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commerce matters

2007 Legislative Update on Commerce Issues

The legislative session is in full swing and the Department of Commerce is primarily following two bills that directly impact the department. House Bill 1018 is the Department of Commerce's appropriations bill and House Bill 1027 is the economic development initiatives bill that came out of the interim Economic Development Committee.

HB 1018 is currently being considered by the House Appropriation's Government Operations Division. The Governor highlighted many of this bill's initiatives in his Budget Address and the State of the State Address including a career awareness program, Operation Intern, \$3 million for the North Dakota Development Fund and increased funding for the North Dakota Trade Office. This bill also includes funding for Innovate North Dakota, increased funding for the Dakota Manufacturing Extension Partnership, and replaces the 1 percent lodging tax revenue for tourism with general funds.

The House Industry, Business and Labor Committee has finished its work on HB 1027 and the bill has been referred to House Appropriations. Although it has been amended, it still contains many initiatives that promise to have a significant impact on economic development in North Dakota. A few of the initiatives include:

- A \$2.5 million rural airport economic development fund to bridge the gap between what the FAA will fund for airports and the needs of rural communities.
- A Business and Tourism Acceleration Commission modeled after APUC that will provide grants for Innovation, Tourism and International Trade.
- An increase in the Research and Development tax credit from 8 percent to 25 percent, which would make North

Dakota's R&D tax credit the highest rate in the nation.

- Funding for a website spider program that will place all available job postings in North Dakota into one website.

Please contact Justin Dever at 701-328-7258 or jdever@nd.gov for questions about these two bills. ●

North Dakota Trade Office Hosting Spring Conference

Plan to attend the North Dakota Trade Office's Global Conference March 22 and 23 at the Ramada Plaza Suites in Fargo.



The conference will bring together the state's emerging and experienced exporters and international business professionals from around the world.

Keynote speakers are Rich Karlgaard, publisher of *Forbes Magazine*, and Doug Burgum, senior vice president of Microsoft Corporation. Karlgaard will speak about "Global Economics and it's Meaning to North Dakota." Burgum will share his personal knowledge about "Building a Successful Global Business on the Plains."

Attendees will network with exporters, meet international business professionals and attend sessions designed to help them expand globally.

Presentations and panels by leading export professionals will cover:

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- Piracy Protection
- Shipping and Documentation
- Cross-Cultural Negotiations
- International Expansion
- Trade Mission Preparation
- Agribusiness Export Opportunities
- Export Finance Options and Solutions
- International Contracts
- Global Market Opportunities for Ag Equipment Manufacturers and Distributors

Online registration for the Global Conference is available at www.ndto.com. For more information about the Global Conference contact the North Dakota Trade Office at (701) 235-3638 or Trade Office Development Director Cherie Harms by e-mail at: cherie@ndto.com.

Feb. 20 is First New Professionals Session

If there is a new economic development professional or volunteer within your community, have him or her register for Commerce's first quarter new professionals day scheduled on Feb. 20.

This training is designed to introduce new partners to programs and services offered within all four divisions at Commerce. Contact Pamela Trhlik at ptrhlik@nd.gov to register.

Blue Flint Ethanol Recognized for Bringing North Dakotans Home

North Dakota natives want to come home. That sentiment was the feature of a *Bismarck Tribune* article, Sunday, Jan. 28. Blue Flint Ethanol, one of North Dakota's newest ethanol plants, near Underwood, has brought back more than a dozen natives to fill several of its 36 positions.



To view the article paste this link www.bismarcktribune.com/articles/2007/01/28/news/topnews/127858.txt in your internet explorer.

Knew View Image Program Going Strong



More than 1,000 people have attended the Knew View state image-building program sponsored by Com-

merce. The image campaign kicked off in March 2006 and employees from 12 state agencies have participated, plus several private sector presentations have been completed.

Knew View is designed to showcase new and positive things about the state, educate participants about North Dakota's business strengths and highlight top state rankings. Attendees are quizzed on North Dakota knowledge and learn about the state's five target industries.

Some of the recent comments from the November and December sessions include:

- *Very Good, surprising facts about North Dakota.*
- *Excellent information presented in a high-energy format.*
- *The excitement of the presenter and the positive outlook of North Dakota.*
- *Absolutely well done, the rich mix of helpful stats, anecdotes and phrases was easy to understand.*
- *It's great, not too many handouts and great pictures!*

Knew View presentations are available on a limited basis through the end of this biennium. If you are interested in booking an event, contact Pamela Trhlik at ptrhlik@nd.gov. The fee for the speaking engagement includes all travel costs.

Nominations Sought for the 2007 North Dakota Governor's Awards for Tourism



The Destination Marketing Association of North Dakota (DMAND) and the North Dakota Tourism Division are pleased to announce nominations are now being sought for the 2007 North Dakota

Governor's Awards for Tourism. The awards will be presented during the North Dakota Tourism Conference, to be held April 29-May 1, at the Best Western Doublewood Inn in Fargo. The conference, themed "Next Generation Tourism," is co-hosted by DMAND and the Tourism Division.

