



Office of the Governor

Doug Burgum
GOVERNOR



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w/VIDEO: Burgum, Miller reflect on progress and milestones during administration's seventh year

Governor to deliver 2024 State of the State Address on Jan. 23 in Dickinson

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BISMARCK, N.D. (DEC. 15, 2023) – Gov. Doug Burgum and Lt. Gov. Tammy Miller this week marked the completion of the Burgum administration's seventh year, reflecting on a year of landmark legislation and milestones that included a record tax relief package, major investments in child care, workforce and infrastructure, and expanded support for law enforcement and the military.

"The historic progress made in the past year reminds us that even the most intractable and seemingly insurmountable challenges can be solved when we work together with the best interests of North Dakota's incredible citizens at heart," Burgum said. "These accomplishments are a testament to the innovation by our strong private sector, the hard work of our citizens and the relentless efforts by our state team members who strive every day to empower people, improve lives and inspire success."

Burgum will deliver his 2024 State of the State Address at 11 a.m. CT (10 a.m. MT) Jan. 23 at Dickinson State University's Dorothy Stickney Auditorium.

The administration's seventh year began with Burgum appointing Governor's Office Chief Operating Officer Tammy Miller to serve as lieutenant governor, succeeding former Lt. Gov. Brent Sanford, who returned to the private sector.

Miller, the former CEO of Fargo-based electrical distributor Border States, officially assumed the role of lieutenant governor on Jan. 3, 2023 – the same day the 68th Legislative Assembly convened for a regular session that would see the passage of several landmark pieces of legislation.

Historic tax relief and reform

- With state reserve funds full and revenues far exceeding expectations, Burgum prioritized sending money back to taxpayers. Working with lawmakers, on April 27 [Burgum signed a \\$515 million tax relief package](#) that will provide \$358 million in income tax relief – making it the largest individual income tax relief package in state history – and \$157 million in property tax relief over two years.

House Bill 1158 zeroed out the state’s bottom tax bracket and combined the top four brackets into two brackets with reduced tax rates. At the bill signing, Burgum noted the changes gave North Dakota the lowest income tax rates in the nation among states that have individual income tax, moving the state further down the path toward becoming a zero-income tax state.

The \$157 million in property tax relief will be provided in two ways: \$103.2 million will be available to homeowners by allowing them to claim a property tax credit of up to \$500 on their primary residence, and \$53.5 million will be provided by expanding the eligibility requirements and maximum reduction for the state’s Homestead Property Tax Credit program for homeowners 65 and older.

- [House Bill 1286](#) also eliminated the state’s “trigger” tax on oil production, with the goal of encouraging more investment in North Dakota’s energy sector.

Addressing workforce

- Tackling one of the biggest obstacles to workforce participation, [Burgum signed landmark legislation](#) investing \$66 million of state funds to work alongside federal funds to improve child care accessibility, affordability and quality through the North Dakota Child Care Initiative. The initiative is the result of more than 14 months of collaboration and input from child care providers, business leaders, chambers of commerce, the Workforce Development Council, state agencies and legislators.
- Using Burgum’s ND Works plan as a starting point, the Legislature also invested \$30 million into Regional Workforce Impact Grants, worker recruitment and retention programs, skilled workforce training, internships and New American workforce training.
- For the first time, the Job Service ND budget also included funding to support the H2A Visa Program for temporary agricultural workers.

