

THE PARTICIPATOR

SPRING 2026



MEMBER FEATURE

North Dakota Recreation and Park Association

NDIRF Introduces Public Sewer Back-Up and Water Main Break Coverage Endorsement

NDIRF Now Offers Additional Free Training for Schools

Register for the 2026 HR Collaborative Conference

NORTH DAKOTA

NDIRF

INSURANCE
RESERVE FUND

FROM THE CEO

Greetings,

I am pleased to report that the NDIRF remains in a very strong financial position. However, based on 2025 financial results, the Board of Directors did not declare a conferment of benefits for the year. Members and their agents were notified of the decision in February.

Year-end results were challenging. A record-high volume of incurred claims resulted in an underwriting loss, only the sixth such occurrence in our 40-year history. Total losses incurred for 2025 exceeded \$20 million, approximately 90 percent higher than the next highest loss year on record.

Offsetting some of this impact, our investment portfolio performed well in 2025, and along with the gain on the sale of our old office building, produced minimal positive net earnings. Thanks to several years of strong investment results and disciplined financial management, the NDIRF continues to maintain member equity over three times the surplus recommended by our actuarial consultant. You can be assured that the NDIRF is more than adequately funded to protect members against covered losses.

Whether 2025 proves to be an anomaly remains to be seen. Several losses were eminently avoidable, underscoring the importance of continued focus on member risk management. We are reinforcing this commitment through additional resources, ongoing investments in member services, and reviewing underwriting options to encourage participation in training offered by the NDIRF and partner member associations.

Looking ahead, the NDIRF will continue to work closely with members to reduce loss trends, strengthen risk management practices, and preserve the long-term stability of the NDIRF. Our mission remains unchanged: to be *the* source of risk services for North Dakota political subdivisions. Thank you for your continued trust and membership in the NDIRF.

Sincerely,



Keith Pic
NDIRF CEO



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NDIRF Q1 EVENTS

The team did not let the cold weather keep us from meeting with members, agents, and partners! Check out some pictures from our winter outings!



NDLTAP Highway Supervisor Orientation at Bismarck Public Works



NDSAA State's Attorney's Conference in Bismarck



Member Feature (Winter 2026) visit with West Trail Ambulance Service



NDACE County Roads Conference in Grand Forks



NDFA State Fire School Vendor Show in Minot



2026 AGRIp Conference in Nashville, TN

DISCLAIMER

This publication is provided for educational purposes only and provides a general description of NDIRF or NDFT coverage. Representations of coverage provided by the NDIRF or NDFT within the context of this publication may not reference all language contained in the coverage documents provided by the NDIRF or the NDFT. Refer to the appropriate coverage documents for exact coverage, conditions, exclusions, and other relevant information. Coverage documents can be viewed and downloaded from our website at www.NDIRF.com.

NDIRF INTRODUCES PUBLIC SEWER BACK-UP AND WATER MAIN BREAK COVERAGE ENDORSEMENT

The NDIRF is pleased to introduce the Public Sewer Back-Up and Water Main Break Coverage Endorsement, designed to support municipalities and their residents when sewer back-ups or water main breaks occur. This endorsement promotes public health and safety by encouraging prompt cleanup efforts while helping municipalities maintain goodwill with residents – even in situations where the municipality may not be legally liable for the damages.

Sewer back-up incidents are among the most challenging losses faced by municipalities. Many property owners are uninsured or underinsured for these types of events under standard homeowner policies. This endorsement provides municipalities with a practical tool to address cleanup needs, reduce potential health hazards, and strengthen community trust.

The endorsement provides a base per-claimant coverage limit of \$10,000 per occurrence, with optional per-occurrence limits of \$25,000 or \$40,000, subject to underwriting review and approval. Coverage is subject to aggregate and occurrence limits outlined in the endorsement form and is excess over any applicable property owner coverage/insurance.

Education and risk management remain the most effective defense against sewer and water system losses. Many sewer back-ups are caused by general debris blockages from improper items entering the sewer system, such as disposable wipes or diapers.

The NDIRF remains committed to supporting members through enhanced risk management training and citizen education initiatives. Additional resources and toolkits are currently being developed to assist municipalities in reducing these types of losses.

