

# NEW FACILITIES AND TECHNOLOGIES PROVIDE IMPROVED CARE

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# Highlighting leaders in worksite wellness

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The program, now called Thrive, was revamped in 2020 in partnership with Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota. Together, they created a more holistic approach to wellness encompassing physical, social, emotional, financial, professional and environmental health.

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*—Barb Bigger, Benefits Coordinator, TrueNorth Steel*



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**Tuesday, June 11 | 8 to 11 a.m.**

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*The Midwest Agriculture Summit is the second installment of the 2024 Midwest Summit event series.*

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**June 11 | Midwest Agriculture Summit**

Host: The Chamber

Location: Red River Valley Fairgrounds and livestream

**June 11-12 | Bushel Buddy Seat Conference**

Host: Bushel

Location: Brewhalla

**June 13 | Cultivate Conference**

Host: Grand Farm

Location: Announced soon





# THE COST OF SLEEP

Words: Caitlin Pallai

**Like food and water, sleep plays a vital role in our health and well-being and impacts our entire body.**

“Our brains need sleep in order to process information; they need to recover at night,” explained Nicole Mullis, a nurse practitioner specializing in sleep medicine at Essentia Health. “Sleep also impacts our immune system, our cardiovascular system and our mood.”

Adults should average between seven to eight hours of sleep a night.

However, we often skimp, instead choosing work, family demands or even TV. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 1 in 3 adults in the United States don’t get enough rest or sleep.

“Everything is impacted by sleep,” said Mullis. “Sleep should be treated as a priority, not an option.”

When we don’t get enough quality sleep, our ability to process information and function the next day – including at work – is negatively affected.

According to the National Safety Council, fatigue is estimated to cost employers about \$136 billion a year in health-related productivity.

“When you’re consistently sleep-deprived and you’re trying to perform complex tasks, this decreases the amount of time you’re actually productive,” said Mullis. “Lack of sleep can accumulate – this is known as sleep debt – and it takes time to recover.”

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## SLEEP HYGIENE

Sleep hygiene refers to both your sleep environment and behavior. Poor sleep hygiene can impact sleep quantity and quality, so it’s important to review your habits for potential areas of improvement.

**Consistency.** Aim for seven to eight hours of sleep while going to bed and waking up at the same time. With inconsistency, your brain doesn’t know what to expect; it can be harder to fall or stay asleep.

**Bedroom environment.** Make sure your bedroom is cool, dark and comfortable. Consider a fan vs. a TV if white noise is needed.

**Light exposure.** Limit light exposure from sources such as your phone before bedtime, but use morning light to your advantage when waking up.

**Caffeine and food.** Limit caffeine intake starting eight hours before sleep. Avoid large meals before bedtime as digestion will keep your body awake.

**Exercise.** Being physically active can help you sleep better, but avoid exercising near bedtime.

**Phone use.** Limit phone use beginning 30-60 minutes before bedtime. Opt for something calming and relaxing, such as mild stretching, reading or meditation.

**Medication.** Check with your doctor about side effects before starting a medication and follow up if you think medicine could be affecting your sleep.

If living with a partner, and especially if your partner does shift work or has a different routine, even little improvements to sleep hygiene can go a long way.

“Sometimes it’s unavoidable, where you just can’t get enough sleep at night,” said Mullis, adding that an early afternoon cat nap — no more than 30 minutes — and supplemental melatonin in lower doses can help. “But it’s important to try and avoid a continuous cycle of insufficient sleep. This requires effort to make some changes, but if you’re not seeing improvements, then maybe it’s a good time to come in and visit us.”

Learn more about sleep medicine and make an appointment at [EssentiaHealth.org](https://www.essentiahealth.org).



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# Elevating Athletic Prowess



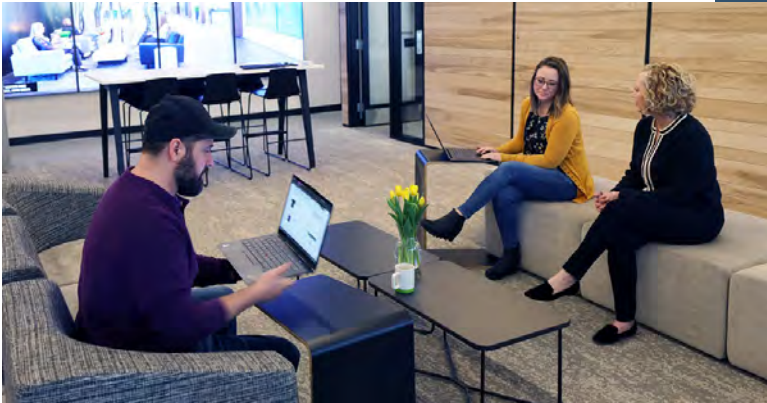
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# DEPARTMENTS



FROM LEFT, CARTER CUSACK, EL WINKELMAN AND TRACY JORDRE WORK IN A LOUNGE AREA OF JLG'S OFFICE IN DOWNTOWN GRAND FORKS. ERIC HYLDEN / GRAND FORKS HERALD

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### KAILEY ARMAN

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ARMAN IS FROM BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA. IN SPRING 2020, SHE GRADUATED FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA WITH A BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN MARKETING. ARMAN SAYS HER FAVORITE PART OF MARKETING IS HOW DYNAMIC IT IS AND BECAUSE IT ALLOWS HER TO THINK BOTH CREATIVELY AND TECHNICALLY. IN HER SPARE TIME, YOU CAN FIND HER READING, ENJOYING THE SUN, OR SPENDING TIME WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY.

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CARRIE MCDERMOTT ■ EDITOR

# TEND TO YOUR BUSINESS AS YOU WOULD YOUR GARDEN

As the farmers get to work readying their fields for planting, I'm grateful for the mild winter we've had. The weather is warming, the grass is already greening up and soon I can dig in the dirt to plant my flowers.

Growing a business is like tending a garden — you need a plan, you need the best resources and a favorable climate for success. Many strong organizations in the Prairie Business footprint are expanding, adding on and improving their products and services, such as the health-care industry.

Access to quality health care is beneficial to our communities. The sector is competitive and innovative. This month we reached out to regional health-care systems to find out the latest and greatest advancements and initiatives they're working on to streamline patient care and ease of access. Whether it's a new medical facility or a new application of technology, patients and staff are benefiting. It was exciting to hear about all the new things happening in the field and I'm sure you'll be interested in reading more about it.

Sticking with health care, this edition also features an interview with leaders at Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota about employer-sponsored insurance. Employers want healthy employees and to help with that, many companies partner with health insurance providers offering wellness plans and preventative care. Lacey Bergh, senior vice president of Health Delivery at the organization, said health care in general needs to ensure solutions are being provided for patients wherever they're at in their health-care journey. We couldn't agree more.

The Grand Forks office of JLG Architects gave us a tour for our Around the Office feature, highlighting modern sustainability practices in its new downtown building. It was fun to learn how an architecture firm designs its own workspace and the detailed thought and energy put into creating a "living lab" office space.

As always, we look forward to sharing your business news with our readers, identifying trends in specific industries and highlighting those who are making a difference in your organizations.

If you want to ensure you're getting our business news regularly, you can sign up for free to get our monthly e-newsletter by heading to <https://grandforksherald.com/newsletter> and scrolling down to the Business topic and choosing Prairie Business. Put your email into the box at the bottom and you're all set! **PR**

Until next month,  
Carrie McDermott

*I look forward to hearing from you at [cmcdermott@prairiebusinessmagazine.com](mailto:cmcdermott@prairiebusinessmagazine.com) or 701-780-1276.*

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# Health Insurance

# TALKING HEALTH INSURANCE WITH BCBSND

## THE LATEST IN EMPLOYER-SPONSORED COVERAGE

BY CARRIE MCDERMOTT

Employer-sponsored health insurance (ESI) is the main source of health coverage for non-elderly people, covering just over 60% of the U.S. population, or 164.7 million people, according to Peterson-KFF's Health System Tracker. About 80% of adult workers are employed by a business that offers ESI to at least some employees.

Private health insurance spending increased by 5.9% in 2022 (to \$1.3 trillion), which was slightly slower than the increase of 6.3% in 2021, according to data from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). For hospital care, physician and clinical services, and dental services, private health insurance expenditures grew more slowly in 2022 following stronger growth in 2021. Private health insurance enrollment increased 1.5%, or by 2.9 million individuals, in 2022 – the fastest increase since 2015.