Awards will be distributed in eight categories, which include: Tourism Attraction of the Year; Event of the Year; Tourism Organization of the Year; Travel & Tourism Industry Leader; Front-Line Tourism Employee; International Tourism; Best Package; and Behind the Scenes Tourism Employee. To view the criteria and/or submit nominations, simply go to www.northdakotadestinations.org.

Once again, DMAND and the Tourism Division commissioned glass artist, Jason Lindell, from Park River, to design the awards. Jason is designing something for each recipient, which will reflect the spirit and uniqueness of North Dakota.

"This is a great opportunity to nominate organizations, businesses and individuals that go above and beyond to make tourism stronger in our great state," said Teri Onsgard, DMAND president and Fargo-Moorhead CVB director of sales. "I encourage individuals from around North Dakota to submit nominations for those who deserve the recognition of receiving the premier award for our industry."

For more information, contact: Fred Walker, N.D.Dept. of Com-

merce, Tourism Division , 701.328.2525 or fwalker@nd.gov. Conference registration and sponsorship submissions may also be completed at www.northdakotadestinations.org. ●

Commerce to Attend Outsourcing World Summit

Personnel from the Division of Economic Development and Finance will be attending the Outsourcing World Summit in Las Vegas, Feb. 19-21, to showcase North Dakota's outsourcing opportunities.

ED&F Director Paul Lucy will be speaking as part of an international panel, plus the North Dakota Department of Commerce is one of the exhibition sponsors for the event.

The Outsourcing World Summit provides an exceptional networking opportunity for building professional relationships with the leading executives, analysts, consultants and leading service providers in the outsourcing industry. For high-end outsourcing ventures that require a near-shore presence, North Dakota provides a highly cost-effective location.

North Dakota has many outsourcing success stories and even better examples of companies moving an arm of their business to the state instead of outsourcing to foreign companies.

The summit is hosted by the International Association of Outsourcing Professionals, of which ED&F is a member. ●

Heads Up! on the Summer EDND Conference

It's early yet, but don't forget to mark your calendars for the Economic Development Association of North Dakota annual summer conference in Jamestown, June 18-20. The Jamestown/Stutsman Development Corporation is planning the event. Watch for invites and sign-up later this Spring. Last year Beulah hosted the event. ●

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Cal Steiner Wins National Award

Congratulations to Commerce employee Cal Steiner who works as a Residential Energy Specialist with the Office of Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency. He is the 2007 recipient of the *James Gardner Weatherization Award*. This award is given on behalf of the members of the National Association for State Community Services Programs (NACSCP).



Cal Steiner

The NACSCP board presents the *James Gardner Weatherization Award* each year to someone who has been or continues to be involved in weatherization program activities at the national, state or local level. Cal will accept his award, Feb. 16, in Washington D.C. during the NACSCP winter conference. ●

Entrepreneurial Week Coming Up

Commerce is participating in a special entrepreneurial showcase at the Capitol Great Hall, Friday, March 2. This event is



one of hundreds across the country as part of Entre-

preneurshipWeek USA (Feb. 24 – March 3, 2007). Innovate ND will be highlighted as a unique tool for North Dakota's entrepreneurs.

The Friday event is hosted by the North Dakota Council on Entrepreneurial Education and is an incredible career development opportunity to increase awareness in North Dakota's youth of their entrepreneurial potential. It is also a strong opportunity to make legislators more aware of all the unique opportunities across the state for business innovators. ●

Innovate North Dakota Update



With the deadline for registration passed, the Innovate ND entrepreneurial business competition is in the second phase to select top submissions and help participants further develop their ideas. Seventy-one teams with a total of 112 participants entered the first year's competition.

Innovate ND is designed to launch businesses within the state through entrepreneurial education and mentorship. The top 20 entries will make it to a final judging round with the winners announced during a special awards ceremony, Tuesday, May 15, in Fargo.

Nearly 30 companies have provided funding and in-kind services for Innovate ND. The competition is co-sponsored by the Governor's Office, North Dakota Department of Commerce, UND Center for Innovation and NDSU Research and Technology Park. For more information visit the Innovate ND website at www.innovatend.com. ●

Tourism Day at the Legislature

Wednesday, Feb. 21, is Tourism Day at the State Capitol from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. in the Memorial Hall. Booths will be open and snacks and beverages will be served. The event is sponsored by Destination Marketing Association of North Dakota, North Dakota Tourism Alliance Partnership and North Dakota Hospitality Association.



For more information about the event contact the Bismarck-Mandan Convention and Visitors Bureau at 222-4308 or laurie@discoverbismarckmandan.com. ●