



City Rec Department and Minot Park District merger moving forward

The Minot City Council voted in January to direct city staff to move forward with a proposed merger between the City's Recreation Department and the Minot Park District. Under the proposal, the Minot Park District would take control of the Recreation Department, under the direction of Parks Director Ron Merritt. At the City Council meeting, alderman directed staff to draft the lease agreements and joint powers agreements necessary to merge the two entities.



Merritt's information presented at the meeting detailed how the merger would work going forward. Merritt said the goal would be to have one board that oversees the combined departments, which would be the elected members of the Park Board. An issue to be finalized is how the transfer of City Recreation Department staff members will take place, maintaining the city employees at their current levels of salary and benefits.

The merger has been in discussion for much of the past year. A committee chaired by Mayor Shaun Sipma held several meetings, including public meetings to gather information from residents.

Senator Cramer to keynote MADC Annual Meeting

The Minot Area Development Corporation will hold their annual meeting on Feb. 20, where U.S. Senator Kevin Cramer (N.D.) is scheduled to keynote the event. The annual affair will be held at the Grand Hotel from 5 to 7 p.m. and is open to the public. "We are honored to welcome Senator Cramer to our annual meeting," said MADC President and CEO Stephanie Hoffart. According to Hoffart, the annual meeting will celebrate the achievements of the prior year as well as communicate the opportunities and challenges ahead. A formal invitation will follow. For more information, call Jaime at 701.852.1075 or email jhauge@minotusa.com.

Mayor's Committee on Addiction making positive changes in 2019

The Mayor’s Committee on Addiction, formed in 2017, is seeking to hire an executive director who will report to the Recovery Organization Inc. board of directors, which will have six members.



The committee received a \$200,000 Bush Foundation Grant in late 2018. The Recovery Organization Inc. will be an independent, non-profit organization run by local representatives, with a mission to mobilize resources and increase the availability and quality of long-term recovery from alcohol and other drug addictions. The strategy includes public education and peer-based recovery support services.



Paul Stroklund, an original member of the committee, said the group completed its work in laying the foundation for the next steps in the battle against opioid addiction in the Minot area. As part of the changes, First District Health Unit is working to establish a peer program led by former addicts to help those in search of recovery. The Minot area does have Narcotics Anonymous, but there's no consistent meeting place or program stability. A team of community members is working to create a case management team for recovering addicts to have easier access to the appropriate resources.

Minot’s efforts to eliminate spot blight in the valley reach early milestone

In January, the City of Minot purchased two blighted valley properties in the continued effort to ensure the long-term stability and resilience of neighborhoods impacted by the 2011 Mouse River Flood. The purchase of homes through the Spot Blight Program was approved by the Minot City Council in 2018 using \$800,000 in Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) money allocated in 2012.



“Out of the nearly 3,000 homes severely damaged by the flood, we are down to less than 30 that we consider to be ‘zombie’ or blighted properties – that’s a great improvement,” said Minot Mayor Shaun Sipma. “City staff is continuing to work with these last handful of properties to ensure those neighborhoods that have truly bounced back in the last seven years are made as whole as possible.”

Roughly 35 properties were identified by the City of Minot in early 2018 as meeting the definition of blighted due to flood damage. These property owners were notified of the need to show intent to repair their home, or their property could be considered for acquisition.

Of the properties that were initially considered for the program, 32 remain on the City's watch list.

- Two of those properties are currently making notable progress toward a certificate of occupancy, some others have pulled permits for reconstruction but are showing limited or no progress.
- Three properties were noted as "bank-owned" when the City began this process, while some others are in various steps along the process of foreclosure.
- Two were purchased in January 2019 with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development CDBG-DR funds. Three more are considered "willing sellers," interested in being acquired through the Spot Blight Program.

The ultimate goal of the City of Minot is to restore the valley and ensure that the area has been established as a vibrant, resilient, thriving community after the devastation left from the 2011 flood. Offer prices to purchase homes were developed via independent appraisals, which were then reviewed by the city's tax assessor. Homes acquired by the city will be demolished and turned into green space until a future use is determined.

MSU Development Foundation receives grant to assist veterans become entrepreneurs

The Minot State University Development Foundation, in partnership with Minot State's College of Business,



announced the University has received an Edson & Margaret Larson Foundation grant. The grant will support the start of the Minot State University Veterans Entrepreneurship Training (VET) Program. Minot State entrepreneurship students working in this program will assist veterans (or veteran spouses) who are interested in starting their own business.

"In developing the entrepreneurship program, I wanted to give students the opportunity to provide service to the community using the theories they learned in the classroom," said Minot State assistant professor of entrepreneurship and management Tracey Mays. "This will be one of their possible portfolio experiences to demonstrate to themselves and future employers they have applied skills learned in the classroom to real-world businesses. I am always looking to give them opportunities for hands-on learning."

Approximately 25 percent of transitioning veterans are interested in running their own business, according to research conducted by Bunker Labs. The VET Program is designed to help veterans and others start businesses in the local Minot community, which invigorates the local economy through job creation and the development of a local entrepreneurial ecosystem. As a neighbor and friend of the Minot Air Force Base, it is essential the Minot community continues to support our veterans.

'Skyping' with a burn specialist

Patients who come to the Trinity Emergency/Trauma Center with a burn injury now have the advantage of being evaluated by a burn specialist. Trinity Health is partnering with Regions Hospital and Burn Center in St. Paul to deploy Teleburn iPads that are used to assess burn injuries and help manage ongoing care.



“It’s a form of virtual medicine that works much like Skyping over the internet, but instead of talking to a friend or family member, you’re talking to a burn surgeon,” said Trauma Program Manager Rhonda Gunderson, RN, BSN. The iPads provide the burn surgeon a detailed view of the burn so the specialist can help determine whether the patient should be transferred or treated locally.

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