- The Department of Commerce established the Office of Legal Immigration, fostering effective collaboration between agencies, global partners and government bodies to facilitate the movement of international talent, thereby enriching North Dakota's workforce and economic landscape.
- Commerce re-established active talent attraction marketing through a refreshed Find the Good Life in North Dakota campaign, which not only delivered strong marketing results – 26.7 million impressions, 140,000 clicks and 15,000 conversions – but also connected potential relocators to communities that meet their long-term needs.
- In his first bill signing of the 2023 session, Burgum approved legislation providing a \$68 million line of credit to ensure that construction wouldn't be delayed on 13 career academy projects across the state where students will be able to pursue high-demand careers in the trades, health care, technology and other sectors to meet workforce needs. The bill was a stopgap measure in case expected federal funding didn't come through, but ultimately the U.S. Treasury Department released the \$68 million in federal funding.
- The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) launched the Working Parents Child Care Relief pilot to help more working parents pay for the cost of child care, while also providing a recruiting tool for employers. As a public-private partnership, the cost-sharing program provides funds to match participating employers' investments in child care benefits while directing support to working parents in North Dakota whose children are younger than age 3 and meet household income eligibility requirements.
- HHS also supported health care workforce recruitment and retention efforts in underserved communities in North Dakota by providing loan repayment funding through the HHS Primary Care Office to 106 health care professionals.
- North Dakota leads the nation in employment of people with disabilities at 58%, a national distinction due in part to HHS vocational rehabilitation professionals who helped 737 North Dakotans with disabilities obtain competitive, integrated employment in their community last federal fiscal year. This is an increase of 31% from the previous year for vocational rehabilitation-assisted employment placements.

Diversifying and growing the economy

- After urging the Legislature to modernize the state's archaic "corporate farming" law, [Burgum signed a bill](#) that gives farmers and ranchers the ability to aggregate capital via an authorized livestock farm corporation or limited liability company (LLC). The narrowly defined changes in state law allow capital investment to flow into the state, growing animal agriculture, adding value to crops, creating opportunities for the next generation and helping rural communities and schools to thrive in North Dakota once again, Burgum said.

- The governor also signed legislation providing \$25 million – more than double the current funding – for the state’s Agriculture Diversification and Development (ADD) Fund to provide grants for new or expanding value-added agriculture businesses as well as public infrastructure improvements to support such businesses.
- North Dakota further cemented its reputation as a soybean powerhouse with the opening of the Green Bison Soy Processing plant in Spiritwood and two additional soybean crush facilities in the works in Casselton and Grand Forks, representing a total investment of over \$1 billion. When completed, the three plants will process roughly 75% of North Dakota’s soybean production, unlocking new market possibilities for farmers, spurring growth in animal agriculture and adding value to North Dakota’s raw commodities.
- With work by Commerce and others, North Dakota also continued to establish itself as the go-to state when locating industrial facilities that require a reduced carbon footprint. Gas to liquids (Cerilon GTL), ore processing (Talon Metals), fertilizer production and many more industries are taking advantage of North Dakota’s unique state geology coupled with the development of new innovative technologies, primacy and policy.
- The North Dakota Development Fund (NDDF), Innovate ND and LIFT have combined to invest, loan or award more than \$18 million to more than 40 projects resulting in impactful growth and innovation in rural and urban communities statewide. The child care loan program facilitated by NDDF is expected to enhance provider capacity by over 1,000 spots through the financing of various projects.
- North Dakota continued to solidify its status as the nation’s proving ground for the research, development and commercialization of uncrewed aircraft systems (UAS), investing \$39 million to support and advance UAS. That included \$26 million for continued buildout of the Vantis network, the nation’s first beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) network for UAS operations. Lawmakers provided \$10 million for continued development of the Grand Sky aviation park, which is home to tenants such as Northrop Grumman and General Atomics. Grand Sky is a flagship example of world-class infrastructure on the ground enabling world-class operations in the air, providing a major competitive advantage for North Dakota. The remaining \$3 million is for the Northern Plains UAS Test Site, one of seven federally recognized test sites in the nation.

Supporting energy development

- The North Dakota Industrial Commission, chaired by Burgum, approved \$15 million in matching grants and \$222.5 million in loans in July to fund a variety of projects to enhance oil and gas production and carbon capture, utilization and storage (CCUS). The Industrial Commission’s budget for 2023-25 received a \$140 million expansion to the existing \$250 million line of credit to support loans or loan guarantees issued from the Clean Sustainable Energy fund, increasing the total program to \$390 million. In addition, the bill included \$30 million for Clean Sustainable Energy Fund grants.

