than 12,000 people visited the facility during the three-day Mandan Rodeo Days event in July.



Mandan Park District Executive Director Cole Higlin accepts Golden Egg Award on behalf of Mandan Park District.



Other rodeos are planned throughout the spring, summer and fall seasons that previously were held at Dacotah Speedway. This reduces the time spent by Mandan Park District 's maintenance staff transitioning the racetrack to rodeo grounds and back.

Dale Pahlke and Dakota Community Bank and Trust have always been strong supporters of the Mandan community, providing local leadership and helping the community grow. Mandan Park District is thankful for their partnership. More than \$4 million was raised to make this project a reality.

The new arena not only benefits Mandan Park District staff, but also fulfills a need for the community. Mandan Park District's mission encompasses offering recreational opportunities for all ages and abilities for its community and visitors. Throughout the process, Mandan Park District's goal was to encourage a progressive community, attract new businesses, offer a common sense of pride, and make a difference for the community.



# PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

## Bismarck Parks and Recreation District



**Drew Lenertz** has been hired as a facility specialist for arenas and pools at Bismarck Parks and Recreation District (BPRD). He earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Mary and has worked for BPRD in several capacities, including facility attendant II at

the arenas, facility attendant I at Pebble Creek Golf Course/Fore Seasons Center and as an open gym supervisor. In his free time, Lenertz enjoys playing hockey, watching documentaries and gaming. In the summer, you can find him playing softball and going for hikes.



**Scott Nustad** has joined BPRD as a facility specialist for arenas and pools. He earned a bachelor's degree from Valley City State University and a master's degree from the University of Mary. Nustad retired from a career in education, working as a teacher and

assistant principal before spending eight years as activities director for Bismarck High School. He enjoys golfing, hiking, biking, and working out. He officiates football and gives back to the community through involvement in several service organizations. He is married and has three children and three grandchildren.

## Fargo Park District

The Fargo Park District has announced the addition of multiple new full-time team members.

- **Brianna Zenner**, Marketing and Communications Specialist
- **Bryce Lawrence**, Fargo Parks Sports Center Facility Manager
- **Carmen Johnson**, Finance Administrative Specialist
- **Clarissa Satrom**, Arborist I
- **Elizabeth Ernst**, Valley Senior Services Cook
- **Jackson Ehlert**, Park Maintenance
- **Keltie Wetch**, Concessions Supervisor
- **Kerry Bittner**, IT Technician
- **Liana Long**, Facility Scheduling Specialist (promotion)
- **Madonna Fitzgerald**, Parks Administrative Assistant (promotion)
- **Paul Wixo**, Fargo Parks Sports Center Partner Success Manager
- **Shelley Tollefson**, Director of Southeast Senior Services – Valley Senior Services
- **Tyson Powell**, Park Maintenance

## Devils Lake Park District



**Christy Remmick** has been hired by the Devils Lake Park District as the Dockside Entertainment Center and community engagement manager. She is responsible for the new 30,000-square-foot family entertainment center operation, and marketing, public relations and social media for the park district. She grew up in Selkirk, Manitoba, Canada, and earned her bachelor's degree in communications from the University of North Dakota. In her free time, Remmick enjoys spending time with family and friends, coaching volleyball and softball, golfing, and time at the lake.



## Grand Forks Park District



**Megan Cory** joined the Grand Forks Parks District as a marketing and graphic design specialist. She is originally from the Grand Forks area and worked previously as a cake decorator. In her free time, Cory enjoys drawing, watching movies and spending time with family.



**Mary Kelly** has been hired by the district as administrative services specialist at Choice Health and Fitness. Originally from Wyoming, she moved to Grand Forks 18 years ago. Kelly enjoys going to the lake, being outdoors and spending time with her husband and three children.



**Josh Janzen** will work for the park department in the winter and at King's Walk Golf Course in the summer. A Devils Lake native, he started with the district in 2016 at Lincoln Golf Course, Purpur Arena and ICON Sports Center until October 2022. He has a 5-year-old bull terrier named Mookie. He enjoys being outdoors, working out, sports, and spending time with family.

