

**PLAN YOUR SPRING  
GETAWAY TODAY!**  
Fly Local, Fly GFK

DELTA  
www.delta.com

allegiant  
www.allegiantair.com

GFK  
www.gfkairport.com

# Grand Forks Herald

GRANDFORKSHERALD.COM

FRIDAY, APRIL 12, 2024

Year: 144 Issue: 292  
Copyright: 2024

## Thief River officials not concerned by DigiKey transfers

BY DELANEY OTTO  
Grand Forks Herald

THIEF RIVER FALLS, Minn. — City leaders say they don't know much about the job transfers going on at DigiKey, but don't have any concerns about them.

The transfers are a normal thing for the company, City Administrator Angie Philipp said.

"It's normal practice for them to send some other IT, calling stuff to India," she said. "It's their business practice."

DigiKey, a distributor of technical components and automation products, said in a statement sent to the Grand Forks Herald that it has outpaced Thief River Falls' local workforce market, and has decided to transition

some of its data management, quotes and operations work to its Global Capability Center in India. Around 85 team members are impacted by this decision, the statement said, and will be offered different roles to which they can transfer their expertise.

"DigiKey regularly realigns our teams as the business evolves," the

statement said. "Beyond the reassigned roles, we are actively trying to fill 100-200 job openings in Thief River Falls at any given time."

The company previously celebrated more than 3,600 new Thief River Falls employees in October, and announced it had shipped one million packages from its Product Distribution Center expansion in November.

Thief River Falls Mayor Brian Holmer said he doesn't have any concerns about the change and understands that a large corporation like DigiKey has to cover its overseas business. "It was a business decision and I don't think it's going to affect our community too much," he said. "We're one of the

communities that's got a lot more jobs available than we do people."

DigiKey said in the statement that it is still a U.S.-based company, though with its global customer base it will have a global team to provide local support.

The Thief River Falls Chamber of Commerce declined to comment on the transfers.

## Cramer leads effort in US Senate to repeal Biden rule tracking tailpipe emissions

BY JACOB FISCHLER  
North Dakota Monitor

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Senate voted Wednesday to pass Rep. Kevin Cramer's resolution and roll back a Transportation Department rule that targeted greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles traveling on highways.

The rule, issued by the Transportation Department's Federal Highway Administration in December, established greenhouse gas reductions as one of the 18 performance measures for state transportation departments and local planning organizations to track.

The 53-47 vote, with four Democrats and independents joining all Republicans, was approved via a resolution under the Congressional Review Act, which allows Congress to undo new executive branch rules. Only a majority vote is required.

The White House said Wednesday, April 10 that President Joe Biden will veto the measure if it passes both chambers of Congress. The margin in the Senate's vote Wednesday would be well below the two-thirds standard needed to override a veto.

The U.S. House, where Republicans enjoy a slim majority, is likely to approve the measure.

Democrats Joe Manchin III of West Virginia, Sherrod Brown of Ohio and Jon Tester of Montana, and independent Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona, voted along with every Senate Republican to approve the resolution.

Brown and Tester are among the most vulnerable Democratic senators facing reelection this

EMISSIONS on A2



Supporters of Julie Fedorchak march down the aisles at the North Dakota Republican Convention after Fedorchak is endorsed for the United States House on Saturday, April 6, at the Sanford Health Athletic Center in Fargo.

## BUSIEST ND GOP PRIMARY SINCE '72

North Dakota's race to fill the state's lone House seat has seven candidates overall

BY MATTHEW VOIGT  
Grand Forks Herald

GRAND FORKS

North Dakota is heading into its most competitive Republican primary since its current congressional district was established in 1972.

Since 1972, North Dakota has had one seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. In the 26 primary elections between 1972 and 2022, there have never been as many

Republican candidates vying for the nomination as there are this year. Between the Republican and Democratic-NPL parties, there are seven candidates.

Five filed paperwork to be on the ballot for the June 11 Republican primary, including military veteran Alex Balazs, of Cando; former state Rep. Rick Becker, of Bismarck; Public Service Commissioner Julie Fedorchak, of Bismarck; Williston resident Sharlet Mohr;

and former independent U.S. House candidate Cara Mund, of Bismarck. Two candidates filed paperwork to be on the Democratic-NPL primary: Democratic nominee Trygve Hammer, of Minot, and perennial candidate Roland Riemers, of Grand Forks.

