

NEWS MINNESOTA

Suspect shot, killed by law enforcement at Polk County residence

The sheriff's office and the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension are investigating



A residence, located at 19115 445th Ave. SW in Rhinehart Township, is blocked off with yellow tape after a suspect was shot by a law enforcement officer inside on Jan. 9, 2024. Sav Kelly / Grand Forks Herald



By **Sav Kelly**

January 09, 2024 at 2:00 PM

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POLK COUNTY, Minn. — A suspect was shot and killed by a law enforcement officer on Tuesday, Jan. 9, at a Rhinehart Township residence.

The Polk County Sheriff's Office, East Grand Forks Police Department and Pine to Prairie Drug Task Force executed a search warrant on the residence, according to a news release from the sheriff's office.

The suspect, who remains unnamed in the release, exited the residence at one point but then returned inside. Officers followed, and shortly after, the suspect was shot, the release said.

The suspect was transported to Altru Hospital by ambulance. An Altru spokesman told the Herald they would not release information about the patient's condition, and deferred to law enforcement.

The Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension shared on social media that the suspect died from the shooting.

"More information to come once our preliminary investigation is complete," the agency posted.

Both the BCA and sheriff's office will be investigating the incident.

The Herald reached out to the sheriff's office, but the agency declined to comment further than the information shared in its early afternoon news release.

"I can assure you that it's a safe scene," East Grand Forks Police Officer Justin Roue told the Herald on the scene around 2 p.m. "At this point, it's just an investigation."

Roue said he'd been sent shortly after noon to enforce a perimeter at the intersection of 190th Street Southwest and 445th Avenue Southwest.

A residence at 19115 445th Ave. SW was blocked off with yellow tape.

Law enforcement from the BCA, sheriff's office and police

department were still on scene nearing 4 p.m. Tuesday, when a school bus arrived to drop off some neighborhood children.

Officers were allowing residents and law enforcement to pass through the affected block, but media was not permitted to enter.

BREAKING NEWS **NEWS MINNESOTA**

Family identifies East Grand Forks man killed by law enforcement

The man was shot early Tuesday afternoon at a residence in Rhinehart Township, just outside of East Grand Forks



A residence, located at 19115 445th Ave. SW in Rhinehart Township, is blocked off with yellow tape after a suspect was shot by a law enforcement officer inside on Jan. 9, 2024. Sav Kelly / Grand Forks Herald



By **Sav Kelly**

January 10, 2024 at 10:59 AM

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POLK COUNTY, Minn. — The man shot and killed by law enforcement in Rhinehart Township on **Tuesday afternoon, Jan. 9**, has been identified by his aunt.

The deceased is Lucas Gilbertson, 42, of East Grand Forks. The

shooting took place at his mother's residence, according to Jane Gilbertson, his aunt.

According to a Tuesday news release from the Polk County Sheriff's Office, the sheriff's office, East Grand Forks Police Department and Pine to Prairie Drug Task Force were executing a search warrant on the residence at the time.

The release says Gilbertson — whom law enforcement didn't identify at the time, but has since been identified by family — exited the residence, then returned inside.

Officers followed Gilbertson inside, and he was shot shortly after, the release said. His mother was there at the time, Jane Gilbertson told the Herald.

Lucas Gilbertson was transported to Altru Hospital by ambulance. The Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension later confirmed in a social media post that he died.

First cold snap of the season imminent

Weekend wind chill temperatures could reach 40 degrees below zero

BY SAV KELLY
Grand Forks Herald

GRAND FORKS — Don't let the imminent cold snap take you by surprise.

The season's first round of extremely cold conditions are expected

to begin on Friday morning, Jan. 12, continuing throughout the weekend and into Monday, Jan. 15, according to Vince Godon, meteorologist at the National Weather Service in Grand Forks.

"We're definitely getting the coldest we've

been so far this winter," Godon said. "It's definitely been a warmer winter than normal."

Grand Forks nightly lows are -6 on Thursday, -7 Friday, -15 Saturday and -11 Sunday, according to the Wednesday afternoon, Jan. 10, NWS

forecast.

"Right now, it looks like Sunday morning may be the coldest, with temperatures between 15 and 20 below (zero)," Godon told the Herald on Tuesday, Jan. 9.

The high for Sunday morning, Jan. 14, is near

-5 degrees.

WDAY forecasts are a bit warmer, with temperatures expected to hover around zero degrees to -15, according to John Wheeler, meteorologist.

"You might get a few temps as cold as -20, but most of it won't be that

cold," Wheeler said.

In Grand Forks, wind chill is expected to be anywhere from -25 to -40 degrees throughout the weekend, Godon said.

Weekend wind gusts may reach 32 mph, according

ZERO on A5

Hammer to run for US House

BY MATTHEW VOIGT
Grand Forks Herald

GRAND FORKS — Trygve Hammer has announced his candidacy for North Dakota's seat in the U.S. House of Representatives.



Hammer previously ran as a candidate for the North Dakota Public Service Commission and serves as District 5 chairman for the Democratic-NPL Party. Hammer lives in Minot with his wife, Kelly, and has three adult children. He is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and holds a bachelor's degree in chemistry.

The former Marine has served as a helicopter pilot and air traffic controller and also served in Iraq. He has taught science to high school students, worked as a roughneck in the Bakken oil fields and was a freight rail conductor. He is originally from Velva, North Dakota.

Hammer is running as a Democrat and will face incumbent Republican Rep. Kelly Armstrong in November. Armstrong was first elected as North Dakota's representative to Congress in 2018, taking over when Kevin Cramer moved to the Senate.

For Hammer, a big issue is getting the U.S. House of Representatives to work and, in his opinion, functional.

"You've got this subset of (Republicans) that have absolutely no

HAMMER on A3

'HE WAS SCARED TO DEATH'



A residence, located on 445th Avenue Southwest in Rhinehart Township, is blocked off with yellow tape after a suspect was shot by a law enforcement officer inside on Jan. 9, 2024.

EGF man killed by law enforcement was wanted for conditional release violations

BY SAV KELLY
Grand Forks Herald

POLK COUNTY, MINN.

The East Grand Forks man who died after being shot by law enforcement officers on Tuesday, Jan. 9, was accused of violating his conditional release and for failing to appear in court.

Lucas Paul Gilbertson, 42, was shot by a still-unnamed officer — or officers — sometime after noon at his mother's home in Rhinehart Township. The Herald spoke with a family member, Jane Gilbertson, who confirmed her nephew's death.

His mother was present

at the time of the shooting, Jane Gilbertson said.

Information about the incident remained scant as of Wednesday. The Herald reported on Tuesday that the Polk County Sheriff's Office, East Grand Forks Police Department and Pine to Prairie Drug Task Force were at the 445th Avenue Southwest residence looking for Lucas Gilbertson. He exited the house at one point, then returned inside, where officers followed and shot him.

Lucas Gilbertson was transported to Altru Hospital by ambulance, according to a sheriff's office press release. He didn't survive surgery, his aunt said.

"They couldn't get him

to stop bleeding," Jane Gilbertson said. "He just didn't make it. He bled out."

On Wednesday, area law enforcement, Rhinehart Township leaders and various East Grand Forks City Council members either declined comment, said they couldn't comment due to lack of knowledge, or didn't respond to the Herald's inquiries.

A public information officer for the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension confirmed the BCA had taken over the investigation into Gilbertson's death. The BCA is statutorily required to investigate incidents that involve law enforcement use of force when

requested to do so, PIO Bonney Bowman said.

"When that happens, we do take over the entirety of the investigation — with what happened in the incident, the officers involved and the person who was involved," she told the Herald.

Bowman declined to answer most of the Herald's questions due to the ongoing nature of the investigation, and it remains unclear who was involved in the shooting, what agency or agencies they belonged to, and how many times Gilbertson was shot.

A preliminary investigation is underway and when it's completed, additional details will be

released to the public. This release is expected Friday, Jan. 12, at the earliest, and Monday, Jan. 15, at the latest, Bowman told the Herald.

A complete investigation into a deadly use-of-force incident typically takes around two months, she said. During this time, any available video will be thoroughly reviewed, follow-up interviews will be completed, forensic evidence will be processed and all relevant records will be examined — such as agency training and policy records — according to the BCA.

After the investigation concludes, BCA Force Investigations Unit

SCARED on A2

Rios removed from committee for berating police during DUI arrest

BY MICHAEL
ACHERLING
North Dakota Monitor

North Dakota legislative leaders this week removed Rep. Nico Rios from the interim Judiciary Committee after the Williston lawmaker berated police officers during a December drunk driving arrest.

House Majority Leader Mike Lefor, R-Dickinson, chair of Legislative

Management, which oversees interim committee assignments, said that Rios' comments during his arrest were inappropriate for a committee that routinely takes testimony from law enforcement.

Rios, arrested on Dec. 15 for DUI and test refusal, made a series of homophobic and racist comments toward the arresting officer during the more than hour-long traffic stop and booking process, which was captured on an officer-worn body camera.

"I wasn't going to

subject members of the law enforcement community to have to testify in front of a committee in which he was a member," Lefor said.

Rios, a Republican, also attempted to use his position as a lawmaker to influence the officer, the video shows.

Lefor has called on Rios to resign, as have leaders of the District 23 GOP, which endorsed Rios as a freshman legislator for the 2022 election.

Holand Neubauer, chair of the District 23 GOP, said Rios has not responded to the district's Dec. 29

call for his resignation. "He's been asked and we're kind of waiting for his decision before we can make any decision on our end," Neubauer said.

The district executive committee has contacted the North Dakota Secretary of State's office to inquire about the steps, signature requirements and procedures of a possible recall, Neubauer said. However, members want to hear from Rios directly on whether he intends to resign before going any further.

Multiple attempts to contact Rios for comment

this week were unsuccessful.

In a Dec. 27 statement on social media, Rios apologized to law enforcement and said he understands why people are calling for his resignation. He stated he is "mulling" all aspects of his future. Court records show he's scheduled for a Feb. 5 hearing.

In a letter to the Williston Herald, Williston Mayor Howard Klug admonished Rios' behavior and said the citizens of Williston deserve better representation.

Lefor said decisions

about Rios' future may ultimately come down to the voters of his district.

Legislative Management is unlikely to name a replacement for Rios on the interim Judiciary Committee because there are already 18 members assigned, including 11 House members and seven state senators, Lefor said.

"The number of interim committee spots that we allocated this session was far higher than other sessions," Lefor said.

This story was originally published on NorthDakotaMonitor.com.

Grand Forks man sentenced for shooting at occupied vehicle

BY SAV KELLY
Grand Forks Herald

GRAND FORKS — A Grand Forks man accused of shooting a gun at an occupied vehicle, evading law enforcement and other crimes changed his plea and was sentenced on Monday, Jan. 8.

Omar Agustín Martínez, 26, was originally charged with Class A felony attempted murder. He was granted a plea agreement, amending the crime to Class C felony terrorizing with a dangerous weapon, which he pleaded guilty to.

Martínez also pleaded guilty to two counts of Class C felony reckless endangerment - extreme indifference.

His remaining charges — Class A misdemeanor fleeing a police officer, Class B misdemeanor refusal to halt and Class B misdemeanor disorderly conduct — were dismissed.

On May 21, Grand Forks police responded to the Altru emergency room for a man who'd been shot, according to an affidavit filed in the case.

The man, Rey Sosa, told police he'd been driving westbound on DeMers Avenue, with his juvenile child in the front passenger seat, when Martínez shot at the vehicle.

Sosa's ex-girlfriend

and the mother of his child, Abilene Corona, was dating Martínez at the time. Martínez believed Corona and Sosa were involved again behind his back, according to the affidavit.

The night prior, Martínez damaged Sosa's car and fled from police, the affidavit said. Martínez showed up at Sosa's residence, kicked in the door and got into a physical altercation that resulted in his arrest.

After getting out of custody just hours later, Martínez pursued Sosa — this time with a weapon, which Corona described as a rifle-style firearm, the affidavit said.

After the shooting, law enforcement struggled to find Martínez. Heevaded arrest for more than a month, but was ultimately apprehended on July 6.

Martínez was sentenced to five years in the shooting case and three years in the fleeing case during a plea hearing at the Grand Forks County Courthouse.

The sentences will be served consecutively, adding up to eight years at the North Dakota Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. As part of the plea agreement, he forfeited all seized items, including the gun.

Martínez has credit for 188 days in custody. He will serve no probation time upon release.

