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## ODHIAMBO TAKES HOME \$500 IN KARAOKE BATTLE

U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Tessi Odhiambo of the 5th Force Support Squadron, assigned to Minot Air Force Base, celebrates after winning the Karaoke Battle Finale at Rockers Bar & Grill, Jan. 30, 2026. Members from the 5th Bomb Wing and 91st Missile Wing competed in the event, with Odhiambo taking home the \$500 grand prize. See page A6 for more from the event.

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# OPSEC: Why Operational Security Matters

NATALY ZARRELLA, NORTHERN SENTRY

Operations Security, commonly known as OPSEC, is a critical responsibility shared by military personnel, their families, and civilians living or working on military installations. While the term “OPSEC” is frequently heard in military environments, its importance cannot be overstated, especially during real-world or ongoing situations. OPSEC is the practice of identifying, controlling, and protecting sensitive information from unauthorized access. This includes details that, if disclosed, could compromise missions, endanger personnel, or place civilians at risk. Even information that may seem harmless on its own can become dangerous when combined with other details and accessed by those with harmful intent.

When incidents or operations are occurring on a military installation, it is essential that information is released only through official channels. Individuals may sometimes believe they are helping by sharing updates or details, particularly if they feel informed or connected to the situation. However, releasing information outside of approved sources, especially during ongoing events can do more harm than good. Unofficial information can interfere with mission execution, hinder first responders, and create unnecessary risk for service members and their families.

Violations of OPSEC can occur both in person and on social media. In face-to-face situations, examples include discussing troop movements, security procedures, or incident details in public places such as restaurants, gyms, or airports where conversations can

be overheard. Sharing timelines, locations of emergency responses, or speculating about ongoing investigations with friends or family can also unintentionally expose sensitive information. On social media, OPSEC violations are even more common and far-reaching. Posting photos or videos that show restricted areas, security checkpoints, badge access points, or response vehicles can reveal vulnerabilities. Sharing real-time updates about base lockdowns, active incidents, deployment schedules, or emergency activity. During these times military bases might be at their most vulnerable and sharing this type of information can put personnel at risk.

Another common violation includes reposting or commenting on unofficial rumors or leaked information. When individuals share details that have not been released through official channels, they may unknowingly spread misinformation or confirm sensitive facts. This can create confusion,

panic, or operational challenges during critical moments.

In many cases, public communication is delayed intentionally. During emergencies or active situations, safety, coordination, and mission success take priority over immediate information sharing. This is not secrecy for its own sake, but a deliberate effort to protect lives and operational effectiveness.

OPSEC is not solely the responsibility of leadership or security forces, it is everyone’s job. Whether on duty or off, in uniform or not, each person on a military installation plays a role in safeguarding sensitive information. Understanding OPSEC and respecting its principles helps ensure the safety of personnel, the success of missions, and the security of the installation as a whole.

Remember, when in doubt, do not share. Trust official channels, and let OPSEC guide responsible decision-making.



Operational Security (OPSEC) is more critical than ever, and Wing leaders are urging Airmen to adopt new digital habits in 2026 to counter adversaries exploiting everything from smart devices to artificial intelligence (AI) tools.

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# Cold Weather Defender Course reinforces 91st Missile Wing security mission

91ST MISSILE WING

MINOT AIR FORCE BASE, N.D. - Airmen assigned to the 91st Security Forces Group strengthened readiness and resilience during the Cold Weather Defender Course, a three-phase exercise focused on extreme cold while responding to high-stress tactical scenarios, Jan 20, 2026.

The course challenged participants both mentally and physically, combining medical readiness and tactical response while operating in temperatures as low as 20 degrees below zero, conditions routinely faced in the region during winter months.

The full day course began with a tactical combat casualty Care (TCCC) refresher brief and rope descent instruction, followed by a simulated launch facility recapture and recovery, and concluded with a 12 hour scenario requiring Defenders to apply TCCC principles and cold weather-survival techniques.

The exercise tested small-unit coordination, communication and decision-making as Airmen adapted to extreme cold and uncertain terrain.

“We are seeing how Airmen react in those situations,” said Tech. Sgt. Khadir Truth, 891st Security Forces missile security commander control. “It proves they can think quickly and out of their comfort zone with no guidance to solve the problem.”

The final phase pushed participants to endure the elements as Airmen stood watch for 12 to 16 hours in subzero temperatures, applying both their TCCC training and cold weather survival skills. The scenario emphasized endurance, discipline and the ability to treat injuries despite freezing conditions, limited dexterity and environmental stress.

“The Cold Weather Defender Course isn’t just about surviving

the cold, it’s about ensuring the 91st Missile Wing can maintain full operational readiness and safeguard the nation’s missile deterrence,” said Tech. Sgt. Truth.

Spanning more than 8,500 square miles, the 91st Missile Wing’s missile field presents harsh conditions and isolation. The Cold Weather Defender Course builds Defenders’ confidence to maintain control of missile facilities and sustain themselves under any circumstance whichunderscores Minot Air Force Base’s commitment to preparing Airmen for the unique challenges of operating in extreme climates. By combining medical proficiency, tactical execution and environmental resilience, the exercise ensures Airmen remain capable, adaptable, and ready to defend the mission regardless of conditions.



Senior Airman Alexander Kenueck (right) and Senior Airman Chase Siler (left), 91st Security Forces Group Defenders, conduct a simulated launch facility recapture and recovery during the Cold Weather Defender Course at Minot Air Force Base, North Dakota, Jan. 20, 2026. The three-phase course reinforced Tactical Combat Casualty Care skills, small unit coordination, and the ability to operate effectively in subzero temperatures.



U.S. Air Force Airmen assigned to the 91st Security Forces Group load equipment into a vehicle during the Cold Weather Defender Course at Minot Air Force Base, North Dakota, Jan. 20, 2026. The training emphasized mission planning, equipment accountability, and readiness supporting missile field security.



U.S. Air Force security forces Airmen with the 91st Security Forces Group participate in a simulated launch facility recapture and recovery as part of the Cold Weather Defender Course at Minot Air Force Base, North Dakota, Jan. 20, 2026. The exercise emphasized movement, decision-making and the application of lifesaving medical skills under realistic conditions.



Senior Airman Chase Siler, 91st Security Forces Group Defender, conducts a simulated launch facility recapture and recovery during the Cold Weather Defender Course at Minot Air Force Base, North Dakota, Jan. 20, 2026. The three-phase course reinforced Tactical Combat Casualty Care skills, small unit coordination, and the ability to operate effectively in subzero temperatures.

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CONTACT US

Ted Bolton  
Publisher | Advertising  
701-240-5039  
bagroup@srt.com

Rod Wilson  
Business Development | Marketing  
sentrysales@srt.com

GRAPHIC DESIGN BY

Nikki Greening  
nsads@srt.com

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MAIL

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A VIEW FROM  
OUR SIDE

ROD WILSON

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Sometimes it happens...You spend time editing your column to make sure that everything is spelled correctly, all the I's are dotted and t's crossed, there are no extra words...well in general you are supposed to proof what you write at least 3 times. My journalism teacher back at the University of North Dakota wanted our articles 100% mistake free "No matter how many times you have to proof them!" I have often remembered her marking up our articles. It really hurt to see her cross through words and phrases.

And correcting an article is only a small part of what needs to be accomplished. I need to follow through and get the corrected document to the production side, which will end up being the FINAL proof, the one you read in the newspaper on Friday.

I almost felt like a young freshman in Journalism class when I read the final copy of our January 30th edition. There in front of me were countless mistakes that had been corrected, but never were part of the final article that many of you may have read. For this mistake I apologize. I looked back in my files and there it was...the final proof of my article just waiting to be sent.

Darn! I just hate it when things like that happen. It's kind of life I guess. We can only strive to do better next time.

ANYWHERE IN THE  
WORLD

I had the opportunity to watch part of a nuclear deterrence symposium where Senator Kevin Cramer spoke about the importance of Minot and Minot Air Force Base. Senators Cramer and Hoeven are important voices

for Minot Air Force Base, as both are on important committees that are key to continued funding for projects like Sentinel and the B 52 J modernization. You can call it "rhetoric" because what they say is such a common theme, but important rhetoric as we must keep the message about Minot AFB front and center.

I guess from my perspective the entire world is downrange from Minot Air Force Base. Of course, the Minuteman III missiles can and will strike any target, anywhere if needed. But add to that the ability to use our B 52's to deploy when and where they are needed. There is no geographic limitation to the deployments of the B 52's, and Col John Burrell, soon to be the commander of the 5th Bomb Wing, outlined the activity of the 5th Bomb Wing at a recent Air and Space Force Association meeting. Col Burrell pointed out that there were no limitations when it comes to the B 52's at Minot Air Force Base. "They will go where they are needed, when they are needed, and with the purpose of sending a message to our adversaries that we are ready" according to Burrell.

The missions? They are pretty well defined, albeit expanding every day as the world becomes a bit more dangerous. The task at hand needs to be well defined, and the message from people like Senator Cramer is so important as Minot Air Force Base prepares for the future.

A GREAT OPPORTUNITY-  
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On Feb. 8, entry to the Garden is free for all active military and their families. We appreciate the dedication of our servicemen and servicewomen. Our deep winter may be new for families stationed at Minot, Grand Forks, Shiloh, Winnipeg and Portage La Prairie. There's a great beauty in the Turtle Mountain cold, so come one out and let us show the possibilities when embracing winter.