- The Industrial Commission also approved the state's fourth Class VI carbon dioxide underground storage facility, at the Blue Flint Ethanol facility in McLean County, advancing North Dakota's status as a leader in CCUS. North Dakota is one of only two states to be granted primacy over Class VI carbon storage wells from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.
- The Legislature designated \$3 million for the Intelligent Pipeline Integrity Program (iPIPE) to continue the development of world-class pipeline safety technology through innovation.
- Lawmakers also advanced legislative intent for the North Dakota Pipeline Authority to commit \$30 million a year to partner with private industry to build additional natural gas takeaway capacity to support the oil and gas industry and provide additional natural gas for value-added agriculture development in eastern North Dakota.

Reducing red tape

- A Red Tape Reduction Working Group created by Burgum in August 2022 with representatives from 34 state agencies reviewed state law, administrative rules and internal policies and procedures to identify opportunities to reduce burdensome red tape. Of the roughly 500 ideas submitted by Team ND and the public, 385 received internal or legislative action, including 52 bills advanced by the working group – 51 of which were signed by the governor – and about 40 additional approved bills that reduced red tape during the 2023 legislative session.

Red Tape Reduction 2.0 is continuing this momentum by focusing on greater business and citizen engagement. Additionally, five state agencies have begun to pilot an effort to obtain feedback immediately following the delivery of services by the pilot group agencies. Citizens and businesses are encouraged to visit the portal at www.governor.nd.gov/redtapereduction and provide their input on how the state can streamline regulations, rules, policies and procedures to make state government more efficient and effective and help every North Dakotan reach their full potential.

- As part of the Red Tape Reduction initiative, the North Dakota Department of Financial Institutions implemented money transmitter model law, a coordinated effort between states to harmonize supervision, reduce regulatory burden and improve efficiencies.

Tribal engagement

- At the fifth [Strengthening Government to Government Partnerships and Relationships Conference](#) in June, organized by the state Indian Affairs Commission, Burgum and First Lady Kathryn Burgum highlighted progress made through collaboration between the state and tribal nations. The first lady shared her personal story of addiction and recovery and noted that storytelling – a strong tradition in Native American culture – is among the

most powerful tools for eliminating the shame and stigma surrounding the disease of addiction. The governor and legislators also were recognized for their work on HB 1536, which codified the federal Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) into North Dakota law as the U.S. Supreme Court was considering a lawsuit challenging ICWA. The bill ensured that extended family members and fellow tribal members would receive preference before non-native families when it comes to adoption and foster care of Native American children.

- Legislation signed by Burgum now allows the State Water Commission to enter directly into agreements with tribal nations for a cost-share program that provides state funding for water development projects, including water supplies, flood protection and other general water management efforts, rather than having to go through an eligible non-tribal partner.
- Each of the five tribal nations with whom North Dakota shares geography can now enter into a tax-sharing agreement with the state on alcoholic beverages sold at the retail and wholesale levels within their respective reservations, due to legislation passed last session. Tribal nations that adopt the alcohol tax will keep 80% of the tax revenue, while the state's general fund will receive 20%. Burgum said the bill creates a fair and uniform framework for taxing alcohol on reservations while ensuring that the bulk of the revenue goes to the tribes to support addiction treatment and other programs.
- The Native American scholarship was nearly doubled to \$1 million and grants to tribally controlled community colleges increased to \$1.4 million.
- Lawmakers also authorized NDIT to provide IT and cybersecurity services to tribal schools and colleges should they choose to utilize the services.

