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By: Associated Press, Valley News Live

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By: **Ryan Johnson**, Grand Forks Herald

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Published December 28, 2010

**N.D. universities laud system’s impact on economy**
By: **Associated Press**, Bismarck Tribune

The North Dakota University System says its impact on the state’s economy is worth $3.7 billion a year.

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Published December 28, 2010

**Four VCSU students to compete in conducting**
Jamestown Sun

Four music education majors at Valley City State University have been selected to participate in the American Choral Directors Association Conducting Competition Choir at the organization’s national conference.

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Published December 28, 2010

**Sioux nickname saga state’s top sports story of 2010**
By: **Associated Press**, The Dickinson Press

It was a momentous sports year on and off the field for colleges in the Red River Valley.

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Published December 29, 2010

**North Dakota lawmakers ready for pension shakeup**
By: **Dale Wetzel / Associated Press**, INFORUM

Survey: **Legislators willing to look at switching benefit savings plans:** North Dakota lawmakers are willing to consider excluding newly hired teachers and government workers from state pensions, and putting them instead into retirement savings plans that do not have guaranteed benefits, an Associated Press survey shows.

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Published December 29, 2010

**Latest North Dakota news, sports, business and entertainment...**
By: **Associated Press**, KXMB Bismarck/Mandan

The North Dakota University System says its impact on the state’s economy is worth $3.7 billion a year. An Associated Press survey shows North Dakota lawmakers are ready to consider a shakeup in state pensions for newly hired teachers and government workers.

*Click on the title to go to the full article.*

**Some of the articles are no longer available seven days after publication. They are, however, archived on the publication’s website and are available for a small fee.*
Proposed budget to improve roads, education and more in North Dakota
By: Anna Jauhola, Wahpeton Daily News

To view the original article, please visit:
http://www.wahpetondailynews.com/articles/2010/12/21/news/doc4d11211712f0e829574245.txt

After only 12 days as governor of North Dakota, Jack Dalrymple has traveled the state, touting his proposed $3.197 billion budget for the 2011-13 biennium.

The governor visited numerous papers throughout North Dakota recently to share his budget.

Funding priorities, building reserves and providing tax relief are the main objectives of this budget. “Our reserves will be built to a little over $1.2 billion,” he said.

The recently established Legacy fund, passed in the June election, will be a large part of helping build up state reserves. Dalrymple said by the end of the 2011-13 biennium, $619 million will be built up in the Legacy fund.

One-time investments through the Permanent Oil Tax Trust Fund will help improve infrastructure in the western half of North Dakota. Roads are in dire need of repair and construction, particularly in the western half of the state due to the oil boom. "They're being overwhelmed out there by the level of activity," Dalrymple said. "I've been out there myself and been up and down the roads."Dalrymple said if the state doesn't get resources out there quickly, infrastructure will begin to fail.

Based on a study by the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute, he will propose putting $229 million into state highways in the 17 counties affected by the oil boom and $142 million will go straight to the counties and townships for their roads.

On a local note, the North Dakota Department of Transportation will receive $1.7 billion this biennium. Dalrymple said each county will get their fair share. Richland County has plenty projects on tap over the next five years, but has had to push some off in the last five due to lack of funding.

"Overall, this whole business is new for us," Dalrymple said. "If we want to keep this development going and bringing in all this revenue... we have to look at this as an investment. Slowly, gradually I think people are going to see that."

Education continues to be an important issue in the state, which the budget will support in the next three years. Dalrymple set $102.3 million for K-12 education, including for completion of adequacy, an increase in per student payments, supplemental performance pay for teachers and more. He wants to make sure each district has enough funds to do what is required.

Higher education will also see some benefits, including a freeze on tuition hikes at two-year institutions over the next biennium and no more than a 2 1/2 percent hike at four-year schools. Dalrymple particularly budgeted for an $8.18 million remodel of Old Main at North Dakota State College of Science. Currently, the fourth floor is unusable and it doesn't have an elevator. If the budget passes, funds should be available for this project in July 2011, Dalrymple said.

Property and income tax relief are also in the budget at $350 million and $150 million respectively. Both come at a time when many people are still suffering from the effects of the national recession. Reductions in income taxes will show as a 12 percent savings for North Dakota taxpayers.

