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No 2023 traffic deaths in Roseau, Red Lake counties Traffic-related fatalities in Minnesota are down 37% since 2003

BY SAV KELLY
Grand Forks Herald

GRAND FORKS — Since Minnesota implemented its Toward Zero Deaths program in 2003, the state's traffic-related deaths have decreased by 37%. The program coordinator, though, believes work is far from over. "Our goal is zero," Kristine Hernandez said.

"We had two counties in northwest Minnesota that had zero fatalities last year — we highlight our wins, but we all want zeroes to be the goal."

Roseau and Red Lake were two of the 12 Minnesota counties (13.79%) with zero traffic-related deaths in 2023. With 87 counties in the state, 75 of them (86.21%) had at least one traffic-related

death.

Toward Zero Deaths is a national strategy that focuses on highway safety with the goal of eliminating traffic deaths and serious injuries. The "zero deaths" idea was first adopted by Sweden in the late 1990s, according to the Minnesota TZD. It has been implemented in various state transportation departments

throughout the U.S., including Minnesota and North Dakota.

There were 414 traffic fatalities in the state last year, and 95 so far in 2024, according to Minnesota TZD preliminary data. In North Dakota, there were 106 fatalities in 2023 and — as of March 28 — 15 this year, according to Vision Zero.

In the two decades

since Minnesota established its own TZD program, some issues have been nearly eliminated, Hernandez said. Some advancements were made through changes to infrastructure, such as creating barriers and redirecting traffic.

Cable median barriers have been erected on many highways that were experiencing high rates

of head-on crashes, she said.

"They wreck your car if you hit them, but the flip side is, you're not hitting another motorist — because those are very deadly, impactful crashes," Hernandez said. "So that was huge."

Another change was closing some median

TRAFFIC on A6

Grand Forks teen pleads not guilty to murder

BY SAV KELLY
Grand Forks Herald

GRAND FORKS — A Grand Forks teen accused of murder waived his Monday, April 29, preliminary hearing and pleaded not guilty to the crime.

Cazmere G. Haskins, 18, is charged with Class AA felony murder-intentional, knowing or with extreme indifference, which has a maximum penalty of life in prison without the possibility of parole.

The crime allegedly occurred around 3 a.m. on March 7. A group of 11 individuals, including Haskins and 24-year-old Anfernee Economy, agreed to meet up that night to fight, according to an affidavit filed in the case.

Haskins was soon apprehended and allegedly admitted to the stabbing, but claimed it was done in self-defense.

The knife was found in his residence, and law enforcement determined he'd sent images of the suspected bloody weapon

Once law enforcement arrived, they located Economy with an apparent stab wound to the torso, and pronounced him dead on scene.

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HASKINS on A5



Members of Grand Force pose with their robot.

Contributed / Sarah Dignan

GRAND FORCE RETURNS FROM WORLD ROBOTICS CHAMPIONSHIP

At the end of this year, two mentors and two founding students will move on.

BY DELANEY OTTO
Grand Forks Herald

GRAND FORKS — Grand Forks' only FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Robotics team is back from the world championship event, five years after the team's inception and on the cusp of two of the

founding mentors heading out of North Dakota and two founding students graduating high school.

Sarah Dignan, lead mentor for the team, will move to Virginia with her fiancée and fellow mentor Derrick Seubert. While the two have plans to mentor virtually and hand off in-person mentoring to others, Dignan

said she has mixed emotions about moving away from the team.

"I'm not ready to leave them, but I also know that they'll be fine without me," she said. "They can do it."

Grand Force, a team of five students and three college-aged mentors, came 33rd out of 75 in the Hopper division — named after mathematician and

computer technology pioneer Grace Hopper — at the FIRST Championship, held in Houston, Texas, April 17-20. They were one of three teams from North Dakota that made it to the championship, the other two being from Hatton-Northwood and Fargo.