Supporting law enforcement and the military

- In a year that saw incredible acts of bravery from North Dakota's men and women in uniform, [Burgum signed several bills to support law enforcement](#) and show that North Dakota "Backs the Blue." The legislation expanded workers' compensation coverage for full-time firefighters and law enforcement officers; provided \$3.5 million for hiring and retention bonuses and tuition/fee assistance to help recruit new officers and retain current officers; and exempted law enforcement retirement pay from state income tax, making North Dakota more competitive with other states.
- Workforce Safety & Insurance (WSI) [launched a new Serve & Protect Reimbursement Program](#) that helps offset the costs of routine medical exams for both paid, full-time firefighters and law enforcement officers. Employers with an active account who are in good standing with WSI and employ full-time firefighters and/or full-time law enforcement officers are eligible to receive a maximum reimbursement amount up to \$250 per employee for routine medical exams. As part of the statutory requirements, an

employer is required to pay for a medical exam at no expense to the employee. The medical exam schedule is based on continuous years of service as a paid, full-time firefighter or law enforcement officer regardless of where the service occurred.

- As part of ongoing efforts to make North Dakota the most military-friendly state in the nation, [Burgum signed legislation](#) to exempt military pay from state income tax for active duty, National Guard and Reserve members, building on legislation signed in 2019 that exempts military retirement pay. The legislation is estimated to reduce North Dakota service members' income taxes by \$4 million in the 2023-25 biennium.
- In August, Burgum deployed approximately 100 soldiers from the North Dakota National Guard's Wahpeton-based 188th Engineer Company to the U.S.-Mexico border as part of Operation Lone Star. Burgum authorized the deployment in response to an Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) request from Texas Gov. Greg Abbott for National Guard and law enforcement to help secure the border. Burgum noted that North Dakota has a long history of assisting other states in their time of need and that there is a risk to public safety due to drug trafficking, including deadly fentanyl making its way across the southern border and into U.S. communities, and the increased risk of human trafficking. Burgum and Maj. Gen. Alan Dohrmann, adjutant general of the North Dakota National Guard, visited the soldiers to observe operations and show their support during their 30-day deployment.
- In addition, four National Guard units returned from deployments to the National Capitol Region, southwest border or Central Command, and three other units departed on deployments to Central Command or the border. Over the past few years, 22% of the North Dakota National Guard has been mobilized to support federal missions.
- Burgum signed legislation that allows North Dakota National Guard members who attend college out-of-state to qualify for State Tuition Assistance. Child care providers licensed by the U.S. Department of Defense also can now operate in North Dakota with their DOD license and without redundantly being licensed with the state. And military-connected children, after a parent's reassignment, now have the option of starting their education virtually at a North Dakota school prior to arriving or completing the semester to help relieve stress and support educational success.
- The North Dakota National Guard won the National Guard Bureau's Excellence in Diversity Award in the Army National Guard Unit Category after hiring a naturalization liaison who has assisted 42 soldiers in gaining their citizenship.
- After the governor proposed funding for a North Dakota Military Museum, the Legislature approved a \$20 million dollar line of credit to be matched with private donations. The funding will be used to build a state-of-the-art military museum, attached to the North Dakota Heritage Center and Museum, to honor all North Dakotans who have served in the Armed Forces.