TODAY'S CHUCKLE

It's better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all; assuming, of course, you're the one who ended up with the house and the dog.

# Snowmobile safety becomes a concern



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There's no denying we've had a mild winter thus far. But as most of us know, that can change in a heartbeat. And when it does, about the only consolation is snowmobiling. Snowmobiling is a lot of fun and it actually brings tourists to various parts of North Dakota several weekends throughout the winter. That sort of activity needs to continue to be promoted because there are parts of the state that don't get a lot, if any snow, and for them, the parts of North Dakota that are white, can become

quite attractive to someone who doesn't have snow on the ground at their home, most often in the southwest. Getting on your snowmobile and riding endlessly turns wherever you are into a winter wonderland. The Turtle Mountains, the Pembina Hills, Fort Ransom, Devils Lake and the Missouri River corridor are all places that make a snowmobile worth having. But there are drawbacks that need to be discussed because it seems every year someone forgets the most basic rule of riding a snowmobile and that is safety. Every year we get reports of people driving through communities. Snowmobile traffic at random is not usually something that's done. A lot of communities have specified routes if people want to ride into town for a meal or a beer. They later take the same route out of town. When snowmobiles are driving around town, safety becomes paramount because many people aren't aware of snowmobiles on city streets outside of designated routes. So, motorists in general aren't watching for snowmobile traffic like they would be watching for general traffic. It's important to say this, even

though it shouldn't have to be said more than once, if a car and a snowmobile collide, guess who's going to win? And, depending on the speed of the sled vs. the car, there could be some serious bodily injuries. Most sheriff's departments across the state admit it's difficult to stop and ticket snowmobilers because they don't have easily read license plates, they can go places a police car can't and when wearing a helmet, the driver isn't recognizable. But there are other ways to identify violators and sheriff's departments have the authority to arrest violators in many city limits. A Cavalier County deputy says he sees snowmobile accidents every year and he's seen serious violators try to outrun the cops. He's seen young children try to handle a machine that has more power than most adults need. And, he said he can preach forever and nothing ever changes until somebody gets killed. He said he hopes it never has to come to that and the entire Cavalier County Sheriff's Department is urging caution, safety, and abide by the rules and everyone can have a good time on

their sleds wherever they may be. Police and snowmobile clubs have long worked together to make the winter season an enjoyable one all across the state of North Dakota. Selling snowmobiles is also good business for dealers across the state.... that is when it isn't too warm for snow to appear. They too will talk about safety. One of the first things discussed before purchasing a new snowmobile is the safety aspect of it. It should also be pointed out that numerous people from across North Dakota, travel to parts of Montana to spend their "holiday" snowmobiling. There's usually better snowpack in western Montana or very northern Minnesota, but the same holds true. Those county mounties are going to be stressing the same safety concerns as our own law enforcement in North Dakota. The worst-case scenario is when people drink too much and get on a snowmobile. It's gotten much better in recent years because most people recognize the risk before drinking. If not, that's a giant powder keg waiting to explode.

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# February Squadron of the Month

## Heart and Hustle: 5th Healthcare Operations Squadron

The 5th Bomb Wing Command Team is proud to congratulate the 5th Healthcare Operations Squadron (5th HCOS) for their selection as the February Squadron of the Month!

At a time of year when the winter chill can settle in, the 5th HCOS has been a source of warmth and energy for the entire Minot community. Their leadership team hosted a festive “Breakfast with Santa,” bringing families and friends together for food, crafts, and holiday cheer. The squadron’s Senior NCOs also spread joy throughout the clinic with music and treats, lifting spirits and strengthening their team bond.

This commitment to people and morale is the foundation of their mission success.

Even as holiday celebrations were in full swing, the Diagnostics and Therapeutics team demonstrated their unwavering dedication by keeping the pharmacy, laboratory,

and radiology services open on Christmas Eve to care for 31 patients.

The squadron’s creative and resilient spirit shines brightest in the face of challenges. Currently operating with only one-third of its technician manning, the medical lab has shown incredible resourcefulness. By collaborating with the Clinical Operations Flight, medical technicians have stepped up to augment phlebotomy services, collecting vital blood specimens for both diagnostics and deployment readiness.

Their teamwork ensures that every service member is medically fit to answer our nation’s call.

The 5th Healthcare Operations Squadron embodies the principle of “service before self.” Their actions, both in the clinic and in the community, demonstrate a powerful commitment to providing the best care to Minot AFB and a dedication to the well-being of every Airman and their family. Congratulations to the entire 5th HCOS team on this well-deserved recognition!



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# Karaoke Battle of the Wings Brings the House Down

NATALY ZARRELLA, NORTHERN SENTRY

Minot Air Force Base saw its fair share of high notes, big laughs, and friendly rivalry as the Karaoke Battle Finale took over Rockers Bar & Grill, proving once again that the installation is packed with hidden talent.

The high-energy finale featured a head-to-head showdown between the 5th Bomb Wing Warbirds and the 91st Missile Wing Bullys, drawing Airmen, spouses, and civilian employees from across the base. Those who missed the event missed more than just impressive vocals, there were prizes, crowd-favorite performances, and music trivia spanning classic hits, 2000s throwbacks, Disney favorites, and hip-hop.

While many in attendance hoped

to see Chief Sharp, Command Chief of the 5th Bomb Wing, and Chief Thomas, Command Chief of the 91st Missile Wing, take the stage themselves, the two instead served as judges for the night. Even without their vocal debut, their presence added excitement and friendly competition to the event.

Karaoke at Rockers may not be new, but its popularity has soared over the past year, and this finale showed exactly why. Competitors stepped out of their comfort zones to bring personal stories and favorite songs to the stage.

Timothy Gates from the 5th Security Forces Squadron chose the R&B classic “If I Ever Fall in Love” by Shai, a song rooted in childhood memories. Gates shared

that he grew up listening to old-school music with his parents and had only attended karaoke the week before. “I usually only sing in my shower or in my room,” he admitted, making his performance even more impressive.

Representing the 91st Missile Security Forces Squadron, Christian Hardy brought country vibes to the competition with “Alright” by Darius Rucker. Introduced to country music later in life, Hardy summed up his song choice simply: he loves “country music, beer, Darius Rucker, and our country.”

The night ultimately belonged to Technical Sergeant Tessi Odhiambo of the 5th Force Support Squadron, who claimed the top spot in the



5 FSS hosts the Minot AFB Karaoke Battle Finale at Rockers Bar & Grill.



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Minot AFB members from the 5th Bomb Wing and 91st Missile Wing compete during the Karaoke Battle Finale at Rockers Bar & Grill on Jan. 30, 2026.

finale and \$500. What began as a fun night out turned into an unforgettable victory. TSgt Odhiambo shared that she never expected to reach the finals, let alone win. Having sung since childhood on the choir team and discovered karaoke while stationed in Korea, she said the experience meant more than she imagined. Despite nerves and moments of self-doubt, Odhiambo credited her success to the support of her family, FSS teammates, and Chief Sharp. “I just wanted to have fun and bring energy,” she shared, adding her gratitude for everyone

who pushed her to keep showing up and believe in herself. For those inspired by the performances or simply looking for a fun night out Rockers Bar & Grill is keeping the music going. Karaoke Nights return on February 20 and March 20, offering another chance to showcase talent, cheer on friends, or just escape the dorms or home for a night of laughs and music. You might be surprised by just how much talent is hiding right here on Minot AFB and Rockers Bar & Grill is the place to be.



CMSgt Sharp and CMSgt Thomas present TSgt Odhiambo with the winning check at the Karaoke Battle Finale.

NOTES ON BEING SAFE

IT COULD HAPPEN TO YOU



It was like a dream or even make believe, I peered again at my rear-view mirror to see if what I was seeing was real. The fog seemed to illuminate the rotating lights, which were summoning my vehicle to stop. No! Not me, I thought as my mind raced for answers. What did I do? Was I going too fast? Didn't I stop for that stop sign? I began to pull to the right and stopped my vehicle upon the right side of the road. What was taking so long? Where was the Security Forces member? A sudden thump! And big bright light from a metallic flashlight startled my thoughts. He identified himself, and said “Your vehicle was left of center Sir, may I see your identification and drivers license?” I hurried to react to the officer's request. I began to fumble through my wallet attempting to locate the items. I recalled the party I had attended. Joe was a good host, he wanted me to stay the night, but I was the tough guy, besides all I had was a couple. “Could you please step out of the vehicle” broke my thought pattern. Can he smell the alcohol on my breath I wondered, does he know? I asked to light a cigarette to mask the odor. Maybe I could hide it. Again the officer repeated his previous request. As I stepped out of the vehicle, I held my composure (So I thought). Next came the sobriety test to determine my ability to drive. Impaired, I've driven many times before, maybe in worse shape than this. As I completed the tests, even I decided I shouldn't have driven. My reflection became reality as

the officer applied the handcuffs and placed me in the rear of his car. I began to contemplate my actions, what about my career, my family and my future. The pending results greatly outweighed the small reason I had to drive. The impending punishment would undoubtedly cost well into the thousands of dollars, as well as my families respect. Was it worth it?

This is a fictional account but the statistics of drinking and driving are not. Don't be among the statistics dead or alive! The next time you want to drive when you drink alcohol - DON'T! Take along a designated driver, call a taxi, or call a friend. Don't allow this fictional tale to become true for you. Don't Drink and Drive!