LACEY BERGH, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF HEALTH DELIVERY AT BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD OF NORTH DAKOTA.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota is the largest provider of health coverage in North Dakota and insures and/or administers claims for over 310,000 people, the company's website states. BCBSND is a not-for-profit mutual insurance company whose members have access to all of the hospitals in North Dakota and 99% of physicians in the state. Prairie Business spoke with leadership at BCBSND to learn how the company is addressing the ongoing increasing cost of health care and changes in the market relating to how health care is delivered.

Lacey Bergh, senior vice president of Health Delivery, said employers want to ensure their employees have health-care services that are easy to access, including wellness and prevention, and want to keep that coverage affordable.

"How do you get ahead of people developing chronic conditions is something our employer partners look for us to bring to the table," she said. "The cost of health care continues to rise and it really is so important as we think about people's wellbeing."

The way people access their health-care services has changed since the pandemic, driving the push for technology that allows virtual visits, virtual nursing and advances in health-care facilities.



"During the pandemic, a lot of folks put off preventative care. We haven't necessarily seen that rebound back to the way it was before the pandemic. What we're seeing is the need for earlier intervention," Bergh said.

The company rolled out a digital care management platform this year through which care managers can help BCBSND members. The new platform is an effort to reduce barriers patients may face in accessing health care.

"Rather than playing phone tag to get ahold of people, being able to connect with them digitally has been really fun for our care team. Later this year, folks will be able to self-enroll in that through our BCBSND Care Connect app," she said.

Kristi Huber, executive vice president and chief marketing officer, said BCBSND is bringing innovation to its members, especially in the digital realm.

"One of the things we've been working really hard on at BCBSND is to make sure our members have a wonderful customer experience and they feel that difference of experience through that telecare clinic experience," Huber said. "In order for us to really lower the total cost of care across the state, it's about being as efficient and effective as possible."

VitellaCare Clinics will be a new primary care clinic model in North Dakota. BCBSND's parent company, HealthyDakota Mutual Holdings, partnered with Crossover Health to launch the clinics. This model of primary care provides a holistic approach to physical, mental and emotional well-being, according to a release. VitellaCare-advanced primary care clinics will offer in-person and virtual access to comprehensive health-care services and proactive health management.

"We're starting small and hope to expand," Bergh said of the VitellaCare Clinics. "I think it's about how you wrap services around patients, around employees, to make it easier for them to take care of their health. We know they benefit – employees benefit, everyone benefits when employees are healthier. The community benefits as well."

Huber said one of the big concerns they're hearing from employers is, "How can we engage our members (employees) and truly encourage them to take an active approach to their well-being?"

"One of the things we're doing to make it easier and more accessible is we'll be adding a digital app that is truly a consumer-grade level experience," Huber said, explaining that people are already using apps to re-



KRISTI HUBER, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER AT BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD OF NORTH DAKOTA. / COURTESY JEREMY ALBRIGHT

search products and save time shopping. The name of the app has not yet been released, but is promised to offer a personalized experience using information gathered through claims data and the ways in which a member uses the app.

"It will provide an opportunity for messaging for reminders to schedule appointments, or if you have challenges, like your A1C is getting high, it will connect you with the Omada program we utilize. It's about

making that next best step available for each person. Meeting them where they're at to help them engage in their health differently," she said.

Knowing that not all people enjoy dealing with technology, care guides can be accessed via phone to assist members who have questions about their health-care services.

"Our goal going forward is that we support our BCBSND members wherever they are on their health-care journey – to help them stay well, help them manage chronic conditions, if they have a catastrophic event, help reduce the anxiety and coordinate the care so they have the best outcome possible," Bergh said. "We need to keep our eye on that as we implement all of the solutions."

Health care in general needs to ensure solutions are being provided for patients wherever they're at in their health-care journey, Bergh said. Employers should also be aware they have employees with various health and wellness needs and try to find the best coverage for their teams as a whole.

"We understand that data and analytics are the drivers of being able to provide all that so we're going to continue to double down and make sure we can provide that information to our members so they can make their best decision. We're going to continue to innovate in that space, which is going to be crucial to lower the cost of care in North Dakota," Huber said. 





# HEALTH-CARE SYSTEMS ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

BY CARRIE MCDERMOTT

"Health care has a deep purpose that has a calling, whether you're in patient care or nonpatient care. Making a difference for those we serve is foundational to what health care is," said Todd Forkel, CEO of Altru Health System, based in Grand Forks.

Forkel was talking to Prairie Business about the new mission, vision and set of values Altru announced at the start of 2024. Altru's new mission statement is "Making a difference for those we care for."

The other big news from Altru is the new hospital, slated for new patients in January 2025.

Altru isn't the only health-care organization in the region with big news. Jamestown Regional Medical Center has launched a women's health walk-in clinic. Sanford Health is building a new digestive health facility in Sioux Falls. Essentia Health has opened a new clinic in Lisbon.



TODD FORKEL, CEO OF ALTRU HEALTH SYSTEM IS PHOTOGRAPHED IN THE NEW HOSPITAL, THURSDAY, APRIL 11, 2024. ERIC HYLLEN / GRAND FORKS HERALD

Prairie Business reached out to the leaders of our region's health-care systems to talk about their latest advancements, additions and facilities. Here's the roundup:

## ALTRU HEALTH SYSTEM

In about six months, administrators at Altru Health System will be handed over the keys, so to speak, to the company's new \$475 million hospital. The 528,000-square-foot facility in Grand Forks was designed by JLG Architects.

"Oct. 1 it will be handed over to us and we will take the months of October, November and December to install new technology, training of staff, those types of things," Forkel said. "The first patients will be mid-January 2025 and we're very excited for that."

The new medical facility replaces the current hospital, built in 1971. Forkel said some of the key attributes the staff is excited about include lots of natural light throughout the building — something lacking in the current hospital.

"The amount of natural light that is present is just exponentially more than we currently have," he said. "It's beneficial not only for our patients and their family members, but for our staff."



ESSENTIA HEALTH LEADERS AND STAFF CELEBRATE AT THE GRAND OPENING OF THE LISBON CLINIC IN AUGUST 2023. / COURTESY ESSENTIA HEALTH

**“We really believe that it is not only high-tech but high-touch in the spaces that are there for those we serve.”**

— Todd Forkel, Altru CEO

A unique design feature is the surgical platform located on the second floor. It includes a staff-only accessible corridor that allows employees to take a break, see the outdoors and enjoy natural sunlight. It's part of the company's efforts to give the staff the best facility in which to work, Forkel said.

Although the new seven-story hospital is only slightly larger than the current building, it feels much bigger because it's designed for efficient flow, he explained.

"It's designed with a futuristic look at modern medicine around technology, but also the fact that the patient experience plays such a role in what you might be here for in terms of your care process," Forkel said. "We really believe that it is not only high-tech but high-touch in the spaces that are there for those we serve."

A new inpatient behavioral health facility is also being constructed at the same time, just to the east of the hospital. This new facility will expand the behavioral health services currently offered, from 16 beds to 24. Forkel said construction will then start on an

additional 24-bed space so that eventually, Altru will have tripled its capacity for inpatient behavioral health.

"Today we know there is a lot of demand for those services and this is one of those ways we can grow our own services to meet that demand," Forkel said.

With the new hospital's impending opening, Altru's leadership determined it was time to rethink and modernize the company's mission, vision and values.

"Our vision statement was the most exciting for me. It's who you aspire to be. I love the concept of never being satisfied with what we're doing," Forkel said. "We may be great at what we're doing, but how do we get 1% better at whatever we are working on? That really motivates me as part of any organization to have that guiding north star that we're always going to be working at getting better at what we do."

## ESSENTIA HEALTH

Three of Essentia Health's hospitals have earned a five-star rating from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the highest possible score. Essentia Health-Fargo, Essentia Health-St. Mary's Medical Center and Essentia Health-Duluth are among the most highly-ranked hospitals in the nation.

Hospitals are scored on criteria including mortality rates, readmissions, patient experience, post-op and timely care.

"All the things we want to be known for. It's a great recognition for our staff who are really accomplishing great things. We are fortunate to work with so many excellent clinicians whose commitment

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

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to our mission and values is exhibited every day," said Dr. Richard Vetter, chief medical officer. "We extend our heartfelt gratitude to them for sharing their calling to care for our patients and our communities while making a healthy difference in people's lives."

