

The Forum

OF FARGO-MOORHEAD

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Burgum names new lieutenant gov

Sanford to step down; Miller to fill post

By Jeremy Turley
The Forum

BISMARCK — North Dakota Lt. Gov. Brent Sanford announced on Tuesday, Dec. 20, that he will resign from his position on Jan. 2 after serving six years as Gov. Doug Burgum's right-hand man. Tammy Miller, the governor's chief operating officer, will take over the role.



Sanford

Sanford's resignation will go into effect just a day before he would have resumed his duties as president of the North Dakota Senate. The state Legislature's biennial session is slated to begin Jan. 3. The former Watford City mayor and certified accountant said in a

statement he would like to return to the private sector and focus on his career and his family.

"Serving the citizens of North Dakota as lieutenant governor has been the honor of a lifetime, and this was not an easy decision," Sanford said in a news release.

Burgum commended Sanford for his leadership as Senate president and as an advocate for the energy sector.

LIEUTENANT: Page A10



Jeremy Turley / Forum News Service

Tammy Miller, right, speaks at a press conference on Tuesday where Gov. Doug Burgum introduced her as North Dakota's next lieutenant governor.

TR Park proposes removing wild horses

Horse supporters 'shocked' by plan that would reverse decades of policy if it's adopted

By Patrick Springer
The Forum

MEDORA, N.D. — The wild horses that have roamed the Badlands of Theodore Roosevelt National Park since before its creation could be captured and removed in a gradual elimination of the herd.

The National Park Service has announced that its proposal for handling the herd, which has grown to almost 200 horses, is to reduce the size to zero over time.

If adopted, that course of action would reverse decades of policy at the park, which has kept horses inside the fenced boundaries to commemorate the open range era, when Theodore Roosevelt ranched in the Little Missouri Badlands in the 1880s.

HORSES: Page A6

No bids for funding of ND natural gas pipeline

By Ann Bailey
Agweek

GRAND FORKS — No companies submitted applications by the deadline of Dec. 15, 2022, for a grant that would assist with construction of a high-pressure transmission pipeline to bring natural gas west to east across North Dakota.

The pipeline project would partly be funded by \$150 million from the North Dakota Industrial Commission. North Dakota lawmakers made the funds available to the Industrial Commission for matching grants during a special legislative session in November 2021. The amount includes \$10 million designated to transport natural gas to Grand Forks County, where Fufeng Group Ltd.,

PIPELINE: Page A10



Michael Vosburg / The Forum

Mark Lindquist assembles support poles for his nylon tent Monday to camp outside the Livewire building in Fargo as part of his "Operation: Sleep Out," which continues through New Year's Day to benefit Ukraine.

COLD CAMPOUT

Local US Air Force veteran faces coldest night in campout to benefit Ukraine

Fargo
U.S. Air Force veteran Mark Lindquist has a burning passion for charitable causes, but he might not have realized just how chilled he would get in pursuit of his latest.

His "Operation: Sleep Out" encounters its most frigid weather yet on Tuesday, Dec. 20,

Robin Huebner reports

when the overnight low in Fargo is expected to plummet to 20 below zero.

The predicted "high" temperature the following day is minus

8. Lindquist may be best known for his motivational speaking and singing of the national anthem at NFL games and other big events, but this challenge is much different.

For 17 days, ending on New Year's Day, he's camping in a nylon tent at various

outdoor locations in the Fargo-Moorhead area to amplify the plight of the people of Ukraine and the ways people here can help.

He's collecting warm coats, boots, hats and other winter weather gear from all over the region, as Ukrainians deal with power outages caused by the most devastating Russian air

strikes of the conflict, entering its 10th month.

"People have been so great... I wish everybody could see these little acts of kindness," Lindquist said by phone from his running car, where he was warming up for a few minutes.