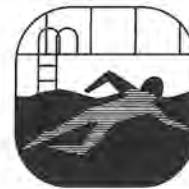
## Mandan Park District



**Maggie Rennecke** has been hired by Mandan Park District as an accounting and administrative assistant. Rennecke grew up in Mandan and graduated from Mandan High School. She has an associate degree and is working toward a bachelor's in business administration with a major in accounting. Rennecke was previously employed by the city of Bismarck as an accounting technician. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her family, hunting, fishing, and riding her motorcycle.



**Sage Rishling** has been hired as a park maintenance employee. A lifelong Mandan resident, he enjoys snowboarding, playing darts, fishing, camping, and spending time with his family and friends. He is a father of one son, with another son on the way.



**Associated  
Pool  
Builders, Inc.**

**For All Your Pool Building Needs...**

2121 Lovett Avenue - PO Box 2318  
Bismarck, North Dakota 58504

Toll Free: (800) 218-2366

Phone: (701) 258-6012 - Fax: (701) 224-9729

Visit us @ [www.associatedpool.com](http://www.associatedpool.com)



**For All Your Pool Supply Needs...**

2121 Lovett Avenue - PO Box 2318  
Bismarck, North Dakota 58504

Toll Free: (800) 218-2366

Phone: (701) 258-7302 - Fax: (701) 224-9729

Contact: Jeff Turner ([JeffT@associatedsupplyco.com](mailto:JeffT@associatedsupplyco.com))

Jeff Turner Office (701) 712-3078 - Cell (701) 220-3834



## MAXIMIZE THE BEAUTY AND FUNCTIONALITY OF YOUR GROUNDS WITH MTI'S TURF SOLUTIONS.

OUR COMPREHENSIVE RANGE OF RELIABLE EQUIPMENT, BACKED BY MORE THAN 70 YEARS OF INDUSTRY EXPERTISE AND SUPPORT, HELPS YOU MAINTAIN PRISTINE LANDSCAPES. OFFERING THE TOP BRANDS IN THE INDUSTRY, WE PROVIDE THE TOOLS AND SUPPORT YOU NEED TO CREATE SAFE, INVITING, AND SUSTAINABLE OUTDOOR SPACES.

**CONTACT US TODAY FOR AN ON-SITE PRODUCT DEMONSTRATION OR TO LEARN MORE.**



## VENTRAC SSV THE SIDEWALK SNOW VEHICLE

THE VENTRAC SSV IS YOUR ONE-PASS SNOW REMOVAL AND DE-ICING MACHINE. WITH STAND-ON 4X4 SKID STEER OPERATION, THE SSV HAS A 36" WORKING WIDTH THAT ALLOWS YOU TO TRAVEL MILES OF SIDEWALK IN A FRACTION OF THE TIME, FURTHERING THE REDUCTION OF HAND LABOR AND WALK-BEHIND EQUIPMENT. WITH A FULL LINE-UP OF COMMERCIAL QUALITY SNOW REMOVAL ATTACHMENTS AND DE-ICING OPTIONS, THE SSV IS SURE TO BE A GAME-CHANGER FOR YOU THIS WINTER SEASON.



[MTIDISTRIBUTING.COM](http://MTIDISTRIBUTING.COM) | [INFO@MTIDISTRIBUTING.COM](mailto:INFO@MTIDISTRIBUTING.COM) | 888.537.2484

GOLF, SPORTS FIELDS & GROUNDS EQUIPMENT & IRRIGATION | LANDSCAPE CONTRACTOR EQUIPMENT





Dakota Playground

Park & Play  
— USA —

## Supplier Of All Your Park & Recreation Needs



Playground Structures



Site Amenities



Splash Pads



Sports & Recreation Equipment

[ParkandPlayUSA.com](http://ParkandPlayUSA.com)

| [Contact Us To Refresh Your Park](#)

| [DakotaPlayground.com](http://DakotaPlayground.com)

# SAVE MONEY AND TIME

WITH STATE COOPERATIVE PURCHASING  
CONTRACTS & SURPLUS PROPERTY!