The theme of the game played this season focused on music,

shooting "notes" into goals called "speakers" and "amps" to earn points. The team won the Innovation in Control Award and qualified for the world championship at a regional event in St. Cloud, Minnesota, when another team it was in an alliance with qualified twice. A team can't be

ROBOTICS on A5

DAKOTA DATEBOOK

The 'last roundup' corralled North Dakota wild horses

BY SARAH WALKER
Dakota Datebook

MEDORA, N.D. — On April 29, 1954, cowboys from across the region were preparing themselves to participate in one last roundup of wild horses near Medora. The event was determined to possibly be the nation's last major horse roundup.

The roundup was to start the next day, and would last for a total of three days. During that time, riders would focus on a herd of wild horses in the Theodore Roosevelt

National Memorial Park area. These horses had been roaming and grazing in the park for many years, and were considered a nuisance.

According to James L. Barnhart, the roundup foreman, the horses needed to be removed from the park. This need stemmed from a National Park Service policy of enforcing anti-trespass grazing laws, as well as through a program set to improve the park.

Cowboys from ranches in the Roosevelt Park area and volunteer riders

from South Dakota, Minnesota and Montana all took part in the event.

More than 100 riders were expected to participate. Requests had been received from saddle clubs and horse buyers across the region, people interested in riding in the event. However, it was only about 40 cowboys who ended up corralling 125 horses on the last day of the event on May 2. Cowboys who participated also took part in a rodeo afterward.

Those who were riding in the event traveled over

more than 60,000 acres. They all camped on the range until the roundup was completed, and chuck wagons followed the riders around the park. The cowboys moved in three stages from the north limits of the park. They worked down coulees, driving horses into points where they could be collected. As Barnhart had said, if horses were branded, they were cut out from the rest of the herd and returned to their owners.



Cal Olson Collection / NDSU Institute for Regional Studies
Cowboys participate in the 1954 roundup of wild horses at Theodore Roosevelt National Memorial Park. Two years later, in 1956, a boundary fence was completed, leaving uncaptured wild horses and a few ranch strays fenced in.

DATEBOOK on A2

Judge rules lawmakers can be called to testify in gender-affirming care case

BY MARY STEURER
North Dakota Monitor

BISMARCK — Two state lawmakers are expected to testify in a lawsuit challenging North Dakota's ban on gender-affirming care for minors after a judge last week resolved a dispute over whether the legislators could be ordered to speak about the law.



Tveit



Prichard

Attorneys for Gender Justice, the advocacy group representing the plaintiffs, last month sought to subpoena Rep. Bill Tveit, R-Hazen, and Rep. Brandon Prichard, R-Bismarck, for depositions related to social media posts the lawmakers made discussing the ban and LGBTQ issues in North Dakota.

Tveit was the primary sponsor of the 2023 legislation, while Prichard was a co-sponsor. The representatives through Deputy Solicitor General Katie Carpenter responded with a motion

to quash the subpoenas, arguing that lawmakers would be required to divulge privileged information about their work on the ban and that the orders would be too burdensome to comply with. South Central District Court Judge Jackson Lofgren in a Friday, April 26 order upheld the subpoenas, but said the plaintiffs' attorneys could only question Prichard and Tveit about public statements the lawmakers have made.

"The Court finds the Representatives, through their actions, have elected to waive legislative privilege in a limited capacity," Lofgren wrote in the order. "By posting their thoughts on social media, pertaining to the current

litigation, they have opened themselves up to questioning about their social media posts."

In previous court documents, the plaintiffs stated they wanted Prichard and Tveit to testify on their posts in part because they express "bias against transgender and LGBTQ people," which the plaintiffs argued could be relevant to the lawsuit.

The plaintiffs referenced multiple comments by Prichard containing anti-LGBTQ views, including a January post on X, previously Twitter, where he stated "The LGBTQ agenda is evil and bad for North Dakota" and asked, "What even is a queer?"