Supporting health and well-being

- The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) supported 2,942 individuals through the Free Through Recovery program, a community-based behavioral health program designed to increase recovery support services to individuals involved with the criminal justice system who have behavioral health concerns. The 2023-25 budget includes an additional \$15 million to fully fund Free Through Recovery. The agency also continued to increase access to treatment and recovery services for individuals with a substance use disorder through the SUD voucher, which approved 1,556 applications.
- HHS supported 4,708 individuals through the Community Connect Program, which provides quality, community-based behavioral health services to meet the needs of each person.
- The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline received 4,139 calls from January through October of this year. 988 provides 24/7 access to a trained crisis counselor who can help North Dakotans experiencing a behavioral health crisis. HHS also enrolled 264 mental health programs into the North Dakota Mental Health Program Directory, increasing access to mental health services for North Dakotans.
- HHS collaborated with health care providers and stakeholders to develop value-based purchasing programs for large hospital systems and skilled nursing facilities to prioritize member health outcomes, experiences and smarter spending as the program develops.
- HHS secured \$70 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding through the Legislature to support the planning and development of North Dakota's new State Laboratory building to preserve and advance the state's ability to protect North Dakota's public health and environment for future generations. The facility will be shared by the laboratory services divisions of DHHS and the Department of Environmental Quality and [will be located in the northeast area of the Capitol grounds.](#)
- The governor and first lady hosted the seventh Recovery Reinvented on Oct. 5 at Minot State University, a daylong in-person and online event focused on reinventing recovery through eliminating the stigma of the disease of addiction and championing the benefits of recovery. They were joined by national and state addiction recovery experts, and more than 950 people registered for the in-person event, with approximately 1,000 registering for online participation. The governor highlighted several state programs and initiatives making an impact on addiction and recovery in North Dakota.
- The third annual North Dakota Health and Human Services Behavioral Health and Children and Family Services Conference saw record attendance, with over 1,000 individuals registered to attend the event Oct. 24-26. Those who attended included behavioral health advocates, service providers, professionals who work with children and

families and the child welfare system, business and community leaders, faith-based organizations, first responders, law enforcement, tribal representatives and other interested North Dakotans.

- An estimated 500 moms across North Dakota were helped by expanded North Dakota Medicaid health care coverage starting Jan. 1, 2023. Coverage increased from 60 days to 12 months for new moms after pregnancy.
- North Dakota continued to increase access to home and community-based services for older adults and adults with physical disabilities, providing services for 2,586 individuals which allowed them to continue living within a community setting of their choice.
- The HHS Public Health Division's crisis response team stepped in to provide over 1,230 hours of care since January 2023 to North Dakotans residing in long-term care facilities or served at home in their communities by local public health when those providers were short staffed due to illness outbreaks and turnover.

Strengthening Main Street and community development

- Commerce launched the Destination Development Grant Program, providing financial support for the development and expansion of transformative tourism experiences. This initiative awarded \$25 million, building on private sector investments to 14 entities to bolster economic prosperity and diversification, supporting the attraction of additional visitors and new talent and improving the quality of life for North Dakota's rural and urban residents.
- Commerce made the most comprehensive changes to the Renaissance Zone since 1999 with a forward-looking revitalization of a successful state program adopted by over 60 rural and urban communities statewide. The program encourages growth and revitalization by incentivizing the resourceful use of existing infrastructure in community development.
- Commerce pioneered the Sustainable Food Delivery Program, a groundbreaking pilot grant initiative targeting rural grocery store sustainability and the expansion of food accessibility. This initiative not only supports local businesses but also ensures vital nourishment for underserved communities.
- The Main Street Initiative celebrated its 100th Main Street Community in Sheyenne, N.D. A total of 107 Main Street communities are now engaged in supporting community development and rural prosperity.

Transforming education, supporting students

- North Dakota became the first state in the nation to approve legislation requiring cybersecurity education with [the governor's signing of HB 1398](#), which requires the teaching of computer science and cybersecurity and the integration of these content standards into school coursework from kindergarten through 12th grade.
- The governor created a [Task Force for Teacher Retention and Recruitment](#) to address the state's teacher shortage and ensure teachers have the support they need to deliver a world-class education for our students.
- To support college students and families across the state, Burgum signing legislation freezing tuition rates for residents for the 2023-24 and 2024-25 academic years.
- In the 2023-2024 school year, the HHS [Best in Class program](#) has 65 classrooms across the state participating, currently serving 910 children with high-quality, supported interactions between adults and children based on developmentally appropriate experiences.
- The governor called for a significant increase to the higher education challenge grant, which was approved at \$20 million and will result in at least \$60 million from public and private sources to advance scholarships, endowed chairs, research and education technology.