Dave Leckie of Bemidji, Minnesota,

CAMPOUT: Page A10

INSIDE TODAY'S FORUM

- Business A11
- Classifieds C1-6
- Comics B5
- Crosswords C2-4
- Life B5-6
- Obituaries A8-9
- Opinion A5
- Sports B1-4

U of M leaders urge caution on Fairview-Sanford merger

By Frederick Melo
St. Paul Pioneer Press

MINNEAPOLIS — The proposed merger of Minnesota-based Fairview Health Systems and South Dakota-based Sanford Health continues to raise questions with key stakeholders, including leaders of the University of Minnesota concerned

about the fate of their two Minneapolis teaching hospitals, which educate the majority of the state's doctors and nurses.

On Monday, Dec. 19, Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison's office announced four public hearing dates in January

MERGER: Page A4



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Today's weather



Snow

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Details, B8



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The holidays can be an especially difficult time for people who are missing loved ones and grieving. May the memories of those you love and miss shine brightly this holiday season.

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BRIEF

Minnesotans can still get coverage through MNsure

ST. PAUL — Minnesotans who missed the deadline for 2023 health insurance through MNsure can still enroll until Jan. 15 to receive benefits that begin Feb. 1. So far, MNsure, the state's health insurance marketplace, has had 119,500 Minnesotans sign up for medical and dental coverage. In its 10th enrollment period, the state's health insurance marketplace "continues to see strong

enrollment and to provide tax credits that reduce the cost of monthly premiums for nearly 60% of enrollees, according to a MNsure press release. Many families are saving up to \$560 per month, according to MNsure CEO Nate Clark. Applications are free, and enrollment help is available from brokers and navigators across the state. All plans sold through MNsure are guaranteed to cover essential health benefits that help Min-

nesotans stay healthy, including prescription drugs, mental health services and preventative care like flu shots and cancer screenings, according to the press release. The Jan. 15 deadline does not apply to Minnesotans with coverage through Medical Assistance or MinnesotaCare or members of federally recognized tribes, who can enroll through MNsure any time of the year, according to the press release.

Forum staff report

HORSES

From Page A1

The park is weighing two alternatives, including sticking with the current management plan and herd size or expedited removal of the horses. Public comments will be accepted on the options until Jan. 31.

Supporters of the horses — Facebook fan pages have attracted hundreds of thousands of followers — said they were "blindsided" and "shocked" by the proposal, which came as the park is revising its policy for managing the horses and a dozen longhorn cattle.

Castle McLaughlin, who retired as the curator of North American ethnology at Harvard's Peabody Museum, studied the history and management of the horses for the park for a report published in 1989.

"It is stunning that the NPS has apparently decided to minimize interpreting culture and history at Theodore Roosevelt National Park in favor of returning to the long discredited concept of promoting the badlands as a 'pristine' natural area untouched by people or time," she said.

"Theodore Roosevelt was not just a conservationist, he was a rancher," McLaughlin said. "It is equally shocking that the state of North Dakota doesn't seem to care. Native cultures and ranching traditions are important to the state, and they attract tourists.

"By eliminating them, the NPS is disrespecting those communities and their heritage, and discarding an historic resource that is much beloved by visitors."

The National Park Service doesn't consider the horses to be a native wildlife species, such as the bison, elk, pronghorn and prairie dogs.

According to the park's mission statement:

"Theodore Roosevelt National Park memorializes Theodore Roosevelt and pays tribute to his enduring contribution to the conservation of our nation's resources by preserving and protecting the scenery, native wildlife, and wilderness qualities — the landscape that inspired Roosevelt and still inspires visitors today."

Chris Kman of Chasing Wild Horses Wild Horse Advocates, an advocacy group based in Dickinson, said it's clear the park wants to eliminate the herd, which she believes has long been the intent.

"We were shocked they are blatantly saying out loud, 'Our goal is to eliminate all the wild horses,'" she said. "We were kind of blindsided by this. This is a horrible time to drop this bomb," with people absorbed in celebrating the holidays.