Court records indicate that Prichard was served with the subpoena on March 26, but that attempts to serve Tveit were unsuccessful as of April 18.

Prichard told the North Dakota Monitor previously he believes the

plaintiffs want him to testify because he spoke in favor of the legislation on the House floor and was an avid backer of the ban in committee meetings.

He also said he believes the Gender Justice attorneys only want a "gotcha" moment that would bolster their case. The ban on gender affirming care for minors was signed into law by Gov. Doug Burgum in April 2023. In September, a group of families and doctors filed suit against the state, arguing the law discriminates against transgender adolescents by denying them treatments that are still legal for other kids to receive for other medical reasons. They also claim the ban infringes on parents' constitutional right to make medical decisions for their kid.

Attorneys for the state have said previously that the law, which was adopted by North Dakota's Republican-dominated

Legislature with more than two-thirds support from lawmakers, should stay in place because it protects children.

Under the ban, it's a class A misdemeanor to administer medications — including puberty blockers and hormone therapy — to children for the purpose of providing gender-affirming care.

Providers found to have violated this part of the law could face up to 360 days in jail, fines of up to \$3,000 or both.

The law also makes it a class B felony to perform transition-related surgery on a minor — which means up to 10 years in prison and a maximum \$20,000 fine. In hearings on the bill, health care professionals testified that transition-related surgeries are not performed on minors in North Dakota.

The law does carve out an exception for those who were receiving gender-affirming care before the legislation was

adopted, though the plaintiffs have said the provision is worded too vaguely for doctors to know when it applies. As a result, North Dakota doctors are not providing gender-affirming care to any minors, even those who were receiving treatment before the ban, the plaintiffs argue.

Both parties are waiting for Lofgren to rule on a motion to suspend enforcement of the law while the case plays out in court.

The plaintiffs asked for a preliminary injunction on the legislation in 2023, claiming the law will cause irreparable harm to children who need gender-affirming care if left in place.

Witnesses testified for and against suspending the ban at a January hearing in Bismarck.

This story was originally published on NorthDakotaMonitor.com

BRIEF

Rochester man killed, teen injured in rollover crash

ROCHESTER — A Rochester man was killed in a crash Sunday afternoon when he went off the road on U.S. Highway 63.

According to the Minnesota State Patrol, Corey Christopher Krohn, 55, was killed after driving off the road in a 2018 Dodge Ram on Highway 63, east of 18th Avenue Northeast north of Rochester shortly before 1 p.m. Sunday, April 28. A 15-year-old passenger suffered minor injuries in the crash.

Krohn was driving east and went off the road at a curve near mile marker 46, the crash report shows. Road conditions were dry at the time of the crash.

Deputies from the Olmsted County Sheriff's Office, the Rochester Fire Department and Mayo Clinic Ambulance Service responded to the crash along with the Minnesota State Patrol. Forum News Service

FCC fines US wireless carriers over illegal location data sharing

BY DAVID SHEPARDSON
Reuters

WASHINGTON — The Federal Communications Commission on Monday fined the largest U.S. wireless carriers nearly \$200 million for illegally sharing access to customers' location information.

The FCC is finalizing fines first proposed in February 2020, including \$80 million for T-Mobile; \$12 million for Sprint, which T-Mobile has since acquired; \$57 million for AT&T, and nearly \$47 million for Verizon Communications.

The carriers sold "real-time location information to data aggregators, allowing this highly sensitive data to wind up in the hands of bail-bond companies, bounty hunters, and other shady actors," FCC Chair Jessica Rosenworcel said in a statement.

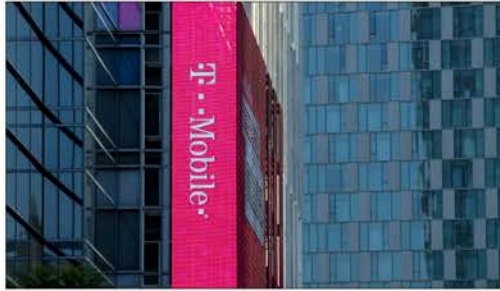
The wireless carriers said they plan to challenge the fines.