With this proposed budget, the state’s share of school funding will increase from 48 percent to 70 percent. That is a reduction of 75 mills in school district levies, Dalrymple said. Also, he said the legislative assembly has already invested dollars for property tax relief this coming biennium from the Property Tax Relief Sustainability Fund. He is suggesting funds be set aside again from the fund for the 2013-15 biennium.

A few other notes in the budget include an increase in health and human services, long term care, military and veterans, economic development and public safety.

The budget includes money for training highway patrol troopers and equipment for communications towers, psychiatric care, suicide prevention, college campus and high school mental health problems, senior citizens and
public employee salaries, among others.

Published December 22, 2010

**Eagle study important to state**
Bismarck Tribune

To view the original article, please visit: [http://www.bismarcktribune.com/news/opinion/editorial/article_2ab1548e-0d16-11e0-8cd1-001cc4c03286.html](http://www.bismarcktribune.com/news/opinion/editorial/article_2ab1548e-0d16-11e0-8cd1-001cc4c03286.html)

North Dakotans would like to see ranching, wildlife and oil production exist in harmony in western oil-producing counties. The more hard, scientific information people and industry have about the area, the better they are able to balance and manage continued use of the land and natural resources.

The Bakken formation in North Dakota, where oil exploration and production has been growing dramatically, resulting in a strong economy amid a national recession and a surplus in the state’s bank accounts, overlaps the range of the golden eagle and the northern half of the Little Missouri Badlands.

No one knows if the increased oil activities have any significant downside for eagles. There’s not enough information about the number of eagles and their nesting habits in the area. But that will change.

A multi-year survey of active and inactive eagle nests in western North Dakota, under the supervision of Dickinson State University biologist Margi Coyle, has begun. Coyle has a three-year, $100,000 grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to do “systematic aerial counting” of eagles and their nests.

That means piloting a small fixed-winged plane low over the badlands and grasslands, in a tight GPS marked grid, while a researcher with a laptop logs coordinates for active and inactive nests.

The hard data from the survey should help the oil industry, ranchers and grasslands managers work with the golden eagle population. The strategy is to protect the eagles so that their numbers do not drop to the point they are placed on the endangered species list. If the eagles get placed on the list, operating in the eagles’ range becomes more complicated and expensive.

It’s in everyone’s best interest — oil companies, ranchers, naturalists and the public — that there are healthy golden eagle numbers. But to get a handle on what “healthy numbers” might be, the survey work needs to be done.

Interestingly, it’s not just a matter of counting nests. A nesting pair of eagles might use up to 10 nests. And some of the nests in western North Dakota go back decades or more. In Coyle’s doctoral work on golden eagles in western North Dakota between 2002 and 2006, she estimated there were between 30 and 50 pair of nesting eagles. Surveyors have identified 420 eagle nests in that part of the state.

Conversations about management of wildlife and industry need to be based more fact than assumptions and guesses. The survey helps in that regard.
Is it time for a new rec center?
By: Levin T. Black, Williston Herald

To view the original article, please visit:
http://www.willistonherald.com/articles/2010/12/22/news/doc4d122eb8c4f1b787764906.txt

EDITOR'S NOTE: THIS STORY HAS BEEN UPDATED TO CLARIFY BUDGET NUMBERS DERIVED FROM A PROPOSED 1-CENT SALES TAX.

The Williston Park Board had its monthly meeting on Tuesday and members debated whether a new recreation center in Williston is a worthwhile venture.

President Larry Grondahl said talks are in the infancy stage and should only be considered preliminary at this point.

The board has been approached by Williston State College on the subject. WSC wants the new rec center to be built on its campus.

At least one member of the board has concerns about working together with another entity because of past experiences when doing that. Given the current economy, a proposed 1-cent sales tax would bring in about $4 million annually, Grondahl said, and that has prompted Park Board members to discuss how to spend that potential money.

The Parks and Rec. 1-cent sales tax proposal will be on the ballot in April 2011 and include language that will cancel out the property taxes currently being used to fund the department, Grondahl said.

Grondahl said the Park Board has been waiting for a current 1-cent sales tax being used to pay for a school district bond to expire before bringing this new sales tax increase to the voters.

Last week, the Williston Public School School District 1 announced its bond had been paid, and the 1-cent sales tax would be eliminated in April.

Currently, sales tax in Williston is 7.5 percent. If voters choose to pass the Park and Rec. sales tax, it would remain at that level, Grondahl said.