THE STATE CAN HELP YOU AFFORD WHAT YOU NEED.

Computers • Copiers/Multifunctional Devices • Software • Vehicles • Paper & Paper Products  
Janitorial Products & Trash Bags • Batteries • Food • IT Consulting • Government Credit Card

NORTH  
**Dakota**

Be Legendary.

Procurement

MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

701.328.2740 • [INFOSPO@ND.GOV](mailto:INFOSPO@ND.GOV)

[OMB.ND.GOV/COOPERATIVEPURCHASING](http://OMB.ND.GOV/COOPERATIVEPURCHASING)





## Not Your Typical Parks and Rec Program

In 2020, Williston Parks and Recreation District (WPRD) designed a program called Girls Run Strong (GRS) that mirrors the nonprofit Girls on the Run. Although GRS has not been offered for long, it is proving to be influential and just as important as other WPRD programs.

Through GRS, “we are trying to build a solid foundation of core emotional and social skills needed in everyday life,” said WPRD Recreation Manager Amanda Nelson. “During this eight-week program, each lesson focuses on a different mental activity which relates to everyday life, and a physical activity to train for the 5K at the end of the program. It is important to know that we are not just running all the time as the title may suggest, and no one is ever forced to partake in any of the activities (that) prove to be too strenuous.”

Over the years, many girls in grades 3-6 have been influenced in countless ways, and because of the program’s success, Nelson knew young boys of the same age group could benefit just as much. Nelson asked WPRD Recreation Coordinator Trevor Powell to design a similar program for young boys. Last spring, Boys Break Through (BBT) was launched. Although still in the fine-tuning stages, Powell has one thing in mind for the program. “I would like the participants to learn the importance of not only taking care of themselves, but also looking out for others,” he said. “As a man, one is asked to find the balance of being strong for the people around you.

We teach this in one of our lessons, but we also teach in the same lesson that strength can mean reaching out for help when you need it for yourself.”

How does this all come together? Although separate programs, both GRS and BBT have girls and boys in grades 3-6 that work diligently to achieve one goal: better themselves for everyday life, physically and mentally. Nelson and Powell base their lessons on motivational and encouraging words. For example, the words healthy, brave, valuable, kind, grateful, generous, confident, etc., are used. “These words become the foundation and the building blocks behind everything we do and focus on in each class,” Nelson said. Powell takes it one step further and assigns class goals where students apply these words between classes, and it makes participants realize, “a small gesture, like holding the door, can make their (the BBT participant) day as well as the stranger that might have needed (the door held open).”

During the GRS program, the Healthy Day lesson day is a favorite. Participants run a lap around the track and then cut something out of a magazine that shows someone doing something healthy. That can be going to the gym, taking a walk or sitting quietly to read a book. Throughout the lesson, not only are the girls working on their own health, but they are looking for ways to maintain a healthy lifestyle in other aspects of life. The hardest, yet most satisfying, day is Resilient Day. On this day, the girls

practice their 5K with a running buddy who joins them for the end of the program 5K. Prior to the run, “we discuss the struggles of committing to a task of this size and how feeling the achievement at the end is enormous,” Nelson explained. “I know one thing; it is hard to put this day into words because watching the special bond develop between all members completing the run is an incredible thing to watch.”

As GRS has evolved, it has started to reach further into the community. For example, for Generous Day, GRS participants raise money for a chosen community organization. In fall 2023, GRS raised money for Williston Wonders, a group of individuals with special needs of all ages that come together to enrich their lives socially and physically through recreational activities. After the check presentation, the two groups came together to play a friendly game of kickball. The Wonders did not know this until the check was presented and were beyond thankful for the \$2,714.43, which helped to purchase adaptive sporting equipment for their program. “When this check was presented, you could feel the chills everyone got in the room. Girls of such a young age were donating their time and efforts to help people they didn’t even know. Honestly, I still get the chills thinking about the sense of accomplishment and excitement everyone had during this,” Nelson shared.