Improving infrastructure

- The Legislature invested over \$1 billion in roads and bridges for 2023-25 and put \$222.5 million into a new Flexible Transportation Fund to help expedite critical projects on and off the state highway system, including within counties, cities, townships and tribal reservations. An additional \$780 million was approved for flood protection, water supplies and other water projects across the state. More than \$638 million has been invested in road infrastructure this year alone. The North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT) continues to aggressively pursue federal discretionary dollars to advance transportation infrastructure projects in North Dakota. In 2023, \$40.8 million dollars has been successfully awarded and \$278.5 million has been applied for.
- Through its cost-share program, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) and the State Water Commission provided approximately \$277 million in project approvals, including \$263 million for water supply projects in 24 cities and 18 rural/regional systems, where approximately 4,500 new water users can be supported, and \$14 million for 61 different flood protection, water conveyance and general water projects benefitting citizens across the state.
- The state continued to make progress on construction of the Northwest Area Water Supply (NAWS) and Southwest Pipeline Project (SWPP). NAWS progress included service to the city of Westhope, continued advancements at the Biota Water Treatment Plant

and Minot Water Treatment Plant, and modifications to the Snake Creek Pumping Plant. On the SWPP, progress was made on increasing hydraulic capacity in four different areas: New Hradec, Fairfield, Twin Buttes and Killdeer Mountain Service Areas. Progress was also made toward the migration of the treatment plant capacity at Dickinson by the procurement of equipment needed for the expansion.

- The North Dakota Dam Safety Standards were released for public comment in fall 2023, resulting in over 300 comments to help enhance the standards before final publication. The Dam Safety Standards update represents years of work and significant investment from FEMA's Dam Safety Program State Assistance Grant and DWR's dam safety team to help update the current 1985 ND Dam Design Guidelines. The updated standards are expected to go live in early 2024.

Enhancing safety, emergency response and corrections

- After years of trying to secure funding for a new women's facility, the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCR) budget for 2023-25 includes \$131.2 million for design and construction of a new women's facility in Mandan to replace the existing Dakota Women's Correctional Rehab Center, a leased facility in New England where female DOCR residents have been housed since 2003. The bill also includes legislative intent for an additional \$30 million next session to complete the Mandan project, which will be known as the Heart River Transformational Center.
- The North Dakota Department of Emergency Services (NDDDES) designated the newly authorized Watch Center, staffed 24/7/365, as the hub for public safety information and sensor technology. Work has begun on designing and optimizing methods for sharing data and live feeds in a standardized fashion to provide decision makers with the most timely and accurate operating picture possible. Prior to the Watch Center, NDDDES staff maintained 24/7 availability via an on-call duty officer rotation. These staff members are now able to devote 100% of their time to their primary duties, effectively reclaiming the equivalent of three FTEs for the agency.
- After many years of efforts by safety advocates, Vision Zero stakeholders, including the North Dakota Department of Transportation and North Dakota Highway Patrol, were successful in getting a primary seat belt law passed through the Legislature and signed by the governor. The law went into effect Aug. 1.
- NDIT led the creation of a Public Safety Technology Team dedicated to enhancing the Statewide Interoperable Radio Network (SIRN) and ensuring seamless communication for first responders across the state. SIRN enables efficient communication and coordination among various public safety agencies, including state, county and municipal entities. In addition to enhancing SIRN, the Public Safety Technology Team supports all public safety technology across Highway Patrol, HHS, NDDOT, DOCR and

NDDDES, truly enabling a unified vision of public safety technology and breaking down barriers and red tape in state government.