"The sales tax won't be any higher than it is now, and you're going to lose 12 percent of your property taxes," Grondahl said.

Two years ago, officials estimated the proposed 1-cent sales would generate $2.5 million per year. However, the local economy is stronger today.

"All our numbers are based off that $2.5 million. Since then it has skyrocketed," Grondahl said. "What are we going to do with all the extra dollars. That is where we came up with the idea of future facilities because we knew there was a new indoor pool needed and an outdoor pool was needed at some point in time."

A new rec center would cost a considerable amount of money. Grondahl estimated that it would cost at least $25 to 30 million. He said the extra income from the sales tax wouldn't be able to fund the building on its own.

"The sales tax money would never be able to fund a whole rec center," Grondahl said. "There will have to be a whole another gamut of people involved in this. This is just putting it into a fund for a future building."

Members of the board will continue to discuss the possibilities of a new rec center in the coming months.

Some members will meet with other entities interested in a new rec center in January to discuss ideas further.

Currently, Williston Parks and Recreation has an annual budget of $1.7 million, which is derived from property taxes, Grondahl said.
Published December 22, 2010

Put that Pizza on My Student Loan
By: Scott Cohn, CNBC

To view the original article, please visit: http://www.cnbc.com/id/40777957

It happened at a bar and restaurant in Grand Forks, N.D., but it could have been at any college campus in America.

College kids were enjoying pizza and beer, and paying for it all with a debit MasterCard. But this was not any debit card. The funds behind it come from student financial aid.

The card is the brainchild of Miles Lasater and Mark Volchek, who came up with the concept when they were students at Yale and turned it into a business called Higher One [ONE 20.05 ▲ 0.11 (+0.55%)], which went public in 2010. Higher One reported $75 million in revenue in 2009, and is on pace to more than double that in 2010, with some 700 colleges and 5 million students on board. And the business is built around that debit card.

According to the company, roughly half of student borrowers receive aid that covers more than their tuition. Those funds are supposed to cover books, housing and living costs. Schools are required to refund that money to students, and in the past did so in the form of a paper check.

Lasater, who was a computer science major at Yale, and Volchek, who studied economics, reasoned they could streamline the process for schools and students, while at the same time making money from MasterCard transaction fees collected from merchants and debit-card fees collected from students. Schools quickly signed on, including the University of North Dakota,

“We really looked at it as a pretty reasonable win-win kind of arrangement,” University of North Dakota Vice President Peggy Lucke said.

But not everyone views it that way.

Higher One’s fees have drawn ire of some students, like University of North Dakota senior Shane Gerbert.

“I don’t like the fact that someone’s taking money from money I borrowed,” Gerbert said.

And the money can add up. Higher One charges $20 to replace a lost card. $19 a month for account that has been inactive for nine months, and 50 cents any time a customer keys in a PIN instead of swiping the card, which is how Higher One earns transaction fees.

Published December 22, 2010

WSC releases evaluation results
Williston Herald

To view the original article, please visit: http://www.willistonherald.com/articles/2010/12/22/news/doc4d12320097d62908934400.txt

Williston State College has long been proud of the members of its faculty, but evaluations from administration and from students this fall have shown that the college has a right to that pride.

“Williston State has always had excellent faculty,” said Wanda Meyer, Vice President for Instruction at WSC. “It was nice to see the change and momentum in how students aren’t afraid to step up and say it.”

Meyer plans a time to observe each full-time benefitted faculty member as they teach.
Some of the things she watches are the dynamics between the instructor and the students, how they interact, how they learn, how and if the students are participating in the class, and how technology is being used and if it is being used appropriately.

When the teacher is done with instruction for that class, she asks for 5 to 10 minutes alone with the students for a confidential visit. "We talk to each other. I tell them I need to know what we can do to make this the best educational experience and learning process that they can get. I ask them to talk to me about their instructor, and then we talk about the campus." "When I'm done, I give the instructor a report, outlining their strengths, what they could improve on and what we'll look at next time. They made it very difficult for me this year because there's really not much to improve on. Every single teacher would have been nominated for teacher of the year. I did not have any group of students complain about the instruction. To me, that is amazing."

She said there were suggestions for the teachers, but no actual complaints from the students. "There were some complaints on other areas of the college, but none on instruction. They had some comments, such as maybe making tests easier, etc., but there were no complaints."