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# Norsk Høstfest announces end of festival

Dear Friends of Norsk Høstfest, We share this message with deep gratitude for the volunteers who were the heart and backbone of Norsk Høstfest year after year. From long hours and early mornings to welcoming guests, supporting performers, and doing the countless unseen tasks that made the festival run, your dedication and generosity shaped the Høstfest experience. Delivering this news is especially difficult, knowing how much time, care, and pride you invested in making the festival a success.

The Board of Directors of Norsk Høstfest Association today announced that the annual Norsk Høstfest festival, long recognized as North America’s largest Scandinavian festival, will no longer continue after the conclusion of the 2025 event.

For more than four decades, Norsk Høstfest brought together millions of attendees to celebrate Nordic culture through community, music, art, food, and education. The festival was founded in 1978 by the late Chester Reiten and a group of friends who shared his interest in celebrating their Nordic heritage. The decision to end the festival was not made lightly. After careful evaluation, the Board determined that rising operational costs combined with declining attendance have made it financially unsustainable to continue the event at the scale and quality expected by patrons, artists, and partners.

“In recent years, the festival has faced significant increases in the cost of nationally recognized performers, as well as insurance, facilities, labor, and logistics,” said festival leadership. “At the same time, attendance levels

have not rebounded to pre-pandemic levels, creating ongoing financial challenges that cannot be responsibly overcome.”

While the festival, as we know it, is ending, its spirit lives on in Minot through the Scandinavian Heritage Association (SHA). As the creator and steward of the Scandinavian Heritage Park, the SHA remains committed to this legacy through ongoing education and community engagement. We invite the community to help shape this future by volunteering, joining a society, or contributing their time and talents; to learn more or get involved, please visit [scandinavianheritage.org](http://scandinavianheritage.org).

Norsk Høstfest has been made possible through generations of volunteers, staff, performers, donors, vendors, sponsors, and supporters whose passion and dedication built the festival into a beloved international tradition. The organization extends its deepest gratitude to the community of Minot and to the people of North Dakota, as well as to supporters across the United States, Canada, and the Nordic region. We also offer special appreciation to Minot’s sister city, Skien, Norway; to the many dignitaries who have joined us over the years; and to the Royal Family of Norway, whom we were honored to host. Together, these individuals and communities were instrumental in making Norsk Høstfest a cherished and enduring success.

Thank you for being part of this remarkable journey and for your continued support of Scandinavian culture.

With sincere appreciation,  
Norsk Høstfest Association



# Upcoming Events

07 FEB

**ICE CREAM FOR BREAKFAST DAY**  
**9:00AM-11:00AM**  
Souris Valley Golf Course  
2400 14th Ave SW

Calling all ice cream lovers! Help us celebrate Ice Cream For Breakfast day on February 7th, at Souris Valley Golf Course! Join us for free ice cream, all your favorite toppings, coffee, hot cocoa, and board games! After you get your morning fuel, rent a tube for \$5.00 and head down our sledding hill (weather permitting)! This is a free event; however, tube rental fees do still apply.  
\*No pre-registration is required for this event\*

MINOT PARKS



## ICE CREAM FOR Breakfast DAY

FEBRUARY 7TH | 9:00AM - 11:00AM | @ SOURIS VALLEY GOLF COURSE

**For more information:**  
Facebook / Minot Parks / Events

14 FEB

**16TH ANNUAL CHAMPAGNE & ICE GALA**  
**6:00PM**  
Clarion Hotel and Convention Center,  
2200 E Burdick Expy

Benefiting the Northern Plains Children’s Advocacy Center. Join us for an elegant and inspiring evening at the 16th Annual Champagne & Ice Gala, featuring Gaelin Elmore — former NFL player and nationally recognized speaker. Gaelin shares his powerful story of resilience and hope, reminding us of the life-changing difference caring adults can make in the lives of children who have faced adversity. Enjoy an unforgettable night with:

- Complimentary hors d’oeuvres and champagne
- Live and silent auctions
- Inspiring stories and community celebration. All proceeds support the Northern Plains CAC and our mission to bring healing and justice to children and families affected by abuse.



Tickets available now at:  
[www.npcacgala.cbo.io](http://www.npcacgala.cbo.io)

14 FEB

**HUNT FOR HEARTS AT THE MAGIC CITY DISCOVERY CENTER**  
**10:00AM-6:00PM**  
Magic City Discovery Center,  
1545 1st Street NW, Minot

Love is in the air and hidden all around the museum! Join us for Hunt for Hearts, a special Valentine’s Day adventure where guests can explore the Discovery Center while searching for hidden hearts throughout the galleries. Each guest may find one heart to turn in at the front desk. Most hearts will earn an MCDC Valentine, but four lucky hearts will win a \$25 gift card! All other hearts receive a Valentine’s treat. This event is included with regular museum admission and is perfect for families, friends, and little explorers looking for a fun and festive way to celebrate Valentine’s Day. • One heart per guest • While supplies last. Come play, explore, and see if you can find the heart that wins!

Valentine’s Day



### HUNT FOR HEARTS!

FEBRUARY 14<sup>TH</sup>

**Sign up today:**  
Facebook / Magic City Discovery Center / Events

21 FEB

**FROZEN FUN DAY**  
**11:00AM-2:00PM**  
Polaris Park,  
712 26th Ave NW, Minot

Due to projected extreme cold temperatures and a lack of snow, we are rescheduling Frozen Fun Day to February 21st from 11am to 2pm at Polaris Park. It is going to be little too frozen out there, and we want the day to be fun, not painfully chilly. Bundle up, stay warm, and we look forward to celebrating with you on the new date for a much more enjoyable Frozen Fun Day! • Skating on both rinks • Delicious hearty foods, hot cocoa, & more! • Frozen bubbles, snow painting, scavenger hunt and rentals (ski and skating!) • S’mores around the firepits. This event is free and includes all rentals used for the duration of the event (rentals are limited).

POLARIS PARK



## Polaris Park FROZEN FUN DAY

FEB 21 | SATURDAY 11AM - 2PM

**For more information:**  
Facebook / Minot Parks/ events



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Love Yourself,  
So You Can Love Others

February is the month of hearts and cards and all things LOVE. Lately, I've been thinking about a conversation I had about love—not the romantic kind, but about self-love. Before you start rolling your eyes and picturing bubble baths and spa-night facial masks, let me clarify.

I'm talking about the kind of self-love that doesn't show up in the self-care aisle of Target. Rather, the kind that looks like learning to support yourself, and value who you are—whether you're in a relationship or not.

Self-love isn't indulgent or selfish. It's foundational. When I'm confident in my value and sure I can meet my own needs—without pretending I don't need anyone else—I stop obsessing over myself. I'm less concerned with whether I'm doing enough. I'm not preoccupied with my own worries, or comparing myself to others. I'm free to notice other people. To show up with patience. To love others more deeply, without burning out.

When you are supported, you are better equipped to support others. Self-love is the proverbial fuel for that work.

With love on the mind this month, I've been reflecting on what self-love looks like in practical, everyday ways—February and beyond. Here are four simple ways to show yourself some love.

**Prioritize movement.** We've all heard the science by now, but it bears repeating: regular movement supports physical health, mental health, and resilience. You don't need a gym membership, simply the will to intentionally be active every day: a short walk, stretching before bed, or finding a form of exercise you actually look forward to. Moving your body is one of the kindest ways to remind it that it matters.

**Explore preventative care.** Love

yourself by investing in your health before things fall apart. Many of us are conditioned to wait—until pain interrupts sleep, until stress becomes unmanageable, until our bodies force us to pay attention before getting help. Preventive care flips that script. It says, "I'm paying attention now."

This is where places like Cornerstone Chiropractic come into my own story—not as a quick fix, but as a long-term partner in understanding my body better. Their approach emphasizes education, consistency, and customized care plans that adapt as life changes. The goal isn't perfection; it's sustainability. Caring for your body in this way isn't about chasing peak performance. It's about giving yourself the support to keep showing up—for work, for family, for daily life—without running yourself into the ground.

**Invest in your mental health.** Loving yourself means tending to your mind, not just your schedule. It means developing tools to process emotions you've been carrying for years, learning how to set healthy boundaries, and sharpening your ability to communicate clearly and recover from stress. These skills don't just benefit you—they improve every relationship you're part of. And the best part is, these are skill that can be learned.

One thing I've appreciated about Cornerstone is how they view certain therapies as complementary, not standalone solutions. Hyperbaric oxygen therapy, for example, is offered as a support alongside other forms of care. By increasing oxygen availability in the body, it can help support recovery and overall wellness. My own experience was subtle but meaningful: less mental fog, more even energy, and fewer moments of decision fatigue. It didn't replace other supports in my life, but



AMY ALLENDER

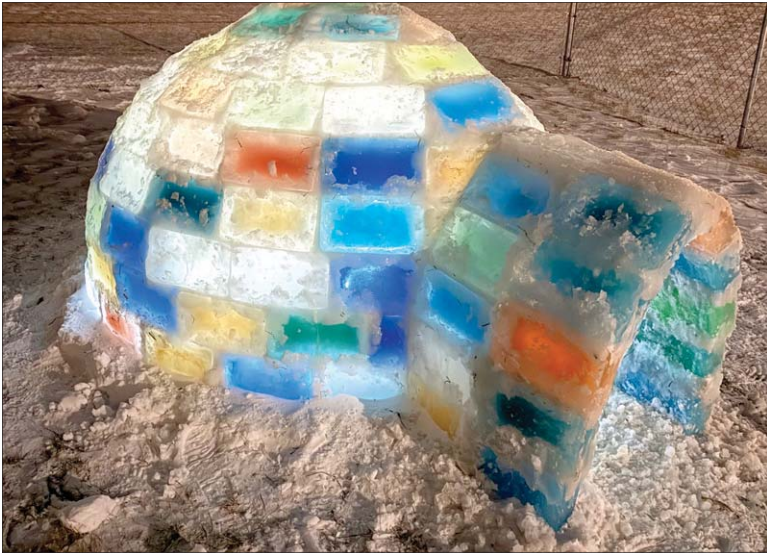
it fit into the bigger picture of caring for myself more intentionally.

