

Commerce

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Dakota
Be Legend

Commerce News

April 29, 2021





Quarterly Commerce Economic Briefing

North Dakota's real GDP was \$52.78 billion, slightly lower than its fourth quarter of 2019 pre-pandemic real GDP of \$53.90 billion. In North Dakota, the agriculture industry was the leading contributor to the fourth-quarter increase in real GDP, and the energy industry was the second leading contributor. In comparison to neighboring states (South Dakota, Minnesota and Montana), North Dakota's real GDP growth was slightly below the average of the three states in the fourth quarter of 2020. This report analyzes the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic by the quarter-on-quarter growth rate in real GDP at the state and sector level.

[Click here to read the full briefing](#)

[Click here to view the Q4 2020 ND GDP](#)



Legislative update

With the legislative session coming to a close, a number of important bills impacting the Department of Commerce's work have been passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor. A brief summary of some notable bills Commerce was tracking includes:

- SB 2291 directs Commerce to study the potential fiscal impact of Environmental Social Governance (ESG).
- SB 2137 establishes a sales and use tax exemption for certain purchases made at qualified data centers.
- HB 1452 creates clean, sustainable energy authority which will direct funds to support low-emission

technology. The legislature appropriated \$25 million for the fund. The Commerce Commissioner will serve as a non-voting member of the fund.

- HB 1141 appropriates \$15 million for the Innovation Technology Loan Fund (LIFT).
- HB 1135 expands the eligibility requirements for the North Dakota career and technical education scholarship and the North Dakota academic scholarship.
- HB 1425 directs the State Investment Board to broaden its focus to include an emphasis on investing legacy fund dollars in North Dakota businesses.
- SB 2018 is the Commerce budget bill. Highlights of the bill include roughly \$1.5 million for partner programs, \$21 million for unmanned aircraft systems and BVLOS, \$1.5 million for workforce safety grants, \$7 million for tourism and marketing, \$755,000 for Operation Intern, \$250,000 for rural healthcare grants, and much more. The budget bill also eliminates the primary sector designation requirement for businesses to participate in the rural growth initiative program.



**Burgum to lift COVID-19
emergency declaration on
April 30; vaccination efforts
still top priority**

Gov. Doug Burgum announced that he will lift North Dakota's COVID-19 emergency declaration on April 30 as the state continues to shift the focus of its pandemic response efforts to increasing vaccination rates.

“Lifting this emergency declaration on April 30 recognizes the tremendous progress our state has made in protecting the most vulnerable, preserving hospital capacity and making safe, effective vaccines available to every eligible North Dakotan. Nearly 70% of North Dakotans ages 65 years and older have received at least one dose of the vaccine and 64% are fully vaccinated, including over 90% of long-term care residents. Our vaccination efforts remain a top priority as another wave of COVID-19 continues to spread across the country and world.” - Gov. Doug Burgum

In response to the declaration, [ND Smart Restart protocols](#) will be removed from [ND Response](#).

[Click here to read full article](#)

Burgum signs HB 1175, providing COVID-19

liability protection to health care providers, businesses

Gov. Doug Burgum signed legislation that creates common-sense liability protections to shield health care providers, businesses and others from frivolous claims related to exposure to COVID-19.

Burgum noted that North Dakota health care providers and businesses did their best to protect their patients, customers and team members through extremely challenging conditions and ever-changing rules and recommendations during the pandemic.

“It’s important that we provide common-sense protections for those North Dakotans who were doing everything they could. Legislation like House Bill 1175 will protect these businesses, organizations, medical providers and educational providers from frivolous lawsuits arising from COVID-19 exposure, while still allowing claims in situations that involved ill intentions or reckless acts.” - Gov. Burgum

[Read more here](#)

Message from Health to workplaces, employers

Thank you for your continued efforts in stopping the spread of COVID-19 in your community and workplace. You are protecting the health of your employees and customers while ensuring our economy remains open and is thriving. The North Dakota Department of Health would like to inform you of some additional assistance regarding COVID-19 vaccines.

- **On-site workplace vaccination:** If your business/workplace has 30 or more employees and you are interested in an on-site vaccination clinic, please complete the [workplace vaccination interest survey](#) by April 30. We will facilitate a workplace COVID-19 vaccination clinic for you.
- **On-site or virtual COVID-19 vaccine education:** If your business/workplace would like on-site or virtual COVID-19 vaccine education for staff, please complete the [request for education survey](#). We will provide tailored education for your workplace.
- **COVID-19 Community Corps:** You're invited to support the effort by joining the [COVID-19 Community Corps](#). As a member, you'll receive timely, accurate information to share with your family, friends, and neighbors. By encouraging them to get vaccinated, you'll help protect them – and allow all of us to safely gather together again.



ND sees record high population in newly released 2020 Census data

Gov. Doug Burgum welcomed figures released by the U.S. Census Bureau today showing that North Dakota's population hit a record high of 779,094 residents on April 1, 2020, and the state had the fourth-highest growth rate in the nation by percentage, growing by 15.8% from 2010 to 2020.