Carriers have allowed the use of location-data for programs like roadside assistance, logistics, medical emergency alert services, human trafficking alerts and fraud prevention.

"Smartphones are always with us, and as a result these devices know where we are at any given moment," Rosenworcel said. Citing the sensitivity of geolocation data, she added, "In the wrong hands, it can provide those who wish to do us harm the ability to locate us with pinpoint accuracy."

T-Mobile said the FCC "decision is wrong, and the fine is excessive. We intend to challenge it."

T-Mobile said the "industry-wide third-party aggregator location-based services program



Reuters / Mike Blake / file photo
A T-Mobile logo is advertised on a building sign in Los Angeles on May 11, 2017.

was discontinued more than five years ago after we took steps to ensure that critical services like roadside assistance, fraud protection and emergency response would not be disrupted."

Verizon said it has worked to protect customers: When "one bad actor gained unauthorized access to information relating to a very small number of customers, we quickly and proactively cut off the fraudster, shut

down the program, and worked to ensure this couldn't happen again."

AT&T criticized the order as lacking "both legal and factual merit. It unfairly holds us responsible for another company's violation of our contractual requirements to obtain consent, ignores the immediate steps we took to address that company's failures, and perversely punishes us for supporting life-saving location services."

The FCC said carriers relied on contract-based assurances that service providers would obtain consent from carriers' customers before accessing location information.

Lawmakers in 2019 expressed outrage that aggregators were able to buy user data from wireless carriers and sell "location-based services to a wide variety of companies" and others, including bounty hunters.

TRAFFIC
CONTINUED from A1

crossovers in four-lane highways, forcing motorists who want to enter the highway from a county road to go around, rather than crossing straight through four lanes of traffic, Hernandez said. "If you get hit on the side of your car, on the driver's side, it's not going to have a good outcome, either," she said. "So we've virtually eliminated that by eliminating people trying to make it across four lanes, because you don't know exactly

how fast the other person's coming at you — especially if they're speeding."

Though Hernandez believes progress has been made, conversations continue on how to improve safety — and more people are being brought in for those conversations. Though a number of agencies are involved in traffic safety, they operated largely independently for quite some time, she said.

"What we've tried to do with TZD is break down our silos," Hernandez said.

Bringing in new perspectives and sharing insight from across agencies reveals new solutions, she said. When the Minnesota Department of Transportation was putting in cable medians, a law enforcement perspective allowed the agency to realize there should be gaps for state patrol to utilize when they need to turn around quickly.

"That reduces their reaction time if they need to go to a crash, or to a hospital," Hernandez said.

Conversations take place on small and larger

scales. A large-scale method TZD has to bring what Hernandez calls "traffic safety stakeholders" together is by hosting workshops through the state.

The first of seven scheduled for this year was held on Tuesday, April 23, in Thief River Falls. There were approximately 80 such stakeholders in attendance, Hernandez said.

One major topic highlighted at the workshop was ATV/UTV safety, which has become a larger concern in the state because, as of Thursday,

April 25, the amount of related deaths this year has already matched 2023's total.

There have been eight ATV/UTV traffic fatalities in 2024 so far; there were eight throughout all of last year.

One concern is that people don't recognize the potential dangers of off-road vehicle use, often allowing their children to operate the vehicles while unattended, without proper gear or training.

"People kind of use ATVs as an electronic babysitter," Hernandez said.

Helmets need to be DOT-sanctioned for ATV/UTV use; bicycle helmets do not count. Additionally, children have to be fitted for the vehicle. If they're using the same one, it's likely too big for them.

Hernandez advises that, when children are driving ATVs and UTVs, their guardians should be monitoring them. They cannot drive on a roadway without a driver's license, and specific UTV/ATV training is recommended as well, she said.

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