**Foster relationships.** Self-love doesn't have to happen in solitude. In fact, one of the most loving things you can do for yourself is to invest in relationships that give life back to you. Time with friends who make you laugh. Conversations that go deeper than logistics. Moments with a spouse, partner, or children that are unhurried and undistracted. Sometimes choosing connection over productivity is the most generous choice you can make for yourself.

As Valentine's Day approaches, I'm not suggesting we skip the cards, candy, or dinner plans. Those things are lovely. I'm simply inviting a wider view of love—one that includes how we treat ourselves when no one is watching. Listening to your body. Supporting your mind. Choosing care that's steady and thoughtful, not reactive.

When we love ourselves well, we create the space to love others better. And that kind of love lasts far longer than February.

For more information on Cornerstone Chiropractic, reach out to their office. For more on living well in North Dakota, join me online at amyallender.com or social media @heyminot.



This ice igloo has been such a fun family project! If you can't beat the temps might as well join them and have some fun and make lasting memories as a family!

MACY HUMISTON PHOTO



The Smiths enjoy sledding all winter long, despite the temperature!

JESI SMITH PHOTO



Having fun outside in the snow.

SHYLA PARRIS PHOTO



Married in the snow at the Scandinavian center!

VANESSA DIVITTORIO PHOTO



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# How Cold Is Too Cold for Dogs? Plus, How to Calm the Comment Section

ERIN BEENE, NORTHERN SENTRY

It’s North Dakota. It’s well below freezing. Dogs still need to go outside to relieve themselves, and some need time outdoors to burn off energy. On base, where backyards are often visible to neighbors, pets are frequently in plain sight. When temperatures drop into the negatives, those sightings often spark outrage. Neighbors take to social media, convinced that dogs left outside will freeze to death or are being subjected to cruelty. Those posts are frequently met with defensive, sometimes aggressive, responses insisting the pet is fine and that others should mind their own business.

This debate resurfaces every winter, often multiple times. On one side are those who believe any extended time outdoors in extreme cold is harmful or abusive. On the other are owners who say they know their dogs’ limits and monitor them closely. So who is right? Is there a specific temperature, time limit, or breed where dogs can safely be outside in subzero conditions? As with many things, the answer is not straightforward.

First, this writer looked into whether North Dakota has a state law or ordinance that specifically addresses dogs being outside in freezing temperatures. After reviewing state statutes, no law was found that sets exact temperature thresholds or time limits. Instead, the issue falls under broader animal welfare language. The 2009 North Dakota Code of Humane Treatment of Animals states that pet owners must provide “adequate care,” defined as “normal and prudent attention to the needs of an animal including wholesome food, clean water, shelter and health care as necessary, to maintain good health, in a specific species of animal.”

While that definition establishes a legal obligation, it does not offer specific guidance on cold-weather exposure, leaving much of the interpretation to owners, and fueling ongoing disagreements.

That brings the conversation into ethical territory, where opinions diverge. However, many people agree on at least one point: how a dog tolerates cold depends largely on breed, size, health, and individual characteristics.

Military spouse and science-based dog trainer Monica Heath-Brost, who holds a bachelor’s degree in animal behavior, weighed in on the issue. She emphasized that breed plays a significant role in cold tolerance. “Dogs are unique because selective breeding of individuals for a specific purpose has created identical physical, genetic, and behavioral characteristics that are passed on to offspring,” she said.

Heath-Brost stressed that there is



Sled dogs in Alaska. These dogs run better in colder temperatures. The dogs feel 30 degrees is too warm. Once temperatures lowered from 33F to 16F, the dogs started running faster and were having more fun.

MONICA HEATH-BROST PHOTO

no universal rule. “Each situation should be assessed individually to ensure each dog is healthy and happy. There are always limits to ensure a dog is safe; however, these limits can be influenced by multiple factors.”

She pointed to the stark contrast between breeds as an example. Alaskan Malamutes, bred for pulling sleds in harsh Arctic conditions, have thick, dense double coats designed to withstand cold, wind, and snow. “A Malamute will beg to be outside for endless hours in a winter blizzard,” Heath-Brost said, “while a Saluki will prefer a warm beach vacation. Both breeds have different physical features that make them well suited to the environments they were developed in.”

She also acknowledged why the topic becomes emotionally charged each winter. “I went to college for animal behavior and have dedicated countless hours to education and advocating for dogs,” she said. “Misconceptions and misunderstandings lead to frustration and conflict.”

Beyond breed, paying close attention to a dog’s behavior is critical. Leanna Porter, a Minot AFB resident, said dogs often show clear signs when they are too cold. “If you pay attention to your pet, they will indicate it by slowing down, lifting their paws, or laying down,” she said. “It’s also a pretty good indicator if they’re sitting at the door barking or whimpering that they’re not okay.”

Another base member, who asked to remain anonymous, shared a deeply emotional experience, stating, “If any dog is outside when it’s under -10, they die in 20 minutes or less. My dog ran down the block when it was -15, and he froze mid-run. It looked like a statue. My kids couldn’t sleep for three days.” While such experiences are extreme and not universal, they underscore why fear and urgency often drive public

reactions.

Veterinary guidance consistently emphasizes observation over rigid rules. According to PetMD.com, “The best way to monitor your dog is to keep a close eye on their behavior. If you notice your dog shivering, acting anxious, whining, slowing down, searching out warm locations, or holding up one or more paws, it’s time to head inside and warm up.”

In the end, there is no magic temperature or set amount of time that determines when it is safe or unsafe for a dog to be outside in subzero weather. Responsible pet ownership means understanding your individual dog, monitoring them closely, and responding quickly to signs of distress.

If you believe a pet is in immediate danger, seek help. If you’re concerned about a neighbor’s dog, a respectful conversation can go a long way. For situations requiring official assistance on Minot AFB, the non-emergency Security Forces line can be reached at (701) 723-3982 or 723-3983.



Sigrid is a Belgian Malinois. She LOVES the snow and will spend hours outside playing in it. She loves to shove her face into snow.

MONICA HEATH-BROST PHOTO

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**For more information contact:**  
Jim Bowman- nd135.president@afa.org

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# Fire-Smart Starts Here: SPARKY's February Safety Tips

- Candles and fireplaces can set a romantic mood, but they also bring a fire risk. Keep candles and any other open flames away from flammable items like blankets, decorations, and clothing. Always extinguish candles and fires before you leave the room or go to bed.
- Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless gas that can be deadly. DO NOT park your car in a garage & leave the door to the house open if the car is running.
- Never leave cooking unattended, especially when frying or grilling.
- Be sure to have a fully charged fire extinguisher readily available in the kitchen.



**SPARKY SAYS**  
MINOT AFB FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES

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is a pilot in the 23rd Bomb squadron at Minot Air Force Base. Lieutenant Derks has logged over 400 hours piloting high performance military aircraft and has dropped nearly 12,000 pounds of high explosive ordnance. In addition to his flying duties, Lieutenant Derks is one of the 23rd Bomb Squadron's Resource Advisors, managing funds to ensure the squadron maintains combat readiness. Lieutenant Derks was recognized as Group Volunteer of the Quarter for his exceptional commitment to volunteering, demonstrated through his engagement with key stakeholders, emphasizing the critical need for advocacy and support for essential system advancements.  
*Info from Feb 2025*

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## DOG TREAT CONUNDRUM

Kim Fundingsland

All dog owners do this. They stand in a store and stare at shelves of dog treats with completely dazed looks on their faces. I know this. I've been doing it for years. There's too many choices. Too many decisions to make. And your pet's happiness and health is at risk. It's overwhelming for a concerned dog owner. Woof. What chemicals are in what dog treat? Is a treat healthy, fattening, or likely to cause digestive problems? Is it really necessary to buy a treat to fight bad breath? Do they work? Will your dog eat them? How many treats are in a box or package? How big is a medium-sized dog biscuit anyway? Is this the kind of treat that will cause a dog to quit eating dog food? What do Milk Bones have to do with milk? And on, and on it goes.

Good dog. Bad dog. Any dog, the problem is infinitely perplexing. But when you can't live without a dog, regular visits to dog treat shelves are mandatory— gotta' be done whether or not you are at the end of your rope, or leash. Fetch 'em up is your mission!

Admit it. You find yourself shopping for dog treats as if you were trying to pick out that extra special present for your child's birthday. All dog owners do it. As you look at the great variety of selections on the shelves today you seek out the one very special and unique treat that will make your dog jump for joy.

As any dog owner knows, this is not easy. There's just too many things to consider to get it right. Do you go for the traditional hard pressed Milk Bone or Milk Bone look-a-like treat, or maybe the chewy kind? Regular? Flavor variety? Small, medium, large? There's treats specially formulated to promote healthy teeth too. Does that mean other dog treats are bad for teeth?