Essentia Health's Fargo hospital is the only designated baby-friendly hospital in the area, he said. The designation highlights maternal and baby care particularly in regards to breastfeeding.

"We were recertified this past year. It's a testament to our nursing staff and OB/GYN staff in the hospital who provide excellent care for our patients," he said.

In August 2023, Essentia opened a new 6,000-square-foot clinic in Lisbon.

"We've been in the Lisbon community since 2008 with a clinic. We were able to upgrade that. It is about three times bigger than our previous clinic. It allows us to have telehealth capability in every room. It also allowed us to expand our lab and radiology areas to provide more of that care in the community. We're very excited for the Lisbon community and surrounding area," Vetter said.

One piece of technology Essentia has implemented recently is called ScripTalk, allowing prescription labels to be read aloud for patients.

"It's a pharmacy-based text-to-speech technology that our pharmacists can put on somebody's pill bottle, so if somebody has difficulty reading (vision), they can scan it with their smartphone or a device that will read aloud the medication and directions on how to take it. That's something we rolled out recently that we think is a real value-add to those patients who have difficulty reading those small labels or understanding the labels," Vetter said.

Robot-assisted surgeries are also taking place within the Essentia Health system. The Fargo hospital has two da Vinci Xi Surgical Systems, and most recently the St. Mary's-Detroit Lakes facility is now using one. The Xi will be used during gynecologic, colorectal and general surgery procedures, including hysterectomies, resection of endometriosis and ovarian cysts, colon surgery, laparoscopic hernia repair and gallbladder surgery.



DR. RICHARD VETTER,  
 CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER AT  
 ESSENTIA HEALTH, FARGO. /  
 COURTESY JEFF FREY



"The surgery is a little bit harder for the surgeon but easier for the patient. The patient recovers much quicker, has less pain, less bleeding and there's less risk of infections. Patients have shorter hospital stays and get home much quicker," Vetter said.

### JAMESTOWN REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

A Women's Walk-in Clinic was created in January at Jamestown Regional Medical Center. It was created to help patients with female concerns who aren't able to quickly get an appointment with their regular health-care provider. Walk-in care includes diagnosis and treatment for female health concerns including UTIs, sudden onset uterine pain, STD testing, breast pain and IUD checks, among others.

Trisha Jungels, chief nursing officer at JRMC, said the new walk-in clinic has helped shift some of those patients who would have had to visit the ER or urgent care, which use higher level resources.

"We've been able to help people who maybe have lived with something for a while but realized they need a surgical intervention," she said.

The idea for the women's walk-in clinic came from the OB/GYN staff as they considered how to best serve the community.

"Women need access to this care. As a woman, I don't need a referral, I can just go," she said.

Lactation counseling is another recent offering JMRC features as part of its women's service lines. It's available to any woman who



TRISHA JUNGELS, CHIEF  
 NURSING OFFICER AT  
 JAMESTOWN REGIONAL  
 MEDICAL CENTER. /  
 COURTESY JAMESTOWN  
 REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

**"We can be very responsive to community needs."**  
 — Mike Delfs, JRMC president and CEO



is struggling with breastfeeding, whether they delivered their baby there or elsewhere.

"We're able to help mom with that hard, dedicated work and help navigate the difficult journey. It's a great support for women," Jungels said.

Mike Delfs, CEO and president of JRMC, said a variety of specialties are offered at the facility, and patients can access specialists without referrals.

"We're about removing roadblocks to make that happen. It's highly unusual," Delfs said. "If a patient believes they need to see a specialist, they can make an appointment."

JRMC is an independent hospital, which allows administrators to be agile and flexible if changes are needed, Delfs explained.

"We can be very responsive to community needs. We like the fact we're independent and will partner with anyone and everyone to bring in those services, be it a large health system or small systems," he said.

The No Excuses Program was created after it was determined the community was not being served well in the area of mammography screenings. JRMC works with Central Valley Health and Women's Way to ensure there are no barriers to access.

After area dentists reached out to the hospital for help with anesthetized pediatric dentistry, JRMC partnered with Prairie Rose Family Dentists to assist in those situations.

JRMC won a 2024 Best Hospital Award from Women's Choice for obstetrics, which puts it in the top 8.5% of hospitals in the nation. Considerations include how patients are treated, the quality of early delivery rates, best practices in eliminating early elective deliveries, and others.

"Those awards are independent, we don't apply for them," Delfs said. "It's indicative of the organization doing a good job."

"JRMC is on a journey to excellence," Jungels said. "The nursing clinical team is working towards achieving a Pathway to Excellence designation through the American Nurses Association. It's a designation given to organizations that can attest to providing a positive working environment for nurses. If we achieve it, we would be first in North Dakota."

That application process begins in 2025.

## SANFORD HEALTH

Sanford Health's new Center for Digestive Health in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, will be completed this summer. The 45,000-square-foot building, which includes a four-story parking ramp, will add additional space to a growing area of care and will also include a GI fellowship program, the first of its kind in the Dakotas. The intent is to train gastroenterology providers there with the hope they will remain in the region.

"This is something that's been realized for a while. We know that by 2025, we're going to be short 1,600 gastroenterologists in this nation,"



MIKE DELFS, CEO AND PRESIDENT OF JAMESTOWN REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER. / COURTESY JAMESTOWN REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER




DR. JEFFREY MURRAY, CHIEF OF STAFF AT SANFORD USD MEDICAL CENTER AND MEDICAL DIRECTOR AT THE SANFORD CENTER FOR DIGESTIVE HEALTH. / COURTESY SANFORD HEALTH

said Dr. Jeffrey Murray. "We also know with the screening rate being dropped to age 45, which just happened in 2021 with the U.S. Preventative Services Task Force data, we know that allowed 19 million more average risk Americans that needed to be screened."

Murray, chief of staff at Sanford USD Medical Center and clinical professor at the Sanford USD School of Medicine, is also the medical director at the Sanford Center for Digestive Health.

The GI fellowship is designed so that by the physician's third year in the program, they will be functioning as an independent gastroenterologist, Murray explained. They will also help instruct first- and second-year fellows and see patients of their own. The space created for this program will include a dedicated workspace for students as well as an endoscopic simulation space for trainees to learn endoscopic techniques.

Kris Denevan, executive director of Facilities and Support Services at Sanford Health, said the benefits relating to patient experience of the new facility are that the GI clinic and the procedural space are all located together in one setting.

"Today if they go see Dr. Murray in the clinic they go to one building, and if they need a procedure they go to another building," she said. "We're improving the wayfinding and ease on the patients to come and see their provider in one setting, whether that be a clinic visit or a procedure." 



KRIS DENEVAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF FACILITIES AND SUPPORT SERVICES AT SANFORD HEALTH. / COURTESY SANFORD HEALTH



SANFORD HEALTH'S NEW CENTER FOR DIGESTIVE HEALTH IN SIOUX FALLS, SOUTH DAKOTA, WILL BE COMPLETED THIS SUMMER. / COURTESY SANFORD HEALTH

TOM BEHM, CCCA, CDT, CSI, DIRECTOR OF CONSTRUCTION SERVICES WITH JLG ARCHITECTS, GRAND FORKS, AND TRACY JORDRE, AIA, LEED AP, PRINCIPAL WORKPLACE LEADER SHOW AN ARRAY OF SOLAR PANELS ATOP THE DOWNTOWN OFFICE OF JLG ARCHITECTS IN GRAND FORKS. ERIC HYLDEN / GRAND FORKS HERALD



# ARCHITECTURE THAT ELEVATES

## COMFORT MEETS SUSTAINABILITY IN HIGH-PERFORMANCE JLG OFFICE

BY CARRIE MCDERMOTT

The Argyle is the modern five-story building on the corner of Fourth Street South and DeMers Avenue in downtown Grand Forks. It houses JLG Architects, founded in 1989 in the city by the late Gary Johnson and late Lonnie Laffen (originally called Johnson Laffen Architects). Jim Galloway became a partner in 2000 and the company rebranded as JLG.

JLG Architects works in a number of sectors, designing for health care, higher education, sports facilities, recreation and wellness and civic projects, among others. The new Altru hospital in Grand Forks is a JLG project, and the firm is also the local architect for the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library being constructed in Medora, North Dakota, which was designed by international firm Snøhetta.

Although JLG has been around for decades, the building housing its professionals has been in existence for just two years. The company previously occupied space above the Toasted Frog, just a few blocks away.