NOW AVAILABLE ON NDIRF.COM

The following documents have been added to the Liability Coverage page on NDIRF.com. You can also scan the QR code on this page to learn more about the Public Sewer Back-Up & Water Main Break Endorsement!

- [Understanding the Public Sewer Back-Up and Water Main Coverage Endorsement](#)
- [Public Sewer Back-Up and Water Main Break Questionnaire](#)
- [Public Sewer Back-Up and Water Main Break Coverage Endorsement](#)

New Coverage Endorsement
**PUBLIC SEWER BACK-UP
WATER MAIN BREAK COVERAGE**

The NDIRF is pleased to introduce this endorsement that promotes health and safety by encouraging prompt cleanup efforts and helps foster goodwill between cities and citizens. Available **NOW** to NDIRF members.

NORTH DAKOTA
NDIRF
INSURANCE
RESERVE FUND
For North Dakota Local Government.

SCAN HERE!

Use your phone's camera to scan the QR code to view the new Liability Coverage documents!

(Continued)



PUBLIC SEWER BACK-UP AND WATER MAIN BREAK COVERAGE ENDORSEMENT

Following the introduction of the new General Liability (GL) endorsement, the NDIRF hosted a webinar for agents outlining key features of the Public Sewer Back-Up and Water Main Break Coverage Endorsement.

In case you missed the webinar, here are several important highlights:

1. ENDORSEMENT LIMITS

This optional GL endorsement is designed for political subdivisions that provide water or sewer services. Members may select per-claimant limits of **\$10,000, \$25,000, or \$40,000**. The endorsement may be added mid-term or at renewal.

2. LIABILITY

The endorsement applies when the member is **not legally liable** for the loss. If the member is determined to be legally liable, coverage would instead apply under the primary General Liability form (GL 10 01 08 25).

3. PRIMARY AND SECONDARY COVERAGE

If a property owner has applicable insurance coverage, that coverage is considered primary. The Public Sewer Back-Up and Water Main Break endorsement applies secondary to other available coverage. If the property owner does not have applicable coverage, the endorsement may respond as primary.

4. COVERAGE LIMITS

The endorsement includes a \$2 million aggregate limit per policy period, a \$1 million limit per occurrence for sewer back-up damage, and a \$250,000 limit per occurrence for water main break damage.

5. EXCLUSIONS AND DEFINITIONS

The form includes several exclusions and newly defined terms that members and agents should review carefully.

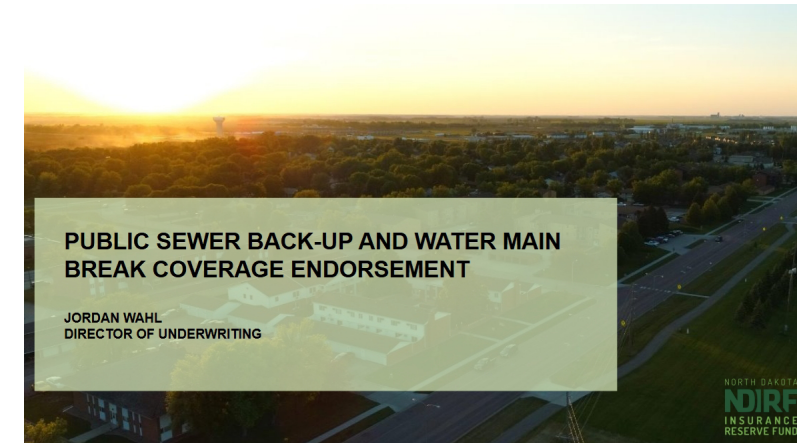
6. QUESTIONNAIRE REQUIREMENT

A completed questionnaire is required in order to obtain coverage under this endorsement.

Members should review the endorsement form in its entirety to understand the coverage terms, conditions, and exclusions.

For questions or to request a coverage quote, members should contact their agents, and agents should contact the NDIRF Underwriting Department at NDIRFUnderwriting@ndirf.com.

Scan the QR code on P. 3 to view the new Public Sewer Back-Up and Water Main Break Coverage Endorsement!