There's another doggone serious issue as well – your dog's health. Sure, your dog will happily eat some moldy, putrid unknown substance he finds outside, probably after rolling in it and covering himself in stink, but you want to make certain any dog treat you purchase is loaded



That look of loyalty, love, and trust is just one of many reasons dog owners keep a variety of dog treats within reach at all times.

with all the proper vitamins and minerals and is labeled "veterinarian recommended". Then you place those ideal dog treats in your grocery cart next to the chips and frosted donuts. Go figure.

Yes. We love our dogs. We want to treat them right like they always do for us. They're amazing. I have a sign in my TV room that reads, "My goal in life is to be the kind of person my dog thinks I am." I try, but it's impossible really. Dogs are always so complimentary and understanding and treat their owners right. Maybe that's why buying the right treats for them is so darned important to us.



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SUDOKU

Solution to puzzle on page B7

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CROSSWORD PUZZLE

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- 1. Abbr. of origin
  - 6. Watch displays, briefly
  - 10. Guy
  - 14. Emmy winner Christine
  - 15. Seniors' gp.
  - 16. Israeli dance
  - 17. TACKS
  - 20. Highlands tongue
  - 21. Augsburg article
  - 22. Yet to be marketed
  - 23. Talent
  - 25. Chalet environs
  - 26. Quick-witted
  - 28. Tibia
  - 29. '60s radical gp.
  - 30. Panoramic view
  - 31. Kublai \_\_\_\_
  - 32. TACHS
  - 39. Hides the gray
  - 40. Short time
  - 41. ER measures
  - 44. Minn. neighbor
  - 45. In a saucy way
  - 46. Insurer's delight
  - 48. After-school drink
  - 49. Melodic piece
  - 50. Affleck of "Good Will Hunting"
  - 51. '70s Olympics name
  - 54. TAX
  - 57. Like a milquetoast
  - 58. Actress Sedgwick
  - 59. Crusoe's creator
  - 60. Actor Mineo et al.
  - 61. Psychic
  - 62. Skilled

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- Down
- 1. "What \_\_\_\_ can I say?"
  - 2. Moselle tributary
  - 3. Faith Hill Top 10 hit
  - 4. On and on
  - 5. Playbill feature
  - 6. Eye surgery procedure
  - 7. "All the Way" lyricist
  - 8. Rapping Dr.
  - 9. Quick and vigorous
  - 10. Singer-dancer Rivera
  - 11. Kind of course
  - 12. Made one's case
  - 13. Ziti and linguini
  - 18. Angular lead-in
  - 19. "Nothin' \_\_\_\_!"
  - 24. Ishmael's overseer
  - 25. Some herrings
  - 26. T-shirt brand
  - 27. River inlet
  - 28. Filmdom ogre
  - 31. Enclosed canoe
  - 33. Laundry mysteries
  - 34. "Hey, wait \_\_\_\_!"
  - 35. Torn from the ground
  - 36. Retort to a meddler
  - 37. Angular shape
  - 38. Stallone's nickname
  - 41. They may be staked
  - 42. 55-Down part
  - 43. Whirl around, as on a chair
  - 44. Señor's "Sure thing!"
  - 45. Polliwog's place
  - 47. Corner pieces?
  - 48. Aromatic wood
  - 50. Like Hubbard's cupboard
  - 52. Sticky stuff
  - 53. Work without \_\_\_\_
  - 55. Looker?
  - 56. "Rhoda" mom

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# Missile community study nears completion, town hall planned for spring 2026

1ST LT SYDNEY SEDLAK, AFGSC PUBLIC AFFAIRS

BARKSDALE AIR FORCE BASE, La. --

The Missile Community Cancer Study (MCCS) continues burn testing and assessments research in 2026, with a town hall to be announced once assessments are completed.

Audience input from previous town halls has expanded the burn studies, which now include additional materials in the testing regimen.

During the burn exposure simulations, a physics model was used to understand, predict, and simulate the behavior of the burn materials.

“Physics models are based on fundamental physical laws using numerical techniques to find solutions to input equations,” said Lt. Col. Thomas Doker, AFGSC Public Health Officer. “This model used takes into account a single exposure. To account for multiple exposures as experienced per each individual, analysts can multiply that single exposure as many times as necessary to cover the entire course of a missileer’s career.”

For the model, the burn test used materials identical to those burned in the launch control centers (LCCs).

“AFGSC provided scenarios and locations where the burning of materials in LCCs most likely occurred,” Doker continued. “A burn test was conducted in a controlled environment to

accurately capture emissions from accelerants and materials.”

Due to a lack of appropriations for Fiscal Year 2026, there was a pause in the burn study, the epidemiological study, and the access release for members’ Individual Longitudinal Exposer Records (ILER). Those working on these three projects have since resumed testing and research and are on track to have updated information for the next town hall, scheduled for March 2026.

Other ongoing efforts include the cleaning of Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) from the LCCs including working areas that may have been affected.

The command will continue to host town halls to provide the testing results with those impacted.

The next virtual town hall is projected for spring of 2026 and will discuss results of recent burn testing and provide an opportunity for the audience to ask questions. Please reference the AFGSC website or social media pages for town hall announcements and information on how to join the town hall.

For more information on MCCS, virtual town hall announcements, and frequently asked questions, please visit <https://www.airforcemedicine.af.mil/Resources/Missile-Community-Cancer-Study/> (will update with new link once site switches to AFGSC).



by Patricia Stockdill

**FISHING:**  
Lake Sakakawea elevation, Feb. 2: 1,827.92 feet above mean sea level (MSL); 15,800 cubic feet per second (CFS) Garrison Dam average daily releases. Devils Lake elevation: 1,448.9 feet above mean sea level (MSL). Stump Lake elevation: 1,448.8 MSL.  
• N.D. Game & Fish Dept. game wardens: No new reports.  
• Devils Lake, Woodland Resort, Devils Lake: Try 8 to 15 feet for walleye with better success in the evening hours around Doc Hagen’s on the south end of 6-Mile Bay, the north end of the bay, or Military Point on Creel Bay.  
• Lake Darling, Karma C-Store, Ruthville: No new reports.  
• Lake Metigoshe, Four Seasons, Bottineau: Some nice bluegill starting to show up. Better walleye success remains at night. Generally nice water clarity for pike spearing with occasional nice-sized fish taken.

• Lake Sakakawea/Lake Audubon, Cenex Bait & Tackle, Garrison: Lake Audubon producing walleye in a variety of depths and locations using jigs or tip-ups. Try Douglas or Steinke bays on the east end of Lake Sakakawea but use caution with varying ice depths.  
• Lake Sakakawea/Lake Audubon, Hwy. 83 Lawn & Leisure, Garrison: Lake Audubon fair for walleye but inconsistent and success varies day-to-day. Try 20 feet. OK pike spearfishing success on the east end of Lake Sakakawea with fairly good water clarity. However, use extreme caution throughout the east end bays with warm weather creating open water in locations with pressure ridges, springs, and sunken humps and islands with flowing water.  
• Lake Sakakawea, New Town: More activity on the Van Hook Arm in the Lake Sakakawea midsection with some walleye activity. Continue to use caution on the ice, however.

Thanks to Woodland Resort, our Outdoors Report sponsor, for helping keep readers up-to-date on happenings throughout the region. For complete details about fishing Devils Lake and its array of recreational opportunities visit their website, ([www.woodlandresort.com](http://www.woodlandresort.com)), Facebook at ([facebook.com/woodlandresortDL](https://facebook.com/woodlandresortDL)), telephone (701) 662-5996, extension 1, or email ([woodlandresort@gondtc.com](mailto:woodlandresort@gondtc.com)). They’re located at 1012 Woodland Drive, Devils Lake, N.D. 58301.

- Ice is never completely safe. Avoid areas with vegetation, moving water, pressure ridges, and springs. Check conditions as you go along on the ice and don’t move around at night.
- Feb. 6 & 7: Minot Curling Club Winter Fest Bonspiel.
- Feb. 6 & 7: Magic City International Figure Skating Competition, MAYSA Arena, Minot, beginning at 8 a.m.
- Feb. 7: Sakakawea Chapter Ducks Unlimited banquet, Washburn Memorial Hall, 5 p.m.
- Feb. 7: Little Missouri Badlands Chapter Rocky Mtn. Elk Foundation banquet, Roughrider Center, 2209 Wolves Den Pkwy, Watford City, 5 p.m.
- Feb. 7: Ice Cream for Breakfast, Souris Valley Golf Course. Free ice cream, toppings, coffee and hot chocolate with board games and optional tubing down the course sledding hill (\$5 for tube rental).
- Feb. 11: Spring turkey applications due. More information and application is available on the N.D. Game & Fish Dept. website, ([gf.nd.gov](http://gf.nd.gov))
- Feb. 14: Winterfest Cabin Fever, Cross Ranch State Park south of Hensler, 11 a.m. Children’s activities, guided hike, cast iron and Dutch oven cooking demonstrations, and more.
- Feb. 15: Boots & Birds free wildlife photography adventure with photographer Seth Owens. Meet at Badlands Bar & Grill for introductory session and then hit area parks to observe and learn wildlife photography tips. Sponsored by Souris Valley Pheasants Forever, 2 p.m. go to the website, ([events.pheasantsforever.org/events](http://events.pheasantsforever.org/events)), for more information.
- Feb. 20: West Dakota Waterfowlers Delta Waterfowl banquet, 5 p.m., Clarion Hotel & Convention Center, Minot.
- Feb. 21: Souris River Longbeards Nat’l. Wild Turkey Federation banquet, Grand Hotel, 1505 N. Broadway, Minot.
- Feb. 21: Frozen Fun Day, Polaris Park, featuring winter activities, games, s’mores, and more, 11 a.m.