"We spent just shy of 30 years there and it was always their dream to have their own building and hang their sign on main street," said Tracy Jordre, AIA, LEED AP. "We wanted a bigger opportunity and a bigger impact to the community."

Jordre is the principal workplace leader for the Grand Forks office, and led the design team on the new building.

The goal was to create a thriving mixed-use development that includes residential space, office space and restaurant or retail space — a trend many busy downtowns are now seeing.

"Taking care of our employees is one of our main goals and providing an office where people can truly thrive isn't just a tagline. We mean it to our core," she said. "What we did with the design of this office was our opportunity to dig deep into what we do for our clients and what we did is use this space as a living lab."

JLG's office takes up the entire second floor of the Argyle and part of the ground floor, which is the employee break area. The upper floors are apartments that were filled as quickly as they were available, Jordre said.

The high-performance building is a testament to the company's dedication to sustainability. It's designed to maximize the use of daylight, minimizing the need for electric lighting. It features a solar array on the roof and includes efficiencies in heating, cooling and water use. A digital dashboard is displayed on a monitor at the front desk, showing energy usage throughout the day and the energy the building is making from the solar panels on the roof. It gives daily, monthly and yearly values.

"We wanted to show our clients what could be done not only with enhanced sustainability measures, but also live our values in a very high-integrity way," Jordre said.

For example, the lights dim automatically throughout the day in relation to the amount of daylight coming through the walls of windows.

"That was a big part of our design too, making everything as automated as possible and as smart as possible," she said.

Extensive thought and care was put into choosing the most optimal lighting levels, acoustical levels and materials that would not provide off-gassing or smells that can occur with new carpet or paint.

The workspaces are open with a "hoteling" type design, meaning there are no assigned desks. This will allow for growth. The majority of the 30 or so employees work in the main office space, with a separation for the human resources and accounting teams, which need more privacy.

Smaller meeting rooms are available as well as larger open lounge areas with comfortable sofas and chairs, often used for team huddles or breakouts.

"We were really thoughtful in trying to design different styles of seating and working areas as we could so everyone has the ability to find something that fits best for them wherever they are that day," Jordre said.

Scandinavian-style decor is used throughout the space, which is clean, modern and features natural and neutral colors.



TRACY JORDRE, PRINCIPAL WORKPLACE LEADER AT JLG'S GRAND FORKS OFFICE, AND GRAPHIC DESIGNER CATHERINE DORSHER ARE PHOTOGRAPHED IN A LUNCH AREA BOOTH THAT FEATURES A MURAL OF JLG FOUNDERS LONNIE LAFFEN AND GARY JOHNSON. ERIC HYLDEN / GRAND FORKS HERALD

"For this building, we are pursuing LEED Platinum (certification) and doing the Living Building Challenge. We are partway through getting certification for FitWell, so we're using it as an opportunity to go after more difficult sustainability programs. It can prove how great design plus smart decisions all

the way through doesn't necessarily have to cost more. We wanted this to be a living lab to prove that theory. Lonnie said, in the first meeting I had with him, that this will be a net-zero building. That was not a question — it was a command. And we are pretty darn close," Jordre said. **PR**

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## LEXI PUEV

**School:** Dickinson State University

**Graduation date:** May 11, 2024

**Degree:** Bachelor's degree in exercise science with a minor in leadership

**Career track:** Attend grad school in Davenport, Iowa, at Palmer College of Chiropractic to earn a Doctor of Chiropractic degree.



*Get involved and don't be afraid of messing up. It's part of college, we're all going to make mistakes.*

# SHE'S PROOF WISHES CAN COME TRUE

## DSU ATHLETE SET TO BECOME SPORTS CHIROPRACTOR

BY CARRIE MCDERMOTT

When Lexi Puev was in middle school in Cheyenne, Wyoming, her volleyball coach handed out Brazilian wish anklets to the team. The coach told the young athletes to tie the anklet on, make a wish and not take it off. When their wish came true, the anklet would break.

Puev's wish was to play collegiate volleyball. The anklet remained on for several years into high school, where she was a three-sport athlete and was being recruited by several colleges. During the COVID pandemic, she was on a Zoom call with Dickinson State University's then-volleyball coach, Jennifer Hartman.

"She made a great offer, the campus looked amazing, and afterward, I was like, I don't know. There's still another place to look at," Puev recalled. "I went upstairs and took off my sock and the anklet had broken, which meant my wish had come true. If that's not a sign that I'm going to Dickinson, North Dakota, what will be?"

Puev is finishing up her last courses before graduation on May 11, when she will receive her bachelor's degree in exercise science. She's on a professional track to earn a doc-

torate of chiropractic from the Palmer College of Chiropractic in Davenport, Iowa, and intends to eventually work with athletes.

"I'm very interested in spinal rehabilitation," she said.

As an athlete herself, she was used to getting injured and going through physical rehab. Puev became interested in the chiropractic profession during her sessions, and along with encouragement from family friends who have chiropractic practices of their own, she decided to go into the field.

Originally from Lincoln, Nebraska (population 292,657), Puev said she was skeptical of moving to the smaller town of Dickinson, where the population is around 26,000.

"I got up here and I love it. The culture up here is just phenomenal," she said. "The people are so friendly, everyone's so nice, especially the professors and faculty."

She said the small classes at DSU allow more one-on-one time with instructors. The student to faculty ratio is 13:1, and this academic year there were 1,453 students enrolled.

"Everyone's just so nice. I think that's something I've taken away from these

small towns. I like the idea of building all these personal relationships in the community. That's been super helpful to me," Puev said.

As a TR Scholar (Theodore Roosevelt Honors Leadership Program) she got involved in activities as soon as she arrived. Not only was she on the volleyball team, but she joined the Student Ambassadors, who give tours to new students, attend events and help promote the school. She also became a resident assistant for one of the dorm buildings and has done that for the past two years.

"There's so much going on and you want to get involved in everything, it's overwhelmingly amazing," she said of the number of clubs, organizations and events on campus. The types of clubs include academic, cultural, performing arts, political, religious and special interest groups.

"It feels like there's something for everyone here and that's been very amazing to me because talking to people in class, learning about new things around campus, it really broadens your horizons on what this school has to offer."

It feels like there's something for everyone here and that's been very amazing to me because talking to people in class, learning about new things around campus, it really broadens your horizons on what this school has to offer.

Lexi Puev

Puev steps into leadership roles with ease. She's been a senior leader on the volleyball team for three years and enjoys inspiring the younger students.

"I like helping them to grow and push through the hard times and enjoy the good times. Really stepping up kind of humbled me a little, you don't realize how fast your time goes here," Puev said during her remaining month at the university.

"Being a resident assistant has been a really fulfilling leadership role, as well. Helping the students, keeping them safe around campus, doing different activities with them. I never would have seen myself becoming friends with the entire wrestling team, but by being their resident assistant on their floor, now I know all of them," she said.


Her favorite instructor is Dr. Elizabeth Freedman Fowler, who Puev had for anatomy class.

"I had an amazing experience with her, she's such a great instructor. She really takes the time to know her students and make sure they're succeeding and if not, she's making sure she explains it to you better. She really has challenged me personally and prepared me for what comes next after school," Puev said.

Puev's advice to prospective students is to get involved on campus right away.

"You can't be afraid, we're all going through the same things. Especially on a small campus, you do have time to make those connections and you notice when new students show up, we all know each other," she said. "Whatever your hobbies are, there's probably a club or organization that does those kinds of things. I was so amazed at the amount of opportunities here for people, whether it's being in a club like science or math club, or joining a sport – most coaches allow you to come and try out if you want to be a walk-on."

The college experience is a time to try different areas of interest to figure out what fits a student best.

"Get involved and don't be afraid of messing up," Puev said. "It's part of college, we're all going to make mistakes, fail a test. But the experience allows you to grow as a person while you're here and find what your calling is and figure out what you want to be when you grow up." 