Article by Jordan Wahl
NDIRF Director of Underwriting

NDIRF NOW OFFERS ADDITIONAL FREE TRAINING FOR SCHOOLS

In January 2026, the NDIRF announced a new partnership with Vector Solutions LMS, a nationally recognized, award-winning online training platform used by K-12 schools across the country to manage employee training and compliance.

Vector Solutions' mission is to serve everyday heroes by delivering intelligent software solutions that empower them to make safer, smarter, and better decisions.

Through this partnership, NDIRF K-12 school members can now access the K-12 Staff Training Online Course Catalog **FREE** of charge.

We are very excited to partner with Vector Solutions to offer tailored online training courses that are key to any risk management program. We appreciate the opportunity to provide school members with this great educational tool to help keep North Dakota schools safe for students and faculty.
 – **Corey Olson, NDIRF Director of Member Services**



WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT TRAINING WITH VECTOR SOLUTIONS

TRAINING FOR EVERY DEPARTMENT	With a wide range of course offerings, find training for every department. Training can be done individually or in a group.
EASY TO IMPLEMENT AND USE	Our training management system is easy to administer and use. Millions of courses are completed each year!
CUSTOMIZE FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION	Customize our courses with your own content or resources, or easily build your own policies and courses in our system.
AUTOMATED FEATURES	Our system includes a number of automated features that make your job easier. Set up training plans in minutes. Email notification, real-time tracking, and more!

K-12 STAFF ONLINE TRAINING COURSES



SAFETY & COMPLIANCE

Train staff on essential safety topics to prevent incidents, strengthen response, and meet state and federal compliance requirements.



CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE PREVENTION

Microlearning prepares staff to recognize grooming, intervene early, reduce liability, and protect students from abuse.



FACILITIES MAINTENANCE

3D training teaches safe, cost-effective preventive maintenance and repairs without disrupting equipment or school operations.



CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS

Courses help staff recognize threats, protect personal data, and strengthen district cybersecurity practices.



INCLUSIVE INSTRUCTION & INTERVENTIONS

Evidence-based training gives educators practical strategies to support all learners and improve student outcomes districtwide.

REVIEW COURSES	IMPLEMENT VECTOR SOLUTIONS
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Scan the QR code to review available courses



Scan the QR code to implement Vector Solutions



CLAIMS CORNER

UPDATE: QUICK PAY COMP CLAIM PROGRAM

In the fall of 2023, the NDIRF introduced the **Quick Pay Comp Claim Program** to members in order to streamline smaller first party claims for auto and equipment.

As the Quick Pay Comp Claim Program heads into its third year, we would like to remind you about this optional member benefit.

QUALIFICATIONS	QUICK CLAIM DAMAGE EXAMPLES		
To qualify for the Auto and Equipment Quick Pay Comp Claim Program, the following requirements must be met: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The claim involves your entity's auto or contractor equipment No third parties/autos/properties were involved in the accident 	Animal	Fire	Freezing
	Hail	Glass	Towing
	Water	Flying Missile	Falling Object

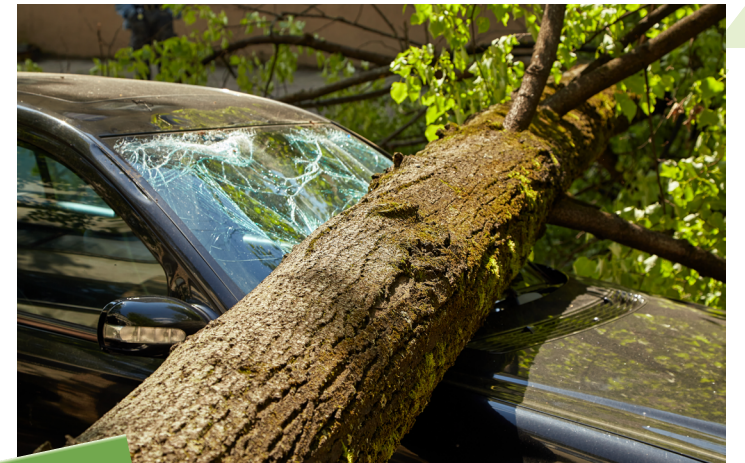
Includes all comprehensive claims except vandalism and theft.

