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It was a tough year for farmers, then – and now – the major industry in the state. Per capita income was 47 percent of the national average. About 40,000 residents left the state during the 1930s leaving 650,000 behind. The population continued to gradually decline. By the turn of the century there were about 630,000 people in the state.

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Preparing for the jobs of tomorrow

BY JERRY W. KRAM

“We are preparing these kids for jobs that don’t exist today,” said Nancy Reimer, director of Career and Technical Education at New Town High School.

Reimer is the point person for the school with Northwest Consortium, an organization that provides high tech equipment to 24 schools in northwestern North Dakota. The equipment is shared by the schools on a rotating basis and includes scientific equipment for electronics, biochemistry and robotics labs and lessons to manufacturing equipment like a CNC (computer controlled) router, laser engraver, and 3D printer to graphic design tools like a vinyl printer/cutter and computerized embroidery machine.

“Most schools can’t afford to buy emerging technologies,” Reimer said. “So the schools created the Northwest Consortium so they could share the cost. Then all of the equipment is rotated between the schools.”

The equipment is used in a variety of different classes. Many of the modules were used in Kurt Wollschlagers’s science classes while things like the vinyl printer/cutter was used to teach graphic design in computer classes. Teachers get special training to use and teach how to use the equipment.



Nancy Reimer stands next to a vinyl printer/cutter that students are using to learn graphic design at New Town High School. On the printer are several figures created with a 3D printer. New Town is part of a consortium to provide school with high tech equipment to prepare students for the jobs of tomorrow. PHOTO BY JERRY W. KRAM

“We have to be trained,” Reimer said. “It’s not like they

just toss us equipment and say ‘Play with it.’”

Reimer said although the equipment is high tech, students can expect to find most if not all of the devices when they go out into the workplace. She said that businesses in New Town

use some of these devices.

Teaching them how to adapt to new and changing technologies will give these students a leg up when they go to find a job.

“We are preparing the kids for careers that don’t even exist yet,” Reimer said. “What I went

to college for I’m not teaching.

None of this existed then. We have to teach the kids to be self-learners. Not everything can be taught in the classroom so they have to learn on their own.”

Innovation Idea

Finding office inspiration. Sure, you have to be mentally game to boost your productivity--but your office space plays a role too. From layouts to gadgets, there are a few ideas for revamping your workspace and office to enhance your get-more-done attitude and creativity.

Laura Montini

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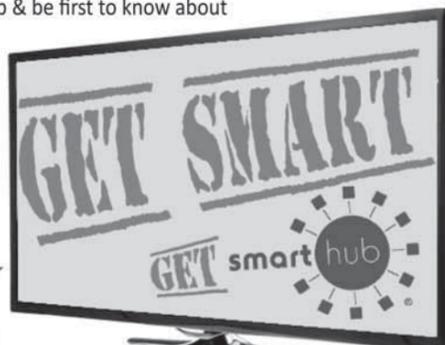
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A new look at an outdated system

Garrison School votes in a new education format

BY ALYSSA ADAM

The definition of innovative is to feature a new method or idea that is creative and advanced. This is exactly what Garrison Schools has done in researching and implementing a Flex Mod Schedule for the coming year.

Back in November, school officials took a close look at this new style for educating students.

Flex Mod scheduling is described as flexible class times and varied student groupings. A school schedule is made up of modules of time, which vary. Classes can meet any number of days per week and for different numbers of mods each time.

“There is so much more flexibility,” High School Principal Steve Dangel said.

Five members of the school staff visited Bismarck’s Legacy High School to see, first-hand, how a Flex Mod schedule works. Garrison School administration considered implementing such a format at Garrison.

Superintendent Nick Klemisch said this is an exciting new era the school is entering. He said he predicts flex-mod scheduling will afford greater opportunities for students to become prepared for life after high school accompanied with a greater development of soft skills.

“Simply put, the education style allows for greater flexibility in the development of course schedules, creating more time for courses,” he said. “It aligns closely with technical schools, colleges, and universities.”

School officials said the idea of a new schedule arose as it allows students greater opportunities to develop skills necessary after high school.

“Again, it aligns with post-secondary options for our students,” Klemisch said. “Also,

there’s a much a greater emphasis on soft skills, which have become an extremely desirable attribute for employers.”

