

Commerce

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Be Legend

Commerce News

February 4, 2021





\$30 million in funds available for round two of grant

The application window for a second round of Hospitality Economic Resiliency Grants (HERG) opened today and will close on Feb. 25 at 5 p.m. CST.

Eligible entertainment venues include movie, drama or music theaters and facilities used to host community and private events, including indoor recreation entertainment,

e.g., bowling alleys, indoor golf clubs and indoor trampoline parks where membership/class fees do not exceed 51% of revenue.

Hotels with restaurants, bars, coffee shops and/or banquet/meeting spaces may apply for a grant using the operational expenses from those specific operations. Receipts must clearly show this connection, such as payroll, rent and mortgages that have no affiliation with BND products, marketing expenses, utilities and insurance.

[Click here for more information](#)



Community Services

Commerce renews Renaissance Zone for Gwinner

Commerce announced this week that the Renaissance Zone Program for the city of Gwinner has been renewed for five additional years.

The Renaissance Zone Program is a tool for community redevelopment and economic investment that incorporates tax incentives to business and residential properties.

Gwinner started utilizing the Renaissance Zone Program in 2006 and has had 17 approved projects. A recent major project for the community was the rehabilitation of AW Diesel Service Inc. in 2019.

“Gwinner has used the Renaissance Zone Program to encourage reinvestment and redevelopment in its downtown area to enhance business and improve housing. The program is often used in smaller rural communities to attract businesses that provide vital services to their populations.” - Rikki Roehrich, program manager at the North Dakota Department of Commerce

[Read more here](#)

Community Action Partnership of North Dakota and Commerce host board training

The Community Action Partnership of North Dakota (CAPND) and Rikki Roehrich from Commerce's Division of Community Services recently hosted Community Action board training.

Training objectives:

- Increased knowledge of the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)
- Understand CSBG-specific tripartite board responsibilities
- Understand legal roles and responsibilities of a nonprofit board member
- Be able to understand and apply principles of board engagement and involvement in governance

The training was recorded and can be accessed [here](#) with the passcode: **F.xP#j3Q**.

The next board training is scheduled for April 30 at noon CT. Agenda items include fiduciary responsibilities and conducting executive director review. Please submit any questions you have about Community Action and your service as a board member [here](#).

[Register here](#)

Additional resources: CAPND recently added a new page to its website titled “[2021 Community Action Board Member Training](#).” The new page includes a toolkit released by Community Action Program Legal Services known as “Tools for Top-Notch CAAs: A Practical Approach to Governance and Financial Excellence.” The toolkit was designed specifically for CAA board members and has six separate sections all related to prevalent board training topics, including compliance with the organizational standards and board roles and responsibilities. These materials are free of charge.

Meet Rikki Roehrich!



Rikki Roehrich is a program manager for the North Dakota Department of Commerce. Rikki has been part of team Commerce for six years. As a member of the Division of Community Services, Rikki is responsible for managing both the Renaissance Zone Program and the Community

Services Block Grant. Rikki says the most rewarding part of her job is working directly with the communities across the state. Rikki resides in Mandan and has two sons.

Main Street Initiative

Applications are now open for the Main Street Initiative Partners in Planning Grant

Commerce recently announced that the application window for round two of the Main Street Initiative (MSI) Partners in Planning (PiP) Grant will be open from Jan. 29 through Feb. 17.

Awards are expected to be announced Feb. 23.

“The PiP Grant program is an excellent opportunity to empower communities to proactively plan their futures, seek smart, efficient infrastructure development and offer a healthy, vibrant environment for residents and visitors.” - Commerce Interim Commissioner Shawn Kessel

The MSI PIP Grant program supports nonprofit organizations and local governments with two grant options for completing a comprehensive plan or economic development/diversification strategic plan.

[Read more here](#)

Twelve North Dakota communities to receive Main Street Initiative Vibrancy Grant funding

This week, Commerce Commerce announced that 12 communities are recommended to receive funding from round two of the Main Street Initiative Vibrancy Grant with a total of \$16,500 to be awarded.

The Main Street Initiative Vibrancy Grant Program seeks to assist in adding a spark of activity and energy to communities across North Dakota. This program helps provide small investments to community projects or events that encourage public art, activate underutilized space or promote walking and biking.