QUICK PAY COMP CLAIMS BY THE YEAR

Since its introduction, the Quick Pay Comp Claim Program has become an increasingly popular and successful member benefit each year. This is due to the streamlined claims process and timely payments for smaller first party auto and equipment claims.

The NDIRF expects to see approximately 300 Quick Pay Comp claims in 2026, which would bring the cumulative total to over 650 claims.

Scan the QR code on this page to learn more about how the Quick Pay Comp Claim Program can help your entity quickly resolve claims and receive payment!



Submit a Claim

QUICK PAY COMP CLAIMS FILED

	2023	2024	2025	2026 (Q1)
BY YEAR	13	169	224	12
YEARLY CUMULATIVE	13	182	406	418

SCAN HERE!

Use your phone's camera to scan the QR code to learn more about the NDRPA!



Article by Tony Burbach
NDIRF Director of Claims

MEMBER FEATURE

NORTH DAKOTA RECREATION AND PARK ASSOCIATION

Photo: McElroy Park by Jamestown Parks & Rec



The Member Feature for the Spring 2026 issue of *The Participator* spotlights an entity that plays a crucial role in keeping North Dakota outdoors beautiful and enjoyable year-round. The North Dakota Recreation and Park Association (NDRPA) serves park districts, county park boards, vendors, and allied partners throughout North Dakota. Executive Director Shannon Schutt shares how the NDRPA supports the people that provide parks, programs, and public spaces.

For more than 50 years, the NDRPA in Bismarck has served as the unified voice for parks and recreation across North Dakota, supporting districts of all sizes through advocacy, education, and connection. Shannon says that, while the NDRPA does not directly operate parks, its members manage beloved community parks, trails, sports complexes, and recreation facilities that serve residents year-round across North Dakota.

NDRPA MEMBER SUPPORT

Since 1974, the NDRPA has collaborated with park districts, state agencies, educational institutions, and other associations serving local governments. The association works closely with these entities to provide practical resources and meaningful support to members. Ways that the NDRPA supports members include:

- **Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI) Course** happened March 11-13, 2026 in Bismarck
- **NDRPA Member Meeting** happening May 6-7, 2026 in Hazen
- **Annual Conference 2026** NDRPA State Conference happening September 15-17, 2026 in Dickinson. **More details coming from the NDRPA!**
- **FOCUS Magazine** and regular member communications
- **ND Park Board Manual**, the biennial Professional Directory and other resources
- **Legislative Advocacy** on behalf of North Dakota parks and recreation
- **Networking Opportunities** across park and recreation districts of all sizes

THE NDRPA IMPACT IN NORTH DAKOTA

Shannon describes the NDRPA team as responsive, mission-driven, and deeply committed to serving members. Members represent agencies of all sizes, from small rural towns to larger urban park districts.



Parks and recreation services positively impact physical health, mental well-being, tourism, and economic development statewide. . . Through awards programs, public relations initiatives, advocacy, and strategic partnerships, the NDRPA works to elevate awareness of parks and recreation's positive impact on the quality of life in North Dakota.

– Shannon Schutt, NDRPA Executive Director

MEMBER FEATURE

PARTNERSHIPS

The NDRPA values collaboration and recognizes that strong partnerships enhance safety, education, and operational excellence for park districts across the state. One of the many partnerships includes the North Dakota Insurance Reserve Fund (NDIRF).

Other NDRPA partnerships include:

NORTH DAKOTA PARTNERSHIPS		OTHER PARTNERSHIPS
HR Collaborative	National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA)	Florida Recreation & Park Association
North Dakota League of Cities (NDLC)	North Dakota Association of Counties (NDACo)	Pennsylvania Recreation & Park Society
North Dakota School Boards Association (NDSBA)	North Dakota Parks & Recreation Department	Illinois Recreation & Park Association
North Dakota Township Officers Association (NDTOA)	North Dakota Procurement	More!
Other State Parks		

COLLABORATION WITH THE NDIRF

The NDRPA and the NDIRF have partnered for many years, working together to support North Dakota park districts and public entities through education, risk management resources, and shared initiatives.