BBT is keeping the bar just as high with its lessons and currently, the most meaningful day for the participants is Grateful Day. Throughout the lesson, “we talk about the importance of having a positive attitude and how that can make a difference in daily

life,” Powell said. “We really try to focus on seeing the good in tasks that you may not like to do which will allow you to appreciate the trouble in doing them.” After the classroom portion is complete, the group heads to a location to pick up trash. “It is neat to see the way the boys react to picking up trash after having a discussion on seeing the good in tasks you may not like. It is like they realize; some things just need to be done and they do it without complaint.”

The favorite day of BBT is the last day for one big reason, they are allowed to “smash down ‘the wall’ they have worked so hard to construct throughout the program.” As they complete lessons each week, they stack bricks (Jenga Blocks) that represent each task they have overcome, and this eventually builds a wall that the boys are allowed to break through. While this may sound destructive, there is one key takeaway from breaking through, Powell said. “They have to understand what we are allowed to break and what we are meant to protect (those who are not as strong). Seeing this event take place, makes me see the major impact one eight-week program that meets for 40 minutes a day can have on one’s life for the many years to come.”

In conclusion, BBT and GRS are two programs that have a unique twist on the traditional parks and recreation program yet are proving to be so influential to those who participate. “Parents should want their children in these programs because it serves as a way to reflect on these societal expectations that they are asked to navigate every day without any help,” Powell said.



# Addressing Algae at Epping/Springbrook Dam

The Williams County Parks Department is using a multifaceted approach and strong partnerships to combat harmful algal blooms at Epping/Springbrook Dam, a recreational area located outside of Williston, N.D.

Harmful algal blooms (HABs) produce extremely dangerous toxins that can sicken or kill people and animals. They are caused by sunlight, slow-moving water and an abundance of nutrients, typically nitrogen and phosphorus. Nutrients in waterbodies can occur for a variety of reasons. Common causes of nitrogen and phosphorus in a highly agricultural area, like much of North Dakota, are animal manure and chemical fertilizers. When these nutrients are not fully utilized by plants, they can be lost from farm fields and negatively impact downstream water quality.

Epping/Springbrook Dam has had blue-green algae, a type of HAB, for four consecutive years. These blooms pose a threat to visitors and have caused a decrease in park usage by both campers and day-users.

Beginning in May 2023, the Williams County Parks Department partnered with the Water Quality Division of the North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality, the Williams County Social Conservation District and North Dakota Game and

Fish to implement a water testing program for the Epping/Springbrook-Stony Creek watershed. Prior to 2023, formal water testing had been conducted at a very limited level. The water testing activities are leveraging funding through section 604(b) of the federal Clean Water Act.

Now that some initial data has been collected for the lake, the next step is to work towards improving the poor water quality using an innovative approach. The Williams County Park Board was awarded an Outdoor Heritage Fund Grant to purchase three ultrasonic algae control buoys manufactured by LGSonic. These buoys will monitor and to an extent, be able to help control HABs. In real-time, the buoys are able to monitor chlorophyll (green algae), phycocyanin (blue-green algae), pH, turbidity, dissolved oxygen, and temperature. To control HABs, the buoys emit ultrasonic rays that inhibit the sun from reaching the bacteria at the bottom of the lake, which is a primary contributor to HABs.

Although the buoys are expected to assist with improving the current conditions of the lake, they will not fix the root cause of the poor water quality, which is thought to be run-off from the surrounding watershed. To address run-off sources, the Williams County Park Board has applied to take part in the Environmental Protection Agency's Nonpoint







Source Management Program, which is funded from Section 319 of the Clean Water Act. This program provides opportunities for farmers and ranchers located within the watershed to apply for 60/40 matching funds for implementing best management practices. These practices include planting cover crops, critical area planting and installation of fencing to divert livestock from waterways. Section 319 also provides funding for educational and outreach programs, as well as administrative expenses.

