



**this issue**

- Kringstad Ironworks Sees Enormous Growth
- Tourism Division Wins Awards
- CSBG Helps Fight Hunger

division of economic development & finance

**commerce matters**

**Christianson Testifies Before Energy Subcommittee in Washington**



**Kim Christianson**

Kim Christianson, manager of the Office of Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency within the North Dakota Department of Commerce, was part of a distinguished group who testified Feb. 12 before the United States Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, Subcommittee on Energy. Christianson's testimony

highlighted North Dakota's efforts for renewable energy and energy efficiency, plus he also testified on behalf of the National Association of State Energy Officials.

Christianson discussed the following topics:

- North Dakota's recent boon in renewable energy plants, with a primary focus on wind energy, ethanol and biodiesel projects. The new Spiritwood Industrial Park was highlighted because of its unique co-mingling of resources and energy.
- North Dakota's Weatherization Assistance Program provides energy-efficiency improvements for low-income households. Thousands of households and individuals across the state have benefited from the program which is administered through the state's seven Community Action Agencies.
- The state implemented a "Best Practices" initiative in 2004, which is a comprehensive effort to implement state-of-the-art approaches to residential energy efficiency. This initiative has been recognized nationally.
- Efforts throughout the state to make state-owned buildings more energy efficient. Since its inception the program has provided technical and financial assistance in 412 buildings, which has resulted in \$3 million in annual energy savings. Many new state facilities have gained the federal ENERGY STAR designation because of comprehensive efforts.

Christianson testified along with the president of the Alliance to Save Energy, president and CEO of the Cold Climate Housing Research Center, chairman of Edison Electric/CEO of Duke Energy, the president of the American Institute of Architects and a vice president of Wal-Mart.

North Dakota Senator Byron Dorgan is the Energy Subcommittee chairperson. ●

**Fargo-Based Global Electric Motorcars Highlighted in Wall Street Journal**

If you keep up on your *Wall Street Journal* reading, Global Electric Motorcars, LLC (GEM) of Fargo was featured in the Feb. 26, issue. Here is a portion of the article, "The cars, which resemble souped-up golf carts, are simple, cheap and have a top speed of about 25 miles per hour. They can travel 30 miles before their



power system, which is composed of six car batteries, runs out of juice. This city (Lincoln, CA) of 38,000, located 25 miles northeast of Sacramento, is spending \$1 million to change its roads and traffic signs to accommodate the cars. Several other California towns are preparing to copy Lincoln's approach.

Global Electric Motorcars LLC, which was bought by DaimlerChrysler AG in 2000, has sold 33,000 of these neighborhood electric vehicles, known as NEVs. Fargo, N.D.-based Global Electric is positioned to be among those first in line for possible new state and federal incentives designed to promote the use of alternative-fuel vehicles." ●



## Kringstad Ironworks Grows to Tackle Big Manufacturing Projects



**Bernie Kringstad, president of Kringstad Ironworks**

Two major contracts catapulted Kringstad Ironworks this past year from 11 full-time employees in the spring to 41 by year's end.

Bernie Kringstad started out 10 years ago as a welding shop south of Hoople doing farm repairs. The first manufacturing job they tackled was building safety hitches used to pull beet trucks through muddy fields. Then came a partnership with the University of North Da-

kota engineering department to build a prototype for a drone launcher. "That opened doors for bigger projects," said Kringstad.

When the opportunity came, they bid on American Crystal's contract for building massive sugar beet pilers. At about the same time they hosted a Danish representative from LM Glasfiber, the world-class builder of wind turbine blades. They were looking for someone to build glass carts -- fully automated steel carts that handle one ton rolls of fiberglass -- for their plant expansion at Grand Forks and Quebec.

When both contracts were solidified, Kringstad Ironworks turned to the Red River Regional Council for help with managing the growth. They needed additional employees, more space, new equipment and operating capital.

"Dawn Keely from SBDC knew the organizations to go to for the different parts of the funding," said Kringstad. The process took three months of fairly intense work. "We sat down for many hours and set up the spreadsheets and different formulas to build the business plan," he said. "Plus every organiza-

tion wants it done a little differently."

The financial package included First United Bank, Red River Regional Council, the City of Park River, Small Business Administration, North Dakota Development Fund within Commerce, Bank of North Dakota, Polar Communications and the Walsh County Job Development Authority.

The City of Park River leased a former mushroom plant to Kringstad with a credit allowance for each employee hired. "Once we hit 18 employees we got the place rent free," said Kringstad. The Park River plant boosted the company's floor space five-fold. The farm shop has 7,200 square feet and the Park River plant 40,000 square feet. Part of the new financing went toward renovating the building and buying the equipment needed to build large machinery.

"I'm really thankful to Polar Communications for matching the preferred stock buy-down by granting us \$10,000," said Kringstad. "Walsh County Job Development Authority matched that."

