

Commerce



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Commerce News

January 21, 2021



Burgum reminds North Dakotans to remain vigilant with the expiration of statewide mask mandate

Gov. Doug Burgum urged North Dakotans to remain vigilant against COVID-19 as the state's case numbers continue a downward trend and the state health officer's statewide mask requirement expired Monday, Jan. 18.

An executive order that limits capacity for bars, restaurants and event venues also was modified, effective Monday, Jan. 18, moving capacity limits and other ND Smart Restart protocols to guidelines or recommendations. The statewide risk level will remain at moderate, or yellow.

Burgum noted that cities and counties may continue to have mask requirements in place, and the state supports those locally enacted protocols.

"Our case numbers and hospital capacity have improved dramatically in North Dakota over the past two months, and with three new tools we didn't have last fall – vaccines, rapid tests and effective therapeutics – we can see the light at the end of the tunnel. However, this fight isn't over, and we need all North Dakotans to continue to exercise personal responsibility, follow protocols and keep wearing masks where physical distancing isn't possible. The day will come when we can take off our masks and discard them with confidence, but only if we do what's needed now to keep ourselves, our families and our communities safe." - Gov. Burgum

[Read more here](#)

New Rounds of Commerce Economic Resiliency Grants under development

Commerce has awarded almost \$70 million of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding by creating, administering and deploying four new grants targeted at segments of the economy hit hardest by COVID-19. Commerce received 6,975 applications and made 5,693 awards totaling \$62,822,583.

The recent federal extension has allowed more time to conduct a second round of grant awards where the intent is to distribute another \$30 million in CARES Act funding to North Dakota businesses in need.

The application window for round two of the Hospitality Economic Resiliency (HERG) is expected to begin in early February, followed by an additional opportunity for hotels to apply for round two of the Hospitality Economic Resiliency Grant PLUS in March, if funds remain.

Commerce is working with state partners to address some of the early hurdles caused by initial federal deadlines. The hope is to go back to existing Economic Resiliency Grant (ERG) applicants and allow them the opportunity to implement their original plans as many applicants were not able to meet the tight deadlines driven by initial federal requirements.

Special Business Briefings

Al Haut, North Dakota Small Business Administration district director and Shawn Kessel, interim Commerce commissioner provided updates about recently passed federal legislation pertaining to North Dakota businesses during a special Business Briefing held today. The presentation and a recording of the meeting will soon be available [here](#).

Another special Business Briefing to highlight the second round of the HERG will be held next week on Jan. 28 at noon CST.

A link to register for the event will be available at the [Greater North Dakota Chamber events page](#).



The graphic features the North Dakota Commerce logo at the top, with the text 'NORTH Dakota | Commerce' and the slogan 'Be Legendary.™'. Below this is a red banner with the text 'SPECIAL BUSINESS BRIEFING'. Underneath the banner is a grey box with the text 'Highlighting the second round of the Hospitality ERG (HERG)'. At the bottom, it says 'January 28, 12:00 p.m. • Hosted by' followed by the GNDC logo, which stands for Greater North Dakota Chamber.

Legislative Update

Last week, the Commerce leadership team presented to House and Senate members during joint session of the Industry, Business and Labor committees. Next week, the leadership team will present to the Senate

Appropriations Committee, which is holding a hearing on Commerce's appropriations bill (SB 2018). If you see a bill that you think Commerce needs to be tracking or you want more in-depth updates on what other bills Commerce currently is tracking, please contact [Michael Tolan](#).



Tourism-Marketing

North Dakota Tourism launches winter advertising campaign



North Dakota Tourism launched its first winter campaign showcasing cool-weather activities and open-air living to inspire discovery of the state’s outdoor recreation, entertainment options and support of small businesses. A new television commercial is airing, along with digital, social and print ads. The campaign runs now through March in-state and in parts of Minnesota, South Dakota and Montana.

From new downtown skating rinks to downhill skiing venues, winter is a great time to enjoy North Dakota. Whether it’s shopping and dining in a new community, taking part in the North Dakota state parks adventure challenge, exploring Theodore Roosevelt National Park, snowmobiling trails or snowshoeing past historic sites, this campaign encourages people to enjoy the winter wonderland safely in North Dakota.

“Winter in North Dakota is an undiscovered time to explore family fun outside and support our businesses that are open and ready to

serve.” - Tourism and Marketing Director Sara Otte Coleman.

This inspirational winter campaign is geared toward reaching North Dakotans and near-border nonresidents over the next couple months. Media placements include cable, print publications, digital and social media.

[View and download the 2021 winter campaign ads here](#)

ED&F

Deadline approaching for the automation tax credit

Commerce announced that the application window for the automation tax credit will close on Jan. 31.

Under the incentive administered by Commerce, a taxpayer is allowed up to a 20% income tax credit for the purchase or capital lease of machinery and equipment to automate a manufacturing process in their operation.

Applications must be completed no later than Jan. 31 of the calendar year following the date of purchase or lease of equipment.

“All eligible primary sector businesses (manufacturers, food processors, etc.) across the state are encouraged to apply for this tax incentive aimed at increasing our state’s manufacturing and processing capacity through automation. This incentive is not just for robots, any automated equipment used to improve job quality or productivity may qualify.” - Commerce Advanced Business Development Manager David Lehman

[Click here for more information](#)

Workforce

WDC announces new toolkit

Recently, the Workforce Development Council (WDC) finalized 13 opportunities and two endorsements of existing initiatives that the council believes can help address the greatest workforce challenges facing the state of North Dakota.

These recommendations fall within the following themes: earlier and more diverse career exploration and addressing the technical skills gap; removing barriers to employment; occupational licensing reform; and recruitment and retention of North Dakota workers.

In order to communicate these opportunities with the public, the WDC created a new online resource to house information pertaining to its recommendations, ongoing research and more. The [WDC Toolkit](#) can be found on the Commerce website.

The WDC is a board comprised of private sector, labor, education and state workforce agency representatives that advise the governor and the public concerning the nature and extent of workforce development in the context of North Dakota's economic development needs, and how to meet these needs effectively while maximizing the efficient use of available resources and avoiding unnecessary duplication of effort.

Energy

Outrigger Energy II Announces Completion of its Williston Basin Midstream Facilities

Commerce, along with the North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality, city of Williston and Williams County, were able to assist Outrigger Energy and its EPC partners in making their investment in North Dakota a success. There were numerous coordination efforts between team members, businesses and introductions that made their entire management team feel welcome and helped employ several hundred locals throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Read more here](#)



In the News



[Meet R.U.D.I.: New germ-zapping robot at Jamestown hospital gets a name](#)



[Pandemic affects North Dakota's tourism revenue](#)



[Large power plant slated for Williston area to harness Bakken's ethane supply.](#)