The Williams County Park Department, the Park Board and their partners are committed to minimizing the occurrence of HABs in the future and improving the recreational opportunities at Epping/Springbrook Dam by reducing the nutrients from the adjacent watershed.



Photo by Jolee F. Floyd

SINCE 1948



# ACME TOOLS®

BUILDING • REMODELING • WOODWORKING • LANDSCAPING™

**DO YOUR BEST WORK™**

<p><b>GRAND FORKS</b> 1705 13th Ave. N 701-746-6481</p>	<p><b>BISMARCK</b> 3840 E Rosser Ave. 701-258-1267</p>	<p><b>FARGO</b> 920 36th St. SW 701-476-4600</p>
<p><b>MINOT</b> 700 20th Ave. SE 701-839-2263</p>	<p><b>WILLISTON</b> 4960 Hwy. 85 701-577-2263</p>	<p>Mon - Fri: 7:00 - 5:30 Sat: 8:00 - 5:30</p>

**10 Locations To Serve You in ND, MN and IA**  
QUALITY • SERVICE • SELECTION • VALUE



## Cold Weather

# SOLUTION EXPERTS

Snow Removal



Clothing



Heaters



Power



# How to Support Workplace Mental Health

*Provided by HR Collaborative for Local Government*

Workplace stress is a common phenomenon that can have a significant impact on an individual's well-being and productivity. According to the American Psychological Association's Work in American Survey: Workplaces as Engines of Psychological Health & Wellbeing, "77% of U.S. workers reported stress at work in (November 2023), with 57% reporting negative health effects as a result" (*US Workplace Stress at All Time High, Survey Says, www.InsuranceJournal.com, accessed 3 Jan. 2024*).

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) recognizes workplace stress can "make it more difficult for workers to get their tasks done; threaten their productivity, happiness and well-being; and lead to burnout" (*www.OSHA.gov, accessed 3 Jan. 2024*). Your entity can support its employees' mental health by finding "ways to alleviate or remove stressors in the workplace to the greatest extent possible, build coping and resiliency supports, and ensure that people who need help know where to turn" (*www.OSHA.gov, accessed 3 Jan. 2024*).

On its website, OSHA also shares examples of employers' approaches to help reduce workplace stress and highlight mental health supports within the workplace, including:

*The six following examples were originally published on www.OSHA.gov, accessed 4 Jan. 2024.*

- **Promote self-care, mindfulness and general mental well-being.** Organizations are implementing strategies to educate workers about self-care and mindfulness activities to help them cope with stress. Employers and supervisors are encouraged to engage their workers to determine what strategies may be most supportive in their workplace. Examples include:
  - Providing access to mobile apps that aim to build emotional resilience and improve sleep habits.
  - Offering "Mindful Moment" meditation sessions for workers multiple times a week or full web-based meditation or yoga classes.
  - Identifying internal staff who can lead self-care activities for the entire company (e.g., weekly, virtual, guided meditation sessions).
  - Implementing structured wellness challenges centered on self-care activities to encourage employees to engage in wellness activities.

- Hosting virtual yoga classes or virtual workouts.
- Supporting mental health awareness campaigns.
- Providing information on employee assistance programs.