The next step was to take a group of teachers, administrators, and board members to Oakes to see how it works in a school system much like Garrison’s. In addition, another group of teachers visited Legacy, along with some potential students to gain a greater understanding.

the schedule went over so well, the Garrison School Board voted in favor of implementing the unique schedule into the school.

have a structured day.

Even though upperclassmen will have an open-campus schedule, according to school officials, homework and passing grades are needed to leave after a class, if the student has the time.

For example, according to school officials, if a senior is finished with a class at 9 a.m. and does not have another class until 11:15 a.m., but is failing to turn in work for a certain class, that student’s open-campus time has now become the school’s time, where they will work on their missing work.

All high school staff had the opportunity to either attend Legacy High School in Bismarck or Oakes High School to look at how their schools run on the Flex-Mod schedule.

“A Flex-Mod schedule will force teachers to be more prepared and to have better communication with the students of the school,” Klemisch said.

Classrooms will be used to teach any subject, besides the science lab, and cooking in the FACS room.

The school is excited to implement this new schedule in the coming year.

“I think the big factor is we have been complacent in education, thinking what was good enough for us is good enough for the kids,” Klemisch said. “We need to adapt.”

Klemisch said he is excited for the Flex Mod schedule to take affect.

“It will be a great experience,” he said. “We know there will be some hiccups but it is flexible and flexibility will be the key as we learn and adjust to this whole process.”

Flex Mod Scheduling

Flex Mod scheduling is described as flexible class times and varied student groupings. A school schedule is made up of modules of time, which vary. Classes can meet any number of days per week and for different numbers of mods each time.

The schedule is described as supporting personalized learning and providing students with choice and flexibility to access a variety of learning activities throughout the day and week.

“Simply put, the education style allows for greater flexibility in the development of course schedules, creating more time for courses. It aligns closely with technical schools, colleges, and universities.”



-Supt. Nick Klemisch

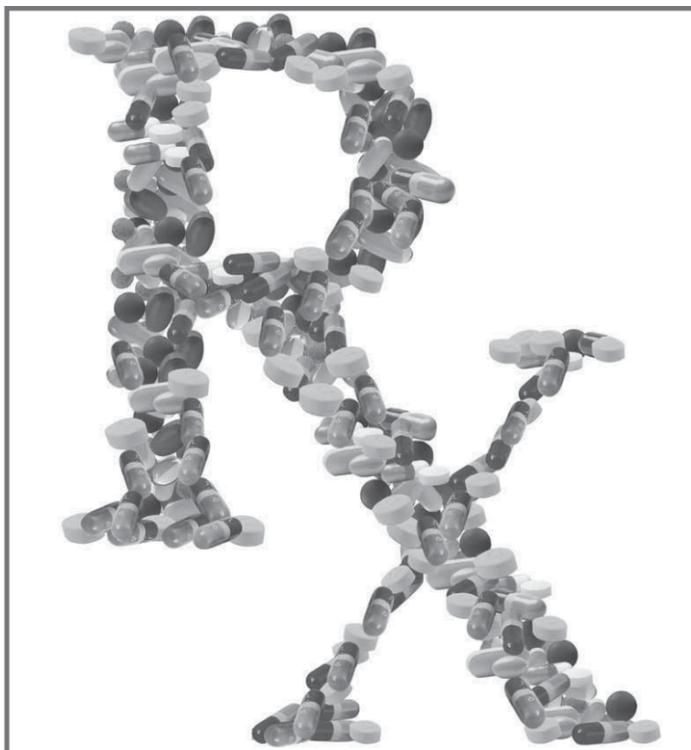
The visiting of these schools resulted in mountains of positive feedback from both students and teachers involved. After the investigation into

Next year, sophomores, juniors, and seniors will have a more flexible open-campus class schedule, while seventh, eighth, and ninth grade will still



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Design drawing of the front of the CCCHC building and how it would look. SUBMITTED

Coordination and cooperation:

A model for the future

BY DANIEL ARENS

In a world that values competition, and where towns often contend with each other in business, sports, and community spirit, rural health care providers in a portion of western North Dakota are demonstrating a different approach to success.