Over the years, the NDIRF has provided funding and support to the NDRPA. A notable project that the NDIRF assisted the NDRPA with was the North Dakota Park Board Manual. Originally published in the 1980s, the manual provides both new and experienced park board commissioners and staff with training for effectively carrying out authorities, roles, and responsibilities. The manual received a total refresh in 2008 with other updates made since then. Another refreshed edition is scheduled to be released late Summer 2026.

Other NDRPA and NDIRF collaborations include:

- **Risk Management Education and Safety Training**
- **CPSI Course Support** – The NDIRF provides valuable funding allowing a limited number of registration scholarships for NDRPA and NDIRF members on a first come first serve basis. The CPSI course is held in March each year.
- **HR Collaborative Conference** – 2026 HR Collaborative Conference happening in Bismarck April 22-23, 2026. **More details on P. 13!**
- **Conference Participation and Sponsorship**

NDIRF CEO Keith Pic and Director of Member Services Corey Olson at the 2025 NDRPA State Conference in Fargo



MEMBER FEATURE

NDRPA PRIORITIES

Looking into the future, the NDRPA is focusing on long-term sustainability by building leadership pipelines, advocating for strong funding structures, supporting workforce development, and ensuring that every North Dakota community has access to safe, high-quality parks, and recreation opportunities.

The NDRPA will continue its mission of “Advancing parks, recreation, and conservation for an enhanced quality of life in North Dakota” through:

MEMBER SERVICES

Expanding professional development, strengthening stakeholder connections and continuing student scholarships.

POLICY ADVOCACY

Adopting a legislative platform, advocating at the state and federal level and increasing member engagement through updates, toolkits and Capitol events.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Promoting the health, wellness and economic benefits of parks and recreation through awards, partnerships, public relations efforts and exploration of an updated economic impact study.

Thank you to Executive Director Shannon Shutt for sharing details on the NDRPA impact in conserving North Dakota community parks, trails, sports complexes, and recreation facilities.

Scan the QR code on this page to learn more about the NDRPA!



2025 CPSI Course by the NDRPA

Williston Water World

SCAN HERE!

Use your phone's camera to scan the QR code to learn more about the NDRPA!



Article by Kori Bowen
NDRPA Marketing & Communications Specialist



ARE YOUR PLAYGROUNDS READY?

As spring turns into summer and the days become longer, public playgrounds see the return of children and their families. As children return to playgrounds to run, play, and socialize, it is important you feel confident your playgrounds are safe for visitors.

Each year more than 200,000 kids are treated in emergency rooms for playground-related injuries. Understanding the hazards associated with your playground should be a top priority. Many of these accidents could have been prevented with proper risk management.

Here are some items to be aware of as you prepare your playgrounds for the upcoming season:

SIGNAGE

- Signs stating adult supervision required are highly recommended. Adult supervision is important to the safety of children on playgrounds. Young children cannot always gauge distances properly and are not capable of foreseeing dangerous situations, while older children like to test their limits. Adult supervision will help mitigate risk in these situations.
- Properly mark playground equipment appropriate for specific age groups. It is recommended that playgrounds have separate areas for infants and toddlers under two, children ages 2 to 5, and children ages 5 to 12. This helps guide adults in selecting equipment that is appropriate for each child's age.
- Be sure the playground rules are visible to all visitors. They should be general in nature and easy to understand.

FALL SURFACE

- Playground surfaces are one of the most important factors in reducing both the frequency and severity of injuries. Children will inevitably fall during play, but proper fall surfacing can significantly reduce the risk and severity of injury.
- Appropriate playground surfaces include loose-fill materials such as wood chips, sand, pea gravel, and shredded rubber, as well as unitary surfaces such as rubber tiles, rubber mats, and poured-in-place rubber.
- Hard surfaces such as concrete, blacktop, or asphalt should never be used under playground equipment. Grass, soil, and packed earth are not recommended because weather and wear can reduce their ability to provide adequate cushioning.
- Loose-fill materials should be maintained at a minimum depth of 12 inches under and around playground equipment.
- Protective surfacing should extend at least six feet in all directions from the perimeter of playground equipment.
- Certain equipment, such as slides and swings, requires a longer use zone, and surfacing should extend accordingly.