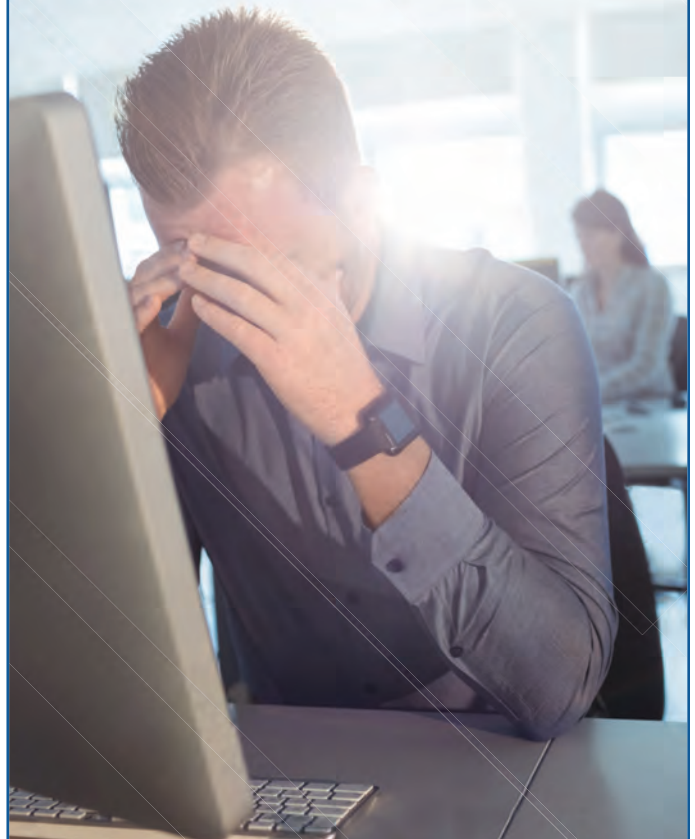
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## GRAND FARM WELCOMES JON ERICKSON AND DR. STEVE KAPPES TO ITS BOARD OF DIRECTORS


**FARGO, N.D.** • Grand Farm has announced the addition of two distinguished individuals to its board of directors. Jon Erickson and Dr. Steven Kappes join the board, bringing with them a wealth of experience and expertise that will further elevate Grand Farm's work.

Erickson, a seasoned leader in cooperative governance and agricultural economics, brings over a decade of experience serving on various boards and committees, including the CHS Board of Directors. Erickson operates the Diamond T Ranch southwest of Minot, North Dakota, where his family raises small grains and oilseeds and has a commercial Hereford-Angus cow-calf operation. As the third generation of his family involved in cooperative leadership, Erickson's deep-rooted passion for agriculture will undoubtedly enrich Grand Farm's strategic initiatives.

Kappes, a distinguished expert in agricultural research and animal production, joins the board fol-

lowing an illustrious career with the USDA ARS. With significant leadership roles within the ARS, including serving as the Associate Administrator for the Office of National Programs, Dr. Kappes has played a pivotal role in shaping national research programs focused on plant and animal sciences. His leadership of the ARS Big Data Initiative underscores his forward-thinking approach to leveraging technology for agricultural innovation.

"We are honored to welcome Jon Erickson and Dr. Steven Kappes to the Grand Farm Board of Directors," said Greg Tehven, Grand Farm Board chair. "Their diverse backgrounds and extensive experience in agriculture will be instrumental in guiding our strategic direction and fostering innovation within agriculture."

The addition of Erickson and Kappes to Grand Farm's Board of Directors reinforces its commitment to creating innovative solutions to challenges in agriculture through technology. 



GRAND FARM'S NEW BOARD MEMBER JON ERICKSON.



GRAND FARM'S NEW BOARD MEMBER DR. STEVE KAPPES.

## HEITKAMP, SNAPP JOIN EMERGING PRAIRIE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**FARGO, N.D.** • Emerging Prairie, an organization dedicated to energizing the startup, innovation, and technology communities, proudly announces the appointment of Heidi Heitkamp and Mary Snapp to its board of directors.


Heidi Heitkamp, a former U.S. Senator from North Dakota, brings with her a wealth of experience in public service. As the first female senator elected from North Dakota, Heitkamp served from 2013 to 2019. Throughout her tenure, she demonstrated a proven ability to work across the aisle to champion initiatives that directly impacted the lives of North Dakotans.

Heitkamp's commitment to addressing the needs of rural America and her advocacy for North Dakota make her a valuable addition to the Emerging Prairie board. Heitkamp currently serves as director of the University of Chicago's Institute of Politics, founder and chair of the One Country Project, and serves on numerous boards including The McCain Institute and The Howard Buffett Foundation.

Joining Heitkamp is Mary Snapp, vice president of Strategic Initiatives at Microsoft. With over three decades of experience at one of the world's leading technology companies, Snapp brings a unique perspective on leveraging technology for social impact.

During her tenure at Microsoft, she has led various initiatives aimed at driving positive change in communities worldwide. She formerly led Microsoft's Global Philanthropies and, before that, served as Deputy General Counsel leading legal support for Microsoft's engineering organizations. She is an active board leader and community volunteer for nonprofit organizations around the country, including the National 4-H Council, The Farm Foundation, and the National FFA Foundation Sponsors' Board. Snapp's dedication to philanthropy and her extensive experience in technology make her an invaluable asset to Emerging Prairie's board.

"We are delighted to welcome Heidi Heitkamp and Mary Snapp to the Board of Directors at Emerging Prairie," said Byron Snider, Emerging Prairie Board Chair. "Their wealth of experience and leadership will be instrumental in guiding the organization as Emerging Prairie continues to support the startup, innovation, and technology communities."

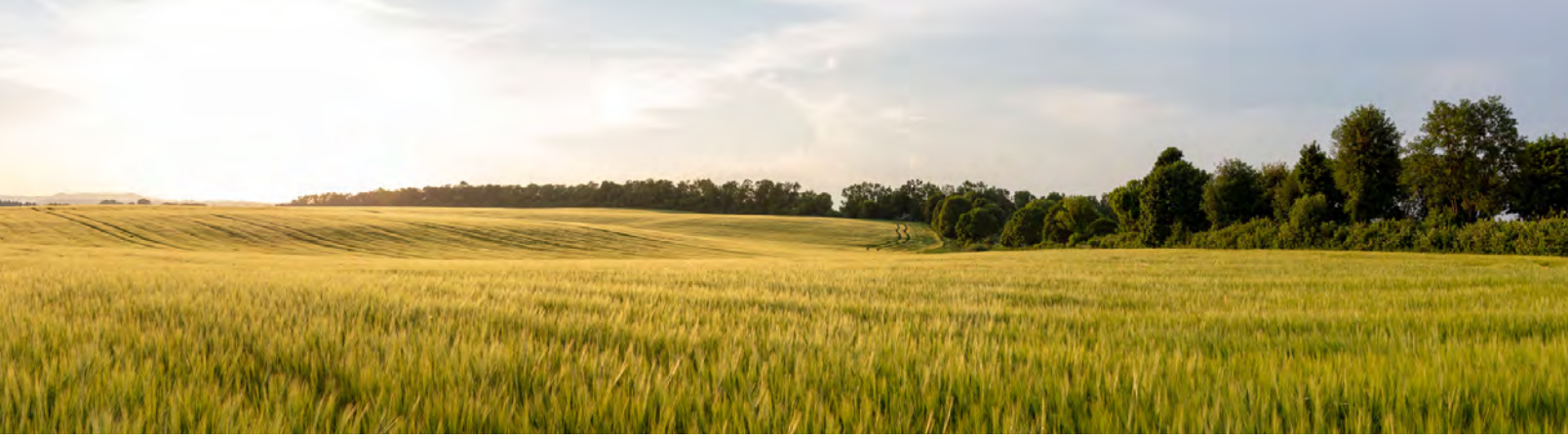
The appointments of Heidi Heitkamp and Mary Snapp further strengthen Emerging Prairie's commitment to energize communities, and the organization looks forward to continued positive impact in the years to come. 



EMERGING PRAIRIE BOARD MEMBER HEIDI HEITKAMP.



EMERGING PRAIRIE BOARD MEMBER MARY SNAPP.



# LEGACY FAMILY BENEFACTORS ESTABLISH NAMED VICE PRESIDENT FOR AGRICULTURE ENDOWMENT

**FARGO, N.D.** • The North Dakota State University Foundation has announced a new endowment to establish the Joe and Norma Peltier Vice President for Agriculture.

Greg Lardy, NDSU vice president for agriculture, will be the inaugural holder of the endowment. A special medallion ceremony celebrating the Peltier family and Lardy will occur during the NDSU Foundation's Evening of Distinction event on April 25, a release states.

"The Peltier family is passionate about NDSU and all that it offers in educating students, conducting world-class research and serving our communities, state and beyond," NDSU President Dave

Cook said. "This investment will be a catalyst in providing flexible funding for agricultural initiatives that are key for our university and state."