Sakakawea Medical Center (SMC), the hospital building in Hazen, and Coal Country Community Health Center (CCCHC), the local clinic operating offices in Hazen, Beulah, Center, and Killdeer, have been operating in the area south of Lake Sakakawea for many years. But, in recent years, a new approach for these facilities to how they advance health care services in the community became the vehicle for new state-of-the-art facilities and equipment and for national recognition.

This model is one of coordination rather than competition between the various health care providers in the region. At its heart is the connection between CCCHC, a federally qualified

health center, and SMC, a critical access hospital.

Darold Bertsch, SMC and CCCHC CEO, and Chastity Dolbec, care coordinator at CCCHC, described this coordination of care as a "Patient Center Medical Neighborhood". Dolbec explained that the nickname comes from the nationally known phrase "Patient Center Medical Home," but in this case, there is a group of such "homes" (including the ambulance service, Knife River Care Center (KRCC), and Custer Health, as well as the clinic and hospital) that, together, make up the health care "neighborhood."

"We just thought that neighborhood was a better metaphor than home from the multiple partners concept," Bertsch said.

What the idea of care coordination boils down to is a continuity of health care services provided to a patient as he or she shifts from one of the facilities to another. Thus, as an example, a man might go through routine check-ups at the clinic following a surgery

at the hospital. In that case, the hospital would ensure through their care coordinator that the clinic receives all the relevant information from the surgery and the hospital's side of patient care that impacts the care he is receiving at the clinic.

Besides care coordinators, the cooperative model displayed by SMC and CCCHC is shown in their having a shared CEO (Bertsch). Also, although each group has its own separate board, two distinct members from the clinic's board also serve on the hospital board, and vice versa.

According to Bertsch, this coordination of services is essential to the success of recent or upcoming major projects with local health care facilities. SMC moved into a large, state-of-the-art new hospital April of last year, and currently there are plans to expand Beulah's CCCHC clinic to increase space both for internal services and visiting specialists.

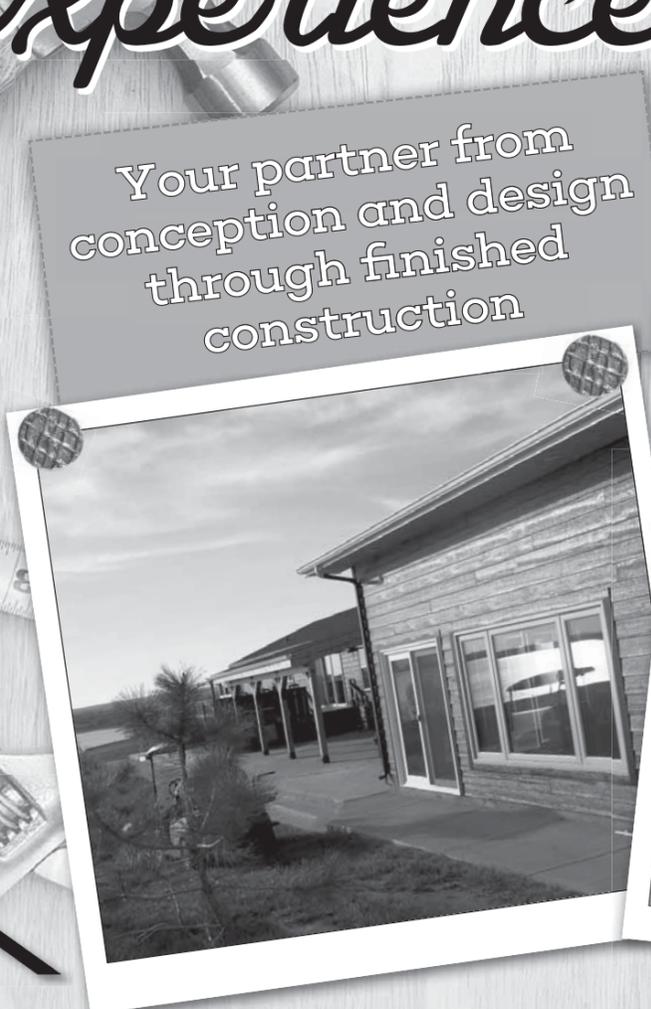


The new hospital features state-of-the-art medical technology like 3D mammography.