MAINTENANCE

- All playground equipment should be inspected and maintained regularly. Playgrounds with higher traffic should be inspected more frequently. Broken equipment should be repaired immediately or at the very least roped off until fixed.
- Wooden equipment must be treated regularly to avoid splintering and rotting. Splinters or falling through a rotted piece of wood can cause significant injury.
- Metal equipment should be treated to keep from rusting. Rust causes the metal to weaken and compromises the integrity of the piece of equipment.
- Be aware of protruding bolts or fixtures as they can cause cuts to a child or cause clothing to become entangled.
- Equipment with moving parts should be checked for pinch points which could pinch or crush a child's hands and fingers.

(Continued)

ARE YOUR PLAYGROUNDS READY?

DESIGN

- Playgrounds should be designed for three different age groups: infants and toddlers under two, 2 to 5-year-olds, and 5 to 12-year-olds. These areas should be clearly marked with signage, as mentioned earlier, to avoid any confusion for both children and supervising adults. Equipment that is designated for older children is too big and complex for the younger children and, on the flip side, equipment designed for younger children is too small and compact for bigger, older children.
- Guardrails should be in place on all elevated surfaces and ramps to avoid unintentional falls. They should be designed to prevent intentional climbing by children. For example, spindles should be vertical instead of horizontal as to not create a ladder. Regularly check guard rails and protective barriers for sturdiness. All openings should measure less than 3 ½ inches or wider than nine (9) inches to avoid getting stuck.
- Avoid overcrowding of the playground equipment. Equipment that is placed too close together causes congestion and in the event of a fall, leads to children hitting other equipment instead of the appropriate fall surface. This can lead to more severe injuries.
- Make sure your equipment does not have any blind spots where children can hide out and not be seen. Crawl spaces, tunnels and boxed areas should have slots, plexiglass, or another type of transparent material which allows for the child to be seen.



Photo by Corey Olson

CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- NDIRF provides free access to LocalGovU which includes hundreds of online courses tailored to the professional development needs and interests of your political subdivision.
 - Here are a few courses specific to parks and recreation employees:
 - Designing and Maintaining Safe Playgrounds
 - Public Pools and Public Health
 - Coaching with Character
 - Successful Customer Interactions
 - Preventing Slips, Trips, and Falls
 - Defensive Driving Basics
 - Lawn Care Equipment Safety
- NDIRF partners with the North Dakota Recreation and Park Association (NDRPA) to provide a limited number of scholarships each year for its member employees to complete the Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI) designation course. **Sponsorship does not include exam fees.**
 - See the [NDRPA website](#) for more information.

Public playgrounds are a great place for families to enjoy spring and summer days. They are an important piece of any city or town. Be confident your playground is safe and ready for the season!

If you have any questions concerning playgrounds in your city or town, please contact NDIRF Director of Member Services Corey Olson at (701) 751-9107 or by email at Corey.Olson@ndirf.com.



Article by Corey Olson
NDIRF Director of Member Services

COMMIT TO DRIVING DISTRACTION FREE

Originally Published by the North Dakota Safety Council (NDSC). Adapted and expanded by the North Dakota Insurance Reserve Fund (NDIRF).

April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month, a time to shine a light on the dangers of multitasking behind the wheel. Distracted driving is a leading cause of accidents, injuries, and fatalities on the road, yet many drivers continue to engage in risky behaviors like texting and eating while driving. This month, join us in our commitment to staying focused while driving and encouraging others to do the same.

WHAT IS DISTRACTED DRIVING?

Distracted driving is any activity that diverts attention away from driving. Such activities include talking or texting on your phone, eating and drinking, talking to the passengers in your vehicle, adjusting the stereo settings, entertainment or navigation system – anything that takes your attention away from the task of safe driving.

DISTRACTED DRIVING STATISTICS

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), distracted driving claimed 3,275 lives in 2023 alone.