The establishment of the Peltier Vice President endowment is the second of its kind at NDSU. Ron and Kaye Olson established the named Dean of the College of Business endowment in 2017. Kathryn Birkeland currently holds the title of Ronald G. and Kaye S. Olson Dean of the College of Business. One of NDSU Foundation's funding priorities is to establish named deanships or administrative positions for key leadership roles on campus.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23

"I am thrilled to be named the inaugural holder of the Joe and Norma Peltier Endowed Vice President for Agriculture position at NDSU," Lardy said. "The Peltier family name is intricately linked with NDSU Agriculture, and I am privileged to hold this endowed position named in their honor. The earnings from the endowment will further our work within NDSU Agriculture as we seek to grow the impact that we can make with our teaching, research, and extension programs that are so vital to the state of North Dakota and its agricultural industry."

The late Joe and Norma Peltier were long-time benefactors and passionate supporters of higher education in North Dakota. Their legacy of involvement and support continues through their four children and extended families. The family traces its NDSU roots back to the university's founding and first class of students. Jessamine Slaughter Burgum was the first female student to attend what was the North Dakota Agriculture College, now NDSU. She was Joe's grandmother.

Norma, who was born in Halstad, Minnesota, grew up on a farm in Grandin, North Dakota, and spent much of her life in agriculture. She earned her teaching degree and was employed at elementary schools in Clearbrook, Minnesota, and Kindred, North Dakota, until she married Joe Peltier.

Joe was a 1951 NDSU graduate in math and education. After two years working in U.S. Army counterintelligence in Pennsylvania, Joe returned to Arthur, North Dakota, and grew the family farm and associated businesses. He became an influential leader in North Dakota agriculture and in service to his community, region and state.

Norma and Joe's children — Keith Peltier, Jeff Peltier, Suzette Peltier, and Betty-Jo Peltier Wilson — each graduated from NDSU, as did many of their grandchildren.

Supporting NDSU is a tradition that started early for the Peltier family. Norma and Joe's longstanding dedication to NDSU academics and athletics has included the Peltier Endowment for Innovation in Teaching, Don Larew Scholarship, Jessamine Slaughter Burgum Scholarship, Joe Peltier Award for Risk Management and the Peltier Complex, a state-of-the-art agriculture facility opening this summer.

"With all their dedication to higher education, Mom and Dad would be proud to see



GREG LARDY, NDSU VICE PRESIDENT FOR AGRICULTURE, WILL BE THE INAUGURAL HOLDER OF THE JOE AND NORMA PELTIER VICE PRESIDENT FOR AGRICULTURE ENDOWMENT. / SUBMITTED

**With all their dedication to higher education, Mom and Dad would be proud to see this come to fruition.**

— Jeff Peltier said,  
on behalf of the family

this come to fruition," Jeff Peltier said, on behalf of the family.

Named endowments provide strategic, perpetual funding for the holder of the position. The dollars can be used in several areas, including scholarships, staffing and faculty support, research equipment or other priorities for the program.

"We are grateful to the Peltier family for once again demonstrating their belief and confidence in NDSU and what it offers to the state and world," NDSU Foundation President/CEO John Glover said. "Transformative endowments like these really make a difference for the programs they support, and we look forward to seeing the outcomes produced from the investments made in Agriculture."

The endowment's principal is commingled with other endowed assets of the NDSU Foundation to generate annual earnings for spending. Each year, 4% of the earnings are made available. The Foundation's overall endowment was valued at \$464.2 million as of Dec. 31, 2023. More than 99% of the endowed funds are designated according to donor intent. **PB**





**DEREK  
BENDICKSON**

### **BENDICKSON PROMOTED TO ENVIRONMENTAL TEAM LEADER**

BISMARCK, N.D. • KLJ Engineering LLC (KLJ), is pleased to announce that Derek Bendickson has been promoted to an Environmental Team Leader at KLJ. Bendickson, who is based out of Bismarck, North Dakota, has nearly a decade of experience in the environmental engineering field. His experience includes serving as an environmental planner in several projects in North Dakota, South Dakota, and Montana. Bendickson's extensive background includes botany and wildlife surveys, Endangered Species Act compliance, wetland delineations, stormwater inspections, and more.

In his new role, Bendickson will oversee strategic development, deliver influential leadership, and prioritize future innovation for our environmental services, ensuring they align with the evolving needs of our clients and industry.



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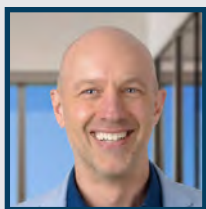


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## JLG PROMOTES TWO, HIRES ONE TO NATIONAL SPORTS STUDIO

**GRAND FORKS, N.D.** • JLG Architects has announced three strategic moves to expand the footprint of its national Sports Studio. A new hire and two principal promotions bolster the firm's depth of expertise in multi-sport and mixed-use entertainment venues, community recreation centers, and ice facilities.

JLG Architects has welcomed Ryan Rademacher AIA, principal, to the firm's national Sports Studio team. Rademacher, formerly of MG McGrath, brings 23 years of architectural experience, with specialized expertise in Virtual Design and Construction, complex and high-performing facades and strategic operations planning. He will set and implement the strategic vision for the design of sports and community recreational facilities, including management of the technical development of system design.

Rademacher joins JLG's team of nearly 200 employee-owners and the firm's award-winning Sports Studio led by Tom Betti, AIA, NCARB, principal architect, along with Adam Barnett, AIA, principal architect, and Adam Davidson, AIA, LEED AP, principal architect.

"We're excited to welcome Ryan as a Principal in our Sports Studio. He brings a wealth of business development and project management expertise," said Betti. "Ryan is a passionate architect who will help build and maintain client relationships to ensure their vision and needs are met. He's a proven leader of people, process, and projects, and brings to our Sports Studio innovation, growth, and high-performance design."

### Adam Davidson promoted to principal architect

Adam Davidson, a United States Army combat veteran and registered architect in North Dakota, Oregon, Minnesota and South Dakota, was promoted to principal architect. Davidson has led JLG's project teams and collegiate clients since 2016, completing some of the firm's most significant sports projects, including Augustana University's Midco Arena in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, Colorado College's Ed Robson Arena, and Xtream Arena in Coralville, Iowa. Davidson is currently leading the

Athletics Event Center at Dakota State University in Madison, South Dakota. The Athletic Events Center will feature upgrades to the football field, esports arena, a new soccer field, and relocated track and field. The facility is part of the larger Athletics Master Plan completed by JLG, which consolidates all sports programs into one district.

"Adam continually brings strong leadership with a detail-oriented approach to sports architecture — he's able to channel critical analysis invaluable to the fan, campus, and student-athlete experience," said Betti.

### Adam Barnett promoted to principal architect

Adam Barnett, AIA, recreation and sports specialist, has also been promoted to principal architect. With 15 years of experience, Barnett spearheads the firm's community and recreation projects, leveraging recreation facility studies, sports and rec programming, and community growth trends.

A Registered Architect in Minnesota and North Dakota, Barnett has been part of the region's most successful rec centers, including White Bear Lake Sports Center in White Bear Lake, Minnesota, Prairie Lakes Wellness Center in Watertown, South Dakota, Rough Rider Events Center in Watford City, North Dakota, and the award-winning Frogtown Community Center in St. Paul, Minnesota. He is currently leading the design of the Runestone Community Center addition in Alexandria, Minnesota. This addition looks to maximize the city of Alexandria's opportunities for concerts, curling, figure skating, graduations, hockey, open skating, seminars and trade shows.

"Adam is a true leader and visionary in the community sport and recreation market," said Betti. "He balances a technical understanding of how a sports complex operates efficiently, with a 'sweat equity' design sensibility for design solutions that engage and excite."

"I'm excited for what's to come — this leadership team and the young energy that we're bringing to the Sports Studio is going to be a game-changer. It will be fun to see where that energy can take us and how much our studio grows," Barnett said.



**SAM  
WILSON**

## WILSON JOINS APEX SURVEY GROUP

**BISMARCK, N.D.** • Apex Engineering Group hired Sam Wilson as a survey crew chief supporting the Bismarck office. He brings 16 years of surveying and project coordination to his role at Apex. He holds an associate degree in civil technology and land surveying from NDSCS. Most recently, Wilson worked for a surveying and mapping company in St. Louis, Missouri.

## EPIC HIRES AMANDA LAKEMAN TO LEASING TEAM

**WEST FARGO, N.D.** • EPIC Companies is thrilled to welcome Amanda Lakeman to the team. She will be an invaluable addition to our talented leasing team in West Fargo. She is a native of Borup, Minnesota.