MODEL FOR FUTURE
continued on page 5

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The front entrance of Sakakawea Medical Center in Hazen.

MODEL FOR FUTURE continued from page 5

An example of the cooperation between the two groups can be seen in the new hospital. Previously, Hazen's CCCHC clinic was located across the street, with patients needing care from both organizations having to cross 8th Ave. NE to reach the other building. Now, the clinic is renting space within the hospital building, easing the coordination of services between the two health care groups.

It is important to remember that, in this model of care, the hospital and the clinic remain two separate entities.

"They are still two separate, distinct 501c organizations," Bertsch said. "We're not merged." But, unlike in previous years, there is now a conscious and intentional model of care in place to ensure that patients in the area receive the most efficient and comprehensive health care services they need to thrive.

Prior to March 2011, such a collaborative model did not exist in the area. In actual fact, that meant that SMC and

CCCHC operated like the majority of other rural communities, with each separate organization acting competitively.

One of the major issues this caused was duplication of services. Both the clinic and the hospital offered the same health care services in the same region. These services included primary care clinic services and ancillary services like lab, radiology, CT Scan, physical therapy, ultrasound, bone density and stress testing.

"We're a unicorn," Bertsch said in noting that he does not see the coordination model replicated in other rural areas of the country like it is here. "The fact of the matter is, you know, more often than not, when we reached out to different organizations, they couldn't put together what we managed to put together."

When it comes to the health care coordinators, Bertsch emphasized that there are specific coordinators in the hospital and clinic, whose job is to make sure that all of a patient's health-related information is transferred

adequately, efficiently, and completely between the different members of the "neighborhood of care."

"Their job is coordinating care of anything that happens to that patient no matter where the transition of care is at, and arranging other services if needed," he said. In fact, these coordinators will even work with external entities like Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., ensuring that relevant information from SMC or CCCHC on a particular patient is made available to the Mayo care providers, and in turn the relevant information from Mayo on that patient comes back to local providers.

Coordinators also check in on patients when they are not at the respective health care facility, making sure that issues like diabetes levels or prescription updates are handled smoothly, and providing accountability for the patients in keeping their appointments.

"They handle all transitions of care," Bertsch said. "Some of them wear multiple hats. It's just that complete circle of care,



A centralized nurses' station allows for more efficient utilization of staff and better communication between acute care, emergency room and operating room departments.

with the patient at the middle."

"We help the patient navigate the transition of care," Dolbec said. She pointed out that one recent addition to this "circle of care" is the visiting nurse services, a program which allows a registered nurse in specific circumstances to perform services in-home for the patient.

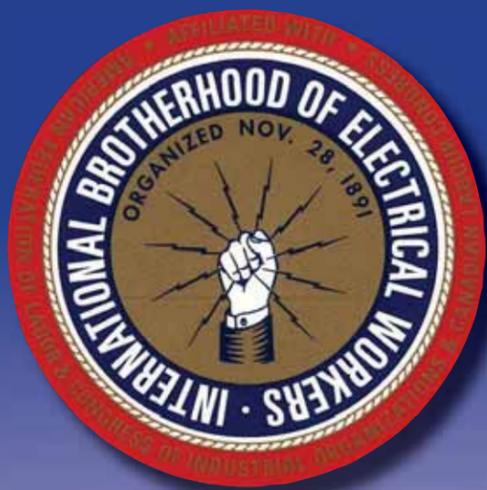
Initial collaboration between the two organizations began after Bertsch became the shared CEO. When the clinic's former

CEO left, Bertsch was asked to serve in an interim capacity to help the clinic through the transition process. It was then that he took note of the duplicated services, and saw an opportunity for the Hazen hospital and Beulah clinic to work more cooperatively and less competitively.

"It took both boards and their

MODEL FOR FUTURE
continued on page 6

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Innovation Emerges From Stories We Tell

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HENRY DOSS, CONTRIBUTOR

*I could a tale unfold whose
lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul,
freeze thy young blood,
Make thy two eyes like stars
start from their spheres,
Thy knotted and combined
locks to part,
And each particular hair to
stand on end
Like quills upon the fretful
porpentine.*

-Shakespeare, Hamlet

We find ourselves in a mad rush to do innovation. We create innovation strategies, innovation processes, innovation jump-starts, innovation this and innovation that. We do things, as earnestly and energetically as we possibly can, and then we measure some stuff and decide that what we did was, or was not, a contributor to innovative output of this, or that. Then, we do it all over again, fingers crossed, all the while forgetting about the the single, most powerful, indispensable tool we have available to cause innovation: Stories.

