

Commerce



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# Commerce News

June 10, 2021



# Engaging Impacts

**Commerce visits New Town to spend two days in the heart of the Bakken**

Commerce Commissioner James Leiman and Economic Development and Finance Director Josh Teigen joined Lt. Gov. Brent Sanford and members

of the EmPower Commission for two days in the heart of the Bakken.

Day one was focused on meeting with MHA Nation Chairman Mark N. Fox to learn what they are doing to reinvest back into their communities for long-term resiliency. In addition to this, the group spent hours touring the MHA Nation Interpretive Center where the group was able to experience a world-class facility and immerse in the rich cultural history.



Day two was spent visiting an active drill site for Enerplus. The group experienced first-hand the operations of drilling an oil well and the operations of an oil pad and all of the steps taken to mitigate environmental circumstances.

Following the site visit, an Empower Commission meeting was held at the Enerplus corporate site before departing for another site visit to see Oneok's natural gas compressor site that was commissioned just two days prior.





Applications are now open  
for two new grants  
designed to assist  
businesses that continue to

# experience the impact of COVID-19

## Tour Operators Grant (TATO)

**Funds are still available! Applications close June 18**

The TATO is designed to assist travel agents and tour operators within the travel and tourism industry that continue to experience negative impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic. Funds from the grant are to be used to reimburse eligible entities for lost revenue.

Eligible applicants may be awarded up to \$100,000 per qualifying location. Businesses must prove a 50% revenue loss from 2019-2020. Award amounts will be based on a 75% loss of revenue.

Eligible entities include:

- A travel agent who books commission-based travel for private individuals or companies.
- A tour company that schedules tour details and itineraries in North Dakota.
- A transportation company that provides bus services to tour planners for tours either originating in North Dakota or receptive operators who provide local services to tour companies bringing groups into North Dakota.

[Apply here](#)

## Event and Support Services Grant (ESSG)

### **Applications opened today!**

The ESSG is designed to assist event centers and supporting businesses that continue to experience negative impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic. Funds from the grant are to be used to reimburse eligible entities for lost revenue.

Eligible applicants may be awarded up to \$100,000 per qualifying location. Businesses must prove a 50% revenue loss from 2019-2020. Award amounts will be based on a 25% loss of revenue.

Eligible entities include:

- Event venues & festivals (indoor and outdoor)
- Florists
- Caterers
- Photographers
- Production companies including DJ's, live performers who are hired for private events
- Promoters
- Decorators

[Apply here](#)





# Community Services

Cooling assistance available for low-income North Dakotans with medical needs

In the wake of recent record-setting high temperatures in the state, the North Dakota Department of Human Services announced it is operating a

cooling assistance program through September 2021 for qualifying lower-income households.

Cooling assistance aid is focused on adults age 60 and older and other individuals with qualifying medical conditions that put their health more at-risk from extreme heat. To participate, individuals must also qualify financially for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), which serves households with incomes up to 60 percent of the state median income. A household of two can earn up to \$41,118 a year and qualify for LIHEAP.

Operated in partnership with Commerce's Division of Community Services and local Community Action Programs (CAP), the cooling assistance program can help eligible households purchase and install a window air conditioning unit, repair an air conditioning unit, or purchase oscillating or window fans.

[Learn more here](#)

## Workforce

### Commerce announces opening of Technical Skills Training Grant

Commerce today announced that the application window for the Technical Skill Training Grant is anticipated to open on June 15.

“We saw tremendous success with the first round of this grant in fall 2020 when we launched it using Coronavirus Relief Funds with the intention of helping displaced workers develop new skills and pursue new opportunities in North Dakota. We have supported the launch and expansion of programs in several sectors across the state, including health care, information technology, welding and commercial driver’s license training. We are thrilled to once again provide this support to public and private sector training providers as we work together to meet the state’s workforce needs.”—Commerce Workforce Division Director Katie Ralston said.

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Although a wide range of programs may qualify, Commerce anticipates that skilled trades and labor training programs are well-suited to develop accelerated programming or expand capacity in existing programs.

[Learn more here](#)

**ED&F**

# LIFT Committee to begin accepting applications June 11

Commerce announced today that the Innovation Technology Loan Fund (LIFT) Committee will begin accepting applications on June 11, 2021.

“We are excited to build on the success of this program from last biennium. The LIFT program is one of our best tools for bringing economic resiliency and diversification to North Dakota’s economy and we look forward to the opportunity to further invest in great companies and entrepreneurs.”—Commerce Director of Economic Development and Finance Josh Teigen said.

LIFT is an innovation loan fund supporting technology advancement by providing financing for commercialization of intellectual property within the state of North Dakota. The following industries qualify for these funds:

- Advanced computing and data management
- Agriculture technology
- Autonomous and unmanned vehicles and related technologies
- Energy
- Health care
- Value-added agriculture
- Value-added energy

Any industry or area specifically identified by the committee as an industry that will contribute to the diversification of the state's economy.

# Tourism and Marketing

## Visitor Services adds live chat

North Dakota Tourism is taking customer service to a more personalized level with the implementation of a live chat feature on [NDtourism.com](http://NDtourism.com).

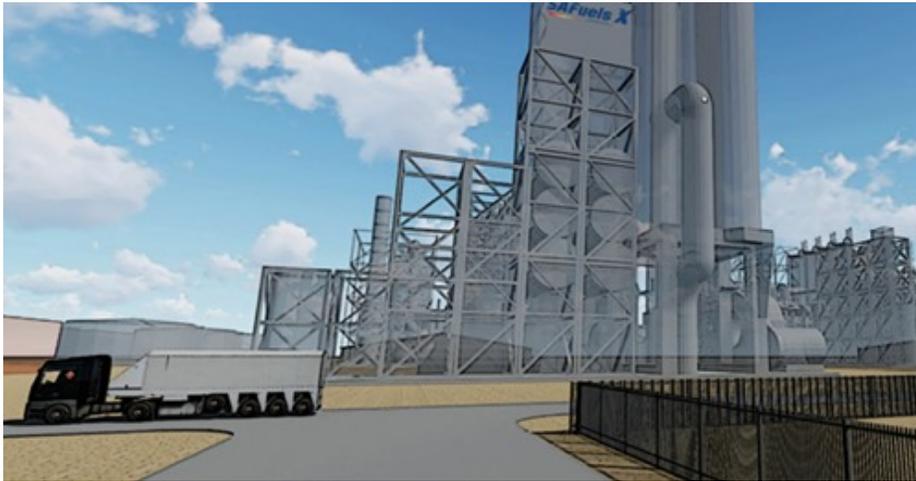
Visitors to the website now have the option of interacting with Tourism staff members with specific questions between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday-Friday. After-hours and weekend requests are answered on Mondays and following holidays.



## In the News



[More people visiting state parks over past year](#)



[City Commission approves Williston Economic Development  
STAR Fund applications](#)