"To get these kind of jobs in Park River, at the north end of the valley, has everyone excited," he said. "Fargo and West Fargo plants usually get these kinds of orders." ●

# North Dakota

## BUSINESS HOTLINE 1-866-4DAKOTA



division of economic development & finance

### North Dakota Tourism Division Wins Four Awards

The 2006 North Dakota Tourism print campaign received both a Judge's Choice and a Gold ADDY Award at the annual awards banquet sponsored by the Bismarck-Mandan Advertising Federation (AdFed) on Feb. 17. Silver ADDYs were presented for the 2007 Official State Map and for a Minneapolis event invitation.

All three projects were done as a joint creative effort with Odney Advertising.

"We appreciate the synergy we have with the team at Odney. These ads are a great example of how a research-driven strategy, combined with well executed creative, results in ads that stand out from the others," said Sara Otte Coleman, Department of Commerce Tourism Division Director.



The AdFed awards recognize excellence in advertising, exemplifying outstanding creativity in each category. The gold ADDYs move on to district competition and the top winners will advance to national competition. ●

### Outsourcing World Summit a Success for Future Prospects

Paul Lucy, Eric Icard and Laura Willard from the Division of Economic Development and Finance participated in the 10th annual World Outsourcing Summit in late February. North Dakota was the only state represented at the conference, amongst many companies, countries and international regions.

Jerry Chavez, president of the Minot Area Development Corporation; Jim Dahlen, vice president of the Bismarck-Mandan

Development Association; and Ken Brooks, director of Valley City State University's Institute for Customized Business Solutions also participated in the summit.

"The Outsourcing World Summit was an incredibly successful conference in terms of putting North Dakota on the forefront and also for making key business contacts," said Laura Willard. "We already have solid leads and generated a great deal of interest in the state and what we have to offer."

Paul Lucy was a key panel speaker discussing outsourcing and its benefits within North Dakota. ●

### Commerce Program Helps Fund Food Program for Homeless Bismarck Children

An \$18,000 grant from the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) program is helping dozens of Bismarck children avoid hunger on the weekends. The grant was awarded to the Backpack for Kids Project which is administered by the Community Action Program Region VII in Bismarck.

Backpacks for Kids is done in cooperation with Bismarck Public Schools and provides backpacks of food that children are able to take home on the weekends. This program started in December 2006 and since then 75 backpacks are being delivered each week.

Children pick up the backpacks on Fridays and are asked to return them so Community Action staff can refill and deliver them the following week.

The \$18,000 grant will cover the costs for 150 backpacks and food for 22 weeks. Fundraisers, grants, community support, churches, civic organizations, youth groups and other sources will be targeted for funding to sustain Backpack for Kids in 2008. ●



## Focus on Economic Development with Paul Lucy

A great deal of conversation is taking place in North Dakota and across the United States regarding workforce availability to support existing and new businesses. Various industry sectors in the state are feeling the pressures of a tightening labor market and we cannot sit idly by and hope this issue corrects itself.



ED&F Director  
Paul Lucy

The Division of Workforce Development within the Department of Commerce and other statewide stakeholders are aggressively working to address short-term and long-term workforce availability issues. With that being said, we need to be aware of messages we send to existing businesses and those companies we are attempting to recruit. How we move forward in discussing and resolving this issue will certainly have an impact on our ability to continue business development success in North Dakota.

This is similar to how we brag about how 'tough' we are in dealing with North Dakota winters. The more we talk about how resilient we are in extreme weather, the more outsiders believe we are living in a frozen, barren wasteland. This holds true for how we talk about our present labor market situation. The more we present our situation as a crisis, the less opportunities we will have to successfully retain our existing companies and attract new companies.

The crux of what I wish to convey is this: The days of focusing our marketing efforts on quality of life, financial incentives, responsive government, lower costs, etc, are behind us. Presenting a message of sustained and flexible workforce development, attraction and retention needs to be in the forefront of everyone's marketing message. Our communications also need to include facts and competent optimism.

North Dakota still has an untapped labor force leaving the state to pursue opportunities which they presently are not finding in the state. On our part, the Division of Economic Development and Finance is implementing, as part of its marketing mix, business recruitment efforts which target niche industries and specific companies interested in hiring new entrants to the labor market. These entities are willing to take on new college and high school graduates and offer career path employment.

I encourage you all to actively participate in discussions that will ultimately lead to resolving workforce issues, while at the same time, present an optimistic message to businesses and people we come in contact with on a daily basis. ●

## Center for Technology and Business Offers Simplified Excel Training

Microsoft Excel is an excellent tool for any manager or small business owner, but busy people don't always have the time to sit down and learn new technical skills. To make designing and using spreadsheets easier, the Center for Technology and Business has designed a new simplified step-by-step Excel lesson.

Excel can be used to:

- Manage, sort and filter data
- Create a general spreadsheet
- Perform quick calculations
- Create budgets
- Assemble address lists
- Produce charts and illustrations

The lesson features tips on formula creation and formatting worksheets in any setting. It's a time saver and profit builder! A copy is available by sending an email requesting Excel Formulas and Formatting to [dalzell@trainingnd.com](mailto:dalzell@trainingnd.com). To learn more about the Center for Technology and Business visit its website at [www.trainingnd.com](http://www.trainingnd.com). (The Center for Technology and Business is a partner program with Commerce.) ●