She credits the instructors at WSC with a willingness to spend extra time with the students. "Every faculty member will take extra time for the students, if they are willing to learn," she said. "The students are saying that they appreciate that the instructors are helping them be the best they can be."

From her own observations, Meyer said that she could see that the instructors are all great presenters, and she realized from talking to the students, that they understand that as well.

"A comment I heard was that 'they know how to get it across to us so that we understand.'" she said.

She said some of the classes offered at WSC are very difficult.

"If you take away the difficulty of the class and talk about the instructor, they all had nothing but praise for the instructors, saying that the instructor is amazing," Meyer said. "They realize that it's not the instructor's fault if they don't get it. The students know that the instructors work very hard to get the information across to them."

Two other comments that Meyer heard often from the students were that the students love their instructors and that they make the classroom experience fun.

"Those are very strong statements," Meyer said. "To know that they are working in a very difficult class and to still say that they're having fun, that's really something special."

Her final step is to meet with instructors, giving them her report which will become part of their record. "They are encouraged to take the reports and put them in their professional portfolio," which helps when considering instructors for tenure and/or rank, she said.

She said the instructors like the evaluation system, which she has used twice. "It's a way of using accountability, and by doing it often they know that they're being held accountable, and they're succeeding," Meyer said.

Published December 23, 2010

**Alumnus Stutrud endows scholarship in memory of wife**

Prairie Business

To view the original article, please visit: [http://www.prairiebizmag.com/event/article/id/11421/group/homepage/](http://www.prairiebizmag.com/event/article/id/11421/group/homepage/)

An endowed scholarship by a 1941 North Dakota State College of Science graduate has been created to help students at the College in need of financial assistance. Odin Stutrud, a retired NDSCS faculty member, has created the Odin and Hazel Stutrud endowed scholarship in memory of his late wife, Hazel. The scholarship will be awarded to enrolled students who need financial help; preference will be given to those whose home residence is in McKenzie County, N.D.
"NDSCS has been a big part of my life through the years and I wanted to put the scholarship in place to honor Hazel and help many others in the years to come," said Stutrud. "Science is a great College and hopefully this scholarship will give many deserving students some financial help." NDSCS President John Richman called the Stutrud scholarship a wonderful act of generosity. "It is through magnanimous gestures from former students, faculty and friends that NDSCS has continued to grow and offer more students the opportunity to take advantage of the world-class education we provide."

Stutrud, a Watford City, N.D. native, came to NDSCS in the fall of 1939 where he enrolled in the printing program. His interest in the printing industry arose from his work experience at a local newspaper during high school, and writing and printing a newspaper in a Civilian Conservation Corp, CCC camp. While at NDSCS, Stutrud participated in middle weight boxing where he boasted an undefeated record in 1940-41. After graduating from Science, Stutrud worked at Northwest Blade in Eureka, S.D. Stutrud enlisted in the Army shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor and served four years, with more than two years overseas. He earned the rank of second Lieutenant. Odin and Hazel were married in 1944 during a ten-day furlough.

Following his service in the Army, Stutrud worked in the newspaper business before being offered a position as an instructor in the NDSCS printing department. After 13 years as an instructor, Stutrud became a N.D. State Trade/Technical & Health Education teacher and traveled the state certifying teachers. He was also the Director of the American Technical Association, headquartered on the NDSCS campus.

Published December 23, 2010

Stories of the Year, No. 6: Building memories
By: Dustin Monke, The Dickinson Press

To view the original article, please visit: http://www.thedickinsonpress.com/event/article/id/43404/

It isn’t even a year old yet, but the Badlands Activities Center has already created some lasting memories.

In its inaugural season, the $16 million facility built with public and private funds on Dickinson State University’s campus in place of old Whitney Stadium made an extremely successful debut in 2010 and, from a sports aspect, played host to several outstanding football games.

“Every week it started feeling more like home,” Dickinson Trinity football coach Randy Gordon said.

The new home to the DSU, Trinity and Dickinson High football teams made its dress rehearsal with a handful of track meets before fully opening its doors on June 19 during the Badlands Bowl high school all-star game that pits North Dakota against Montana.

No one left disappointed.

North Dakota intercepted six passes and both teams broke game records before the home team walked away with a thrilling 41-38 victory.

It was only the start of the show, however.

DSU’s outstanding 2010 season was highlighted by record attendance, great games and a brand-new tailgating policy that made for a wonderful game-day atmosphere.