Grand Forks business leader Mike Fridolfi announces candidacy for Grand Forks' Ward 5 council seat

BY MATTHEW VOIGT
Grand Forks Herald

GRAND FORKS — Grand Forks business leader Mike Fridolfi has announced his candidacy for the Grand Forks City Council Ward 5 seat.

Fridolfi is the site director for Northrop Grumman's Grand Sky location in Grand Forks. Northrop Grumman is an aerospace, defense and security company that works in the autonomous aviation industry. Fridolfi is also a member of the Grand Forks Air Service Expansion Committee, the Grand Forks Economic Development Corporation's Advisory Board, and the Grand Forks - East Grand Forks Chamber of Commerce Executive Committee.

"I want to be deeper in the community and deeper as part of the fabric of what we do," Fridolfi said. "The opportunity is there for me to continue to build on the greatness that this community has."

Fridolfi is running for the Ward 5 council seat currently held by Kyle Kvamme, who was first elected in an unopposed race in 2020 and whose term ends in June. Ward 5 covers the southeast corner of Grand Forks mainly south and east of Columbia Road and 40th Avenue South. In Fridolfi's prospective tenure as council, his first term would end in 2028.

He highlighted quality



Contributed / Mike Fridolfi
Fridolfi

of life and making Grand Forks a place to want to live as his top priorities.

"I think there's a lot of room for growth there from families to have things for their little to do all the way up to things for young adults and adults to do and give people a reason to stay in Grand Forks," Fridolfi said. "I think we need to focus on making sure that those things happen and the communities we live in are safe."

Fridolfi also said that he wants to promote more businesses as well as diversity of businesses on Grand Forks' South End and Ward 5.

"We need more businesses (in Ward 5). I think there's a lot of room for growth and people crave it here," Fridolfi said. "If you don't (expand commercial opportunities) we're not going to continue to have people that want to continue to move here and stay here."

Get the latest weather news and alerts with up-to-date forecasts, current and future radar and more with the Stormtracker app.

StormTRACKER Forecast

Breezy today. Cold weather settles in and lasts through the weekend and next week.

Almanac Through 6 p.m. Wednesday	High	Low
Temperature	20°	8°
Wednesday	20°	8°
Normal	15°	-1°
Record	54° in 1990	-34° in 1912
Precipitation	Inches	
Wednesday	0	
Month To Date	-15	
Departure From Avg Month To Date	-0.04"	
Year To Date	-15	
Departure From Avg Year To Date	-0.04"	

Sunrise: 8:15 a.m. Sunset: 4:55 p.m.
Moonrise: 9:02 a.m. Moonset: 4:57 p.m.



Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
5/-8 Flurries of Light Snow	1/-6 Light Snow	-4/-11 Mostly Cloudy	-5/-11 Partly Cloudy	1/-8 Partly Cloudy	4/-6 Partly Cloudy	6/-1 Partly Cloudy
Wind: NW 18 mph	Wind: N 15 mph	Wind: N 19 mph	Wind: NW 16 mph	Wind: NW 16 mph	Wind: W 13 mph	Wind: NW 14 mph

*Average wind speed for each day

WEATHER TALK

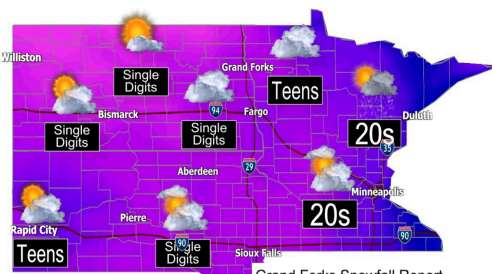
Metal feels colder in cold weather

BY JOHN WHEELER

FARGO — During very cold weather, bare-handed touching of metal objects can result in a slightly painful freezing of the outer skin. This can give the false impression that metal objects are much colder than other objects, but this is not necessarily true. Most metals are just very good conductors of heat, so when you get outside on a 10-below day and bare-hand a piece of metal, heat is rapidly conducted from your hand into the metal. This has the effect of rapidly cooling the outer skin surface.

A metal table in the summer sun will feel warm while a metal table in the shade will feel cool. But whether in sun or shade, an ice cube will melt faster on a metal table than on a wooden table. Again, this is because the metal is a good heat conductor and so will conduct heat away from the ice, causing it to melt.

John Wheeler is Chief Meteorologist for WDAY Television.

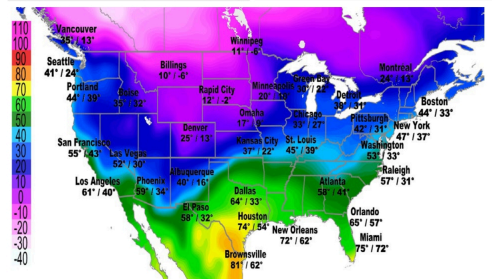


Grand Forks Snowfall Report

As measured by the National Weather Service in Grand Forks

	Observed	Average	Last Year
As of 6 p.m. Tuesday	0	0	0
Month To Date	1.8"	3.4"	3"
Since July 1	15.2"	23.5"	37.8"
Snow Depth	2"	2"	2"

North Dakota	Today	Tomorrow	Minnesota	Today	Tomorrow
Bismarck	5/-9	1/-12	Bemidji	12/0	10/-4
Devils Lake	1/-12	-2/-10	Duluth	28/9	22/5
Fargo	8/-5	4/-6	International Falls	19/2	9/-5
Minot	-2/-13	-2/-10	Minneapolis	20/10	22/8
Williston	-2/-9	-7/-20	Rochester	23/12	20/10



CALENDAR

Today, Jan. 11

To place your event in the Grand Forks Herald calendar, email gffcity@gherald.com, with "Calendar Item" in the subject line. Events should include name, time, location, short description and contact info. Please submit 10 days before the event. The Herald does not guarantee publication of all events.

Breakfast at the Grand Forks Senior Center is 8:30 to 9 a.m., 620 Fourth Ave. S. Also, **hot meal drive-thru** is 11:30 a.m. to noon, and **inside dining serving** is 11:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. **Monday through Friday**. For 60+. Obtain required paperwork and key tags in the Senior Center. Order frozen meals ahead of time at (701) 772-7245, pick up during the drive-thru or inside.

SCARED

CONTINUED FROM A1

agents will share the results with a county attorney who then decides whether to file charges against the officer or officers involved. Gilbertson was in the midst of a multi-felony case at the time of his death. After suspected conditional release violations, a warrant was issued for his arrest in July 2023.

The suspected violations were unspecified in public court documents. The case was filed in June 2022, but many charges were amended within the same month. Gilbertson's active charges included 12 felonies: unlawful possession of a

Other Thursday events at the Senior Center: 9 to 11 p.m.: Free legal services

for seniors, for people 55+, call (701) 222-2110, dial ext. 330 when recording starts to schedule an appointment; and at 1 p.m.: Trivia, new members welcome, also looking for a volunteer to read questions, for people 55+, (701) 772-7245.

SCORE free and confidential business mentoring meetings, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., every Thursday via Zoom, phone, email or in person. To schedule an appointment, email score@gra.midco.net or visit www.score.org and request a mentor from 58201, Grand Forks.

LSS senior meals: Congregate, home delivered and curbside is

11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, in the East Grand Forks Senior Center, 538 Rhinehart Dr. S.E., East Grand Forks. Info: (218) 399-3351.

Grief support group for adults, 1:30 to 3 p.m., East Grand Forks Campbell Library, 422 Fourth St. N.W. For adults, age 18+, who have experienced a loss through death. Second Thursday of the month. Free, open to the public. To fill out a registration form, call (800) 237-4629 at Red River Valley Hospice.

Reception for artist Sheila Renae Dalglish, 5 to 7 p.m., ArtWise, 2800 S. Columbia, inside Columbia Mall, Grand Forks. Her exhibit, "Meander," runs Jan. 17 through Feb. 24 during regular gallery hours.

TODAY IN HISTORY

In 1908, President Theodore Roosevelt declared the Grand Canyon a national monument.

In 1922, insulin was administered to a diabetic patient for the first time; the extract would require further improvement before achieving success.

In 1964, the U.S. surgeon general issued the first U.S. government report concluding that smoking could be hazardous to one's health.

In 2003, departing Illinois Gov. George Ryan commuted the sentences of an unprecedented 167 death row inmates.

firearm, fifth-degree drug possession, third-degree burglary, two counts of theft and seven counts of receiving stolen property. He was also charged with one count of gross misdemeanor receiving stolen property.

The unlawful firearm possession charge had a maximum penalty of 15 years in prison and \$30,000 in fines.

A dozen reportedly stolen items were found on Gilbertson's property, according to a criminal complaint filed in the case. Gilbertson admitted he stole some items, but said he purchased other items he suspected were stolen, the complaint said.

Gilbertson has prior felony convictions dating back to 2012 for burglary,

drug sales and other crimes. Rhinehart Township, a few miles south of East Grand Forks, had just 139 residents documented in the 2020 U.S. Census.

Kristie Wolff, township clerk, and Danny Messelt, chairperson, told the Herald incidents like this in Rhinehart are unheard of.

"I don't remember anything like that happening around the Rhinehart area," said Messelt, who's lived in the area for more than two decades. "It's usually pretty quiet."

It's unclear to Jane Gilbertson why law enforcement showed up at the Rhinehart Township residence looking for her nephew.

"He had his own place," she said.

She said Lucas Gilbertson told her law enforcement knew where he lived and had been to his East Grand Forks residence since the arrest warrant was issued.

Jane Gilbertson was adamant her nephew wasn't a risk to law enforcement and, in fact, "he was scared to death of them," she said. He wasn't violent and didn't hurt anybody but himself, she said.

"He was a drug addict," she said. "That was his whole issue."

Jane Gilbertson doesn't have any children, so her nephew was more like her son, she said.

"He was a good kid," she said. "He would've done anything for anybody. He had the biggest heart ever."

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, 2024

Council discusses future with Circle of Friends

BY JOSHUA IRVINE
Grand Forks Herald

GRAND FORKS — Grand Forks City Council members ruled out establishing an in-house city pound but gave mixed signals on its future with current animal impound contractor Circle of Friends.

City Council members met on Monday as the Committee of the Whole to hear presentations from city and police officials about the scope of

services provided by Circle of Friends compared to other North Dakota cities and also to debate the merit of continuing to contract with the financially-distressed nonprofit.

"Circle of Friends has done a good job for the city, but they do provide more service than other cities, which would equate to more cost," City Clerk Sherie Lundmark said.

Circle of Friends Executive Director Laura Lee

Tupa has said repeatedly that the animal shelter offers a premium standard of care for its shelter animals, and a comparison with city pounds in Fargo, Bismarck and Minot seemingly bore out that claim.

According to city documents, Circle of Friends is the only impound service to provide vet exams on intake, vaccinate its animals, and microchip and spay and neuter adopted pets. It was the only contracted animal

shelter — the other cities either contracted with a veterinary clinic or, in Bismarck's case, ran its own pound.

It was also the sole impound that does not euthanize its pets, keeping with the No-Kill status it maintains alongside 12 other North Dakota animal shelters, per the Best Friends Animal Society.

But those premiums also mean it spends considerably more than other city impounds. The

four other North Dakota cities budget between \$70,000 (Minot) and \$278,968 (Bismarck) per year to operate their impounds; Circle of Friends spent \$944,050 on impounded animals in 2023, of which the city paid a flat rate of \$184,149.50.

"We're anticipating paying for a level of service that other communities are," City Administrator Todd Feland said. "Certainly Circle of Friends are going to the

next step. They have a board policy, maybe some grant obligations that are above and beyond what a normal shelter would be. That's not in our agreement."

Feland said he feels the rate the city currently pays is fair and duly compensates Circle of Friends for the level of care the city wants.

Feland offered council members three possible avenues: continue with

FRIENDS on A3

Armstrong announces run for ND governor

BY PATRICK SPRINGER
The Forum

FARGO — Kelly Armstrong became the first Republican to officially declare his candidacy for the North Dakota governor's office a day after Gov. Doug Burgum shook up the race by announcing he won't seek a third term.

Armstrong, who is well-known to voters after winning three terms as North Dakota's lone congressman, is also a former state senator from Dickinson and a former state GOP chairman.

Solutions will come not from Washington, but from North Dakota, Armstrong said, a lesson he said he learned in his five years in Congress.