The horses were present when the park was established and were fenced in by the park, which Kman said shows they were part of the park's ecosystem before its founding. On the other hand, she said, the bison and elk had to be reintroduced to the park.

Kman, who also has a shop in Medora with merchandise celebrating the park horses, said the



Wild horses roam Theodore Roosevelt National Park in July 2008. Patrick Springer / The Forum

herd is a draw for many park visitors.

"There's a lot of long-time visitors to the park who say, 'If they take the horses out, we're not coming back,'" she said. "It's going to be a huge loss to our state if they're allowed to do this."

Sara Otte Coleman, North Dakota's tourism director, said her office is preparing to comment on the proposed removal of the horses.

"We are looking into the proposals and evaluating any visitor data or social media engagements we have had on the horses at Theodore Roosevelt National Park in order to determine what comments we will provide prior to the Jan. 31 deadline," she said.

Mike Nowatzki, a spokesman for Gov. Doug Burgum, said the governor had no immediate comment, but that could change after the park holds a public meeting on Jan. 12.

Kami Capener, spokeswoman for Sen. John Hoeven, R-N.D., said, "Senator Hoeven encourages interested North Dakotans to share their views on the Livestock Management Plan with the National Park Service during the public comment period which closes on Jan. 31. It is important for the NPS to take into consideration the comments received and work with local stakeholders throughout the development of a new plan."

Sen. Kevin Cramer, R-N.D., also encouraged constituents to make their voices heard.

"I encourage all to participate in the public comment period for Teddy Roosevelt National Park's Livestock Management Plan to address populations of horses and longhorn steer in the park," he said in a statement.

Rep. Kelly Armstrong, R-N.D., backed the park's proposal to eliminate the horse and longhorn herds from the park.

"I support Theodore Roosevelt National Park's management plan," he said in a statement. "They have done the research and will make the best decision based on science so future generations can enjoy the park. These are tough decisions, but emotion cannot outweigh what is best for long-term sustainability."

Roosevelt himself commented on frequently seeing wild horses wandering the range — stray ranch stock or American Indian ponies that got loose. The ancestry of the park horses traces its lineage to American Indian ponies, including horses surrendered by Sitting Bull and his followers at

Fort Buford in 1881, as well as ranch stock.

The wild horses have been a fixture at the park since its inception in 1947, but for three decades the park service tried to remove the herd, conducting periodic roundups, using helicopters and riders on horseback.

Despite years of concerted effort, the eradication policy never succeeded in capturing all of the horses, which were reduced to an all-time low of 16 horses following a series of roundups in the 1960s. Some horses died during the roundups, from exhaustion or injuries suffered while trying to escape.

In the 1970s, the park service changed course and decided to keep horses at Theodore Roosevelt National Park as a living history demonstration of the days of fenceless, open-range ranching.

The park's management of the horse herd follows an environmental assessment made in 1978 that called for maintaining the herd at 35 to 60 horses — far smaller than the almost 200 horses now in the park. Some horse advocates have cited scientific research indicating the size of a horse herd should be at least 150 to ensure genetic health.

A wild horse and range expert from the Bureau of Land Management, who park officials invited to evaluate the range's capacity in 1978, said the park habitat was excel-

lent for wild horses and could support a large population of horses "without adverse impacts upon the soil or vegetative resources."

If the park removes the horses and cattle, American Indian tribes would be given the first opportunity to receive the animals. Any not taken would be sold at auction by the General Services Administration.

How to comment

Theodore Roosevelt National Park officials invite public comment on its management plan for horses and longhorn cattle in the park. "We welcome your ideas, concerns, suggestions, and topics for consideration as we refine the alternatives," the park service said.

The park will host a virtual public meeting on the livestock plan from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m., Mountain Standard Time on Thursday, Jan. 12. More information on how to join the virtual public meeting can be found on the planning, environment and public comment website at parkplanning.nps.gov/LP.

Those wishing to comment on the planning process can submit comments through Jan. 31 online through the website or by mail to Superintendent, Theodore Roosevelt National Park, P.O. Box 7, Medora, N.D., 58645.