- **Support an attitude of gratitude.** It is important to make a concerted effort to be positive, identify and praise workers' achievements and encourage staff to look for the good that still exists around them. For example, consider launching an "attitude of gratitude" challenge that focuses on the positive, or an employee recognition program to highlight workers (via social media, articles and live webcasts) who have taken action to support each other or their broader communities. Keeping it simple, creating a virtual gratitude board for workers to share what they are grateful for can be beneficial.
- **Promote a culture of safety and health in the workplace.** To promote compliance, top leadership and managers within the company should lead by example and consistently reinforce safety practices and look for opportunities to get workers involved. Employers can alleviate concerns by ensuring workers are supplied with necessary protective gear and implementing other protective measures that will keep them safe and healthy, at no cost to workers.
- **Educate workers about the organization's existing safety precautions and ask for their feedback.** The absence of information can cause worries to fester. To prevent this, employers should communicate with their workers regularly in a language they understand to explain what protection measures they have implemented to protect them. More importantly, employers should then ask their workers for feedback on those measures to determine if more can be done to make them feel safe, such as implementing new procedures or helping to enforce protective measures among co-workers and customers. OSHA has created a sample list of questions that employers can use to gauge their workers' perception of existing protective measures. With this feedback in hand, employers can either implement additional protective measures to

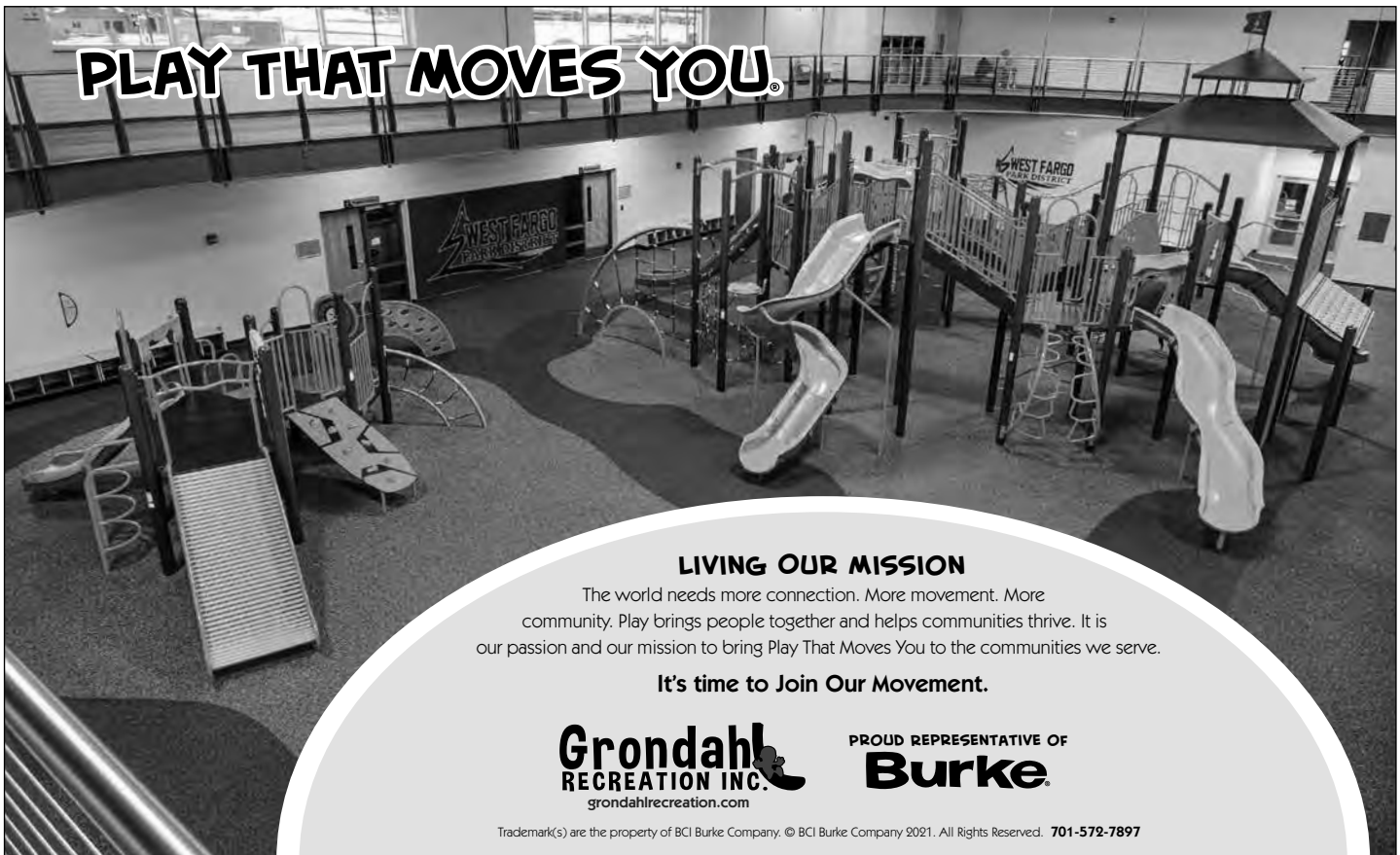
reduce workers' concerns, or at least explain why a certain course of action has been taken.