"North Dakotans will always do better when we are in charge of our own destiny," he said. "That's why I've decided to come home to run for governor. I'll take the experience I've gained fighting for North Dakota in D.C., to help increase opportunity and success here in our state. And I am excited to get back here and work with people who are interested in finding solutions not exploiting problems for political gain."

"I have fought against federal overreach, a two-tiered justice system, and a radical liberal agenda." Among his accomplishments, Armstrong said he has defended Trump against two "sham impeachments" and

ARMSTRONG on A12



Eric Hylden / Grand Forks Herald

An East Grand Forks police officer displays a body-worn camera.

'We want transparency'

ACLU attorney says Minnesotans 'just don't know enough' after some police shootings

BY SAV KELLY
Grand Forks Herald

POLK COUNTY, MINN.

Four of 14 deadly force incidents investigated in Minnesota last year involved undercover officers, according to data collected from Minnesota Bureau of

Criminal Apprehension press releases.

In one of the four shootings, there was no body camera footage.

The state's second deadly force incident of 2024 checks both of those boxes, a fact that an attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union of Minnesota finds

troubling. She believes that, as a result, relatively little information will be released to the public.

"I think there are a lot of ways that this hurts the community, this lack of transparency," Alicia Granse told the Grand Forks Herald. "People should want to trust law enforcement, but we don't

have a way to verify that they're doing things correctly. We just don't know enough about what happened here."

The incident, which occurred on Jan. 9, involved an East Grand Forks police officer operating undercover

UNDERCOVER on A4

Council recommends keeping GF syringe exchange program

BY MATTHEW VOIGT
Grand Forks Herald

GRAND FORKS — The Grand Forks City Council on Monday recommended that a syringe service program in Grand Forks stay in place.

The motion to end the program failed in a tie, 3-3, during Monday's

Committee of the Whole meeting. Council members Danny Weigel, Rebecca Osowski and Dana Sande voted to end the program. Council members Bret Weber, Tricia Lunski and Ken Vein voted against ending the program. Kyle Kvamme was not present.

The syringe service

program, often known as the needle exchange program, provides clean needles to those at risk of infection from the injection of substances. The foremost goal of the program is to reduce the spread of blood-borne diseases like hepatitis C and HIV. The program also hopes to establish

relationships, drive positive changes and reduce opioid overdose and overdoses deaths in the community.

According to GFPH Director Tess Wall, based on her discussion with colleagues across North Dakota, Grand Forks is the only city considering ending its program.

The program uses no local funds for the salaries of the workers nor the materials given out. The salaries are funded with federal money and the materials are through private grants. The program is held at Spectra Health and not in GFPH's

COUNCIL on A3



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Mayor: GF should consider alternatives to Circle of Friends

Two City Council members have already endorsed seeking another impound contractor

BY JOSHUA IRVINE
Grand Forks Herald

GRAND FORKS — The city of Grand Forks should begin looking at other providers to offer animal impound services, Mayor Brandon Bochenski said Tuesday.

The mayor told the Herald he supports putting out a request for proposal on the contract currently held by Circle of Friends animal shelter, though he said that didn't necessarily mean the city would terminate its relationship with the nonprofit.

"If you go for an RFP (request for proposal), it doesn't mean Circle of Friends couldn't be the winning proposal, but it gives us a chance to see what the options are," Bochenski said.

Bochenski's remarks came following a Monday night Committee of the Whole meeting where Grand Forks City Council members Dana Sande and Rebecca Osowski endorsed beginning the process that potentially could replace the long-time city contractor with another veterinary

organization.

Bochenski first discussed Monday night's Committee of the Whole meeting on a Tuesday morning KNOX radio broadcast of "Critical Thought with Noah Chelliah."

The financially-embattled Circle of Friends has come under scrutiny in recent weeks after it announced Jan. 5 it may cut many of its shelter services without a significant cash infusion. The shelter is continuing to operate as the city pound under the terms of its

2023 agreement with the city, though it has not been compensated for services rendered in 2024 as of Monday.

Normally, the city and Circle of Friends would have signed off on an updated agreement Jan. 1, but that deadline passed without a new contract being signed.

City Administrator Todd Feland said Monday the shelter had been provided with a draft 2024 agreement that would raise the shelter's annual



Eric Hylden / Grand Forks Herald

In this Herald file photo from 2023, Mayor Brandon Bochenski delivers his State of the City address at the Alerus Center.

CIRCLE on A5

Video reveals at least 6 shots fired

Officer-involved incident led to East Grand Forks man's death

BY SAV KELLY
Grand Forks Herald

POLK COUNTY, Minn. — At least six shots were fired during a deadly Jan. 9 interaction between law enforcement and a rural East Grand Forks man who was wanted for alleged bond violations and failure to appear in court.

Lucas Paul Gilbertson, 42, died as a result of multiple gunshot wounds he sustained during the incident. Though the circumstances surrounding the shooting itself remain largely unclear, some details — including the approximate number of shots fired — became available when four body camera videos were released to the public on Tuesday, Jan. 23.

The names of all officers involved — aside from two who were undercover, one of whom was the shooter — also have been released. Minnesota law protects undercover officers' identities. Unless the shooter is charged with a crime, it's likely his name will remain undisclosed until the end of his undercover career — or even longer, if there is a perceived threat to his safety or an

SHOOTING on A15



Eric Hylden / Grand Forks Herald

Grand Forks County Sheriff Andy Schneider gives instructions to potential bidders before a public auction of the former Macy's department store located in Columbia Mall. The auction took place at the Grand Forks County Courthouse on Tuesday. No bids were received for the foreclosed property.

NO BIDS

Bank retains foreclosed portion of Columbia Mall

BY SAV KELLY
Grand Forks Herald

GRAND FORKS — Despite a dozen or so attendees at its Tuesday, Jan. 23, public auction, the foreclosed portion of Columbia Mall will be retained by First International Bank and Trust, the plaintiff in its foreclosure case.

The property, which is the former location of Macy's department store, was officially foreclosed in November after a civil

case was settled rather than taken to trial. Defendants Jamieson Capex Fund, LLC, Jeremy Lynn Carlson and Michael Ray Kuntz were found to owe the bank more than \$1 million in mortgage payments, according to court documents.

First International Bank and Trust, represented by O'Keeffe O'Brien Lyson Attorneys, set a total debt bid of \$1,391,371, meaning the bank was hoping to recoup its entire loss.

This is not always the case, according to Grand Forks County Sheriff's Office Cpl. Chris Hutton, who runs property auctions for the county. Sometimes bids are set below the total debt, but the public won't know until the auction is held.

This is likely why there were a notable number of attendees but zero bidders, he said — people come to see if the price is something they can afford.

"You never know,"

Hutton told the Herald. "It's hard to say. I figured one person, at least, would bid \$1 more (than the starting bid)."

The auction took place inside the Grand Forks County Courthouse. Though it's over, someone could still reach out to the bank directly to make an offer, Hutton said.

It's unclear what will happen with the property.

Hutton has been part of somewhere between

150 to 200 auctions over the past two years. Most are for foreclosed residential properties and farmsteads. There's also an annual sale of mobile homes that have been seized due to delinquent taxes.

This auction, though, had, by far, the highest starting bid Hutton has been privy to. The second most expensive was in the range of \$300,000, he said.

With Armstrong running for governor, who's in the race for ND's sole seat in the US House?

BY MATTHEW VOIGT
Grand Forks Herald

GRAND FORKS — With Rep. Kelly Armstrong announcing his candidacy for North Dakota governor, the race for North Dakota's sole U.S. House representative now appears to be anyone's game.

Earlier this week, Gov. Doug Burgum announced he wouldn't seek a third

term, creating a wide-open race for the governor's office. Armstrong, a Republican and North Dakota's current House representative, announced on Tuesday afternoon that he will not seek reelection to the House and instead hopes to be the next governor.

North Dakota Republican Party Chair Sandi Sanford said this week has been lively.

"This has probably been the most exciting week I've had (as NDGOP chair)," Sanford said.

The House race, for now, includes two declared candidates: Rick Becker, a Republican from Bismarck, and Trygve Hammer, a Democrat from Minot.

In 2022, there wasn't a Democratic-NPL candidate for the representative seat, but Sanford said

that she isn't worried about it in 2024.

"The NDGOP is a supermajority and we're a fairly conservative, moderate state," Sanford said. "I don't think that there is any concern in regards to a Democrat."

Becker announced his bid for the seat earlier this week. While North Dakota Republican Party



Chip Somodevilla / Getty Images / TNS

Republican members of the House Oversight and Accountability Committee, including Rep. Kelly Armstrong, R-N.D., hold a news conference at the U.S. Capitol on May 10, 2023, in Washington, D.C.

HOUSE on A5

*DETAILS OF OFFER: Offer expires 1/31/2024. Save up to \$2,000 on your sliding project when you save \$60 per square. One square equals 133 square feet. Financing: Receive 24 months of no payments, no interest, and no money down when you purchase seamless steel siding. Financing subject to credit approval. Interest is added during the promotional period, but all interest is waived if the purchase amount is paid before the expiration of the promotional period. Financing for Greenline® customer loan programs is provided by loanonly.com. Federal- and state-chartered financial institutions without regard to race, age, color, religion, national origin, gender, or familial status. Offer not valid on commercial, multi-family, or contractor projects. Offer subject to change without notice. No cash value. Offer not valid with any other offer or discount. An existing property, garage, or vehicle is not required to be sold or financed. Available only in certain states for homes. Do not add additional items to existing orders. Offer not valid for new homes. See local dealer for details.



A fly-in fishing trip to
northwest Ontario, C1

Grand Forks Herald

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SATURDAY, AUGUST 24, 2024

Death of EGF man still under review at Polk County Attorney's Office

BY SAU KELLY
Grand Forks Herald

POLK COUNTY, Minn. — More than seven months after an East Grand Forks man was killed by a then-undercover — but since identified

— police officer, it has not been determined whether criminal charges will be filed against the officer. Lucas Paul Gilbertson, 42, was shot multiple times on Jan. 9, while at his mother's residence in Rhinehart Township, Polk

County.

He later died while undergoing surgery at Altru Hospital, according to a federal civil court document later filed on behalf of Gilbertson's father.

Law enforcement was at

the residence that day because they received a tip that Gilbertson was there.

Out on bond at the time for a pending criminal case, Gilbertson had a warrant out for his arrest due to alleged release violations.

The acts leading up to the shooting were caught on four body cameras; however, the shooter — East Grand Forks Police Officer Aegis Schrage — was not wearing one, and he was alone with Gilbertson

when shots rang out inside the home.

Prior to the shooting, Gilbertson is seen on video running from officers around the perimeter of the residence.

REVIEW on A8

Alerus Center preps for 2 nights of Bryan

BY PAMELA KNUDSON
Grand Forks Herald

GRAND FORKS — Country musician Zach Bryan brings his "The Quittin' Time Tour" to the Alerus Center on Sunday and Monday, Aug. 25 and 26. Special guests will be Matt Maeson and Levi Turner.

On both nights, the show starts at 7 p.m.

This will be Bryan's first appearance at the Alerus Center, according to Derek Hoffert, the facility's assistant general manager, who's encouraging everyone to "come out and be a part of history!"

The Alerus does not release projected or actual attendance records, he said, but the artist "has already broken our attendance records and tickets are still available for both nights."

Tickets for Sunday's show range from \$192 to \$420 and for Monday's show they range from \$112 to \$382. For tickets, visit www.ticketmaster.com.

Bryan, a singer-songwriter who blends country, folk and rock music, is known for

BRYAN on A8



Rick Becker visits with a supporter at an election night party on June 11 in downtown Bismarck.

Tom Stromme / The Bismarck Tribune

PROPERTY TAX PROPOSAL CONCERNS ND MAYORS

Big-city mayors are against a plan to end property taxes as they currently exist; proponent says their concerns are due to 'fear-mongering'

BY KORRIE WENZEL
Grand Forks Herald

GRAND FORKS

The mayors of North Dakota's largest cities are lining up against a proposal that would effectively shift the burden

of property taxes to the state, rather than being shouldered by property owners.

The chairman of the organization behind the measure doesn't quite understand why the city leaders are so strongly

against it.