**AMANDA  
LAKEMAN**



**NADINE  
SWEET**

### **SWEET NAMED SENIOR MARKETING MANAGER AT MOORE HOLDING CO.**

**WEST FARGO, N.D.** • Nadine Sweet was promoted to senior marketing manager at Moore Holding Company. In her new role, she is responsible for coordinating with the enterprise's operating companies to advance their relationship efforts, driving revenue and attaining growth goals.

She brings unique expertise and extended success in marketing automation and client relationship management. Her knowledge and familiarity with the digital advertising and marketing space provides the enterprise with the dynamic, robust solutions it requires to compete in the modern marketplace.

Sweet has been at Moore Holding Company for two years, and spent the prior 11 years at Titan Machinery managing marketing automation and overseeing digital activities.

She will manage the Marketing team and be responsible for all traditional and digital marketing communication efforts, marketing intelligence, analytics, video production, and social media.

Sweet earned a bachelor's degree in graphic design from The Art Institute, and is currently pursuing a master's degree in business administration (MBA) with emphases in marketing and digital analytics from the University of California, Davis - Graduate School of Management.

She is a West Fargo native and currently resides there with her husband and two daughters. Sweet is passionate about bowling and is a member of the Fargo-Moorhead Bowling Hall of Fame.

### **PENFIELD JOINS APEX GIS TEAM**

**FARGO, N.D.** • Tim Penfield brings 32 years of experience in the AEC industry to his new GIS coordinator role at Apex Engineering Group. His experience in the civil engineering sectors of water, sanitary, stormwater, and transportation spans many years through various data models and client implementation. Tim has a bachelor's degree in geography from Gustavus Adolphus College.



**TIM  
PENFIELD**

### **MATHISON JOINS APEX WATER RESOURCES GROUP**

**DETROIT LAKES, Minn.** • Bryce Mathison joined Apex Engineering Group as a project engineer in Detroit Lakes. In his role, he works with the Water Resources Group. He has six years of experience in engineering and land surveying. He is a licensed professional land surveyor in North Dakota, has an FAA Drone Pilot's license, and is an engineer in training.

Mathison earned a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the University of North Dakota.



**BRYCE  
MATHISON**



**JANE  
VANGSNES FRISCH**

### **FMWF CHAMBER NAMES JANE VANGSNES FRISCH AS VICE PRESIDENT OF WORKFORCE**

**FARGO, N.D.** • Jane Vangsness Frisch, Ph.D., has been named the Vice President of Workforce at the Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce. Dr. Vangsness Frisch brings a wealth of expertise in higher education administration, community advocacy and strategic planning to her new role.

Vangsness Frisch is recognized for her exceptional leadership and dedication to rural communities. With a career spanning over a decade in higher education and public service, she has spearheaded numerous initiatives and research projects aimed at enhancing college students' success, fostering workforce and economic development, and advancing diversity and equity programs.

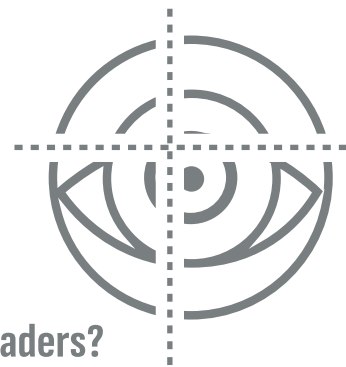
"The Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce is thrilled to welcome Dr. Jane Vangsness Frisch to its team and looks forward to her invaluable contributions in advancing workforce development initiatives and strengthening our communities," said Shannon Full, FMWF Chamber president and CEO.

Prior to joining the Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce, Vangsness Frisch served as an independent consultant, providing invaluable consultation, evaluation, and strategic

planning support to non-profit organizations and higher education institutions since 2022. Her previous roles include vice president for Student Affairs and Strategy at North Dakota State College of Science, where she also served as assistant vice president of Student Success and director of Student Success and Career Services.

Vangsness Frisch's commitment to community service extends beyond her professional endeavors. She serves as a peer reviewer for the Higher Learning Commission and sits on the board of directors for Ortonville Area Health Services and the Sioux Falls Region Sanford Health Network Board. She has also been actively involved with organizations such as the West Central (Minnesota) Initiative, the Rape and Abuse Crisis Center of Fargo-Moorhead, and the North Dakota Women in Higher Education Network.

A proud alumna of North Dakota State University, Vangsness Frisch earned a bachelor's degree in mass communication, a master's degree in mass communication, and a doctorate in education with an emphasis in institutional analysis. She was selected as an Aspen Presidential Fellow in 2019-2020, further underscoring her dedication to excellence in leadership.



# Q. INSIGHTS & INTUITION

## How does your organization train and support young leaders?



**Joan McCusker**

EVP of Operations  
and Corporate  
Strategy  
BCBSND  
Fargo, N.D.

At Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota, we believe strong leadership isn't about having all the answers. It's about empowering talented individuals to leverage their strengths for a shared purpose. That's why we're passionate about cultivating all of our leaders, including young leaders.

We give young professionals an opportunity to lead, regardless of their title. BlueSquad, our internal culture committee, includes young professionals who spearhead impactful initiatives that benefit our employees, culture and the community. We equip them with the budget, mentorship, and support they need, allowing them to learn by doing and build their leadership skills.

We prepare our employees to succeed by offering a leadership development program to equip young leaders with the necessary tools to help them understand and believe they can lead from any seat. Mentorship opportunities, tuition reimbursement, and online courses are available to everyone, fostering a culture of continuous learning.

Our internship program is a launchpad for young leaders. Interns collaborate on real projects, participate in volunteerism, and complete a capstone project under dedicated mentors. It's a hands-on learning experience that allows them to develop their skills while contributing meaningfully.

Open communication is the foundation of trust within our teams. We have a dedicated internal communications strategy that fosters transparency and supports a shared vision. This helps young leaders see the bigger picture and feel invested in the company's success.

Our goal is to create a supportive and growth-oriented environment where young leaders can flourish. It's how we ensure a strong pipeline of empowered leaders for the future.

In simplest terms, we align our training to the firm's mission, vision, purpose and values.

Our strategy with talent development at Eide Bailly has always been to identify the current and anticipated needs of our staff at each phase of their career and provide targeted, robust, and timely training to meet those needs. We accomplish this through a phenomenal team of facilitators and support staff who create meaningful and memorable learning events, webcasts, eLearning programs and support materials. And of course, tracking it all for our accountants' licensure requirements. It takes a village!

We are fortunate to have talented people who love to share their knowledge, whether that's complicated tax, assurance, technology training or leadership development.

We focus on staying ahead of industry changes, adjusting to challenges, and pivoting to ensure we meet training needs in a productive environment. I'm grateful that our team tends to thrive on such challenges! During the pandemic we needed to convert what would have been numerous live events to all virtual trainings. It was important to us to provide the best learning experiences for our staff, and we knew that sitting on a Zoom training for eight hours would not only be painful, but also ineffective from a learner's perspective. We developed prework modules and created a blended learning experience that combined prework with live virtual training to make the most of the participants' time, and it was a success. Providing diversity in training modalities is important and creates an environment for learning and growing.



**Amy Jokinen**

Learning and  
Development  
Senior Manager  
Eide Bailly  
Fargo, N.D.



# EXPAND YO

At First International Bank & Trust, we believe that anyone can be a leader, regardless of title or tenure. And we know that leadership is a learned trait. Everyone has it in themselves to be an effective leader if they decide to work at it. That's why we offer a variety of opportunities for all employees to learn and grow. More specifically for young leaders, we are committed to setting them up for success by providing relevant and actionable training that meets their needs, and the needs of the organization.

Our line-up of programming includes:

Crucial Conversations® for Mastering Dialogue teaches skills in effectively handling difficult conversations, achieving healthy dialogue, and getting results.

DiSC® has become a common language for our organization with training focused on communication styles and enhancing working relationships.

Our Women's Leadership Program encourages personal and professional growth through connection, self-discovery, and learning.

Leadership Academy elevates the abilities of leaders at all levels to develop individuals, teams, and the organization through advanced leadership topics.

Our ongoing development programs, Leadership Evolution and Manager Concepts Series, cover intentional topics that evolve as our organization changes and grows, providing leaders with knowledge and tools for leading others.

And our newest program, Leadership Foundations, will provide participants with foundational leadership capabilities, while helping us build a pipeline of potential future leaders.