From the time we first uttered an intelligible human syllable, we have known that stories, narratives, and tales are our primary means for both the creation and preservation of cultures, values, and ambitions. We have always known that without stories, without meaningful narratives that abide and live and breathe, our organizations, societies and governments grow sterile, lifeless and empty. Heraclitus, the great pre-Socratic, writing 2500 years

ago knew that the achievement of great things starts with an idea, an ambition, a dream. He knew that great outcomes in any human undertaking require that you start from a place of believing in a story -- the story of ambition. "Big results require big ambitions," he said. And big stories.

Recommended by Forbes

Writing 2400 hundred years later, the great American Romantic poet Emerson told us that "fiction reveals truth that reality obscures." Of course. Our stories are our creations, and stories do not start out as "real." They start out as dreams, as fictions, as fantasy. They -- our stories -- are what we live inside of, and are our path to meaning, to belonging and to great actions. If innovation occurs as a result of culture (and it does), and culture is simply the sum of narratives (and it is), then innovation is directly descended from the stories we tell.

If innovation is about anything --whether you are talking about a Fortune 100 company, a country, an economic region or a non-profit -- it is about creating a future that does not exist in the present; it is about taking what is now intangible and rendering it tangible, taking the unseen and making it seen. Innovation is not here; it is there, in the future. Essentially, innovation is taking what is not true in the present and making it the true in the future. The Roman Tenth Legion was not born to greatness; Caesar created the greatness of the Tenth Legion through the narrative he created about them. Likewise, compa-



The world begins in stories told around a campfire.

nies are not born to innovation, countries are not by nature innovative, and economic regions don't just become innovative by pumping resources into them. They can only be created, Or re-created, as innovative inside of an innovation narrative.

Campfire

We have always known this to be true and you can see it in our many incomplete attempts to address narrative in organizations. Consider the "Vision Statement," the arch enemy of all pragmatists. We are perfectly willing to expend enormous energy and time and resources creating a statement of intent or belief or hope around which we think our organizations can rally. We create it, then we sanctify it and then we share it, hoping

that a few dozens of words can tell a powerful story. But a vision statement is not a narrative -- it is static and at the very moment it is created and shared it begins to lose its truth. At best it is a sign-post, a guide of sorts. But in and of itself, it has no life, because it is not narration. A vision statement of innovation is not the same thing as an active, living, breathing, constantly told story of innovation. If we want vision in our organizations we must be visionary in our stories, not our slogans.

Plato told us that "those who tell the stories rule society." Play with his words just a bit and you get: "Those who tell stories of innovation create innovative societies." Of course you need

the tools and resources and assets of innovation to create innovation. But nothing really innovative happens until the stuff of organizations begins to operate inside of authentic narrative. Capital, people and technologies are just balance sheet items, outside of the context of an innovation story. Narrative -- real, authentic and aligned narrative -- calls resources into action against ambition.

Jean-Luc Godard, the great film director, said this: "Sometimes reality is too complex. Stories give it form." Those who are attempting to lead complex organizations or cultures and

STORIES

continued on page 7

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Work, hobbies and life

BY ALLAN TINKER

Ted Meckle will be 86 on June 2. From the time he was young, until he reached well past average retirement age, he has been making things work, fixing and making things that others needed and adjusting to life by adapting his skills to new limitations.

Later in life, he made things that pleased people or that they could use. His latest wood creations are larger, adapted to the loss of fine motor skills that allowed him all the years of making doll furniture.

Hand flexibility is important in many jobs; most older workers know what the loss can mean to work and hobbies they perform.

With wife Diane suggesting new projects for him, his humorous and decorative pet-themed displays, as well as planters created from an old chair with a pot in the middle, keep him busy at craft and vendor shows.

A bowling ball became a yard ornament, as did many items that end up as birdhouses.

"Now I do rougher looking things that don't require fine finishing. Keep on as long as I can. I am not one to quit. That won't happen," Meckle said.