Texting while driving increases the risk of a crash by 23 times.

At 55 mph, sending a text message is like driving the length of a football field blindfolded.

TIPS TO STAY FOCUSED

- **Put your phone away** – keep it out of reach or use the “Do Not Disturb” mode.
- **Set up your GPS and music before driving** – avoid playing with the controls while on the road.
- **Eat before or after your trip** – save meals and snacks for when you’re safely parked.
- **Use safe driving apps** – some apps can block notifications or reward distraction-free driving.
- **Take breaks on long drives** – fatigue can lead to mental distractions; stay alert by resting as needed.

DRIVE SAFE WITH FREE RESOURCES

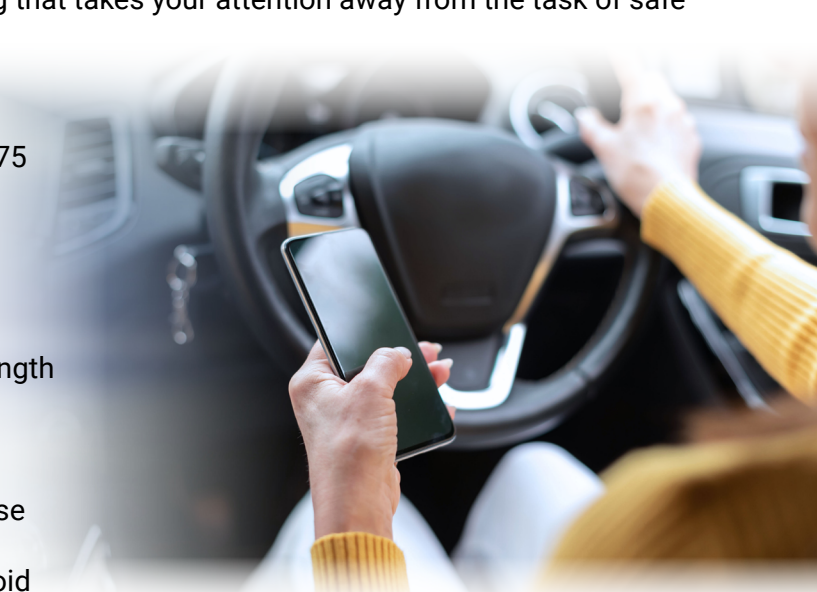
Safety starts with knowledge. The National Safety Council has provided **FREE** driver safety materials to help you stay informed and protected on the road. From safety tips to posters on driving distraction free, these resources can be found on the [NDSC's website](#).

The NDIRF also offers a **FREE** NDSC online, self-paced defensive driving course (DDC) to members.

Training through the DDC helps:

- Meet various regulatory agency requirements
- Meet requirements to reduce driver's license points
- Reduce personal insurance rates
- Reduce auto collision/crash frequency and/or severity

Scan the QR code on this page to learn more about the DDC with the NDIRF and NDSC!



SCAN HERE!

Use your phone's camera to scan the QR code to learn more about the defensive driving course (DDC)!



HR COLLABORATIVE CONFERENCE 2026

Engage 360 - Every Voice. Every Leader. Every Day.

April 22-23, 2026 | Bismarck Hotel & Conference Center



The 2026 HR Collaborative - Engage 360 Conference is April 22-23, 2026, at the Bismarck Hotel and Conference Center (Bismarck, N.D.).

This conference is designed to support local government employees who perform human resource-related functions within their entities, including HR professionals, supervisors, and those interested in employee management and growth. **All local government employees are welcome to attend.**

REGISTER FOR ENGAGE 360

HR COLLABORATIVE MEMBER PRICING: \$150
REGULAR PRICING: \$200

Scan the QR code or visit the [2026 HR Collaborative Conference - Engage 360 page](#) to register today!



FREE JOIN HR COLLABORATIVE

NOT A MEMBER OF THE HR COLLABORATIVE?
Join for **FREE** today!

Scan the QR code or visit the [HR Collaborative Membership page](#) to register today!



Contact HRCollaborative@ndirf.com with any questions.

KEYNOTES	GENERAL SESSIONS	BREAKOUT SESSIONS
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Certain sessions may be recorded and available for purchase after the conference. More detailed agenda to come!