- The DOCR collaborated with Bismarck State College to launch Commercial Driver's License (CDL) programming for Missouri River Correctional Center (MRCC) residents. Eight residents have completed the training this year. Additionally, BSC partnered with the DOCR to allow work opportunities and other enrichment courses on campus for MRCC residents.
- JP3, an initiative stemming from the state's Workforce Development Council, aims to connect ex-offenders with in-demand jobs in North Dakota. This collaboration between Job Service ND and DOCR will provide support beyond employment, including wrap-around services and basic needs like housing and transportation.
- Unity Village, which opened in 2022 at the North Dakota State Penitentiary (NDSP), is a housing unit for 18- to 25-year-olds where 15 mentors help lead them onto the right path by using their years of experience while incarcerated to make sure the younger residents don't make the same mistakes they did. This unit relies on restorative justice rather than the traditional disciplinary system the rest of the institution utilizes. Within this unit, two mentors host the Chainz 2 Changed podcast, sharing stories of change among those incarcerated at NDSP and interviewing team members, outside groups and change influencers who assist with the prison.
- Extreme winter weather with record snowfall required extraordinary efforts from first responders and snowplow crews at the state, county, city and township levels. The governor and Legislature approved \$25 million in emergency snow removal reimbursements to local political subdivisions, and Burgum issued a flood declaration.
- For its commitment to excellence in disaster planning and response, as well as high-level organization and collaboration among more than 26 partner agencies, the state of North Dakota earned consecutive accreditation from the Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP). The EMAP Commission met Sept. 27 to officially confer the designation after conclusion of its on-site assessment. Accreditation is valid for five years. Complying with EMAP standards has also helped position North Dakota for enhanced mitigation plan status, which ensures North Dakota is eligible to receive increased funding under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HGMP).
- Approximately \$114.7 million in North Dakota hazard mitigation projects submitted through NDDDES were selected for further review under FEMA's Flood Mitigation Assistance and Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities grant programs for fiscal year 2022. Final review and award for these projects is expected in early 2024. Additional mitigation projects totaling \$14 million have also been approved under the HMGP. Over \$2 million in cybersecurity grants has been awarded along with \$11 million in preparedness and Homeland Security grants.

Reinventing government

- North Dakota Information Technology (NDIT) began working on the Business Gateway, a first-of-its-kind initiative in North Dakota that aims to simplify the interaction between businesses and state government with a one-stop shop that looks at the experience from the perspective of the end user. Burgum proposed funding the initiative in his executive budget and the Legislature appropriated \$5 million plus staffing to implement the Business Gateway, which is the first phase of a larger project to create a Citizen Gateway.
- Burgum pushed for and signed a major pension reform bill that protects the retirement benefits for existing public employees and retirees and also protects taxpayers in the long-term by addressing a \$1.9 billion unfunded liability in the North Dakota Public Employees Retirement System (NDPERS). House Bill 1040 closes the state's existing defined benefit plan and injects \$200 million into NDPERS to begin reducing the unfunded liability, helping to ensure the state can meet its future obligations to more than 53,000 employees and retirees from state government and local governments enrolled in the plan. The legislation also shifts new hires to a generous defined contribution plan, similar to 401(k) plans offered to employees in the private sector.
- Through an extensive partnership with HHS, NDIT performed a large modernization uplift for the Medicaid Management Information System, decreasing operational support costs, addressing security risk, and building more modern platforms that will support the MMIS system for the future.
- NDIT, in partnership with the Vantis program, made North Dakota the first state in the nation to partner with federal aviation agencies and enter the testing phases for the exchange of data to support the testing of beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) operations of UAS.
- The state Office of Management and Budget (OMB) advanced the reduction of leased office space to bring the total reduction since July 2019 to over 33% or 150,000 square feet, resulting in an annual savings of \$1.8 million.
- The North Dakota Game and Fish Department [launched a mobile app](#) that offers many conveniences for online purchasing, storage of licensing information, notification and messaging, regulations and maps, and offline tools and features. To download the app, go to Google Play Store or Apple App Store and search NDGF or North Dakota Game and Fish Department.
- OMB conducted a fourth annual Gallup team member engagement survey and facilitated a manager and team member development series related to supporting an engaged workforce. In 2023, Team ND achieved an all-time high participation rate of 74%.

