

# End of an era:

Coaches agree final tourney before move to 3 classes holds special significance, Page 7

# Grand Forks Herald

THURSDAY, MARCH 16, 2023

## Fewer speeding tickets issued in GF last year

**By Sav Kelly**  
Grand Forks Herald  
GRAND FORKS — Local speeding tickets saw a significant decline in 2022, which could be a positive, but a lieutenant at the Grand Forks Police Department attributes the drop in part to staffing issues.  
The GFPPD issued more than 1,000 speeding

citations annually for a number of years, according to the department's 2022 annual report. There was a significant jump in citations from 2020 (1,165) to 2021 (1,756).  
However, in 2022 the department issued 588 speeding citations — a 66.5% drop.  
According to Lt.

Andrew Stein, "part of that was a staffing issue."  
"We just haven't had as many officers out on the road," Stein said.  
Stein said "a vast majority" of law enforcement agencies are hiring across North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota and in parts of Iowa.  
The GFPPD has been in

the hiring process for a while now, attempting to bring up staff numbers. According to Stein, the department is authorized to have 98 sworn officers; at present, there are 92.  
Additionally, calls for service increased in 2022, which means the GFPPD responded to more calls with fewer

officers available. From 2021 to 2022, the number of calls for service increased 1.2%, from 53,776 to 54,397.  
Stein said the department has seen an increase in calls for service "all the way back to 2018," and he expects the trend to continue.  
The trend is "certainly regional" and "probably

national," according to Stein.  
Calls for service aren't necessarily crime-related. They include "anything that an officer would get dispatched to," Stein said. One example would be if someone needs assistance when their car breaks down in  
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## EGF supt. resigning to take new job

**By Joe Banish**  
Grand Forks Herald  
EAST GRAND FORKS — Mike Kolness, superintendent of the East Grand Forks Public Schools, has announced his resignation, effective June 30.



Kolness

Kolness — who has served as superintendent for the past seven years — will be leaving to take the position of superintendent at Kindred Public Schools in Kindred, North Dakota. Prior to serving as superintendent, Kolness was a teacher, coach and administrator with the Ada-Borup West School District in Ada, Minnesota.  
Kolness said he is taking the position in Kindred for both "personal and professional reasons," among them the desire to be closer to his children and grandchildren.  
"East Grand Forks Schools has a special place in my heart," said Kolness. "I've really enjoyed serving the community."

Kolness said under his watch, East Grand Forks Schools has made significant progress.

"There are lots of positive things happening in the district," said Kolness. "Since I've been superintendent, we've implemented programs such as full day pre-school, upgraded our two elementary schools and middle school. I feel that I am leaving the district in positive shape."

Kolness also touted the creation of the district's "Wave Academy," an initiative that pairs students at East Grand Forks High School with career opportunities in the region.  
The district has not yet named Kolness' replacement. Kolness said the school board has recently begun its search for a new superintendent, and that he will assist in the process if necessary.

"I want to do what's best for the district," said Kolness. "If I'm asked to help in the search for my replacement, I am happy to do so."

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David Samson / The Forum

Curlers from North Dakota State University practice for a tournament at the Fargo Curling Club in 2017.

## BILL TO MAKE CURLING ND'S OFFICIAL SPORT SWEEPS THROUGH LEGISLATURE

**By Jeremy Turley**  
Grand Forks Herald  
Bismarck  
A game of stones is one step closer to gaining elevated status in North Dakota.

The North Dakota House of Representatives voted 72-21 on Wednesday, March 15, to pass Senate Bill 2229, which would designate curling as the state's official sport.

The legislation that won Senate approval in January will go to Gov. Doug Burgum's desk. A spokesman for the Republican governor

declined to comment on the bill.

Historical evidence suggests curling, sometimes referred to as chess on ice, dates back to at least the 1500s in Scotland and the Netherlands.

Back then, the pastime was played on frozen lochs and ponds. Today, throwers and sweepers compete on well-maintained indoor sheets at tournaments, known as bonspiels.

North Dakota has 11 curling clubs, the most on a per capita basis of any state, according to Sen. Sean

Cleary. The first such club was established more than 120 years ago in Drayton.

Cleary, R-Bismarck, originally brought the bill on behalf of Alaina Schmit, an 11-year-old student in the capital city who told lawmakers she has been a curler almost half her life.

"Curling is a good sport for hanging out with people, and it's good exercise in the winter," she told the Senate Education Committee in January.

Several House members remarked Wednesday that Schmit and her

curling cohort were highly convincing lobbyists for the bill. Rep. Jon Nelson, R-Rugby, noted that Schmit's passion represents "a perfect example of young people having the ability to test our system."

No legislators spoke against the bill Wednesday.

Seventeen states have an official state sport, ranging from dog mushing in Alaska to jousting in Maryland. Minnesota's state sport is ice hockey, while South Dakota's is rodeo.

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## Transgender care pits GOP against doctors, advocates

**ND lawmakers hear more than three hours of testimony**

**By Jeremy Turley**  
Grand Forks Herald

BISMARCK — Legislation that would prohibit gender-affirming care for transgender minors in North Dakota has

laid bare a division between socially conservative lawmakers and the state's medical community.

The Senate Human Services Committee on Wednesday, March 15, heard more than three hours of mostly oppositional testimony on House Bill 1254, which passed the House last month.

Under the proposal,

doctors who perform sex reassignment surgeries on minors would be guilty of a Class B felony, punishable by up to 10 years in prison and a \$20,000 fine.

The legislation brought by Rep. Bill Tveit, R-Hazen, also would charge medical professionals



Jeremy Turley / Forum News Service

Bismarck psychiatrist Dr. Gabriela Balf uses a model of a human brain to describe gender identity to the Senate Human Services Committee on Wednesday.