DEVIN HUGHES

The Power of Engagement: Building Cultures Where Every Voice Counts

CAPTAIN MARTINEZ

Your Story Matters: Leadership Through Identity and Adversity

NDIT SPEAKER

AI in the Workplace

KEEPING IT LEGAL

Panelists will discuss trending legal issues for HR professionals and how to best navigate them at your entity.

ADDITIONAL GENERAL SESSIONS TO BE ANNOUNCED SOON!

NAVIGATING HEALTH ISSUES IN THE WORKPLACE

CONNECTED AT WORK: COMBATING LONELINESS AND STRENGTHENING BELONGING IN THE GOVERNMENT
Keynote Speaker Devin Hughes

BUILDING YOUR HR SYSTEM SERIES

MORE BREAKOUT TOPICS TO BE ANNOUNCED SOON!



NDIRF UPDATE: EMPLOYEES

Quarter 1 of 2026 is a bittersweet time for the NDIRF team. We are excited to welcome new Member Services Representative Henry Gomez. There are also two employees turning over a new leaf into retirement. Help us welcome our new team member and bid farewell to our new retirees!

In January 2026, the NDIRF welcomed a new Member Services Representative Henry Gomez. He is a graduate of Dickinson State University, where he earned a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration and Human Resources Management. He has several years of professional experience working directly with clients and members, with a strong focus on service, relationship management, and problem-solving.

Henry is also licensed in Credit Life and Disability. In addition, he completed the 2024 Leadership North Dakota program through the University of Mary, which further strengthened his leadership perspective and understanding of North Dakota's communities and industries.

He has proudly served in the North Dakota National Guard since 2015.



Henry is excited to join the NDIRF and be part of an organization that directly supports public entities across North Dakota. Being able to work with departments that serve their communities and help them reduce risk and operate safely is meaningful to him.

Henry enjoys living in North Dakota because of its strong sense of community, the summer weather, and the opportunity it provides to raise a family.

One of the NDIRF's longest serving employees retires in March 2026. Business Auto and Inland Marine (BA & IM) Underwriter Brenda Flesness joined the Underwriting team in September 1988. Her banking and finance background secured her the job, but it was the stable company and great atmosphere that led her to a long career at the NDIRF.

Though her career at the NDIRF lasted more than 37 years, Brenda says that the time went by fast. While it sinks in that she is starting a new chapter in life, she is not sure what she will miss most about the NDIRF. . . but she will definitely miss getting maple donuts on Fridays. She also looks forward to sleeping in past 4:45 A.M.!

Learn more about Brenda's career in the [40th Anniversary issue of The Participator on NDIRF.com](#).

Another valued employee also retired in January of 2026. After serving over 28 years in the Army National Guard and working for several other businesses, Donovan Blazek (Claims Adjuster) finished out the final 3.5 years of his career at the NDIRF.



Like his military career, the NDIRF was a company where Donovan enjoyed serving his state and the people within North Dakota communities. In his short career at the NDIRF, Donovan is most proud of effectively and efficiently completing the property claims to get the members back in working condition.

Though Donovan will miss seeing the smiling faces of his coworkers, he is enjoying retirement by spending time with his granddaughters and traveling with his wife.

NDIRF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Aaron Birst, Bismarck | Lyle Bopp, Forman | Matt Gardner, Bismarck | Darcie Huwe, Wahpeton
Tyler Jacobson, Valley City | Burdell Johnson, Tuttle | Sonya Larson, Steele | Scott Ouradnik, Amidon
Chris West, Grafton

UPCOMING EVENTS

April

2026 HR COLLABORATIVE CONFERENCE

April 22-23 \\
Bismarck

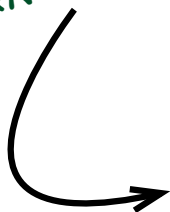
Registration details on P. 13!

May

BIG I CAPITAL CITY CLASSIC

May 24-25 \\
Bismarck

SCAN HERE!



Never miss out on important events!
Use your phone's camera to scan the
QR code to get the latest details on
NDIRF events!