“It’s a big time facility,” Morris said. “Our kids are really proud of the facility and proud to call it home.”
University of North Dakota medical students are priority No. 1 for Judy DeMers.

“My goal is always to do what’s best for the students, not to produce another doctor,” said DeMers, UND School of Medicine associate dean of student affairs and academics. Most of the time, becoming a doctor is in the student’s best interests, but occasionally it’s not. Either way, DeMers is available to the students for counsel.

“My philosophy when dealing with students has really been two-fold: one is to respect them and two is to listen to them.”

That philosophy has, in turn, earned DeMers the respect and affection of hundreds of medical students during the past 27 years. She began her career with UND in 1969 after earning her bachelor’s in nursing from the university. She later pursued post-graduate work at UND and worked in the university’s nursing college, medical school and Center for Rural Affairs before being named associate dean of student affairs and academics in 1983.

Popular

DeMers, 66, will retire from UND Dec. 31. Judging by the number of students who showed up for a recent photo shoot with her, she will be greatly missed. When DeMers sent out an e-mail asking a few students if they would be photographed with her to illustrate an article about her in the North Dakota Medicine magazine, enough showed up to fill a medical school auditorium, said Jessica Sobolik, UND School of Medicine director of alumni and community relation.

The medical students also held their own retirement party for DeMers and wore T-shirts that said I (heart) Judy,” and sang “Hey Judy” to the tune of “Hey Jude.”

DeMers is an integral part of the UND medical students’ education, counseling them from the time they apply to the medical school until their graduation from it. As an admissions counselor, she also counsels students who aren’t accepted into the program about ways they can improve their applications.

Counsel

Throughout the four years the students are enrolled in medical school, DeMers helps students with their academic and personal challenges, which sometimes include balancing classes, work and family.

“I do a lot of counseling of students, help them get through school… I really love working with students and I like working with students who have problems and overcome them. That’s really satisfying to me.”

When the medical student classes graduate, it’s gratifying to both them and DeMers.

“It’s kind of like having 60 kids at graduation,” she said. “I know them all.”

Besides counseling students in her work as associate dean of admissions, DeMers also is responsible for overseeing the students’ organizations.

DeMers has had a long time involvement in community service, serving in the North Dakota Legislature as a representative from 1982 to 1992 and as a senator from 1992 to 2000. She also has served on the board of Valley Community Health and currently serves on the Grand Forks City-County Board of Health, the Development Homes board of directors and is vice chair of the Grand Forks Democrats.

She plans to keep Grand Forks as her home base after she retires. An avid hockey fan since she was a girl in elementary school she plans to continue to attend UND games. DeMers also plans to spend time at the home of her son, daughter-in-law and grandson in the Twin Cities this winter and at her cabin on Grace Lake in Minnesota during the summer.
"I'm going to take up fishing. I just think that would be fun."

Published December 25, 2010

**NDSU hires Strommen as project coordinator**
INFORUM

To view the original article, please visit: [http://www.inforum.com/event/article/id/302747/group/Business/](http://www.inforum.com/event/article/id/302747/group/Business/)

Jane Strommen has joined North Dakota State University as project coordinator for the North Dakota Partners in Nursing Gerontology Consortium Project.

The NDSU Department of Nursing and Dakota Medical Foundation has received a grant for this project, which will address nursing work-force shortages specific to gerontology in North Dakota.

Strommen has more than 24 years of experience in the long-term care field, specializing in aging in rural areas.

She graduated from NDSU and the College of St. Francis, Joliet, Ill.

Published December 27, 2010

**A year after collapse, questions still remain about Minard Hall**
By: **Amy Dalrymple**, INFORUM

To view the original article, please visit: [http://www.inforum.com/event/article/id/303014/](http://www.inforum.com/event/article/id/303014/)

A year ago today, officials at North Dakota State University awoke in the middle of the night to learn that a portion of the school’s largest academic building had collapsed.

Officials are still waiting for results of a forensic investigation into what caused the structural failure of Minard Hall’s northwest wall.

The investigation has slowed work on the addition, which was scheduled to be complete in May 2012.

“I think it would be dangerous for us to be moving too aggressively until we find out what the full impact of that soil instability is,” NDSU President Dean Bresciani said at a recent state Board of Higher Education meeting.