**TOURNAMENTS:**  
• Feb. 7: Devils Lake, Spirit Lake Casino.  
• Feb. 14: Stump Lake, South Carlson Lake.  
• Feb. 21: Lake Audubon, Totten Trail.

• Lake Sakakawea/Missouri River, Scott’s Bait & Tackle, Pick City: Limited reports and activity on the Missouri River tailrace. Try evening hours on Lake Audubon for walleye but use caution if traveling on the ice in the dark. Be extremely careful with variable ice conditions throughout many bays on the east end of Lake Sakakawea.  
• Lake Sakakawea/northwest N.D. lakes, Scenic Sports, Williston: Missouri and Yellowstone rivers fair to good for walleye but water levels likely to increase with warming weather so look for muddy water. Upper end of Lake Sakakawea continues producing some walleye around Lund’s Landing area but watch for pressure ridges popping up, including a large one at Tobacco Garden on the south side. Also try the river channel off Little Beaver Bay in 30 feet. Some pike activity along back bay edges along areas of the lake. Springbrook Dam producing nice-sized perch. Blacktail Dam still producing some panfish with

occasional walleye and pike.  
• North-central/central N.D. lakes, Towner Hdwe. Hank, Towner: No new reports from area lakes.  
**DOWNHILL SKI REPORTS:**  
• Big Sky Resort, Big Sky, Mont., (800) 548-4486: 28- to 46-inch base with 267 runs and 34 lifts open.  
• Bottineau Winter Park, Bottineau, (701) 263-4556: 12- to 24-inch base with 6 runs, terrain park, 1 chair, 1T-bar, and 2 carpets open.  
• Frostfire Ski Area, Walhalla, (701) 549-3600: 8 runs open.  
• Huff Hills Ski Area, Mandan, (701) 663-6421: 16- to 26-inch machine groomed base with 10 runs, 2 lifts, and 1 tow open.  
• Terry Peak, Lead, S.D., (605) 584-2165: 16- to 36-inch base with 20 runs and all lifts open.  
**NUMBERS TO KNOW:**  
• N.D. Game and Fish Dept., main Bismarck office: (701) 328-6300, website: (<http://gf.nd.gov>).  
• Report All Poachers: (701) 328-9921.



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3	9	4	5	8	1	6	2	7	
2	6	8	9	7	3	5	4	1	
4	7	5	3	9	2	1	8	6	
6	8	2	1	5	7	9	3	4	
1	3	9	6	4	8	7	5	2	
5	2	6	7	3	9	4	1	8	
8	4	7	2	1	5	3	6	9	
9	1	3	8	6	4	2	7	5	

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# How to make driving in inclement weather more safe

Impaired visibility can be a safety hazard while driving. Everything from sun glare to hail can affect a driver's ability to see the road and navigate it effectively. Before drivers get behind the wheel, they should make note of their local forecast and make a plan for what to do if rain, snow or other conditions make it challenging to drive.

The International Association of Traffic and Safety Sciences indicates that, based on an examination of crash test data conducted by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the "likelihood of a crash increases during periods of low visibility, despite the tendency for less traffic and for lower speeds to prevail during these times."

Drivers can take several steps to improve their visibility when driving in poor weather conditions.

• Inspect and change windshield wiper blades. Wipers are instrumental in clearing precipitation away from the windshield. If they're not functioning properly, wipers cannot do their jobs. Drivers should replace their wipers at the first indication that they are no longer effective. In some conditions, wipers can freeze or stick. Drivers should then pull over and clean the wipers manually.

• Clear obstructions. Always make sure the windshield is clear before driving. This can include removing ice and snow in the winter and cleaning off mud or bug splatter

in the spring and summer. Use the front and rear defrost if condensation fogs up windshields and windows. Slow down. Foul weather can reduce drivers' ability to see far into the distance. Drivers should always drive slower in inclement weather in order to improve reaction time.

• Top off fluids. Always keep the windshield washer reservoir full and keep extra fluid in the trunk. In addition, look for a fluid that does not freeze in very cold temperatures.

• Learn how to drive in fog. Each year, more than 38,700 vehicle crashes occur in fog, states the Federal Highway Administration. Travelers Insurance recommends slowing down, staying focused and using regular headlights and not high beams when driving in fog.

• Go out only if necessary. In snowy or icy conditions, drive only if it's absolutely necessary, as snow and ice can impair visibility and make roads slick, says AAA.

• Avoid driving at dusk and dawn. The human eye can have trouble adjusting to rapidly changing light and darkness conditions, which are common at dusk and dawn. If possible, drivers should make trips during the heart of the day, especially if poor lighting conditions typically make it difficult for them to drive.

Drivers can take steps to improve visibility when inclement weather makes roadways hard to navigate.



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- Their beak tip is used for tearing. Bald Eagles kill their prey with their talons by penetrating flesh.
- A Bald Eagle's skin is protected by over 7,000 feathers lined with down. Their feet are cold resistant, consisting mostly of tendons.

Fact File	
Life Span	15 - 20 years
Weight	10 - 14 pounds
Body Height	30 - 37 inches
Wingspan	70 - 90 inches
Top Speed	30 - 35 mph
Wild Diet	Omnivore (Carnivore) Herbivore Fish, Other birds, Carrion

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# Minot North Cheer Shines at State with Multiple Titles and Top Honors



BRYLEIGH MCBRIDE, STUDENT JOURNALIST

The Minot North High School cheer team delivered an outstanding performance at the North Dakota State Cheer Competition, earning multiple state championships, top finishes across divisions, and several prestigious individual and team awards. With precision, power, and undeniable team chemistry, Minot North proved itself as one of the most dominant programs in the state.

One of the team's biggest highlights came in the Time Out Team Routine, where Minot North claimed the state championship title. The routine showcased sharp motions, synchronized timing, and high energy, capturing the

attention of judges and the crowd alike. The win reflected months of preparation and the team's ability to execute under pressure on the biggest stage.

Minot North also earned an impressive second-place finish in the Game Day division, a category that emphasizes crowd engagement, spirit, and school pride. The team's performance demonstrated strong leadership, clean execution, and the ability to bring intensity and excitement to the arena, narrowly missing the top spot in a highly competitive field.

In another standout achievement, Minot North took first place and the state championship

in the CDR/PR division, further solidifying its versatility and technical excellence. The routine blended sharp choreography with strong performance quality, earning high marks across all judging categories.

The team's success extended to stunt groups as well. Navy Storm, one of Minot North's stunt groups, captured first place, while Silver Strike followed closely with an impressive second-place finish. Both groups demonstrated advanced stunting skills, stability, and confidence, highlighting the depth of talent within the program and the athletes' trust in one another.

Individual accolades added

to Minot North's memorable weekend. Victoria Cauldreon was named an All-State Cheer Athlete, an honor awarded to athletes who demonstrate exceptional skill, leadership, and commitment to the sport. Her recognition reflects not only her technical ability but also her impact on the team as a whole.

Senior athletes were also recognized for their dedication and excellence. Ariana and Payton each received the Elite Senior Award, honoring their years of hard work, leadership, and contributions to the cheer program. Both athletes played key roles in the team's success and left a lasting legacy for future Minot

North cheerleaders.

In addition to competitive success, Minot North Cheer earned the Team Scholar Award, recognizing the squad's academic achievement and commitment to excellence both on and off the mat.

With multiple state titles, top placements, and individual honors, the Minot North cheer team concluded its season with a performance that exemplified discipline, teamwork, and pride. Their success at state not only brought home hardware, but also reinforced Minot North's reputation as a powerhouse in North Dakota cheer.



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Time-Out Division Class A - Large & Performance Division Class A - Large



**NDCCA TEAM SCHOLAR AWARD**  
Minot North Cheer 2025-2026



**STUNT GROUP**  
Navy Storm - 1st Place Champions



Silver Strike - 2nd Place



**ALL STATE CHEERLEADER**  
Victoria - 1st Minot North Cheer  
All State Athlete



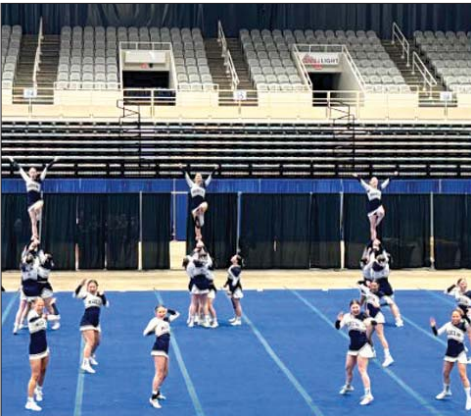
**ELITE SENIOR AWARD**  
Ariana & Payton



Time Out - 1st Place State Champions



**TEAM EVENTS**  
Game Day - 2nd Place



CDR/PR - 1st Place State Champions



**COACH OF THE YEAR**  
2025-2026 - Coach Carly



Kiarra - 15th Place



**JUMP OFF**  
Vreelyn - 1st Place State Champion



Makynzie - 2nd Place



Victoria - 5th Place



**TOP SIDELINE**  
Eleanor - 13th Place





# MINOT NORTH

## SENTINEL REPORT



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# Sentinels Deliver Statement Performances Across Winter Sports

BRYLEIGH MCBRIDE, STUDENT JOURNALIST

Minot North athletes were busy making noise across multiple sports this past stretch, delivering big wins, standout individual performances, and moments that defined what it means to compete as a Sentinel.