"This is a very big change. And as you know, change is a very uncomfortable thing for people," said Rick Becker, of End Unfair Property Tax, a group that's pushing passage of the proposal. "For me, if I was an

elected official, I would be excited about this. ... I would take the opportunity to say 'this is a golden opportunity. We are actually in charge here. We can do things that are the best fit for our people.' I think

TAX on A9

Grand Forks balloon artist contributes to DNC balloon drop

BY HANNAH SHIRLEY
Grand Forks Herald

GRAND FORKS — Working as a balloon artist for a major political event has been on Misti Kauffman's bucket list for years. Kauffman, owner of Grand Forks-based Balloons by Misti, imagined doing work at a mayoral event, or perhaps — if she shot for the stars — a governor's event.

Watching her balloons fall Thursday night at the

2024 Democratic National Convention in Chicago was surreal.

"It was just an amazing feeling to watch it," she said. "Watching a balloon drop never gets old. But on that scale ... it's just amazing."

Kauffman and her daughter, Rebekah, were two of 55 balloon artists from 18 states and Canada to contribute balloons to the DNC balloon drop. At more than 100,000 balloons, Thursday's balloon drop was the largest to

ever occur at a political convention, Kauffman said.

She was contacted a few weeks ago and asked to join the group of balloon artists, all friends from throughout the balloon artist community. Together with the other artists, Kauffman and Rebekah traveled to Chicago and spent a day and a half inflating and tying hundreds of 10- and 20-inch balloons.

"It was just a great experience to be there

and see all the stuff that was happening behind the scenes that was absolutely amazing," she said. "You don't think of all the things that go into an event like that."

The friends weren't the intended balloon artists for the convention. The group came together to help one of their own — Tommy DeLorenzo, the owner of Chicago-based Balloons by Tommy DeLorenzo was supposed

BALLOONS on A8



Screenshot / NBC News

Balloons fall at the Democratic National Convention on Thursday night in Chicago.



Edward Jones

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NWAC calls for works that celebrate farm life

'Around the Farm' exhibit to be shown this winter in council's gallery at NCTC

BY PAMELA KNUDSON
Grand Forks Herald

WARREN, Minn. — The Northwest Minnesota Arts Council is seeking submissions of original artwork for an exhibit, titled "Around the Farm," to be displayed this winter in Thief River Falls.

The deadline for submitting entries, with a limit of two per artist, is Dec. 2.

The exhibit will be presented in January and February in the council's gallery at Northland Community and Technical College.

The types of artwork that may be submitted include collage, pen and ink, photography, mosaic, fiber arts, oil, acrylic, sculpture, creative writing, mixed media and printmaking.

The exhibit will feature up to a dozen works by featured artist Beau Bakken, of Hallock,

Minnesota, as well as entries from artists in the council's service area: Kittson, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake and Roseau counties.

"Farming is more than a job or a career," Trey Everett, the council's showcase specialist, said in a news release. "It is fundamental to (this area's) way of life, part of our region's cultural identity and history, and deeply rooted in where and how we live, work and play."

"This art exhibit will celebrate farm life and farming, and will highlight the importance of agriculture in the lives of residents of our northwest Minnesota region through art."

Centered on the farming theme, the exhibit will highlight farm machinery, harvest, farmland, agricultural heritage, farm animals



Contributed

"Row of Rust," a 2-foot-by-3-foot acrylic painting by Beau Bakken of Hallock, Minnesota, is an example of the works to be displayed this winter in the "Around the Farm" exhibit in the Northwest Minnesota Arts Council Gallery at Northland Community and Technical College in Thief River Falls. Entries for the exhibit will be accepted by the council until Dec. 2.

and farm life.

When submitting artwork, the artist should send an email with the dimensions, medium, title, sale price and their hometown, along with a photo of the art, to treyeverettcreates@gmail.com. The artwork itself may be dropped off at the council's gallery at the NCTC in Thief River Falls in mid-December; the exact date to be

determined.

For more information, contact Everett at treyeverettcreates@gmail.com or (218) 280-4917; or visit www.nwartscouncil.org or northwestminnesotaartscouncil.org/blog/call-for-art-for-around-the-farm-art-exhibit.

Knudson is a features reporter at the Herald. Call her at (701) 780-1107, (800) 477-6572 ext.1107 or email knudson@gfherald.com.

BALLOONS

CONTINUED from A1

to be the DNC balloon artist, but is in the midst of cancer treatment.

Kauffman met DeLorenzo several years ago at an Orlando balloon conference where he was an instructor. DeLorenzo and his husband are known in the balloon community for their work on the balloons for the Chicago Pride Parade each year.

"I had known of him for a very long time," Kauffman said. "I had been a total fangirl. ... He's such an inspiration to all the balloon artists around the world."

DeLorenzo has been in and out of the hospital for the last couple years battling cancer, Kauffman said, and was in the hospital for a stem cell procedure at the same time Kauffman and her daughter were in Chicago preparing for the convention.

Kauffman watched the DNC balloon drop at a Zoom watch party with the other contributing

"Watching a balloon drop never gets old."

MISTI KAUFFMAN

balloon artists. The moment the balloons fell was magical, she said.

"I can't imagine what the people actually standing underneath it must have felt," she said. "But especially for like, my daughter and I, we were a little tearful thinking of Tommy, because he's literally in the hospital fighting for his life, and knowing that every balloon we all blew up and hope for him in his journey."

Although the convention is behind her, the Grand Forks small business owner isn't taking any breaks. Bright and early on Friday, the morning after the balloon drop, she was in downtown Grand Forks, setting up balloons for the annual street fair.

Are there more political events in her future? "I hope so!" she said.

REVIEW

CONTINUED from A1

Within approximately one minute of him returning inside, an officer yells that Gilbertson is throwing "stuff" out of the window, then says, "shots fired."

It was later confirmed that Gilbertson threw a gun out the window. Law enforcement has not confirmed whether he fired any of the shots, or if he was armed with any other weapons.

Reviewing the body camera footage, the Herald heard what appear to be six shots.

Due to Schrage's status as an undercover officer with the Pine to Prairie Drug Task Force, he was exempt from identification under Minnesota law. His identity was revealed, though, when a lawsuit was filed against him in federal court.

Documentation from the lawsuit, which was filed in federal court by Gilbertson's father one month after his son's death, says the gun found outside the window was not fired during the

shooting.

A month after the civil case was opened, Schrage filed a response to the complaint, denying any wrongdoing. Amended pleadings in the civil case are due by Oct. 31.

As is standard procedure, the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension immediately took over the investigation into Schrage's use of deadly force against Gilbertson.

The investigation typically takes around two months, then BCA Public Information Officer Bonney Bowman told the Herald in January.

It took approximately six months for this investigation to conclude, and the information to be passed along to the county attorney's office. Polk County Attorney Greg Widsch, in a Monday, Aug. 19, email to the Herald, said most of the investigation was forwarded to his office in May, but the complete investigation — including everything necessary for a full review — came in late June.

The full investigative report has been in the

agency's possession for approximately two months.

"The matter is still under review by our office," Widsch wrote.

"We are short-staffed, and we have been, and will continue, to devote the necessary time to this case to conduct a thorough review before making a decision. Under the circumstances, that takes time."

Clarence Huderle

Prior to Gilbertson's death, the most recent fatal shooting of a Polk County civilian carried out by law enforcement was the March 20, 2017, death of Clarence Duane Huderle.

Law enforcement was called to a Northland Township residence after Huderle, 73, shot the window out of a mail carrier vehicle, according to a BCA press release.

A Polk County deputy responded to the scene and, while investigating, was confronted with Huderle — who was armed with a rifle.

Huderle fired at the deputy, striking his vehicle,



Sav Kelly / Grand Forks Herald

In this Herald file photo, area law enforcement block 445th Avenue SW in Rhinehart Township, located in Polk County, Minnesota, on Jan. 9, after East Grand Forks resident Lucas Gilbertson was shot by law enforcement.

the release said. He ultimately was shot and killed by a U.S. Border Patrol agent.

Huderle's wife told law enforcement her husband was a veteran who suffered from dementia that had worsened over the previous year and a half. She said Huderle experienced paranoia, did not

like traffic on their road and refused to leave their yard, according to a Forum Communications Co. article.

The BCA investigated the death and turned its findings over to the county attorney's office on May 3, 2017. An article published on the Herald website Aug. 30, 2017, said

the attorney's office determined the shooting was justified.

The whole process took 163 days, or approximately five months.

The time it took from the report being turned over to the attorney's office to a verdict being reached was just shy of four months.

BRYAN

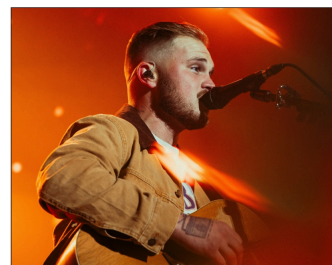
CONTINUED from A1

"I Remember Everything," a Grammy Award-winning duet with Kacey Musgraves, as well as the hit song "Something in the Orange."

About his newest album, "The Great American Bar Scene," released in July, Bryan said he is the "proudest I've ever been of a piece of work." The album features the singles "Pink Skies" and "Purple Gas," a duet with Canadian singer Nelly. Hofmann. Both songs debuted in the top 20 on Billboard's Hot Country Songs chart in June.

On Sunday and Monday, event parking at the Alerus is \$15 and tailgating is encouraged, according to an Alerus announcement. Parking is typically cheaper if paid for in advance; visit www.aleruscenr.com/plan-your-visit/directions-parking. Bus rides to the concerts are being offered by Southgate Casino Bar and Grill, 2525 S. Washington.

The center has listed



Contributed / Downtown Development Association

Zach Bryan was nominated for three 2024 Grammy Awards — Best Country Album, Best Country Song and Best Country Duo/Group Performance for "I Remember Everything." The latter won the Grammy in February.

Light Parking Lot Party is planned, featuring live music from 4 to 6 p.m., a Zach Bryan merchandise trailer and limited concessions. The party is set for 1-6 p.m. Sunday and 3-6 p.m. Monday.

Bryan, 28, who blends folk, rock and country styles, first drew music fans' attention while serving in the U.S. Navy when he began recording songs in his spare time and uploading them online.

On both days, a Bud

Later, as his songs became more popular, the Navy granted him an honorable discharge so he could pursue a music career full time. He struck a deal with Warner Records and became a full-time performer on his "Ain't for Tamin' Tour" in October 2021.

His first major studio album, "American Heartbreak," released in 2022, and his 2023 self-titled album reached the top five of the Billboard 200; the latter debuted at the top.

The Academy of Country Music awarded him the title "New Male Artist of Year for 2022."

Bryan was born in Okinawa, Japan, where his family lived as part of his father's deployment with the U.S. Navy. He spent most of his teenage years in Oologah, Oklahoma, near Tulsa.

He received his first guitar around the age 14 and began composing songs.

Bryan enlisted in the U.S. Navy at age 17, continuing a family legacy — his parents, grandfather, uncles and

great-grandfather had all served. He was stationed in Washington and Florida and did tours overseas in Bahrain and Djibouti.

Bryan recorded his first album, "DeAnn," his late mother's middle name, in 2019, with the help of Navy friends. In 2020, he released another album, "Elisabeth," which included his breakout single "Heading South." The video, shot in Bryan's Navy barracks, garnered millions of views.

Bryan made his debut at the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville in April 2021. In 2023, he was nominated for the New Artist of

the Year award by the County Music Association. He was also nominated for three 2024 Grammy Awards: Best Country Album, Best Country Song and Best Country Duo/Group Performance for "I Remember Everything." The song won Duo/Group Performance in February 2024, giving Bryan his biggest trophy so far.

He has appeared, and performed songs, in "Yellowstone," a Paramount Network drama series, starring Kevin Costner, and several of his songs have been included in the TV series' soundtrack.

MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

Grand Forks School Board

Regular Meeting

Monday, August 26, 2024

6:00pm @ Mark Sanford Education Center
2400 47th Avenue South, Grand Forks

The Notice of Meeting/agenda is found at:
www.gfschools.org/school-boards/meetings

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Weddings, engagements, milestone birthdays, anniversaries, births, all other special events and achievements are published each Saturday in the Grand Forks Herald's MILESTONES.

To place an announcement, go to grandforksherald.com. Click on the MENU link on the left side of the page. Scroll down to COMMUNITY, then click on the MILESTONES.

Deadline: Wednesday 4pm for the following Saturday publication. Questions - call: 701-241-5509 or email: info@modulist.news

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Polk County Attorney's Office says no unlawful conduct by law enforcement in death of East Grand Forks man

BY SAV KELLY
Grand Forks Herald

POLK COUNTY, Minn. — The Polk County Attorney's Office has found no wrongdoing by police in the death of an East Grand Forks man who was fatally shot Jan. 9.