Born on a farm near Goodrich, he graduated from eighth grade at Whitaker Township School # 3. With his two older brothers in the service, one serving in World War II and the other at the end of the same war, he had to stay home and help his father farm and

was never able to attend high school.

After they returned home, one from the army and the other from the navy, it was his turn to serve and he chose the navy.

His father was a farmer and taught him basic mechanic and repair skills. "We didn't go to town to get things fixed and I was always the fixer upper, with my two brothers wanting to drive the machines."

The US Navy taught him skills in the four years he served during the Korean Conflict. He spent his years as a boiler technician on the USS Sierra and the USS Rich. "I learned steam engines, but there were the same general principles to the work."

"Every move in life enabled me to make use of my skills in a new opportunity. I am not afraid to move on. If you want work, you can work. The work is out there some place," said Meckle.

From the years of running a shop in Martin, where he made use of his mechanical skills, to the garage in Crosby that he



Examples of making new items from old: birdhouses from old wood and miscellaneous items; a yard decoration from a bowling ball and metal pieces; and a new take on the term 'potty' chair (an old chair with a hole in the seat becoming a planter where a flower pot can be placed).

sold to his son Darvel, he has worked into a new situation

WORK, HOBBIES, LIFE
continued on page 8



Ted Meckle with some of his current wood dog sign creations. He calls them larger, rougher work that his less flexible 85-year old hands can do. Many years ago, these hands made tiny doll furniture.

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MODEL FOR FUTURE continued from page 6

willingness to collaborate to bring this about," Bertsch said.

An independent consultant was brought on board to help think up ways to create a more collaborative health care model for Mercer, Oliver, and Dunn counties. The result was the "three-legged stool."

The three legs of the metaphorical stool are governance, contractual, and functional relationships. The governance aspect is dealt with through the shared CEO and shared board members, helping to enhance the transparency of the two health care facilities.

An official contractual relationship was established through an administrative services agreement and a memorandum of understanding between the two organizations, while the functional relationship dealt with the day-to-day operations of the facilities, to ensure that duplication of services was eliminated when possible, as well as to develop joint strategies for addressing community health needs.

This leads into another major facet of the cooperative model: the Community Health Needs Assessment and the Community Health Task Force. The assessment involves a careful and coordinated approach to identifying the major community health and well-being needs in the area, while the task force, headed by Dolbec, gathers people together to find workable solutions to those needs.

"We started doing [health needs assessments] long before it was fashionable," Dolbec said. "In approaching these challenges, let's do it together."

Indeed, Bertsch and Dolbec emphatically stressed that, without the cooperative model between the hospital, clinic, and other health care providers, it would be impossible to develop the strong task force that is in place in the area for addressing health care needs. Speaking of the recent addition of the clinic in Killdeer to the CCCHC model, Bertsch said, "I can assure you that if there hadn't been the collaboration between the hospital and CCCHC, that wouldn't have been done."

This process starts with the actual community assessment. Facilitated by the University of North Dakota Center for Rural Health, the assessment is a many-sided approach to identifying those needs, including surveys, community focus groups and the study of health-related data.

When the assessment is complete, and all this information is gathered into a report, the needs identified are listed in ranking order of their significance to the community.

"Then we come together to talk about strategic planning," Dolbec said.

The most recent assessment, conducted in 2016, produced three primary needs the task force hoped to address, correlating with the top three ranked needs. These needs were

affordable child care services, population and behavior health, and wellness focus and programs.

Affordable child care services came to Hazen in the form of the Energy Capital Cooperative Child Care Center in the western part of town. Although this project was initiated by local industry and not the health care providers, the latter quickly became a part of the move to bring a child care facility to the area.

CCCHC, SMC, and KRCC joined the movement, and the CEOs of the founding organizations formed a board of directors. The facility has seen great success since its opening in May, with 66 children enrolled as of March 28 of this year.

Mercer County showcases a strong response to population and behavioral health issues as well. The county's Youth Bureau works closely with the Beulah and Hazen school districts to provide both proactive services as well as counseling, crisis intervention and referral services for youth and their families facing personal problems, including drug and alcohol abuse. Recently, Senator Heidi Heitkamp praised the bureau, saying such services are often not available for kids in need who live in rural areas.