“This grant is a great opportunity to inspire others to engage and contribute to their community’s quality of life for both visitors and residents.” - Interim Commerce Commissioner Shawn Kessel

Grant funding supports nonprofit organizations and/or local governments in vibrancy projects like public events, public art, cultural celebrations, activating underutilized space, community gathering spaces, promoting active transportation, mitigating impacts of vacant or deteriorated infrastructure and more.

The following applications are recommended to receive \$1,500 of grant funding:

- Valley City: Benches and garbage cans for the community orchard
- Watford City: Diversity mural for town in cooperation with the preschool
- West Fargo: Community art project
- Bismarck: Install lighting for Art Alley to highlight these works in the winter months as well as make the underutilized alley space more inviting for events, the public and visitors
- Carrington: Banners and flowering baskets for Main Street
- Fargo: Cooperative effort between Fargo Lions Club and Parks to place art to commemorate the city's resiliency
- Jamestown: Chalkfest event and festival associated with road diet and community arts
- Minot: Downtown geocaching and exploring
- Rugby: Relocation of clock to Pocket Park on Main Street
- New Rockford: Lighting upgrades for Centennial Park
- Grand Forks: Downtown development/UND alleyway murals
- Colgate: Park enhancements in center of town
- Columbus: Planters and plants for Main Street
- Gilby: Outdoor mural on wall of city owned hardware store
- Sheyenne: Restorations of main street building and placement of flowerpots on Main Street
- Foreman: Converting open space into park area

[Read more here](#)

Workforce

Commerce is now accepting applications for Operation Intern

Commerce announced today that the application window for round one of Operation Intern is now open until March 1, 2021.

“Operation Intern has been an excellent resource in helping businesses provide valuable work experiences for students in high-need, in-demand jobs in North Dakota for many years,” Commerce Workforce Division Director Katie Ralston said. “Commerce is proud to continue supporting businesses as they advance our state’s workforce strategy in working to retain talent in the state.”

Administered by Commerce, Operation Intern is a grant program designed to expand the number of internships, work experience and apprenticeship positions with North Dakota employers. The program focuses on creating new internships and apprenticeships within the state’s targeted industries. Priority will be given to new startups, companies that have not participated in the program previously and new internship or apprenticeship positions.

[Read more here](#)

Apply today for a 2021 HIRE Vets Medallion Award

The 2021 HIRE Vets Medallion Award Program is now accepting applications until April 30.

The award highlights companies and organizations committed to hiring and retaining America's veterans in good, family-sustaining careers. The HIRE Vets Medallion Award is the only federal-level veterans' employment award recognizing employers

Award recipients will receive a certificate and digital images of the medallion for use as part of their marketing and promotional activities

Learn more at HIREVets.gov

Apply here

Tourism-Marketing

February proclaimed Winter Recreation Month

February has been proclaimed Winter Recreation Month by Gov. Doug Burgum. It's a great opportunity to inspire others to take advantage of your, or your community's, unique and rejuvenating winter outdoor activities.

Winter recreation isn't just for enjoyment. Studies have shown that spending time outdoors in the winter helps reduce stress and is good for mental and physical health. Exposure to sunlight helps maintain healthy

vitamin D levels, which reduces seasonal affective disorder and increases energy.

Embrace winter activities

Click here for the proclamation

Outdoors Marketing

North Dakota Tourism-sponsored programming is now running on new episodes of Jason Mitchell Outdoors on Fox Sports North and Midco SN, as well as streaming on Jasonmitchelloutdoors.com and YouTube. "[The Flush - Stories from the Field](#)" podcast is featuring new sponsored content about upland game hunting in North Dakota.

Next Tourism Industry Chat scheduled for Feb. 8

You and your colleagues are invited to join the next North Dakota Tourism Industry update call on Feb. 8. This will be the 20th presentation to North Dakota's travel and tourism industry since the national and state emergencies were declared due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This presentation will feature a legislative update, information on the next round of grants and the latest data and trends on travel and visitor spending in North Dakota.

These presentations are open to anyone in North Dakota's travel and tourism industry. You are welcome to forward the [log-in information](#) to colleagues. If you are unable to join, [a recording of the presentation will be available here](#).



In the News



[Adaptation key for business during COVID, and some changes are here to stay.](#)



[12 North Dakota communities will be receiving upgrades](#)



[Sara Otte Coleman describes winter tourism campaign](#)



[This local company has put the ERG grant to good use](#)