In late June, the attorney's office received the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension's full report detailing its investigation into the

incident. Reviewing the documentation thoroughly for any potential wrongful acts was a months-long process, as previously reported by the Herald.

In a letter addressed to BCA Special Agent Dan Byron on Thursday, Sept. 12, which was shared with the media Friday afternoon, Sept. 13, Polk County Attorney Greg Widseth said he found no basis for filing

criminal charges against any of the officers involved in the incident. This includes East Grand Forks Police Sgt. Aeisso Schrage, who caused the death of 42-year-old Lucas Paul Gilbertson by shooting him multiple times.

Gilbertson was transferred to Altru Hospital, where he later died in an operating room, the letter said.

Schrage is the only

person who used deadly force against Gilbertson. Schrage was undercover at the time and therefore not wearing a body camera, so what the public has been able to glean about the incident through video footage has been limited.

"The issue then is whether an objectively reasonable officer would have believed, based upon the totality of the circumstances known to the

officer at the time and without the benefit of hindsight, that deadly force was necessary to protect himself or another from death or great bodily harm," Widseth wrote. "In viewing all of the evidence in this case, I conclude that the use of deadly force by Sgt. Schrage was justified and immediately necessary in this case based upon the

DEATH on A15

Cramer: reservation food delays a 'massive failure'

USDA consolidation has 'left families without a vital food source,' Cramer's office said.

STAFF REPORTS
Grand Forks Herald

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Delivery delays of the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) have been a "massive failure," according to Sen. Kevin Cramer.

Cramer, R-ND, spoke with Mary Greene-Trotter, director of the Tribe's Food Distribution Program and president of the National Association of FDPIR, about the issue, according to a release issued by the senator's office. The program allows low-income families on reservations to order fresh food, but, since the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) consolidated the program into a single distributor, "incomplete, delayed and missed deliveries have left families without a vital food source," the release said. Across the country, including North Dakota, the program serves 276 tribes.

"Participants were promised a smooth transition, but instead were met with disruptions and shortages of staple items like flour and canned goods," Cramer said in a statement. "Despite warnings from tribal partners about the implementation timeline for distributor consolidation, USDA ignored them and proceeded anyway."

Cramer and Greene-Trotter's conversation revolved around the impact of the delays on

Annual KEM Shrine parade brings Potato Bowl festivities downtown

The annual procession began at 9 a.m. Saturday in downtown Grand Forks

GRAND FORKS

Revelers came out for the annual KEM Shrine Potato Bowl Parade on Saturday, Sept. 14. The procession began at 9 a.m. and made its

way along DeMers Avenue through downtown Grand Forks into East Grand Forks.

The festivities were in preparation for the annual Potato Bowl, with UND hosting Idaho State.



Eric Hylden/Grand Forks Herald

2 year-old Shea and 5 year-old Leo Thorstenson stand by for candy at Saturday's Potato Bowl parade.



Eric Hylden/Grand Forks Herald

Members of the Red River High School marching band perform in Saturday's parade.



Eric Hylden/Grand Forks Herald

Zach Cantera covers his ears as a semi-truck blows its horn in Saturday's parade.

THE VAULT

Christian extremists, with help from the Nazis, shaped American politics of intolerance, exclusion

BY C.S. HAGEN
Forum News Service

NOTE: This is the first story in a three-part series based on Forum News Service research to track Christian extremist views over the past century.

MEDINA, N.D. — Before North Dakota farmer and tax protester Gordon Kahl shot down two federal marshals near Medina, North Dakota, in February 1963, Cody Schuler's family never locked their doors.

"I was a little kid when the Posse Comitatus stuff happened and our town was one of the towns where they were very active," said Schuler, who is now the advocacy manager for the American Civil Liberties Union of North Dakota.

He lived near rural

Highway 30 where Kahl, his 23-year-old son Yorle, David Broer and Vernon Wagner left US Marshal Ken Muir and Deputy Marshal Robert Cheshire dead. Three other officers were wounded in the shootout. Kahl's subsequent escape kicked off a nationwide manhunt.

"That was when we started locking our doors on the farm. Because we lived right off of Highway 30 and that supposedly was his escape route," Schuler said.

His family heard about the shooting on the radio while they were coming home from Bismarck.

"When we got home my dad locked my mom and me in the car and he went and swept the house to make sure nobody was hiding. Then we went in and locked the door. And

that's when we started locking our door, from that moment forward," Schuler said. "My aunt did the same thing."

The violence that the Posse Comitatus — an anti-government and anti-taxation group rooted in Christian identity beliefs — brought to North Dakota created a culture shift that is still felt to the present day, Schuler said.

"More recently, with some of the various political movements that have happened in our state I have often thought about that moment because I wonder about the throughline. That political throughline from Gordon Kahl to intersecting the work that I do today where you have organizations who are calling on book bans and those

kinds of things," Schuler said.

A deep undercurrent of intolerance and exclusion in American politics broke into the mainstream in the upper Midwest in the 1930s, garnering support from isolationist politicians, preachers, laymen and historical figures. They schemed to replace democracy with an exclusively Christian and fascist government, and although eventually stopped by federal authorities, the threads were never untangled.

They changed names continuing under names like: Nazism, militias, Christian nationalism — the belief that a nation should be defined by Christianity exclusively, and that the government should take active steps



Contributed / US Library of Congress

The German American Bund, or Nazi Bund, marching on East 86th Street New York City on Oct. 30, 1937.

to keep it that way — and other antisemitic, anti-government organizations.

Whenever Schuler sees reports about the resurgence of extremist Christian views, he has one thought: "This feels very much like 1963," Schuler said.

The throughline
In the 1930s, dozens of

senators and congressmen disguised hatred and intolerance as duty to God and country, reflecting popular views and acting as incubators for right wing Christian extremism today, according to hate group expert and attorney Daniel Levitas.

EXTREMISTS on A3

EXTREMISTS CONTINUED from A3

newspaper reports, some of the people Langer listed in his Senate speech included:

- **James True**, from New Orleans, a "gun toter" and writer who believed the U.S. government was ruled by the Hidden Hand, a Jewish cabal, and patented a lead-weighted billy club called the "kike-killer."
- **Ernest Elmhurst**, from New York, leader of the Christian Mobilizers, a violent faction of Father Coughlin's Christian Front. He was also a member of the American Nazi Bund.
- **George Deatherage**, from Minnesota, an engineer and a one-time national commander of the Ku Klux Klan, acknowledged he had ties to Nazi propaganda sources. He helped plan a coup with 13-man armed militia groups after the 1940 elections.
- **Howard V. Broenstrup**, of Washington, plotted with a medical doctor and the Silver Shirts to have Roosevelt declared unfit to be commander in chief.
- **Lois de Lafayette Washburn**, of Washington, claimed to be nobility. She was a founder of antisemitic groups in Chicago and Washington who worked closely with the Silver Shirts and Coughlin to violently overthrow democracy and set up a "Christian Commonwealth."
- **Eugene N. Sanctuary**,

from New York, a retired Army colonel who worked with Christian fascist Silver Shirts organization. He kept copies of "virtually every Nazi and Fascist publication" at his home, called Germania Bookstore.

• **Gerald B. Winrod**, from Kansas, revivalist preacher who visited Nazi Germany in 1934 and "returned with enough cash to pay all his debts." He published "Defender" magazine that had 125,000 circulation mostly in the Midwest.

After receiving a letter in 1951 from Eva Sanberger, wife of Col. Martin Sandberger, a high-ranking SS official convicted of war crimes against Jews, Langer lobbied the U.S. High Commissioner for Germany to grant the Nazi official a reprieve from death.

Martin was sentenced to death by hanging during the Nuremberg trial for "willingly and enthusiastically" orchestrating the "special treatment" or mass murder of thousands of Jews and communists in Estonia and Latvia and for rounding up Jews in Italy to be deported to Auschwitz concentration camp.

Langer succeeded. "I am sure that you and your children must be very happy that the life of your husband and their father has been spared and can look to the days ahead with renewed faith and courage. With kindest regards, and every good



The Ku Klux Klan parade on Sept. 13, 1926 on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C. The U.S. Capitol is in the background.

wish, I am sincerely, WL."

Sandberger was released 13 years later. Before his natural death in 2010, he became the "highest ranking member of the SS known to be alive," and then died at 98 years of age.

Reporting for this story was based on interviews, declassified FBI files, Congressional records, US Library of Congress, University of North Dakota Scholarly Commons, and many articles from the time period published by newspapers and media outlets including: the Minneapolis Daily

Times, the Pittsburgh Press, the Pigeon Progress, the Berkshire Eagle, the Star Tribune, the Daily News, the Atchison Daily News, The Forum, Bismarck Tribune, the Omaha World-Herald, the Evening Courier, the Baltimore Sun, PBS, the Times Herald, the Modesto Bee, the Los Angeles Times, the Daily American, the People's Voice, the Sun-Journal, and many more.

Readers can reach Forum reporter C.S. Hagen at 701-241-5535 or at chagen@forumcomm.com.

OBITUARY

Allen "Pappy" Gonsorowski

Allen Gonsorowski, fondly known as Pappy, was born on January 22, 1949, in St. Paul, MN, to Florian and Martha Gonsorowski. Not long after, the family moved to the Grand Forks area where his parents built their family business. Al was shaped by his parents' values, growing into a man known for his hard work, sense of adventure, and big-hearted kindness - gifts he shared as he always made new friends wherever he went.

As a young boy, Al's love of sports and can-do attitude took hold. He devoted himself to baseball and track, became a record-setting long jumper at East Grand Forks High School while making lifelong friends.

After graduating from EGF High in 1967, Al headed to MSU Moorhead and earned a bachelor's degree in journalism. His knack for striking up conversations with just about anyone served him well during his 20+ year journalism and teaching career. Throughout his life, Al always found his way back to the ballfield, serving as a baseball and softball umpire for over 40 years, traveling around the country calling balls and strikes with his signature "ooooooooo" cry.

Al married Robin (Perman), and together they raised Tyson and Kai. He loved his time with his children and grandchildren. He would share a love of fishing the Minnesota lakes with Tyson and would become a fixture at Kai's track meets and volleyball matches. Al and Robin later moved to Colorado, where Al's love of travel blossomed. He roamed the U.S. and South America, falling for Cuenca, Ecuador, where he eventually settled in 2022. Al became known there as the friendly expat who gave apples to bus drivers, cookies and other sweets to kids, and fresh pairs of sneakers to locals in need. He traveled the country by bus, snapping pictures and making friends until his very last day.

On June 27, 2024, Al was called to his heavenly home. He will be dearly missed by his children, Tyson Gonsorowski and Kai Peters (Michael); grandchildren, Teddy and Quinn Peters; siblings, Dale (Duanna), Marlene (John), and Glen; and a whole lot of family and friends. He was preceded in death by his parents, Florian and Martha Gonsorowski.

A memorial service will be held at 10 a.m., Friday, September 27, 2024, at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Moorhead, MN, followed by a fellowship at Lindenwood Rotary Shelter in Fargo, ND. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that any memorials be made in Al's name to The Fargo Parks Foundation (<https://app.givingheartstoday.org/charity/1499>), where he spent countless hours umpiring softball. The next time you're at Anderson Softball Complex, look for a new bench dedicated to Al and remember him with a smile.



DEATH CONTINUED from A1

totality of circumstances."

At the time of the incident, Gilbertson had more than a dozen criminal charges pending in Polk County relating to theft, firearm and drug possession. There was more than one warrant out for his arrest.

Widseth states in the letter that law enforcement had made two earlier attempts to arrest Gilbertson — once in August 2023 and again in October 2023 — and were unsuccessful. During the second attempt, Gilbertson allegedly threw a mirror and pushed a dresser down the stairs toward officers before he fled.

In November 2023, someone told a deputy Gilbertson thought the EGFPD was out to get him and meant to hurt or kill him. Gilbertson "said that he would not go alone and would take someone with him," the letter said.

He also allegedly said he thought police were trying to have sexual relations with his wife and had been stealing his property. He expressed wanting to purchase a car to get out of the state of Minnesota, according to the letter.

On Jan. 8, a known individual reported seeing Gilbertson at his mother's Rhinehart Township residence that morning driving a snowmobile, wearing camouflage and appearing to be on drugs due to his movements.

The next day, the individual reported they believed Gilbertson was once again at the residence.