Dr. Aaron Garman, a physician with CCCHC, provides patients dealing with these kinds of issues with a medication-assisted therapy program

option, another innovative step in health care. Bertsch again emphasized that such programs were only possible through the collaborative approach of the different health care organizations.

The task force has also worked to increase patient access to visiting specialists and services. Prior to the health needs assessment, a specialist would come up to the clinic three days a month. Now, a contracted specialist come a couple times a week to provide those services. In addition, the task force is working with the Beulah School District on a pilot project through the Health Resources and Services Administration related to behavior and mental health issues in the school.

Finally, on the wellness issue, the task force has developed numerous community programs and events to help promote healthy life choices in the area. Dolbec described Jumpstart to Wellness, the Halloween Bash, and Women's World of Wellness.

"They just come up with some really cool ideas," Dolbec said.

Other initiatives in the area came about in response to the assessment's finding that workforce is a challenge for the region. That finding was indeed the driving impetus for the child care center, but it also led to the Dakota Nursing Program, a partnership be-

tween local health care entities and Bismarck State College that provides students a video classroom setting to learn skills for providing quality care. Then there is Scrubs Camp, in which middle school students spend one full school day learning about health care-related employment areas in a series of interactive stations at the Hazen High School gymnasium.

"We think it's our civic duty to do that," Dolbec said, "but we're also selfish. We hope that by introducing them to these different possibilities, we might be able to bring them back to the area to work in the health care field."

As future assessments reveal future needs in the area, the task force will shift its focus to addressing those issues. But as long as there are needs to be met, the task force will have a purpose and goal to meet.

"Local challenges need local solutions by local people, I'm a firm believer in that," Dolbec said.

The cooperative care model and coordination of care has won distinct recognition from various national groups, including being named the Outstanding Rural Health Organization by the National Rural Health Association (NRHA) in 2015. In addition, Bertsch was named one of 60 Rural CEOs by Becker's Review. Both of these recognitions were due to the collaborative model.



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with confidence.

With Diane, they were both busy, she with baking. When he sold the garage at age 62, they moved to a farm at Wil-drose in the late 1980s. They lived there until moving to Ray in about 1998.

Then oil development in the area did not fit with what they wanted for their life together anymore.

Diane found three houses for sale, one in Turtle Lake, which was too small. Another house in Goodrich needed too much renovation for what they wanted to do. The third house in McClusky was workable, with a 12 x 50-foot trailer added to the back of the house, creating a commercial kitchen with no direct entry between the two buildings.

Ted was busy, renovating the older house. A wall came out and a new porch and entry were added. The white carpet

throughout the house became wood floors, starting with the kitchen.

Outside, ramps run down the sides of the house, making the transfer of the baked items manageable. "Imagine all those trips with all those baked items," he smiled at the thought.

Carts do the work moving between the commercial kitchen and the bus they use to transport items to the customer or to the four senior centers for which Diane cooks each week.

With her work lined up in their former area of Ray, it worked to go up there for those days of work.

Then they return home to McClusky, where they keep busy preparing for the next flea market for Diane and the next craft show for Ted.

Ted stated he had tried the flea markets but tired of people trying to haggle over the price. "I price my things for a reason,

not cheap."

He added, "I never collected stuff, if you need it, buy it; otherwise leave it alone. Think about it first to be sure you need it."

This thriftiness and the willingness to make something useful out of old or discarded items, is a natural use of his talents.

From the days of mechanic work, through jobs with Minneapolis Moline in Goodrich, and then Robinson for a John Deere dealership, to his own shops and garage, he has adapted well to work, hobbies and life.

Willingness to change, help with ideas from Diane, and a mutual interest in both making things that please people in some way, keep the couple happy in every home they had, in the work they do, and in each community.

STORIES continued from page 7

to create innovative solutions to complex problems would do well to reflect on this. We live in an increasingly complex world, and we work toward supplying increasingly complex needs, with increasingly complex tools. If we dwell in the complexity -- as individuals or organizations -- we risk losing our bearings. But if we live and work inside of a comprehensible, meaningful story, we will contextualize the

complexity around us. Our stories will give form to our world and create the cardinal points we need.