We are constantly evaluating our employee education and adjusting content to align with our ever-changing environment. Remaining flexible allows us to make the greatest, positive impact on the lives of all employees.



**Kacie  
Weber**

Director of  
Organizational  
Development  
First Interstate  
Bank and Trust  
Fargo, N.D.



**Michael  
J. Burns,**  
AIA, CID, NCARB

President  
Michael J. Burns  
Architects, Ltd  
Moorhead, Minn.

Successful leadership must be positive. It is about character development and helping others find their true potential. I believe that leadership must be consistent and unbiased, open to listening to all ideas, including opposing opinions. Long ago, I recognized that I don't know what's best in all cases, so I encourage others to provide feedback to do what's best for the entire group. This is one advantage of being a smaller firm that larger ones may not have. Having a good leader as a mentor also extends to other activities beyond the firm. For some, it may be continuing education, serving on volunteer boards, mingling with colleagues, and having informal discussions with friends, family, and business acquaintances. I believe that sound, consistent leadership will inspire staff to perform to their very best.

The true essence of leadership is encapsulated in the principles of integrity and humility. We manifest this by enabling young staff members and interns to actively engage in design work rather than limiting them to only drafting or other menial tasks. This approach catalyzes their professional growth and cultivates a culture of humility and respect within our firm. It underscores the pivotal role of leadership in nurturing talent, inspiring us all to strive for excellence.

By allowing young staff members and interns to accept responsibility beyond their years of experience and recognize their creative abilities, we are empowering them. Their self-confidence grows, and the recognition from other experienced staff also increases their confidence, contributing to their success. Other training and support for young leaders include attending professional events to continue their education and broaden their perspectives. We advise students/interns to help them meet the NCARB requirements for professional registration.

The more a person experiences success, the better leader and architect they will become. It's my privilege to bestow and share these qualities with our staff, who will be tomorrow's successful leaders.

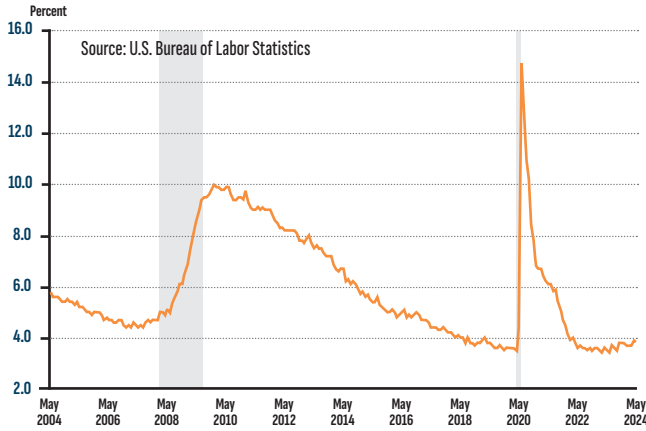
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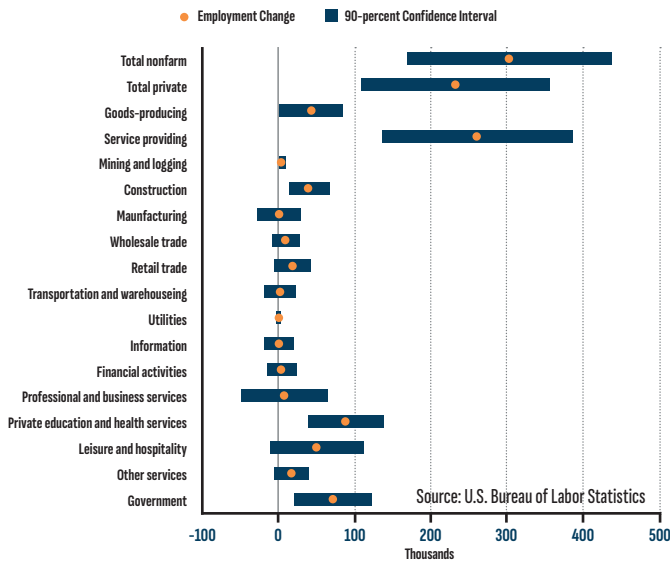
### CIVILIAN UNEMPLOYMENT RATE, SEASONALLY ADJUSTED

Both the unemployment rate, at 3.8 percent, and the number of unemployed people, at 6.4 million, changed little in March. The unemployment rate has been in a narrow range of 3.7 percent to 3.9 percent since August 2023.



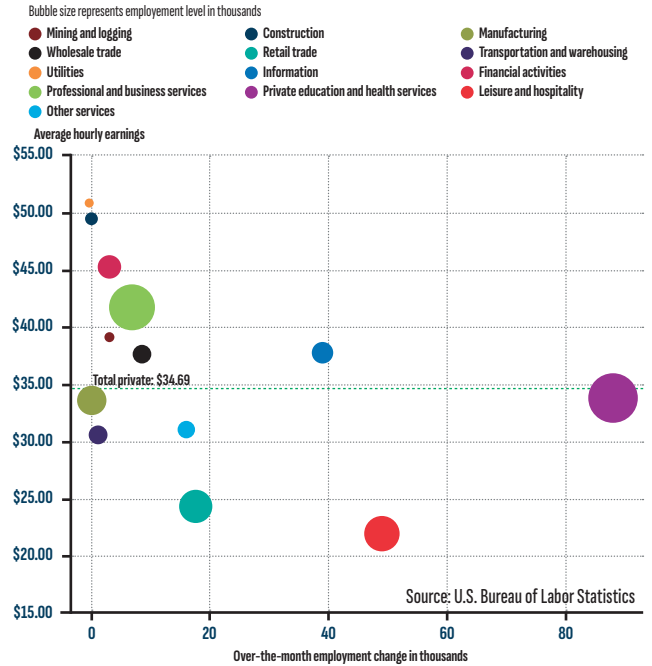
### EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY, MONTHLY CHANGES, WITH CONFIDENCE INTERVALS

Total nonfarm payroll employment rose by 303,000 in March, higher than the average monthly gain of 231,000 over the prior 12 months. In March, job gains occurred in health care, government, and construction. Health care added 72,000 jobs in March, above the average monthly gain of 60,000 over the prior 12 months. Employment in government increased by 71,000, higher than the average monthly gain of 54,000 over the prior 12 months. Construction added 39,000 jobs in March, about double the average monthly gain of 19,000 over the prior 12 months. Employment in leisure and hospitality trended up in March (+49,000) and has returned to its pre-pandemic February 2020 level.



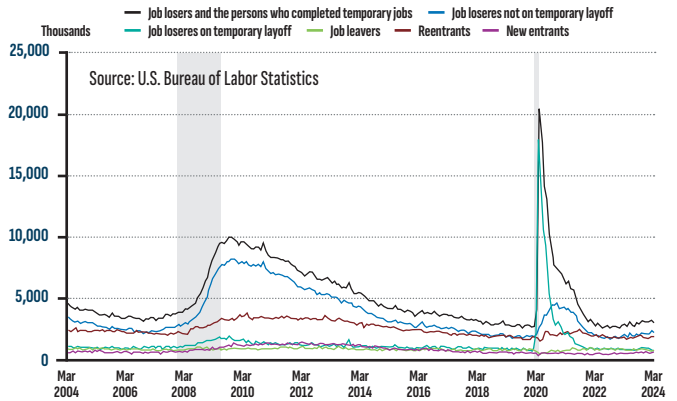
### EMPLOYMENT AND AVERAGE HOURLY EARNINGS BY INDUSTRY

In March, average hourly earnings for all employees on private nonfarm payrolls increased by 12 cents, or 0.3 percent, to \$34.69. Over the past 12 months, average hourly earnings have increased by 4.1 percent. In March, average hourly earnings of private-sector production and nonsupervisory employees edged up by 7 cents, or 0.2 percent, to \$29.79.



### REASONS FOR UNEMPLOYMENT

In March, the number of people not in the labor force who currently want a job, at 5.4 million, was little changed. These individuals were not counted as unemployed because they were not actively looking for work during the 4 weeks preceding the survey or were unavailable to take a job. Among those not in the labor force who wanted a job, the number of people marginally attached to the labor force, at 1.6 million, was little changed in March. These individuals wanted and were available for work and had looked for a job sometime in the prior 12 months but had not looked for work in the 4 weeks preceding the survey. The number of discouraged workers, a subset of the marginally attached who believed that no jobs were available for them, was little changed at 337,000 in March.



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