Having a competitive primary is not unheard of in North Dakota for either party. In the past 27 primary elections, including this one, there has been a competitive race



Alyssa Goelzer/The Forum  
Alex Balazs hugs his wife following his winning of the NDGOP convention endorsement over Julie Fedorchak on Saturday, April 6, at the Sanford Health Athletic Center in Fargo.

in nine, where the Republican Party or Democratic-NPL Party had more than one candidate seeking the nomination. Five of those elections have occurred since 2010.

The Republican Party has had six other primaries with multiple candidates on the ballot, and

GOP on A3

## Balazs hopes to help unify ND's Republicans

BY MATTHEW VOIGT  
Grand Forks Herald

GRAND FORKS — After he received the endorsement from the North Dakota Republican Party, U.S. House candidate Alex Balazs hopes to help unify Republicans in the state.

"We have to go forward and get to November and be one unified party, as hard as it is," Balazs said. "I know that there are

different opinions out there, (but) we have to because the other side is super unified and they're watching every single thing so they can defeat us."

During the NDGOP's convention last week, the endorsement contest — between Balazs and Public Service Commissioner Julie Fedorchak — couldn't get a majority vote after two ballots. The problem was that

supporters of Rick Becker, who was not eligible to receive the endorsement, spoiled their ballots by voting for Becker. After the second vote, Fedorchak bowed out of the contest, handing the endorsement to Balazs.

Now, Balazs said his campaign is energized. "It's great. It obviously kind of energizes you and makes you want to go out and talk to more people," Balazs said. "To be

honest, I feel very supported and a lot of good and hard questions came out of this also."

For him, a priority is bringing together a divided NDGOP so it can be stronger.

"We have to have the majority. We need to bring it together," Balazs said. "I'm going to do whatever I can in this campaign trail to talk with everybody, even those people that disagree

with me or don't want to support somebody else. ... I like the idea of a mandate, showing that we're together and they can't defeat us."

Between now and the June primary, Balazs said his strategy is to talk to and meet with as many people across the state as possible.

"We going to try to set as many town halls as we can, get folks to sit down and talk with us," Balazs

said. "It may be one person or 50 people, but we're going to make the rounds."

Receiving the party's endorsement isn't a sure sign a candidate will win the primary. Kevin Cramer, now a member of the Senate, won the 2012 U.S. House primary without the party's endorsement.

Also, Gov. Doug Burgum won the 2016

BALAZS on A5

# Tom Brosseau & Friends to present concert Saturday to benefit future children's museum

Program will feature ragtime, bluegrass and folk music, performed by a variety of musicians and the Grand Cities Children's Choir at the Empire Arts Center

BY PAMELA KNUDSON  
Grand Forks Herald

GRAND FORKS — Tom Brosseau, host of National Public Radio's "The Great American Folk Show," and his fellow musicians will perform the second annual benefit concert to support the capital campaign for the Grand Forks children's museum on Saturday, April 13.

The fundraising event is set for 7:30 p.m. at the Empire Arts Center, 415 DeMers Ave. Doors open at 7 p.m. Tickets cost \$50, to be sold at the door. Or, tickets may be purchased, in advance, online at <https://www.grandforks-childrensmuseum.com/>

benefit concert, from any Grand Forks Children's Committee member, or in person at Opp Construction, 3625 N. Washington. Call (701) 775-3322 or email [info@gfchildrensmuseum.com](mailto:info@gfchildrensmuseum.com).

The program will feature songs from the great American folk songbook, curated by Brosseau and his friends.

The event will also feature the unveiling of some new plans and renderings for the future museum. The center for Exploration, and a silent auction, which will close after intermission, according to an event announcement.

In addition to Brosseau, other entertainers will

include The Waddington Brothers, John Lardinois, Brent Voigt, Emily Walter, Mary Flower and the Grand Cities Children's Choir, under the direction of Melanie Popejoy and Brad Sherwood.

Terry Dullum, an award-winning former WDAZ-TV newscaster and popular humorist, will serve as emcee.

The Grand Forks children's museum is producing the ragtime, bluegrass and folk musical program to support the cost of building the museum. The fundraising goal is \$59 million. Brosseau also organized and performed for the first benefit concert March 26, 2023. Most of Saturday's



Image courtesy of MSR/EACP  
Grand Forks children's museum

This rendering shows the conceptual design for the Grand Forks children's museum. show will feature North Dakota talent — Brosseau, of Grand Forks; Lardinois, Bismarck; Voigt, Rhame; Emily Walter, Medora; and The Waddington Brothers, Regent. The audience will be treated to several kinds of music and storytelling, event organizers said.