"Gilbertson had established by his conduct that he was not going to allow himself to be arrested on the outstanding warrants since he already had forfeited \$72,000 in bonds, was facing 20 or more years in prison if he was convicted on the pending charges, had fled from law enforcement officers on multiple occasions, and was apparently seeking to flee the state," Widseth wrote in his letter.

There was also evidence Gilbertson could be armed, as he had been in the past. Due to all the

cumulative information officers had, they considered Gilbertson armed, dangerous, a flight risk and a serious threat to public safety, the letter said.

Arriving at the Rhinehart Township residence, law enforcement had a uniformed deputy knock on the door to speak with Gilbertson's mother and inquire about whether her son was there. After some conversation, she asked the deputy to give her five minutes. Officers on the scene believed it was apparent Gilbertson was inside.

At one point, Gilbertson exited a rear door of the residence, apparently attempting to flee on a snowmobile parked nearby. Confronted by officers, he ran back inside. One of the people who'd been inside the residence with Gilbertson advised law enforcement that he had a gun.

Officers repeatedly advised Gilbertson to surrender, but he refused. They entered the residence from both the back and front entrances.

Schrage reported he was confronted by Gilbertson in the hallway. Gilbertson pointed the gun directly at Schrage, calling him by name and swearing at him, the letter said.

Schrage first

unsuccessfully attempted to tase Gilbertson — which a non-police witness corroborated.

Gilbertson fled into a bedroom and out of Schrage's sight.

"Unknown to Sgt. Schrage, upon retreating into the bedroom, Lucas Gilbertson had thrown the handgun out of a bedroom window," the letter said. "Sgt. Schrage reported that Lucas Gilbertson then rushed out towards him, and he shot Lucas Gilbertson."

The gun Gilbertson threw out the window was later determined to be a silver .357 revolver that was fully loaded with live ammunition.

There were mere seconds between the time Gilbertson threw the gun out of the window and when he was shot, and there is no evidence that Schrage knew he was unarmed, the letter said.

"More importantly, Lucas Gilbertson did not indicate in any way that he was unarmed at that point in time or that he intended to voluntarily surrender," Widseth wrote.

Gilbertson was shot at six times and struck four.

In his letter, Widseth writes that a few individuals have suggested Schrage intended to kill Gilbertson from the outset that day, but that

suggestion is not supported by any evidence.

Squad car video taken from in front of the residence shows that, when Schrage entered the home, he was holding only his taser, the letter said. Additionally, Schrage was among those who immediately tried to render aid to Gilbertson after he'd been shot.

"There is no dispute that Lucas Gilbertson's death was a tragedy, but the evidence establishes that it was his own voluntary actions (refusing to obey the law and court orders, pointing a loaded revolver directly at Sgt. Schrage, and retreating into the bedroom and then rushing out towards

Sgt. Schrage) and inactions (refusing to comply with the officers' commands and to surrender peacefully despite being given multiple opportunities to do so) that ultimately lead to his death," Widseth wrote. "Law enforcement officers have a dangerous job, and no officer is required to wait for a suspect to shoot first when dealing with an armed subject who has made clear he has no intent to surrender and appears willing to kill others in order to avoid going back to prison, as the evidence demonstrates) Lucas Gilbertson was on January 9, 2024."

DEATH NOTICE

Dean Markel

Aug. 9, 1934 - Sept. 12, 2024

FARGO, N.D. - Dean Markel, 90, Hoople, N.D., died Thursday, Sept. 12, in Fargo.

Visitation will be from 10-11 a.m., followed by a funeral at 11 a.m., Tuesday, Sept. 17, at First Lutheran Church in Hoople.

Arrangements by Askew Funeral Home.

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Accounts vary in details of fatal Polk County shooting

Attorney's office narrative conflicts with East Grand Forks sergeant's

BY SAV KELLY
Grand Forks Herald

POLK COUNTY, Minn. — Attorneys for Polk County and the shooter have not responded to questions regarding a discrepancy in narratives about a fatal shooting by police in East Grand Forks.

On Friday, Sept. 13, the

Polk County Attorney's Office issued a statement saying it found no wrongdoing by law enforcement in the January incident that led to an East Grand Forks man's death.

A Herald reader pointed out the discrepancy between the Polk County narrative and the officer's own report, which is detailed in a civil court

filing. The Herald reached out to attorneys in the civil case on Tuesday, Sept. 17, but had not received comment by 5 p.m. Wednesday.

The incident occurred at a Rhinehart Township residence on Jan. 9 after law enforcement received reports that Lucas Paul Gilbertson was there.

Wanted for alleged

supervised release violations, 42-year-old Gilbertson had been evading law enforcement for months, according to a Thursday, Sept. 12, letter Polk County Attorney Greg Widseth sent to the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension after reviewing its report of the fatal shooting.

Gilbertson allegedly

failed to surrender, attempted to flee, and ultimately was shot four times. He was pronounced dead in an Altru operating room.

His shooter, East Grand Forks Police Sgt. Aeiiso Schrage, was sued the following month by Gilbertson's father, Rodney Paul Romuld, who argues unreasonable force was

used, among other complaints.

Most of what occurred in the moments leading up to the shooting was publicly unknown — because Schrage had been undercover and was not wearing a body camera — until documents were filed in the civil

SHOOTING on A14

Board decision faces challenge

GFPS faces two legal complaints

BY JOSHUA IRVINE
Grand Forks Herald

GRAND FORKS — A Grand Forks Public Schools teacher who argued before the School Board this summer his contract was improperly reduced has taken his case to court.

A lawsuit filed Monday in Grand Forks County District Court argues School Board members were in the wrong when they voted July 24 to reject band teacher Dave Christianson's claim the district improperly reduced his teaching contract when he was moved from Red River High School to an elementary teaching position.

Mike Geirmann, general counsel for statewide teachers union North Dakota United, is representing Christianson in the suit.

Christianson, who conducted and supervised several student bands as well as supervising choir, was reassigned from the high school in June after Principal Kris Arason blamed Christianson for two pranks conducted by student band members during Red River's graduation rehearsal and subsequent ceremony.

As a result of the move, Christianson lost his

LAWSUIT on A3

SHAPING MINNESOTA

CLIMATE CHANGE'S IMPACT ON ITASCA STATE PARK AND THE STATE'S FUTURE

BY SHANNON GEISEN
Park Rapids Enterprise

Could climate change turn Minnesota into Kansas?

Lee E. Frelich, director of the University of Minnesota Center for Forest Ecology, addressed this question during his presentation on Saturday, Sept. 13 at Itasca State Park in Park Rapids, Minnesota.

Frelich explained that the park lies near the convergence of three biomes: boreal forest, temperate forest and prairie.

Scientific research is exploring how those biomes could shift in low- versus high-warming scenarios.

A 9- to 10-degree increase in summer mean temperatures "would make this place like north-central Kansas," he said, whereas a 4- to 5-degree increase will change the landscape to something similar to Granite Falls, Minn.

Frelich said Itasca State Park would then become "prairie, with light vegetation" instead of oaks.

"There's a few preliminary indications that maybe we'll be able to avoid the high scenario, but if we look at the high



Shannon Geisen / Enterprise

Summer mean temperatures, precipitation and CO2 emissions could alter Itasca State Park's landscape by 2070. The park's pine forest is particularly at risk, according to climatologist Lee E. Frelich.

scenario, we would expect all of our tree ranges to shift north by about 300 miles," he explained.

"Minnesota is the edgeline state in the union," he continued, adding almost every tree species native to Minnesota has its

range limit in the state.

When summer mean temperatures are between 64 and 65 degrees, both boreal and temperate saplings grow equally well in northern Minnesota, Frelich said.

A study has shown, he

said, that as summer temps rise, temperate species thrive. Examples are bur oak, red oak, basswood, sugar maple, red maple and yellow birch.

This means Itasca Park would lose boreal species, like black spruce, white

spruce, balsam fire, jack pine, red pine, quaking aspen and paper birch. Boreal species prefer cooler summer averages, below 59.5 degrees.

Temperate forests are

CLIMATE on A2

Grand Forks Region EDC receives two awards for economic development initiatives

STAFF REPORTS
Grand Forks Herald

GRAND FORKS — The Grand Forks Region Economic Development Corporation received two awards during the International Economic Development Council's conference in Denver.

The awards were given to the EDC for its InternGF program and the "Greater Grand Forks: Way Cooler Than You Think!" video series, which showcases rural communities of Grand Forks counties and what makes them desirable places to live, and received a bronze talent development and retention award for the InternGF program. The program was started in 2018 and helps companies augment the cost of wages for interns.

According to the EDC's 2023 report on the InternGF program, 66.7% of participants were still living and working in the Grand Forks area.

"Workforce attraction and development is a top priority for businesses located in the Grand Forks region, and for

companies looking to expand to the area," Keith Lund, EDC president and CEO said in a statement. "I need to congratulate EDC Director of Workforce Development Becca Cruger and the incredible team of dedicated professionals that drive these and other critical initiatives. Their work is truly making a positive impact in the Grand Forks region."

Cruger added that she is honored that the EDC has received the award and recognition for the community effort.

"Each day, our office focuses on what we can do to grow and expand our region's workforce through programs and initiatives like InternGF and the Cooler rural video series. I am

honored and humbled that the EDC has been selected to receive these international awards," Cruger said in the statement. "I am grateful for the EDC investors who continue allocating resources to allow us to do this work. I am also grateful for the amazing partnership with the UND Center For Innovation which provides funding and programmatic support to keep InternGF running."

IEDC President and CEO Nathan Ohle said the Grand Forks EDC is exactly what economic development should look like.

"The Grand Forks Region EDC is setting the standard of excellence for economic development with its InternGF



Contributed / Grand Forks Region EDC

EDC Director of Workforce Development Becca Cruger holding the bronze and silver awards the EDC received from the IEDC during the conference.

transformative impact of economic development. It is with great pride that IEDC presents this award to the Grand Forks Region EDC, celebrating their leadership and innovation in the field of economic development."

Grand Forks County approves 2025 budget with 2.93 mill levy reduction

BY MATTHEW VOIGT
Grand Forks Herald

GRAND FORKS — The Grand Forks County Commission passed its 2025 budget during its meeting Tuesday night with a 2.93 mill levy reduction.

The reduction means that Grand Forks County residents on average will see roughly a 1.45% increase in their county property taxes or \$14.22 more based on the median home and average property valuation increase. The county is levying a total of 91.57 mills, or \$34,694,002, in 2025.

During the public hearing, no one spoke, but

there was discussion among the commissioners about ways to further cut the budget, like cutting funding to the historical society or the library. Neither gained much traction and the final budget was very close to what the commission passed in August.

The big reduction is mainly due to the levy for the airport being cut in half. Both the city and the county levy for Grand Forks International Airport. When the city decided to cut its airport levy in half, the county levy, which wasn't really in play, would have begun being exercised without any action by the

commission. That would have monetarily not changed much for taxpayers, but would have looked like the county increasing taxes when the only thing changing was where the taxes were being paid to.

According to County Auditor Debbie Nelson, the county will likely have a levy increase in 2026, as the county will likely no longer be able to continue to buy down the levy with cash reserves. While the reserves are within recommended guidelines, there isn't enough to continue to keep the levy buy down.

"We're really going to need to find a solution to this rather than just paying cash," Commissioner

Kimberly Hagen said. Commission Chair Dave Engen added, "This budget is probably easier than they're going to be the next coming years; we're going to have to pay very close attention."

What the budget next year will look like is still a ways off and a vote on whether to eliminate property taxes on market valuation away. The referendum that's on the ballot this fall would dramatically change how local governments fund themselves, especially when a majority of their funding comes from property taxes.

The commissioners did think the county needs to

look into diversifying its revenue streams, moving away from being so reliant on property taxes. The county, once it's no longer able to buy down the mill levy, will likely be near the 60 mill cap allowed for the general fund.

"We can nickel and dime the budget, absolutely. I totally agree with you, but when it comes to the long-range plan, how can we broaden our resources instead of, 'Well, we're going to be capped off at 60 mills?'" Commissioner Cynthia Pic said. "How can we broaden our revenue sources so that we continue to provide the services that are mandated in legislation?"

In other news, the commission:

- Approved a change order to regrade all the deteriorating terracotta of the Grand Forks County Courthouse dome. The ongoing rehabilitation process was started earlier this year and the change order will have to be approved by the state historical commission, which may take some time.
- Approved aligning the county's spring load limits on roads to align with the states. The move will provide clarity to both freight haulers and law enforcement according to County Engineer Nick West.