“The record high 2020 Census count is great news for North Dakota and reaffirms what those of us who live here already know: that our state is a land of abundant opportunity and one of the best places in the nation to live, work and raise and family. As we continue to build healthy, vibrant communities, diversify our economy and invest in infrastructure, innovation and education, North Dakota is poised to continue this pattern of recent growth.” - Gov. Burgum

Population counts were released for all 50 states as part of the Apportionment Population Count used to determine the number of seats each state has in the U.S. House of Representatives. The number of House seats allocated for North Dakota will remain at one.

[Click here to read more](#)



**The Shuttered Venue
Operators Grant
application portal is now
open**

The Shuttered Venue Operators Grant (SVOG) program was established by the Economic Aid to Hard-Hit Small Businesses, Nonprofits, and Venues Act and amended by the American Rescue Plan Act. The program includes more than \$16 billion in grants to shuttered venues, to be administered by SBA's Office of Disaster Assistance.

Eligible applicants may qualify for grants equal to 45% of their gross earned revenue, with the maximum amount available for a single grant award of \$10 million. Eligible entities include:

- Live venue operators or promoters
- Theatrical producers
- Live performing arts organization operators
- Museum operators
- Motion picture theater operators (including owners)
- Talent representatives

[Learn more here](#)



Tourism-Marketing

National Travel and Tourism Week set for
May 2-8

National Travel and Tourism Week (NTTW) recognizes the "Power of Travel" and the travel industry's role in bringing back vibrant

communities, restoring the U.S. economy, rebuilding our workforce and reconnecting America.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the travel and tourism industry was a significant contributor to the U.S. economy. But travel spending is down nearly \$500 billion, costing the U.S. economy \$1.1 trillion. The total number of travel-supported jobs fell by 34% from 17 million in 2019 to just 11 million in 2020.

North Dakota, however, has competitive advantages that allowed us to continue encouraging visitors to “follow their curiosity not the crowds.” National Travel and Tourism Week is an excellent way for North Dakota’s tourism industry to kick off the state’s peak tourism season. We encourage you, your colleagues, your local officials and your communities to join us May 2-8 to spotlight the “Power of Travel.”

Contact [Kim Schmidt](#) with questions about National Travel and Tourism Week.

[Learn more here](#)

ED&F

Bushel bags \$47 million Series C funding as it scales up and eyes new fintech offering

U.S. grain trading platform Bushel has raised \$47 million in a Series C round led by Continental Grain Company and Lewis & Clark AgriFood,

with additional investment from Germin8 Ventures as well as agribusiness firms Cargill, Scoular, and Consolidated Grain and Barge Co.

Cargill is also joining as a member of Bushel's platform alongside Scoular, which has been a user since 2018.

Bushel's product suite includes its flagship mobile app, websites, trading tools, market feeds, API services and a custom software division focused on agriculture. Farmers use the platform for free, while grain companies pay.

It integrates with multiple grain accounting systems, trading desks, farm management systems, insurance companies, and market feeds to allow different software systems to work with each other.

[Read more here](#)



Coming up soon

Williston Economic Development Summit to be held May 5-7

The Williston Economic Development Summit is the City of Williston's premier event that highlights the region's economic achievements, provides insight for current and future developers and promotes economic opportunities

Representative from Commerce will be presenting on May 6 from 10:15-11 a.m.

[Register here](#)



In the News



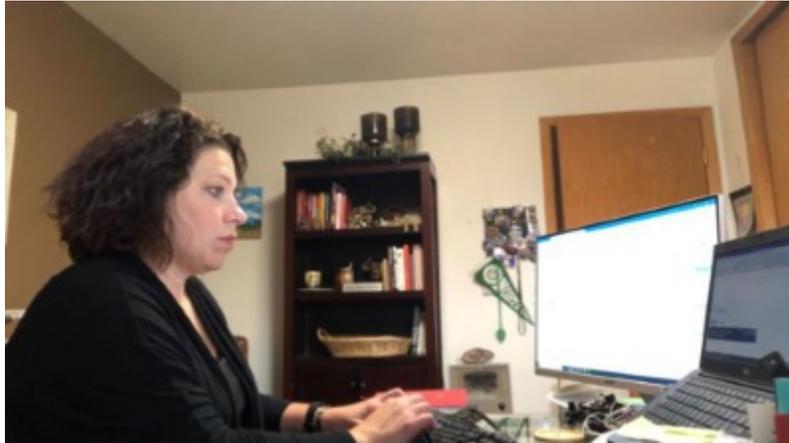
['Accelerate to Industry' Accelerates at UND](#)



[Impact of Census results on programs in Minot](#)



[North Dakota's hotel industry recovering](#)



[COVID-19 pandemic accelerates Department of Commerce's transition to more remote working](#)