The boys basketball team earned a memorable 72–69 victory on Military Appreciation Night, rallying together for a complete team win in front of a packed home crowd. TJ Hjelmstad, Brayden Blikre, and Josh Myers shared The Sentinel honor after stepping up in key moments and showing resilience from tip to final buzzer. Each made crucial plays down the stretch, helping seal the win in a tightly contested matchup. The night also served as a meaningful thank-you to military families in attendance, recognizing their continued service and sacrifice. The boys return to action Tuesday, January 27, when they host Legacy at 7:45 p.m.

On the girls side, Minot North split a pair of home contests that showcased both dominance and determination. The Sentinels protected home court with an impressive 84–70 win over the Dickinson Mavericks, led by senior Kinzy Welstad. Welstad poured in 24 points while setting the tone

with leadership, intensity, and confidence. Her performance earned her the Isaac Award, a reflection of her impact on both ends of the floor. Brayden Blikre also earned The Sentinel recognition for stepping up in a tough defensive matchup, while Cambree Phillips provided a spark with her hustle and energy.

In a later matchup, despite a 60–73 final score, the Sentinels showed heart from start to finish. Cambree Phillips delivered a standout night, scoring 25 points and bringing relentless pressure defensively. Her effort did not go unnoticed, as she earned the Isaac Award for her grit, leadership, and refusal to back down. While the result didn't fall Minot North's way, the performance reflected the toughness and unity of this group.

United Hockey kicked off its senior spotlights by honoring Jaxon Dahl. A longtime player who has been on the ice since the age of three, Dahl credits his music as his pregame superstition and lists playing at the Ralph as his favorite hockey memory. Despite an early varsity mishap, falling three times in his first shift, Dahl has remained persistent, offering advice to younger players to stay

committed and remember why they play. Following graduation, he plans to pursue Mechanical Engineering in college.

In the pool, boys swimming continued a demanding slate of meets. At the West Fargo Invite on January 31, the Sentinels placed 10th with a team score of 108.5 against a deep field of state competition. Gavin Diede delivered a highlight moment by state-qualifying, marking a major accomplishment for the program. Earlier, Minot North placed 8th at the Minot Invite on January 24 with a score of 153, competing against schools from across the state. The Sentinels also picked up a strong dual win over West Fargo Horace, defeating the Hawks 116–64 on January 23. Additional meets included tough contests against Minot High, Jamestown, and other regional opponents, continuing to build experience and momentum as the season progressed.

Across the court, ice, and pool, Minot North athletes continue to represent their school with pride, resilience, and relentless effort. With key matchups ahead and postseason preparation underway, the Sentinels remain focused, unified, and ready for whatever comes next.



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# Minot United Cheer Celebrates Historic Finish at 2026 NDADD State

BRYLEIGH MCBRIDE, STUDENT JOURNALIST

Minot United Cheer closed out its season in unforgettable fashion at the 2026 NDADD State Competition, delivering one of the strongest performances in program history. Competing against top teams from across the state, Minot United advanced to finals in all four routines and finished top three in every category, a testament to the team's consistency, resilience, and relentless work ethic.

The weekend's biggest triumph came in Class A Jazz, where Minot United earned the State Championship title. The routine stood out for its precision, performance quality, and emotional impact, ultimately securing the top spot and bringing home the program's highest honor of the competition. The championship performance marked a defining moment for the team and capped off months of preparation and growth.



Minot United Kick Routine

strong finishes across its remaining routines. In Class A Pom, the team earned second place, showcasing sharp motions, clean transitions, and exceptional synchronization. The Class A Large Kick routine followed with another second-place finish, highlighting technical strength, timing, and endurance. Rounding out the competition, Minot United placed third in Class A Hip Hop, a high-energy routine that emphasized creativity, power,



Minot United Dance Hip Hop Routine

and crowd engagement.

Beyond placements, the team's ability to improve from prelims to finals stood out. Each routine peaked at the right moment, with the athletes delivering their strongest performances of the season when it mattered most. Their grit and determination were evident on the floor, reflecting the countless hours spent refining details and pushing past limits.

Minot United's success extended beyond performance scores. The team was honored with the Team Scholar Award, recognizing its commitment to academic excellence alongside athletic achievement. In addition, the Hip Hop routine earned the Fan Favorite Award, highlighting the team's connection with the audience and its ability to bring

energy and excitement to the arena.

Leadership played a major role in the team's standout season. Head Coach Sarah was named one of only two Coach of the Year recipients, an honor that reflects her dedication, vision, and impact on the athletes and program. Her guidance helped shape a season defined by growth, unity, and confidence.

As the 2025-26 season comes to a close, Minot United Cheer leaves state with championships, top finishes, and lasting memories. With strong momentum and continued support from the community, the team looks ahead with excitement, ready to build on this success and return even stronger next season.



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# Mission: Transition – Managing Stress Together Workshop for Families is Back On!

Minot AFB’s School Liaison Office is hosting a “Mission: Transition – Managing Stress Together” all-day fun, hands-on workshop for military families (including homeschool) at the Jimmy Doolittle Center on Tuesday, February 24th, 2026. This workshop was originally scheduled for November, but unfortunately the government shutdown thwarted efforts for its realization. Back on, five on-base offices serve to provide a one-stop experience for families seeking tips/tools for transitional success! In addition, United Through Reading is donating books for all attendees!

Families can take part in one, two, and/or all sessions in which each presenter – School Liaison Program Manager, Exceptional Family Member Program Coordinator, Military and Family Life Counselor, Minot AFB Librarian, and Family Advocacy Program Support Nurse – will provide support specific to moving, stress, TDYs/deployments, and bullying. Activities can be brought home by parents for their children currently in school to create. Parent attendance is highly encouraged, as the educational wealth gleaned from the workshops will be invaluable!

Here’s what to expect:

9:00am-9:50am, School Liaison Program: Families can create an Education Binder for their student. This binder has ten tabs with hands-on customizable sections (e.g. Unofficial Transcript, Teacher/Guidance Counselor Recommendation, and Military Interstate Compact). Parents will learn about the vital importance of each section, and receive print-outs of the Compact and other resources to be placed directly in their student’s binder. In addition, the School Liaison will emphasize the importance of parents providing their student’s binder to his/her gaining school following a PCS and how parents can utilize this one resource—requiring only minor updates—all throughout their student’s educational career.

10:00am-10:50am, Exceptional Family Member Program: Families can participate in a hands-on Calm and Reset activity. The project provides calm corner cards where the parent will be able to select strategies that best support their child’s needs.

11:00am-11:50am, Military and Family Life Counseling Program: Families will learn how to support children’s emotional well-being during deployment cycles by strengthening connection, communication, and coping skills. Participants will also take part in a Paper Hug activity, creating a simple hands-on tool children can use to feel comfort and closeness when a loved one is away.

12:00pm-12:50pm, Minot Air Force Library’s Transitions and Tea Storytime: Families can have tea and sandwiches/cookies plus engage

**YOUTH IN ACTION SPONSORED BY:**

## MISSION: TRANSITION MANAGING STRESS TOGETHER WORKSHOP

24 February 2026 • Jimmy Doolittle Center

Homeschoolers and Base Parents/Guardians! Join us for fun, hands-on workshops! Each presenter has an activity for you and your kids that provides support specific on moving, stress, TDYs/deployments, and bullying. Activities can be brought home by parents for their children currently in school to create.

All Attendees receive a FREE Child/Teen Book!

8:45AM  
Welcome Message  
9:00AM - 9:50AM  
SLP: PreK-12th Grade • Student Education Binder  
10:00AM - 10:50AM  
EFMP: PreK-5th Grade • Calm & Reset Activity  
11:00AM - 11:50AM  
MFLC: PreK-5th Grade • Create a Paper Hug Activity  
12:00PM - 12:50PM  
Minot AFB Library: All Ages • Transitions & Tea Storytime  
1:00PM - 1:50PM  
FAP: PreK-5th Grade • Create a Hand Activity

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in listening to stories, singing songs, and completing activities about some of the common transitions children experience as part of military family life, including PCSing and deployments. In addition, How to Handle Bullying activity books and crayons provided by the School Liaison Office will be available.

1:00pm-1:50pm, Family Advocacy Program: Families can take part in a Create a Hand activity, which helps children and families identify the safe people with whom children feel comfortable expressing their thoughts and feelings when they need support. This is very important when children are experiencing transitions and starts the discussion for families about positive relationships and open

communication.

Instead of visiting each office in their separate locations, every program is coming to YOU at the Jimmy Doolittle Center on Tuesday, February 24th to engage, teach, and support your military family, so that you remain strong and resilient amid the constant change that is military life, and our forces—in turn—stand strong and ready to provide nuclear deterrence and global strike capabilities anytime, anywhere.