Northwest Regional Corrections Center inmate pleads guilty to assault of fellow inmate

BY SAV KELLY
Grand Forks Herald

POLK COUNTY, Minn. — A Fort Yates, North Dakota, man who is currently being held at the Northwest Regional Corrections Center changed his plea Tuesday, Sept. 17, in an assault case against a fellow inmate.

Christopher Paul James Morrison, 24, was charged with felony first- and third-degree assault after throwing boiling water on another inmate, according to a probable cause statement filed in the case.

Morrison pleaded guilty to the lesser charge, and will be sentenced at 9 a.m. Thursday, Sept. 19.

On March 24, a sheriff's deputy was dispatched to

the correctional center, where a man was observed with burns on his chest, arm, shoulder, neck and back, according to the statement. In some areas, his skin had peeled off, revealing large wounds.

The man said he had been working out and saw Morrison speaking to his cellmate. He suspected they were up to something. Morrison was microwaving water for seemingly no reason, the statement said.

While he was doing laps around the unit, the man said Morrison approached and poured two cups of boiling water on him. A physical altercation ensued.

BRIEFS

Sherburne County man killed in Monday night crash

LIVONIA TOWNSHIP, Minn. — A Sherburne County man was killed Monday night, Sept. 16, in a one-vehicle crash.

Michael A. Calavici, 48, of Zimmerman, was traveling on 112th Street Northwest at about 7 p.m. Monday when his Hummer H3 left the road near 233rd Avenue and crashed, according to a Sherburne County Sheriff's Office news release.

Calavici was trapped inside the vehicle, and extrication was required to remove him, according to the release. Despite medical intervention, Calavici was pronounced dead at the scene, according to the release. No further information was provided.

Rochester crash leaves State Patrol trooper, another driver with minor injuries

ROCHESTER — A Minnesota State Patrol trooper was responding to a

call about a driving complaint on Tuesday morning, Sept. 17, when the trooper and another driver collided in Rochester.

The crash occurred around 7:50 a.m. at the intersection of 19th Street Northwest and West Frontage Road in Rochester, near Highway 52, a statement from Minnesota State Patrol said. The squad car's emergency lights were activated at the time of the crash.

The trooper and other driver sustained minor injuries. "We are thankful that no one was seriously hurt in this incident," Col. Christina Bogojevic said in a statement. "We understand that this situation may raise concerns within the community, and we want to assure you that we are committed to a thorough investigation."

Bogojevic said the Rochester Police Department is handling the investigation.

Forum News Service

Thief River Falls man sentenced to 74 months for intentionally striking motorcyclist with pickup

BY SAV KELLY
Grand Forks Herald

PENNINGTON COUNTY, Minn. — A Thief River Falls man was sentenced Tuesday, Sept. 17, to a little more than six years for intentionally striking a motorcyclist with his pickup, causing great bodily harm.

Paul Gregory Piche, 37, was originally charged with three felonies: second-degree attempted murder, first-degree assault causing great bodily harm and second-degree assault with a dangerous weapon. He was also charged with gross misdemeanor harassment.

Piche agreed to offer a Norgaard guilty plea to the first-degree assault charge, meaning he acknowledged the harm and enough evidence to convict him, but he cannot admit to the crime because he can't remember committing it.

The three remaining

charges were dismissed.

A sheriff's deputy was dispatched to the Seven Clans Casino on May 23, 2022, after receiving a report of a crash between a pickup and motorcycle, according to a probable cause statement filed in the case.

The investigation revealed that Piche followed a woman in her vehicle and was confronted by her husband at the casino, where he arrived on his motorcycle to meet them. After a verbal confrontation, the man drove off, and Piche followed, striking the back of his motorcycle, the statement said.

The man ended up on the ground, but got back to his feet while Piche was backing up his truck. Piche then accelerated toward the man, striking and throwing him into the ditch, the statement said. He sped off and could not be located for approximately three hours.

The man suffered bruised ribs and a fractured arm, according to court documents.

Prior to sentencing, a memorandum was filed by the defense that requested a downward departure from the minimum mandatory sentence, citing Piche's history of mental health issues and the fact that he had been unmedicated at the time of the crime. For a time after his arrest, Piche was found incompetent to stand trial; however, once his medications were in order, there were fewer if any issues.

A more recent evaluation, done in February of this year, explained that Piche may have believed his life was in danger. He spoke about the man verbally threatening him, as well as advancing on him with a weapon.

Security footage showed the man reaching into his pocket while acting confrontational after first being struck by

Piche's pickup, the memorandum said. This may be why Piche struck the man a second time.

The general consensus, among medical professionals who evaluated Piche as well as those known to him who were interviewed, seemed to be that when he takes his medications, he doesn't get into any trouble.

The defense requested that Piche be granted a stayed sentence, meaning he would only serve additional time if he violated probation. Piche was ultimately sentenced to 74 months.

Under Minnesota's two-thirds rule, he will serve approximately 49 months in custody and the rest on supervised release. With credit for 846 days served, this leaves Piche to spend a little less than 21 months at the Minnesota Correctional Facility in St. Cloud.

SHOOTING CONTINUED from A1

case.

In Schrage's answer to the civil complaint, filed March 7, he states that upon entering the residence in pursuit of Gilbertson, the man pointed a gun at him.

Schrage deployed his Taser but missed, so he switched to his handgun "as Gilbertson ducked toward a window he had shattered moments earlier."

The window had been shattered when Gilbertson threw a gun out of it, according to previously released documentation.

Schrage "feared the Gilbertson was planning to shoot and kill (Pine to Prairie Drug Task Force) agents who were just outside the shattered window, or that he was planning to re-engage and shoot and kill him, so he discharged his firearm, striking Gilbertson."

Most of this narrative

corresponds with the events detailed in Widseth's letter, but there are differences. After the Taser missed, Widseth wrote that Gilbertson "fled into a bedroom and out of Sgt. Schrage's sight."

"Unknown to Sgt. Schrage, upon retreating into the bedroom, Lucas Gilbertson had thrown the handgun out of a bedroom window. Sgt. Schrage reported that Lucas Gilbertson then rushed out towards him, and he shot Lucas Gilbertson."

The discrepancy: Did Gilbertson duck toward the shattered window, or charge directly at Schrage?

Seeking clarification, the Herald reached out to Schrage's attorneys and Widseth on Tuesday morning, Sept. 17, but did not receive comment by 5 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 18.

The Herald requested a transcript of the BCA's



Sav Kelly / Grand Forks Herald

In this Herald file photo, area law enforcement block 445th Avenue SW in Rhinehart Township, located in Polk County, Minnesota, on Jan. 9, 2024, after East Grand Forks resident Lucas Gilbertson was shot by law enforcement.

Interview with Schrage, but how long that will

take to be released is unclear.

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Herald

GFPS leaders saying little on fraud

District reported \$2.2 million stolen last month

BY JOSHUA IRVINE
Grand Forks Herald

GRAND FORKS — District leaders are saying little about the \$2.2 million allegedly swindled from Grand Forks Public Schools last month.

The district's superintendent, business manager and School Board president all declined requests by the Herald to provide more information about the alleged wire fraud reported to

police on Sept. 13, citing the ongoing criminal investigation of the matter.

That's included queries about the financial impact of the alleged fraud, when the School Board became aware of the fraud, whether anyone has been disciplined or fired as a result of the incident.

"I know people are interested, that they want to know the why behind all of it, but we do want to preserve the integrity of the investigation," Superintendent Terry Brenner said.

Brenner said all communications relating to

the fraud investigation would be coming from law enforcement. The Grand Forks Police Department is handling the case with support from the United States Secret Service.

Brenner said there is a possibility of a joint media release by the district and authorities in the future, but it was otherwise premature for him to speculate about the case.

The school district did issue a staff-wide notice of the fraud Wednesday afternoon, shortly after the Herald first reached out to confirm whether the fraud had taken place.

Brenner said the notice was sent out to let staff know their banking information had not been compromised, but said he would not address why the district had waited nearly three weeks to do so.

Los Angeles-based certified fraud examiner Julie Platt says it's not surprising district officials are refusing to comment.

"There's very little motivation to publicly disclose you've been defrauded," she said. "I have not seen a lot of governments do it, and a lot of private businesses and public businesses, they

don't want to do it. It makes them look bad."

School Board President Dave Berger also said the School Board would not issue a statement about the alleged fraud "until the investigation is complete and all the facts have been brought to light."

He did not respond to a query about when he or other School Board members became aware of the fraud.

Brenner and Business Manager Brandon Baumbach also declined to speak about the impact of the fraud on the district's finances.

Platt suggested one

reason the district isn't commenting on the financial cost of the alleged fraud is administrators may be waiting to see if law enforcement can recover the lost cash or if the district has fraud insurance that may make up the loss.

Baumbach did not answer a text message asking whether anyone has been disciplined or fired as a result of the fraud.

"The school district has been the victim of a crime perpetrated by an external actor which is under investigation," he wrote in response.

Attorney: Shooting report is based on investigation

BY SAV KELLY
Grand Forks Herald

POLK COUNTY, Minn. — Little, if any, clarification has been provided following publication of a recent Herald article pointing out discrepancies between the accounts of a 42-year-old man's fatal shooting by an East Grand Forks police officer.

The discrepancies were found in Polk County Attorney Greg Widseth's report on the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension's investigation and documents filed months prior in the civil case against Sgt. Aeisso Schrage, the officer who fatally shot Lucas Gilbertson.

Widseth's report said Gilbertson ran at Schrage before being shot. However, Schrage's response to the civil complaint against him — filed by Gilbertson's father — said Lucas Gilbertson was crouching next to a broken window before being shot.

Neither Widseth nor Schrage's legal counsel clarified these discrepancies prior to the article's publication. Afterward, Widseth emailed a brief response.

"The only response I have is my evaluation and decision was based upon a review of evidence compiled in an investigation completed and forwarded to me by the BCA and not upon a review of allegations in pleadings in a civil case," Widseth wrote.

Jason Hiveley, one of the attorney's representing Schrage, provided a statement that he and other legal counsel were pleased by Widseth's findings and agreed that the evidence showed Schrage's use of deadly force was objectively reasonable based on the totality of circumstances known to him at the time.

"We believe the claims in the civil suit will ultimately be resolved in his favor," Hiveley wrote.

He declined to make any comment on the record about the discrepancies between accounts of the shooting.



Contributed / Windland Photography
Dr. Josh Deere (left), and Todd Forkel, president and CEO respectively, of Altru Health System, are pictured at the Altru Gala, an annual fundraising event hosted by the Altru Foundation, on Sept. 21 at the Alerus Center.

Altru surpasses fundraising goal

More than \$13.6M generated for new hospital

BY PAMELA KNUDSON
Grand Forks Herald

GRAND FORKS

The Altru Foundation has surpassed its largest-ever philanthropic capital campaign goal by raising \$13.6 million for the new

hospital, officials have announced.

Sponsors and attendees of the foundation's recent Altru Gala contributed more than \$435,000, according to Kristi Hall-Jiran, chief philanthropy and partnership officer.

These donations, along with a matching gift of \$250,000 from Lunseth

Plumbing and Heating announced at the gala, created a total event impact of more than \$685,000, said Hall-Jiran, who also serves as executive vice president of Altru Health System.

Funds will be used to support the new hospital and surrounding campus on South Columbia Road.

The hospital is expected to open in January.

The gala, which drew about 550 attendees, marked one of the organization's most successful events ever, resulting in the campaign surpassing its goal at \$13.6 million, Hall-Jiran said.

"This is the first-of-its-kind major philanthropic

capital campaign that Altru has done," she said. "So it's really exciting to have our first major campaign be part of a project that's just so incredibly significant in terms of our history and the trajectory of our community. It's really special."

ALTRU on A16

Poll: Most 2024 North Dakota ballot measures appear too close to call

BY MICHAEL STANDAERT
North Dakota News Cooperative

BISMARCK — North Dakota voters appear split and largely undecided about four of the five ballot measures up for a vote on Nov. 5, a new poll commissioned by the North Dakota News Cooperative found.

The four ballot measures — Measures 2, 3, 4

and 5 — are expected to have major ramifications if approved.

Trevor Smith, chief research officer of WPA Intelligence, which conducted the North Dakota Poll between Sept. 28-30, said the large number of undecided voters shows a "lack of understanding."