Testing at the site where the collapse occurred is complete. Experts are analyzing the data and expect to release their conclusions in February, said Mike Ellingson, facilities management director.

The main parties involved are NDSU, general contractor Meinecke-Johnson, JLG Architects, the North Dakota State Fire and Tornado Fund and geotechnical firm Northern Technologies.

The project was budgeted to cost $18 million.

So far, NDSU has incurred nearly $1.3 million in additional costs associated with the collapse.

That includes $930,000 for building-related expenses, such as architecture fees, contractor expenses and asbestos abatement.
NDSU also has spent nearly $200,000 on expert witnesses, legal fees and the university's portion of the forensic study costs.

The remainder of the costs include incidental expenses such as moving departments, technology costs, security, equipment and supplies.

Who is responsible for the collapse-related expenses is yet to be determined.

NDSU may need to go back to legislators to request more funding, but officials can't do that until they have firm estimates, Bresciani said.

Meanwhile, the loss of space is a critical issue for NDSU, Bresciani said. Faculty from the various academic departments are scattered around campus.

"To say that some of them ended up in closets would not be a dramatic understatement," he said.

The end date for the project is unknown.

"It's a slow process, but with the magnitude of it, we've got to make sure it's been a very good, thorough investigation, and we've collected as much possible data that we can," Ellingson said.

Published December 27, 2010

**UND space suit to be tested in Antarctica**

By: **Associated Press**, Valley News Live


GRAND FORKS, N.D. (AP) - An experimental space suit developed at the University of North Dakota will be tested in Antarctica for a simulated mission to Mars.

But researchers told the Grand Forks Herald that the space suit is now being tested in North Dakota because the state is a lot like Antarctica this time of year.

UND officials say the space suit has been tested in other areas that resemble Martian terrain, including deserts in Utah and North Dakota's badlands.

Published December 27, 2010

**HIGHER EDUCATION NOTEBOOK: Wind power safety training ... Carter joins Rural Health ... Ag Arama at UMC ... more**

By: **Ryan Johnson**, Grand Forks Herald

To view the original article, please visit: [http://www.grandforksherald.com/event/article/id/188071/](http://www.grandforksherald.com/event/article/id/188071/)

**OSHA, LRSC team for wind power safety training**

The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration announced Thursday that it has a new alliance with Lake Region State College in Devils Lake.

The partnership will focus on safety training for workers in the wind power industry.
OSHA will provide assistance in developing training related to work safety when exposed to the hazards of the industry, while Lake Region will offer training for students on the commissioning, operation and maintenance of equipment and control systems for wind turbines.

**Carter joins UND’s Center for Rural Health**
Paula Morin Carter has joined the Center for Rural Health at UND’s School of Medicine and Health Sciences, the school announced Thursday.

She’s a research specialist for the National Resource Center on Native American Aging. In this position, Carter will serve the center on a state, regional and national level as a resource person on issues involving Native American again and also provide support in research and data management.

Before joining the Center for Rural Health, Carter was a mental health research with the Veterans Administration, where she worked to develop culturally appropriate mental health resources to be utilized with American Indian veterans.

She’s an enrolled member of the Turtle Mountain Chippewa Tribe and originally is from Belcourt, N.D. She holds a master’s degree in counseling from UND, and currently is pursuing her doctorate degree in counseling psychology.

**UMC plans 36th annual Ag Arama**
The University of Minnesota-Crookston will soon hold its 36th annual Ag Arama, an event hosted by the Agriculture and Natural Resources Department that includes activities for the entire family.

Most of the activities will take place starting at 8:30 a.m. Jan. 29 in the University Teaching and Outreach Center located on the northern edge of campus.

University alumni are invited to a social at the Irishman’s Shanty in Crookston from 5:30 to 7 p.m. that evening.

**UND grad students receive scholarships**
Four UND graduate students will receive scholarships for the current school year as they work to complete their training in remote sensing and geospatial technologies.

Each student will receive a $500 scholarship, awarded through the UND Department of Geography by NorthDakotaView, an organization dedicated to promoting the technology in the state.

The four master’s degree candidates are Nels Anderson, Wautoma, Wis.; Annmarie Krimpotch, Sartell, Minn.; Jeremy Smith, Draper, Utah; and Dustin Van Thuyne, Mankato, Minn.

**LRSC seeks comment during reaccreditation**
Lake Region State College in Devils Lake is seeking public comment as it goes through a reaccreditation process.