- **Regularly provide safety and health training that includes a focus on mental health and ask for worker feedback.** Education and training are important tools for informing workers and managers about workplace hazards and controls so they can work more safely and be more productive. Employers should ensure mental health and workplace stress are included in trainings, which should always be done in the language the workers understand. Employers should underscore their business model succeeds when workers stay healthy and finish the day and go home safely. Workers feel trusted when employers ask them for ideas or improvements and follow-up on suggestions. When possible, provide them with time during work hours, if necessary, to research solutions.
- **Protect workers from workplace violence.** Conflict is stressful, both when it occurs and when workers anticipate that it might. Employers must find ways to help de-escalate and prepare

for these stressful situations, such as having workers approach non-complying customers in teams of two; training them on threat recognition, conflict resolution and nonviolent responses; and providing backup support in the form of managers, security or law enforcement. See OSHA's workplace violence webpage for additional resources, [www.OSHA.gov/workplace-violence](http://www.OSHA.gov/workplace-violence).

An additional idea is to highlight your entity's employee assistance program (EAP) available through your health insurance provider or other organization. Regular EAP communication helps to ensure the program's availability is top-of-mind for your entity's employees and information about the program is easy to access. For example, one North Dakota government entity makes its EAP provider information highly accessibly by placing business card-sized materials throughout its buildings, allowing employees to discreetly pick one up if they're interested in obtaining EAP services.

If you're interested in learning more about how to support workplace mental health at your entity, visit [www.OSHA.gov/workplace-stress](http://www.OSHA.gov/workplace-stress).



**PLAY THAT MOVES YOU.®**

**LIVING OUR MISSION**

The world needs more connection. More movement. More community. Play brings people together and helps communities thrive. It is our passion and our mission to bring Play That Moves You to the communities we serve.

**It's time to Join Our Movement.**

**Grondahl**  
RECREATION INC.  
grondahlrecreation.com

PROUD REPRESENTATIVE OF  
**Burke**

Trademark(s) are the property of BCI Burke Company. © BCI Burke Company 2021. All Rights Reserved. 701-572-7897





**FOCUS**

PO Box 1091  
Bismarck, ND 58502

PRESORTED  
STANDARD  
US POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
BISMARCK, ND  
PERMIT 256



## Serving North Dakota's Public Finance Needs

Government Financing Projects  
Senior Living | Healthcare | Education

Experience you can trust. Commitment you can count on.



Over 45 years serving municipalities in the upper Midwest.



Consistently ranked as a top provider of public financing for North Dakota municipalities since 2003.

We are committed to working with our clients to help develop solutions best suited to meet their unique needs in a variety of sectors. When North Dakota needs to finance important government, senior living, healthcare or education projects, they turn to us, their trusted public finance partner.

**Reach out to us and see how we can help with any of your public finance needs.**

**John Lundby**  
Senior Vice President  
701.222.1617

**Mike Manstrom**  
Senior Vice President  
701.222.1616

**Craig Theis**  
Senior Vice President  
612.376.4135



[colliers.com](http://colliers.com)

Colliers Securities LLC is a Member SIPC/FINRA