Readers can contact reporter Patrick Springer at 701-241-5522 or pspringer@forumcomm.com.

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Golden Pen Winner

The letter "Consider becoming an organ donor today" by Karishma Mistry of Fargo was selected by The Forum's Readers Board as the October Golden Pen winner. The Readers Board selects its favorite letter of the previous month and awards that writer a Golden Pen.

On Sept. 9, 2022, our nation reached an incredible milestone by surpassing 1 million solid organ transplants. This milestone isn't just a number. It represents 1 million people who have been given the gift of time: more birthdays, more family memories, more life for 1 million people - including me.

I was born with a liver disease, and I knew I would eventually need a transplant. When I was 10, my health started to deteriorate to the point where I became bed bound. When we finally received the call that a donor liver was available, my life changed.

After my transplant, I lived life like a normal kid. I became extremely involved in school, extracurricular activities, and am now in my final year of medical school. By choosing this profession, I hope to help others like my donor helped me.

I will be forever grateful to my donor and their family for giving me a second chance at life. Without their decision to donate, I would not be alive today. I write to my donor family yearly and will continue to write and share my gratitude for their gift.

Right now, only 53% of North Dakotans have registered at the DMV and nearly 3,000 people in our region are waiting for a life-saving transplant. Please consider joining the registry when you renew your driver's license or online at Life-Source.org. Anyone can register - the oldest donor was 95! This simple decision saves the lives of people just like mine.

Email or write us, using the guidelines on the Opinion page. Maybe your letter will be selected as the next Golden Pen winner.

Golden Pen Winner

The letter "From a grateful veteran, do better America" by James Leiman of Fargo was selected by The Forum's Readers Board as the November Golden Pen winner. The Readers Board selects its favorite letter of the previous month and awards that writer a Golden Pen.

"S-O-L-D-I-E-R, soldiers, soldiers, that's who we are." Oh the sweet sounds of Army cadence; a quixotic mixture of history, the need for young Americans to leave individualism behind and learn to fight as a collective unit, and smooth rhythms and song from the southern states. I am 40 now, yet I still remember the pride I felt signing those cadences while marching with my unit and wearing the best uniform in the world.

Twenty years ago last month I came home. I will never forget the feeling. I landed in Atlanta and had a four-hour layover. I sat down in a restaurant and ordered everything I could off the menu as I missed normal food. I ordered a beer, the waitress looked at me and knew I wasn't of age yet but she also could read the seven months of hell I had just endured. She brought me two!

I recall those hours vividly as I was still very much on alert, my senses were heightened, yet everyone in the airport just went about their normal business. I recall thinking wow, these people have no idea what I did, what I experienced, what I left behind, or what I saw. Maybe it is a good thing I told myself.

All of my friends lost something when they mobilized. Some didn't come home at all. One of my roommates from leadership training was killed in Iraq in 2004, a year after we were promoted to sergeant; a colleague from basic training was killed the following year; the husband of one our friend's from grad school was killed in Afghanistan in 2006. Since then many of my friends have died slowly; including my best friend, an American hero by the name of Dujaun Vass who died this past summer. His story will never be told but he was one of America's best! All gave some, some gave all they say. I am one of the lucky ones.

Somehow, 18 year olds from all walks of life, regions of the country, ethnicities, religions, sexual orientations, political persuasions, you name it, got along just fine! We trained and fought as one unit regardless of what someone looked like or believed in and that ethos must now transcend into the rest of America. It is an absolute must.

We have hard years ahead, there is no doubt about it. But we must do better and do better together. "C-O-U-N-T-R-Y, for duty, honor, and country I would give my life." We owe to them, do better by your neighbors, do better by those who served. Learn a lesson from the 18 year olds who put everything on the line for you. Thank you and may God be with you.

Email or write us, using the guidelines on the Opinion page. Maybe your letter will be selected as the next Golden Pen winner.