Ask yourself these questions off and on during the day: "Am I narrating a tale of innovation in my community, in my organization? Do I authentically believe the tales I am telling? And is my story, my personal narrative about the community in which I reside, one that is consistent

with my actions?" If you get a "no" answer to any of these, the only tool you will need to find out what is hindering innovation in your organization is a mirror.

Henry Doss believes authentic leadership can change the world. His book, *The Rainforest Scorecard*, provides a guide to the measurement of innovation in organizations.



You cannot expect your team to be innovative if they do not know the direction in which they are headed. Innovation has to have a purpose. It is up to the leader to set the course and give a bearing for the future. You need one overarching statement which defines the direction for the business and which people will readily understand and remember. Great leaders spend time illustrating the vision, the goals and the challenges. They explain to people how their role is crucial in fulfilling the vision and meeting the challenges. They inspire men and women to become passionate entrepreneurs finding innovative routes to success.

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Boomers EMBRACE technology to AGE gracefully

BRAND POINT NEWS

Generation X and Millennials get credit for being the most tech-savvy generations, but a growing group of baby boomers are demonstrating that the generation gap has nothing to do with digital know-how. Folks 50 and older are embracing technology to help them age more gracefully than ever.

Whether they're using devices to hear better in challenging situations, or social media to reconnect with friends they've not seen since high school, baby boomers are demonstrating they're not afraid to use technology to make life easier. Here are a handful of ways boomers are using technology:

- Coping with auditory chal-

lenges - In our noisy, fast-paced society we commonly encounter many situations - such as a business meeting, family gathering or phone call - in which hearing may be difficult, even for people who don't need a specialized hearing aid. Savvy boomers are using a Bluetooth-enabled amplification device to discretely improve volume and clarity in a variety of challenging environments. Personal Sound Amplifiers from Sound World Solutions look like any other sleek, high-tech mobile phone headset, but also provide amplification boomers can easily adjust and control themselves. Users can choose between three preset amplification settings or use a smartphone app to personalize

the device.

- Relationship management - Four in five people age 50 to 75 are active on social media, and of them 75 percent are on Facebook, according to a survey by technology security company McAfee. Boomers use social media - including professional sites like LinkedIn - to reconnect with friends from high school or college, maintain contact with family and friends, date, build professional connections and develop personal interests.

- Managing investments - Approaching retirement can make boomers feel driven to maximize their investment returns. Yet not everyone has access to or can afford working with a financial planner. Many boom-

ers use online investing tools to fill knowledge gaps and build their nest eggs. From in-depth information on tax-deferred or tax-free investment products to online brokerage accounts, technology has made it easier than ever for the 50-plus set to save toward retirement.

- Catching up on their reading - Changes in vision are a natural part of aging, and it's not uncommon for people to need some help reading their favorite novels. Yet traditional compensation tactics, like wearing reading glasses or choosing large-print books and periodicals, shout "fogey." E-readers, however, are cool - and allow boomers to enjoy their favorite reading material at the type size

that's easiest for them to read.

- Staying healthier for longer - Boomers have rewritten history in many ways, and not the least among them is their determination to stay as active and healthy as possible into their old age. An array of fitness technology - from pedometers to in-home gym equipment that tracks BMI and heart rate - is helping boomers achieve their fitness and wellness goals.

From devices that improve hearing clarity to online tools that help them better manage their finances, baby boomers are using technology to ensure they enjoy life and remain active and healthy well into their golden years.

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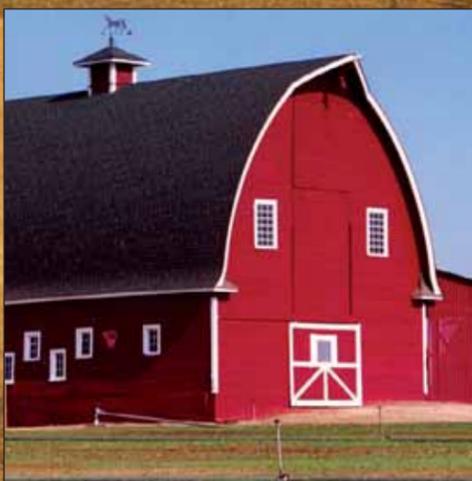


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