The Waddington Brothers will play authentic bluegrass: mandolin, banjo, double bass and acoustic guitar.

Flower, a fingerstyle acoustic blues guitar player from Portland, Oregon, will demonstrate the syncopated method of ragtime with a set of

tunes on the acoustic guitar. She is considered one of the country's leaders in the field of fingerpicking.

Brosseau and his Country Quartet will present a set of nursery songs, which is "perfect for a program to benefit a children's museum," according to the event announcement.

"At the heart of the quartet are two ingredients: melody and harmony."

Some of the costs associated with the event have been paid by the Iseminger Fund for the Arts, administered by the Community Foundation

# Northwest Regional Corrections Center inmate accused of throwing boiling water on another inmate

BY SAV KELLY  
Grand Forks Herald

POLK COUNTY, Minn. — A Northwest Regional Corrections Center inmate is facing two felony assault charges after allegedly throwing boiling water on another inmate, causing burns that warranted transportation to the emergency room, according to a probable cause statement filed in the case.

Christopher Paul James Morrison, 24, had his initial court appearance on Thursday morning, April 11, in Polk County court. He is charged with first-degree assault causing great bodily harm, which has a 20-year maximum sentence, as well as third-degree assault causing substantial bodily harm.

His bond was set at \$20,000 cash or surety. On March 24, a Polk County sheriff's deputy was dispatched to the correctional center for a reported assault. A man allegedly had boiling water thrown on him and there were burns visible on his chest, arm, shoulder, neck and back, according to the probable

cause statement. His skin had visibly peeled off in some areas, revealing large wounds.

The man told law enforcement he'd been doing crunches and working out when he saw Morrison talking to his cellmate. They seemed like they were up to something, because Morrison was microwaving water despite not having any coffee or anything like that, the statement said.

While the man was walking and jogging laps around the unit, Morrison approached him, and allegedly poured two cups of water on him. The two then got into a physical altercation, according to the statement.

Due to the nature and extent of injuries the man appeared to experience due to the boiling water, it seems he "suffered at a minimum substantial bodily harm, and likely will have serious permanent disfigurement or other serious bodily harm that would constitute great bodily harm," the statement said.

Morrison's omnibus hearing is scheduled for 9 a.m. on May 7.

# Grand Awards honor local entrepreneurs

Awards recognize individuals and businesses for significant contributions and commitment to the community

PAMELA KNUDSON  
Grand Forks Herald

EAST GRAND FORKS — Seven outstanding entrepreneurs and businesses were honored at the second annual Grand Awards on Tuesday, April 9, at The Prohibition Comedy and Event Center in East Grand Forks.

The occasion, which drew about 80 people, was meant to celebrate local entrepreneurs who have made significant contributions to the community in a variety of ways, according to the event organizers. The event showcased the innovation, resilience and success that defines the local business landscape.

The awards and winners are:

**Deep Roots Award:** Phil Gisi, Edgewood Management Group — recognizing an entrepreneur who makes Grand Forks and East Grand Forks their home and has established themselves as an iconic figure in the community; their legacy and roots run deep here, and they do what they can to help others grow.

**Forkin' Grand Award:** Justin Auch and Jonathan Hoth, Urban Stampede — recognizing a company or organization that is doing something

right, this is a people's choice award.

**Sky's the Limit:** Sadie Gardner, 322 Hospitality Group — recognizing the exciting potential for this entrepreneurial venture to go above and beyond.

**True Grit Award:** Michelle Hajicek, Darcy's Cafe — recognizing an individual who tirelessly works to achieve their aspirations to become a prosperous entrepreneur and consistently shows resilience in overcoming various challenges along their journey.

**Social Impact Award:** Kay Derry, Northern Roots Boutique — recognizing an entrepreneur who cares about others, strives to create a sense of community and inspires others through their process; and

**Trailblazer Award:** Rachael Eider, RH Standard — the award is given to a woman who deserves recognition and visibility in their industry; it serves as a powerful testament to the hard work, leadership and determination of trailblazing women who inspire others to follow in their footsteps.

At the event, Eider was represented at the event by Jill Proctor; Gardner was represented by Allison Johnson.