"The initiatives are written too complicated for the average voter to understand when they

see them," Smith said, adding pollsters only see large numbers of undecided voters in states where initiatives are written this way.

Measure 4: Abolish property tax measure

On the property tax measure, Measure 4, 33% of those polled were undecided.

The measure would prohibit local governments from taxing

property on assessed value and require the state to find an estimated \$3.15 billion per biennium in replacement revenue, which would then go back to those local governments.

"Those in favor of eliminating property taxes accounted for 28% of voters polled, with only 16% a definite yes."

More voters are opposed to Measure 4,

with 40% against. 27% of which were a definite no.

Measure 4 was sponsored by former Rep. Rick Becker and the End Unfair Property Tax group as part of an effort to force a restraint in spending by elected officials and potentially tap into Legacy Fund interest to support local governments if those taxes are

POLL on A6

Dec. 2 - Dec. 22

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Brad Dokken / Grand Forks Herald

With the Canada Border Services Agency crossing at Piney, Manitoba, in the background, a sign marks the entrance to the Piney-Pinecreek Border Airport on April 15, 2017, on the U.S.-Canada border. The Minnesota Department of Transportation announced the airport will permanently close Dec. 27, a day after the international agreement to operate the airport expires.

Airport located in US, Canada to close

Piney-Pinecreek Border Airport straddles Minnesota, Manitoba

BY BRAD DOKKEN
Grand Forks Herald

PINECREEK, Minn. — A colorful era in the history of Minnesota aviation and cross-border cooperation comes to an end Friday Dec. 27, when the Piney-Pinecreek Border Airport permanently closes.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation and the rural municipality of Piney, Manitoba, announced plans to permanently close the airport

in a Friday, Dec. 13, news release.

One of the few airports actually in two countries, the Piney-Pinecreek Border Airport straddles the U.S.-Canada border about 20 miles northwest of Roseau, Minnesota, and 5 miles south of Piney on the west side of state (and provincial) Highway 89. The airport, which covers 61 acres, has a 3,297-foot paved runway, of which 2,350 feet are in Minnesota and the remainder is in

Manitoba.

The airport also sits next to the Piney and Pinecreek border crossing stations. In a news release announcing the closure, MnDOT said the general aviation airport had operated under an international agreement between MnDOT and the rural municipality of Piney since 1949. The airport had "very low use," MnDOT said, and faced large maintenance expenses, including runway

apron and terminal reconstruction.

The international agreement required to operate the airport expires Dec. 26 and will not be renewed by either airport owner, MnDOT said.

News of the airport's closing came as a disappointment to residents of the area who remember the effort that went into getting it extended in the late 1970s.

AIRPORT on A9

January shooting documents released

Three gunshot wounds were cause of death

BY SAV KELLY
Grand Forks Herald

POLK COUNTY, Minn. — A gunshot wound to the chest was the cause of 42-year-old Lucas Gilbertson's January death, according to an autopsy report from the recently released investigative file, but he also sustained gunshot wounds to the back and right buttock. Gilbertson was killed by East Grand Forks Police Sgt. Aelso Schrage during a warrant service on Jan. 9. The Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension's entire investigative file on Gilbertson's death was shared with the Herald Thursday afternoon, Dec. 19.

The file contains more than 900 pages, plus numerous photographs, videos and audio recordings detailing the BCA's investigation. Protected information was redacted before release. The Herald's review of the file is ongoing but, thus far, a few pieces of information have been found that were not already released

SHOOTING on A8



Eric Hylden / Grand Forks Herald

In this Herald file photo, Rep. Mark Sanford, R-Grand Forks, is photographed in a House Appropriations Committee meeting on March 29, 2023, at the Capitol in Bismarck.

Superintendent to the state House

Sanford emerges as Grand Forks' most tenured legislative delegate

BY KORRIE WENZEL
Grand Forks Herald

GRAND FORKS — Mark Sanford retired from a 28-year career as superintendent of Grand Forks Public Schools in 2007. Three years later, while at

a reunion with college baseball and basketball teammates, he was on a golf course in Arizona when his cellphone rang.

It was former Grand Forks City Council member and 22-year state Rep. Earl Strinden, a Marine veteran, wasted no time. He announced

— yes, announced — Sanford would be running for a seat in the Legislature.

Sanford tried to resist.

"No, I'm not," he told Strinden. "But by the time I put the phone down, I was running for the Legislature."

Looking back, perhaps it could be viewed as a passing of a political baton of sorts — a longtime lawmaker urging a newcomer to join North Dakota's citizen Legislature. Saying

no to Strinden, the House majority leader, wouldn't have been easy. Former President Ronald Reagan once called Strinden, who died in 2022, "one of the strongest and most respected legislative leaders in the state's history."

"I had such great respect for him and an appreciation for the work he had done," Sanford recalled. "I just thought, 'yes, I'm going to give this a try!'"

SANFORD on A9

UND student's dream receives boost with Sanford scholarship

BY PAMELA KNUDSON
Grand Forks Herald

GRAND FORKS — Ali Moses was only 14 when she joined the Thompson (N.D.) Fire Department as a volunteer — following in the footsteps of her father.

After graduating from Thompson High School in spring 2022, she joined

the North Dakota Army National Guard that December, again, inspired by her dad Chad Moses of Thompson and grandfather David Stevens of Grand Forks, who both also served in the U.S. Army.

It's a path that has led to a life of community service and fueled her dream of piloting a

medevac (medical evacuation) helicopter some day.

And, on Thursday, Dec. 5, for Moses, a junior majoring in commercial aviation at UND, that dream got a big boost when she was surprised by visitors in Dean Robert Kraus' office at the John D. Odegard School of Aerospace Sciences. Moses was presented

with a Veterans and Military Services Scholarship from Sanford Health, one of four given each year to veterans, Guard or Reserve members or active-duty military members who have demonstrated leadership and commitment to their country. The scholarship honors those who have enriched the lives of

others, especially in service, academic and community involvement.

"Oh, my gosh," she said, as Jesse Leraas, of Sanford Health in Fargo, presented her with a large, cardboard check for \$5,000. "Thank you so much for the opportunity."

STUDENT on A8



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SHOOTING CONTINUED from A1

to the public — namely, Gilbertson's injuries and the shooter's account.

A transcript and summary from an interview with the shooter — whose name is redacted in the file, but who was identified by court documents as Schragein a subsequent lawsuit brought by Gilbertson's father — says he entered the residence because he'd been waiting out near the front with his Taser and believed the other officers were chasing Gilbertson inside.

"I come around to the front, I open the glass door — again, I know my guys



Contributed / Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension
A crime scene photo of a gun that was in Lucas Gilbertson's possession Jan. 19, before he threw it out the window and was shot by police.

are in here — and I (kick) this door, I don't even see if it's locked, because I want the diversion," Schrage said. "If he is

(going to) confront my guys here, I wanted to be able to Tase him to protect my guys." Once inside, other

officers turned their attention to Gilbertson's mother, trying to get her safely outside. After a moment, Schrage says he was facing Gilbertson, who was swearing and pointing a gun at him.

Schrage fired his Taser, but Gilbertson ducked and the wires hit the wall.

"He retreats, and now I think he's (going to) start shooting at my guys who are still out there, (because) I can still hear them yelling (outside the window)," Schrage said.

He later learned that when Gilbertson briefly retreated, he threw his gun out of the broken window. An officer outside called out upon seeing the gun fall to the ground, but

said there was no time to say anything about it on the radio "because it happened so fast," according to the transcript summary.

When Gilbertson rushed back out toward Schrage and another officer, Schrage fired one round that went through the dry-wall. Schrage immediately fired twice more.

"I wasn't waiting to see the gun the second time," Schrage said. "... I thought for sure he was coming out shooting." He said he wasn't sure ultimately how many times he fired and how many times he struck Gilbertson. When a gun — presumably Schrage's, though his name is once again redacted — was

seized, it was said to have 10 rounds in it. It can hold up to 15.

While uniformed officers had been inside the residence earlier during the altercation, only Schrage and one other undercover officer were in the house with Gilbertson when the shooting took place, documents show. Because Schrage and the other officer were both undercover and in plain clothes, they were not wearing body cameras.

The BCA received an evidence bag containing three hollow-point projectiles and one deformed hollow-point projectile, which were all obtained during Gilbertson's autopsy.

STUDENT CONTINUED from A1

"I'm surprised; this is so awesome," she said. "This is so cool."

"This is an amazing scholarship to get," she said. "It means so much to me — especially the amount, and coming from Sanford ...," because she has set her sights on working as a medevac helicopter pilot for Sanford Health in the future.

"I am so honored that (they wanted) to surprise me like this," she said after the presentation. "The Thompson Fire Department is my second family and this (UND Aerospace) is my third family. I feel so blessed."

Moses said she had submitted her scholarship application some time ago and had forgotten about it. She cited Mike Humble, assistant professor of aviation, for his help in preparing the application and submitting a letter of recommendation.

For a student to receive "a scholarship of this magnitude is definitely special," Kraus said. Many scholarships range from \$500 to \$1,000, he said, and students are always eager to seek scholarships to offset the cost of training.

Wes Van Del, chief helicopter instructor for UND Aerospace, said Moses is "a bit of a star student," due in part to her involvement in the North Dakota Army National Guard and the Thompson Fire Department.

She is also active in a helicopter association student group, Kraus said, and has excelled "academically and flight-wise."

Moses is among a dozen students who serve as ambassadors for the aerospace school. They are prospective students' first contact with the school, answering questions and giving tours. They represent the school at recruiting and other aerospace-related events around the country, Kraus said.

Many applicants
"We receive a lot of applications at Sanford for the Veterans and Military Scholarship," said Leraas, head of library services for Sanford Health, estimating they total between 60 and 70. "Yours rose above the rest."

Her application "embodies a lot of the values Sanford looks for" when considering potential recipients, he said. "She has an outstanding GFP (grade point average), she's an ambassador for her program, she has three part-time jobs, and she is with the North Dakota Guard."

"She is the embodiment of a citizen soldier." Criteria for selecting scholarship recipients rest heavily on evidence of community service and leadership, Leraas said. Created in 2018, the scholarship is awarded as part of the Sanford Health System's efforts to serve veterans and military personnel through patient care, employment opportunities and community outreach.

The applicant must be a veteran, Guard or Reserve or active-duty military



Contributed / Kerry Ring
Ali Moses, who at 14 joined the Thompson Fire Department, is a junior at UND, where she's majoring in commercial aviation. She is one of four recipients of the Veterans and Military Services Scholarships, awarded each year by Sanford Health.



Contributed
Ali Moses works with fellow members of the North Dakota Army National Guard fighting fires in northwestern North Dakota in October.



Contributed
As a military police member, Ali Moses trains with the North Dakota Army National Guard.

firefighting experience. As a military police member with the North Dakota Army National Guard, she took a week off from school in October to help fight fires in northwestern North Dakota.

"The wildland firefighting work was a new experience with the Army," Moses said. "(The fires) were big," she recalled. "It was fun."

Steps to her goal

Receiving the scholarship from Sanford Health is especially significant, Moses said, because it will help her acquire more quickly the hours of flight instruction necessary to achieve her commercial rating as an aircraft pilot and then move on to pay for hours

needed to become a certified flight instructor. Beyond that, she will work to become certified in instrument flight instruction.

"Any sort of funds are an immense help." After graduating and earning the necessary certifications, she intends to become a flight instructor for UND Aerospace and fly helicopters for the North Dakota Army National Guard. As a pilot, she will help with the Guard's search-and-rescue missions out of Fargo, Kraus said, and transport troops, especially short distances.

In her future career, Moses will be filling an important role with the Guard, which relies on helicopter pilots to move



Adam Kurtz / University of North Dakota
Ali Moses, a commercial aviation student at UND, receives the Veterans and Military Services Scholarship from Jesse Leraas, head of library services at Sanford Health in Fargo, on Dec. 4 in the dean's office at the UND John D. Odegard School of Aerospace Sciences.



Contributed / Rob Zafke
Ali Moses is working toward the goal of becoming a medevac helicopter pilot. She's shown here seated in the helicopter that Sanford Health brought for display at a community event in Thompson, North Dakota.



Contributed / Rob Zafke
Ali Moses is shown seated in the type of helicopter she is planning to pilot in the future after completing her training at UND and certification requirements.

troops to the field, he said. "It's what the Army does."

Knudson is a features

reporter at the Herald. Call her at (701) 780-1107, (800) 477-6572 ext.1107 or email pknudson@gfherald.com.

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