*The information in this article is provided as a resource and does not constitute endorsement by Minot AFB, the United States Air Force, or the Department of War of the external website, or the information, products, or services contained therein.*

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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE SCHOOL LIAISON PROGRAM

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# Keystone Club Gears Up for Youth of the Year and a Busy Spring of Service

BRYLEIGH MCBRIDE, STUDENT JOURNALIST

The Keystone Club at the Boys & Girls Club is kicking off the spring season with exciting events, meaningful service, and a strong focus on leadership through the Youth of the Year program. As the Club's premier teen leadership group, Keystone members continue to play a vital role in supporting younger members while preparing themselves for future success.

Several upcoming events are set to bring the community

together at the Youth Center. Teen Movie Night will take place on February 13 from 6–8 p.m. for ages 13 and up with parent permission. The Sweetheart Dance follows on February 16 from 6–8 p.m. for ages 9–18, offering a fun and welcoming environment for Club members. Cupid's Skate Night will round out the month on February 20 from 6–8 p.m. and is open to ages 5–18. At each event, Keystone members will assist

with setup, games, concessions, and ensuring everything runs smoothly. Keystone Club is also hosting several Silver Charter events focused on career readiness. A Career Fair on March 11 will feature mock interviews, résumé writing, The Game of Life activity, and military recruiters. On March 13, members will attend a Career Prep event at Bismarck State College, followed by a group meal at Chick-fil-A. The next day,

Keystone members will mentor Torch Club students by sharing high school advice, eating with them, and participating in activities together. This spring also highlights the National Project on Bullying Awareness, encouraging kindness, respect, and leadership among youth. Central to these efforts is the Youth of the Year program, the Boys & Girls Clubs of America's premier leadership recognition initiative. Established in 1947, the program honors teens ages 14–18

who demonstrate outstanding leadership, service, academic excellence, and commitment to healthy lifestyles. Auditions were held at the Youth Center on January 28, with participants developing public speaking skills and representing the voice of youth as they advance through local, state, regional, and national levels for scholarship opportunities. Keystone Club continues to lead by example, serving the community while shaping the next generation of leaders.



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# Erik Ramstad Middle School Cheer Places 2nd at State

ILIANA MCBRIDE, 12 YEARS OLD

The 7th and 8th grade Erik Ramstad cheer team competed in the North Dakota State Cheerleading Championship at the Bismarck Event Center on January 31st. They worked very hard even when they had to change the routine the day before the competition because a few girls weren't able to attend. There were 5 teams competing in the Middle School Time Out Division: Central Middle School, Erik Ramstad Middle School, Jim Hill Middle School, Mandan Middle School, and Williston Middle School. Erik Ramstad cheer team placed 2nd, after Mandan Middle School. The winter cheer season is ending soon and they left a good impression.



2nd Place Timeout - Erik Ramstad Cheer Team



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# Local Music Educator Named VFW State Teacher of the Year, Advances to National Competition

Dr. Amanda Capote, a music educator serving students at North Plains and Dakota Elementary Schools, has been named the Post 753 Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) 2025 Teacher of the Year, earning top honors at the local, district, and state levels.

With this achievement, Dr. Capote now advances to the national stage of the VFW Teacher of the Year competition, with national results expected in June or July.

Dr. Capote was formally recognized during a ceremony held Saturday, January 31, at the VFW. The award honors her outstanding dedication to education, excellence in teaching, and commitment to fostering a love of music among her students.

Known for her passion for music and her positive impact on students across both school communities, Dr. Capote continues to inspire through her leadership and dedication to the arts. School officials and community members have expressed pride in her accomplishments and enthusiasm as she represents the region at the national level.

## MINOT VFW POST 753 AWARD RECIPIENTS

### VOICE OF DEMOCRACY WINNERS

- 1st place- Emily R Ulland-Velva
- 2nd place- Nikaya L Hillestad-South Prairie
- 3rd place- Kenley J Beeter-Velva

### PATRIOTS PEN WINNERS

- 1st place- Hudson R Johnston-Jim Hill Middle School
- 2nd place- Gavin Schmaltz-Velva
- 3rd place- Odin Gjelstad-Velva

### TEACHER OF THE YEAR WINNERS

- Amanda Capote- North Plains K-8 MAFB
- Doug Richter- Bishop Ryan Catholic School 9-12

Congratulations to all the winners



Teacher of the Year Award Recipients Doug Richter- Bishop Ryan Catholic and Dr. Amanda Capote- North Plains Elementary School pose for a photo with VFW Members.



VFW Member presents Dr. Amanda Capote with the Teacher of the Year Award.



Dr. Capote with some of her North Plains colleagues who came to celebrate her achievement.

DAKOTA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PHOTOS



Dr. Amanda Capote poses for a photo with her family at the January 31 Minot FVW Post 753 award ceremony.



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## A LOOK BACK

### THIS WEEK IN USAF HISTORY

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FEBRUARY 8-17, 1978



In early February 1978, a massive blizzard blanketed New England in 27 or more inches of snow accompanied by winds up to 90 miles per hour. Approximately 54 people from Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island died as a result of the storm, and nearly 2,100 coastal homes were destroyed. On February 8, 1978, Air Force cargo aircraft from units across the country began flying Army personnel, snow removal equipment, and other resources to the areas affected. Over the course of the next week, Air Force C-5s, C-141s, and C-130s airlifted over 1,000 personnel and 2,339 tons of snow removal equipment to the New England area. Equipment included generators, communications equipment, bulldozers, and more. The mission, named after a similar operation in Ohio just a week prior, was called Operation Snow Blow II.

Information courtesy of: media.defense.gov (The United States Air Force and Humanitarian Airlift Operations by Daniel Haulman) / www.newengland.com



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# What's Going On Minot AFB

Note: While the partial government shutdown is in effect, the asterisked (\*) events in this calendar will be cancelled.

FRIDAY06

- \* Harry Potter Escape Room Game Begins, Minot AFB Library
- FTEC, 0730-1600, Professional Development Center
- \* TAP DOL Employment Track Workshop, 0800-1600, M&FRC
- Fun Fri-yay, 1630-2000, Jimmy Doolittle Center
- Friday Flicks, 1630-2200, Rockers Bar & Grill
- Sweetheart Dance, 1800-2000, Youth Center

SATURDAY07

- Norwegian Ruck March Training, 0600, McAdoo Fitness Center
- \* Winter STEAM Challenges, 1000, Minot AFB Library Facebook Page

SUNDAY08

- The Big Game Special Lunch, 1030-1330, Dakota Inn Dining Facility
- The Big Game Special Dinner, 1630-1830, Dakota Inn Dining Facility
- The Big Game Buffet, 1630-2300, Rockers Bar & Grill

MONDAY09

- AFFT, 0530, McAdoo Fitness Center
- Junior Enlisted Foundation Course 300, 0730-1600, Professional Development Center
- \* Reintegration Briefing, 1000-1100, M&FRC
- AFFT, 1100, McAdoo Fitness Center
- \* Sponsorship Training, 1300-1400, M&FRC
- Parent Advisory Board & Quality Improvement Team, 1300-1600, Youth Center
- \* Craft Club, 1800-1900, Base Library

TUESDAY10

- Valentine's Day Treats, Dakota Inn Dining Facility
- AFFT, 0530, McAdoo Fitness Center
- Junior Enlisted Foundation Course 300, 0730-1600, Professional Development Center
- \* Bundles for Babies, 0900-1030, M&FRC
- Tuition Assistance (TA) Brief, 1000, Education Center
- \* Game Day, 1000-1930, Base Library
- AFFT, 1100, McAdoo Fitness Center
- Strength & Mobility, 1100, McAdoo Fitness Center
- \* Moving Out of the Dorms Budget Class, 1300-1500, M&FRC
- Creative Cupid, 1730-1930, Arts & Crafts Center

WEDNESDAY11

- Valentine's Day Treats, Dakota Inn Dining Facility
- AFFT, 0530, McAdoo Fitness Center
- Junior Enlisted Foundation Course 300, 0730-1600, Professional Development Center
- \* Spouses Welcome on the Road, 0830-1430, M&FRC
- \* Pre-Deployment/Remote Readiness Training, 1000-1100, M&FRC
- \* Storytime, 1030, Base Library
- AFFT, 1100, McAdoo Fitness Center

THURSDAY12

- Valentine's Day Treats, Dakota Inn Dining Facility
- AFFT, 0530, McAdoo Fitness Center
- Junior Enlisted Foundation Course 300, 0730-1600, Professional Development Center
- \* Reintegration Briefing, 1000-1100, M&FRC, Zoom Meeting
- \* Minot Myth Busters, 1045-1130, M&FRC
- AFFT, 1100, McAdoo Fitness Center
- Iron Endurance Circuit Training, 1100, McAdoo Fitness Center
- Tuition Assistance (TA) Brief, 1330, Education Center

FRIDAY13

- \* Sweetheart Ice Skates Special, Outdoor Recreation
- Valentine's Day Treats, Dakota Inn Dining Facility
- AFFT, 0530, McAdoo Fitness Center
- Junior Enlisted Foundation Course 300, 0730-1600, Professional Development Center
- Friday Flicks, 1630-2200, Rockers Bar & Grill
- Teen Movie Night: Five Nights at Freddy's 2, 1800-2000, Youth Center

SATURDAY14

- \* Sweetheart Ice Skates Special, Outdoor Recreation
- Valentine's Day Treats, Dakota Inn Dining Facility
- \* Winter STEAM Challenges, 1000, Minot AFB Library Facebook Page
- \* Mad Science Party, 1300, Minot AFB Library

Scan for full event details



SPECIALS

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Bomber Bistro Featured Item  
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