The Greater Grand Forks String Quartet



Photo by Mark Maliskey

Winners of the Grand Awards are (back row, from left): Phil Gisi, Justin Auch, Jonathan Hoth and Jill Proctor (representing Rachael Eider), and in the front row (from left): Allison Johnson (representing Sadie Gardner), Michelle Hajicek and Kay Derry. The second annual Grand Awards were presented Tuesday, April 9, at the Prohibition Comedy and Event Center in East Grand Forks.

provided the musical entertainment.

Event sponsors were Harry's Steakhouse, Gate City Bank, Bifrost Manufacturing, Frandsen Bank and Trust, and The 701 Fund.

Evolve Grand Forks and the Grand Forks Entrepreneurial Ecosystem hosted the event.

Members of the Grand Forks Entrepreneurial Ecosystem including the Grand Forks Region Economic Development

Corporation, Evolve Grand Forks, the Greater Grand Forks Young Professionals, Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Development Association, City of Grand Forks, SCORE, Small Business Development Center and UND Center for Innovation.

Knudson is a features reporter at the Herald. Call her at (701) 780-1107, (800) 477-6572 ext.1107 or email [pknudson@gfherald.com](mailto:pknudson@gfherald.com).

# BALAZS

CONTINUED from A1

gubernatorial primary without the party's endorsement.

There are five candidates vying for Republican votes for the U.S. House, making it the most competitive GOP race for North Dakota's U.S. House seat since the state's number of seats was reduced to one in 1972.

The June primary will decide which Republican candidate will move on to the November general election.

Balazs said he's not worried about the other candidates in the race with similar ideological values.

"There's a strong conservative candidate with experience in this, and if you don't want to split the vote, then you should vote for me," Balazs said.

"We have a strong conservative base here in North Dakota, and I'm glad to see everybody getting out and (participating)."

Balazs is from Cando and continues to live in the Cando area on his family's farm. He joined in the Air Force when he graduated from high school and served in the Air Force, Navy and Army and continued to serve the United States in the foreign service. Previously, he told Forum Communications columnist Rob Port that while the other candidates have experience, he would be better.

"Being a veteran, working overseas, working for the government, and knowing how it really works, I think they'd be good at it. I'd be better at it. We don't have time to wait for them to get better at it," Balazs told Port in early March.

# Soul blues artist Johnny Rawls to headline Grand Forks' Blues on the Red

STAFF REPORTS

GRAND FORKS — Blues on the Red will return to Grand Forks' Town Square on June 29 with Johnny Rawls headlining and Jennifer Lyn and the Groove Revival opening.

The concert, presented by the Olive Ann Hotel and the Downtown Development Association, has become a "hallmark event for Grand Forks, attracting music enthusiasts of all ages to enjoy the rich sounds of blues music," according to a release from the DDA.

In a statement, 322 Hospitality Group director of marketing Allison Johnson said the Olive Ann is

committed to fostering vibrant experiences in downtown Grand Forks.

"As our boutique hotel continues to welcome guests, our goal is to enrich their stay by immersing them in the charm of downtown," Johnson said. "Blues on the Red epitomizes this commitment, offering a fusion of music, food trucks, and beverages. We are thrilled to continue our partnership with the Downtown Development Association (DDA) in advancing their mission, further enhancing the downtown experience."

Soul blues legend Johnny Rawls is an internationally recognized

recording artist, music producer and songwriter with a career spanning more than 50 years. The Columbia, Mississippi, native began his professional career as a saxophone player at age 15 in the backing band for artists including ZZ Hill, Little Johnny Taylor, Joe Tex and The Sweet Inspirations. He made his first solo recording in 1985 and has toured extensively throughout North America and overseas.

Jennifer Lyn, of Jennifer Lyn and the Groove Revival, is a North Dakota-based vocalist, guitarist, songwriter, engineer and producer. Most recently, the band

released their 2023 EP "Gypsy Soul," which spent 16 weeks on the Roots Music Report charts, peaking at the #2 Blues Rock spot. They have toured throughout the upper Midwest.

Tickets to Blues on the Red can be purchased at [downtownforks.com/blues](http://downtownforks.com/blues) or at the gate on the day of the event. Kids 12 and under get free admission. Gates will open at 5 p.m., the opening act will start at 6 p.m. and the headliner will start at 8 p.m. Food trucks and beverage vendors will be available, and attendees are encouraged to bring lawn chairs.