- OMB developed a Managers Essential four-week training program to help managers navigate leading people and teams in the state environment and implemented Oracle Guided Learning (OGL), a tool within PeopleSoft that can be leveraged to help complete processes consistently, help with cross training, and provide guidance on processes that are complex or not done frequently.
- NDDOT [launched a new North Dakota driver's license](#) design that features state-of-the-art technology to protect North Dakotans. To date, over 56,000 cards with the new design have been issued.
- New operations manager and training manager positions at State Radio helped standardize training and maximize dispatcher time at communications consoles by absorbing taskings and required meetings. The operations manager also facilitates interagency collaboration to align procedures and processes.
- WSI engaged in two multi-year projects: an internal system replacement project, Claims and Policy System (CAPS), and development of an online portal, myWSI. The goal is to improve internal and external customer experiences through automation of manual tasks and online accessibility. These releases started in June 2022 and involved staff from WSI, NDIT and vendor ServiceLogix.
- In fiscal year 2023, WSI issued nearly \$23 million in safety premium discounts to employers for successful participation in safety programs. Injury rates have been reduced by over 29% over the last decade, with a rate of 4.51 claims filed per 100 covered workers in fiscal year 2023.
- Oversight of the Western Area Water Supply Project was brought under the State Water Commission following the 2023 Legislative Assembly, and the NAWS Advisory Committee was elevated to a NAWS Authority.
- The DWR Water Appropriation Division continued to expand the role of the PRESENS data collection platform during 2023 to include the collection of soil moisture, soil temperature and precipitation. The Appropriation Division had deployed a total of 536 PRESENS sites through the 2023 field season. Of these 536 sites, 35 now include precipitation data and 34 include soils data.
- HHS launched the Customer Support Center, a new customer service tool that helps North Dakotans get answers to questions, report changes and get help through one toll-free phone number. The agency also launched new dashboards to provide information and data for transparency in programs such as the Child Care Assistance Program, Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, Quality Assurance and Quality Control and Medicaid Renewals. The North Dakota Medicaid renewal process is over 50% complete for the 130,000 cases statewide with the goal to ensure health care coverage continues for all qualifying North Dakotans.

- The Department of Financial Institutions (DFI) engaged with federal regulators and lawmakers to curtail federal prevention of state law and to ensure North Dakota's interests are represented in financial industry supervision. DFI Commissioner Lise Kruse also was elected as chair of the Conference of State Bank Supervisors, the only national organization dedicated to protecting and advancing the nation's dual banking system.

Outdoor recreation, serving hunters and anglers

- North Dakota Parks and Recreation announced the creation of a new state park at Pembina Gorge, making it the 14th state park. In addition, \$27 million was invested to enhance all state parks, whose visitations continue to grow.
- Mid-May through mid-August was undoubtedly the best walleye fishing North Dakota has ever offered, Game and Fish said, attributing the fishing success to rapidly warming water and record populations throughout much of the state. This year will stand out for record-setting walleye natural reproduction in many of the newer prairie lakes.
- No new aquatic nuisance species (ANS) infestations were found in North Dakota in 2023. Game and Fish personnel conducted 8,704 general ANS watercraft inspections and over 300 tournament angler inspections. In addition, Game and Fish maintained and supported a dozen public ANS prevention devices including Internet Landing Installed Device Sensors (ILIDS); waterless decontamination devices for Clean, Drain, Dry (CD3); and wash stations. ANS sampling occurred on more than 200 waters, which includes the collection and microscopy analysis of over 1,500 plankton tow net samples for the early detection of zebra mussels.
- Game and Fish was awarded a \$2.5 million National Fish and Wildlife Foundation America the Beautiful Challenge Grant to help fund midterm native grassland conservation agreements with private landowners in western North Dakota.
- Game and Fish worked with legislators to pass a bill to allow antlerless white-tailed youth deer season hunters to also hunt during the regular deer gun season. Burgum also signed a bill to allow landowners with elk depredation to be eligible for a cow elk tag and allow public access for hunters.
- In the sporting world, Burgum signed legislation designating curling as North Dakota's official state sport, and he awarded five-time world champion boxer Virgil Hill with the Theodore Roosevelt Rough Rider Award, the state's highest citizen honor.

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