The final report developed from this current selfstudy process will be used by a team of evaluators scheduled to visit the campus in late February.

The college became fully accredited in 1973, and earned a 10-year reaccreditation in 2000.

Individuals and groups who wish to submit a public comment are asked to address substantive matters related to the quality of the college or its academic programs. Comments should include the name, address and telephone number of the person providing the comments, which will not be confidential.

If interested, mail public comments to:

Public Comment on Lake Region State College
The Higher Learning Commission
30 N. LaSalle St., Suite 2400
Chicago, IL 60602
N.D. universities laud system's impact on economy
By: Associated Press, Bismarck Tribune

To view the original article, please visit: http://www.bismarcktribune.com/news/state-and-regional/article_b0eaea84-130a-11e0-90d2-001cc4c03286.html

BISMARCK – The North Dakota University System says its impact on the state’s economy is worth $3.7 billion a year.

The system, which includes the University of North Dakota and North Dakota State University, released a study Tuesday of its effect on North Dakota’s economy.

The study estimated that state universities contributed almost $1 billion into local economies in the 2009 fiscal year and another $300 million through student spending.

According to the study, that money multiplies when cycled through the state's economy.

In a statement, university system Chancellor Bill Goetz argued that North Dakota’s investments in higher education pay off later.

Four VCSU students to compete in conducting
Jamestown Sun

To view the original article, please visit: http://www.jamestownsun.com/event/article/id/126261/publisher_ID/10/

Four music education majors at Valley City State University have been selected to participate in the American Choral Directors Association Conducting Competition Choir at the organization's national conference. Casey Behm, Fingal, Thomas Zinke, Rolla, Amber Olson, Mandan, and Kirci Phillips, Valley City, will represent Valley City and the state of North Dakota as members of the choir in Chicago, March 8-12, 2011.

Each university level choral director who is a member of ACDA was allowed to nominate a single quartet of outstanding vocalists for potential participation in the choir. Dr. Leesa Levy, director of choral activities at VCSU and president of the North Dakota chapter of ACDA, sent in the nominations.

The VCSU quartet will take their place with vocalists from other universities around the country, including: the University of Nebraska, Boston University, Penn State University, Indiana University and Valdosta State University.

All four of the students selected from North Dakota are planning careers as choral directors. They will be rehearsing the first day with Dr. Rodney Eichenberger, one of the premier conductors in the U.S. For the rest of the week, the students will be attending master classes, choral sessions and rehearsing intensely with the winners of the national conducting competition. The finals of the competition will be performed in Chicago’s historic Empire Room at the Palmer House hotel.
Sioux nickname saga state’s top sports story of 2010
By: Associated Press, The Dickinson Press

To view the original article, please visit: http://www.thedickinsonpress.com/event/article/id/43541/publisher_ID/6/
The latest attempt to set up a three-class system for North Dakota high school basketball and volleyball suffered yet another resounding defeat.

And in March, Adam Randall and Eli Benz won the Mr. and Miss Basketball awards, making Kidder County the first Class B school to sweep the awards in the same season.

Published December 29, 2010

North Dakota lawmakers ready for pension shakeup
By: Dale Wetzel / Associated Press, INFORUM

To view the original article, please visit: http://www.inforum.com/event/article/id/303201/

BISMARCK – North Dakota lawmakers are willing to consider excluding newly hired teachers and government workers from state pensions, and putting them instead into retirement savings plans that do not have guaranteed benefits, an Associated Press survey shows.

The financial woes of pension funds managed by the North Dakota Public Employees Retirement System and the Teachers’ Fund for Retirement, as well as a drumbeat of reports about other states’ pension difficulties, have made North Dakota legislators more open to shaking up the system, its detractors say.

“We’re in the zone of being able to do something about this,” said Dustin Gawrylow, the director of the North Dakota Taxpayers Association and a critic of the state’s pension structure. “If you can deal with it now, it’s better to fix the problem, and address the problem early, rather than letting it stew.”

The Associated Press, in a survey of North Dakota lawmakers, asked whether they would support closing the two funds to new members and enroll new hires instead in a plan similar to the 401(k) plans common in private business.

Among North Dakota House members who responded, 51 supported the idea, 16 opposed it and nine said they were undecided. In the Senate, 24 favored the proposal, nine did not and five said they were undecided.

The survey was conducted by regular mail and electronic mail during December. Thirty-eight of the Legislature’s 47 senators and 76 of its 94 House members replied, a response rate of 81 percent.

The Public Employees Retirement System’s $1.63 billion pension fund covers almost 20,000 workers, and has about 6,400 retired employees drawing benefits.

Participants include most North Dakota state government employees, 48 of the state’s 53 counties and the cities of Fargo, Grand Forks and Williston.

The $1.54 billion teachers’ fund has about 9,700 contributing employees and about 6,500 retirees.

Both funds were hammered by the stock market’s severe downturn two years ago, and the market’s subsequent rally hasn’t restored the funds to their former values.

Analysts say both funds are likely to exhaust themselves within 30 years unless pension contributions are increased. A North Dakota legislative committee that reviews pension legislation has recommended bills to raise the employer and employee contributions for both funds.

If contributions rise, a plurality of the survey’s respondents in both the House and Senate said they favored raising them for both workers and their employers, rather than asking only one or the other to increase their contribution.

A proposal to bolster the teachers’ fund with $75 million from the state’s general fund got little support from lawmakers in the survey. The Legislature’s pension oversight committee considered the idea earlier this year but declined to recommend approval.
The pension committee also rejected a proposal to close the pension funds to new hires and route them instead to tax-deferred savings plans that do not offer the guaranteed benefit of a traditional pension plan.

Analysts said the change would carry large start-up expenses, and would exhaust the assets of the traditional pension funds more quickly than if the status quo were maintained.

The AP survey shows, however, that the entire Legislature is willing to take up the idea.

“I think we have our work cut out for us in showing what the cost of making such a conversion would be,” said Stuart Savelkoul, director of the North Dakota Public Employees Association.

The traditional pension fund that now covers public employees is called a “defined benefit” plan. Once an employee has worked in his or her job long enough, he or she is entitled to a monthly payment upon retirement. Its size depends on each worker’s length of service and salary history.

Advocates of the traditional pension say it provides the assurance of a guaranteed monthly benefit, which is paid without regard to the vagaries of the stock market.

A 401(k) plan, which allows employees to save money tax-free until they retire, is an example of a “defined contribution” plan. It allows workers to control how their retirement savings are invested, and direct how any leftover retirement money is used after they die.

Traditional pensions, while they are a common benefit for public employees, are increasingly rare for private workers, which has raised the argument of whether private employees—whose retirement savings suffered in the recent market downturn—should have to guarantee the pension benefits of public workers.

“We are going to have a debate about whether we should have two separate systems,” Savelkoul said.

Published December 29, 2010

**Latest North Dakota news, sports, business and entertainment...**

By: Associated Press, KXMB Bismarck/Mandan


**UNIVERSITY ECONOMIC IMPACT ND** universities laud system’s impact on economy Bismarck, N.D. (AP) The North Dakota University System says its impact on the state’s economy is worth $3.7 billion a year.

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**PENSION MONEY AP** survey: ND lawmakers ready for pension shakeup BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) An Associated Press survey shows North Dakota lawmakers are ready to consider a shakeup in state pensions for newly hired teachers and government workers.

Two funds, the North Dakota Public Employees Retirement System and the Teachers’ Fund for Retirement, suffered in the stock market downturn two years ago and haven’t fully recovered. Analysts say the funds will exhaust themselves within 30 years unless contributions are increased.
Most House and Senate members who responded to the AP survey said they would support closing the funds to new hires and putting them into 401 (k)-style plans that are common in private business.

The 401 (k) plans don't offer a fixed benefit like the pension plans do.

A critic of the state pension plans, Dustin Gawrylow (GOV-ur-low) of the North Dakota Taxpayers Association, says the state should move to fix the problem now.

**BERG-NEW STAFF** New congressmen Berg names top staff Fargo, N.D. (AP) North Dakota Congressman-elect Rick Berg has hired his former campaign manager as his chief of staff when he arrives in Washington next month.

Lonnie Dietz managed Berg's successful campaign against incumbent Earl Pomeroy.

Berg announced a host of other appointments Tuesday afternoon.

Former deputy campaign manager Jonathan Casper will be Berg's counsel and legislative aide. Alee Lockman will be the office's communications director and spokeswoman.

Berg says in a statement that he's excited to get to work. He'll become one of two newly elected Congressmen to serve on the influential House Ways and Means committee.