



# Growing Interest in North Dakota

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## NO MORE "EXPLORING" — CALIFORNIA'S A "GO"!

Last month's Growing Interest reported that ED&F and local ND developers were "exploring" the possibility of advertising in California. The idea was to interest energy-starved businesses in expanding to North Dakota.

Well, the talk is over: North Dakota will definitely be noticed on the west coast as a result of our television spots and print ads in major trade and industry journals.

"We had two choices: do it, or don't do it," said ED&F Director Lee Peterson. "To not do anything in a situation where we have so much to offer was unthinkable. It would have been a huge lost opportunity.

"Once we decided to do it, we knew we had to do it right, go all the way, and dispel some common misperceptions Californians may have of us," Peterson added.

By now, northern Californians are besieged with energy-related advertising, including some from other states. North Dakota's campaign will attempt to interest California and other states in our inexpensive, abundant energy and water and our legendary work force. The May Growing Interest should feature a glimpse of the ads. ■

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## REGIONAL TECHNOLOGY CENTER OPENS IN VALLEY CITY

The Grand Opening of the Regional Technology Center on the campus of Valley City State University is Tues., May 1, starting at 2 p.m.

The Center is the result of a partnership between the Valley City-Barnes County Development Corporation and VCSU. The Development Corporation owns the 20,000-square foot facility. Half of the building will house a business incubator, with the other half designated for training, education, and university-related programs.

The Center will offer a wide range of services, including:

- **Professional training**
- **Customized training:** web site development and hosting, e-commerce, networking, network administration and certification, and project management of business solutions, including database- and web-based technologies.

- **Certification:** A+, Network+, CNE (Certified Novell Engineer), MCSE (Microsoft Certification System Engineer), Microsoft SQL, CNA (Certified Novell Administrator)

The Center for Innovation in Instruction will show educators how to integrate technology throughout their curriculum, and the Technology Education Program will be involved in workforce development, distance learning, industrial processes expertise, and software expertise. ■

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## ECONOMY.COM ARTICLE PROMPTS FOUR-SECTION BISMARCK TRIBUNE SPREAD

On Sun., Feb. 25, the Bismarck Tribune featured North Dakota's economic development efforts in a spread that included four entire sections of the paper. The impetus for "North Dakota: Creating a Strategy to Win" was the comprehensive report that ED&F contracted with Economy.com to create last summer. ■

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## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Senate Bill 2019 is the ED&F appropriations bill. It passed in the Senate with an emergency clause and was heard by the House appropriations Committee March 2 and March 6.

Senate Bill 2032 relates to the creation of a Department of Commerce that would merge ED&F, the Division of Community Services, the Tourism Department, and Workforce Development. The bill has been amended several times and was referred from the House Industry, Business, and Labor committee to the House Appropriations committee on March 26. ■

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## RURAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL RECEIVES NATIONAL RECOGNITION

The National Rural Development Partnership Office board of directors and major partners will recognize the ND Rural Development Council for one highlight of the NDRDC's Annual Report 2000.

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The annual report featured articles about eight successful partnerships from the past few years. One of these partnerships was with the ND Division of Emergency Management, to assist delivery of services to remote parts of the state. At the national conference in early April, NDRDC will receive a special Rural Impact Award for this partnership.

Other areas of NDRDC concentration are the Leadership North Dakota Initiative, Community Strategic Planning, the Child Health Insurance Program, and Indian reservation community and economic development programs. ■

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### PIONEER EXPANDS RICHLAND COUNTY SEED PLANT

Pioneer Hi-Bred International Inc. will start an \$8.5 million expansion project in April at its Richland County seed plant. The project will double the plant's soybean seed processing capacity and require seven more full-time employees.

ED&F and the Richland County Commission approved tax exemptions to encourage the expansion project, according to Shawn Kessel, Wahpeton city administrator and director of the city's economic development projects.

"This is one of the things we need to be doing in this agricultural economy today," Kessel said. "More money in the farmers' pockets means more money in the retailers' pockets."

The plant, three miles west of Wahpeton, will expand from 160,000 square feet to about 240,000 square feet. Pioneer will offer farmers more growing contracts to fuel the plant's increased processing capabilities.

When the expansion is completed in September 2002, Pioneer will contract with farmers to grow about 65,000 acres of soybeans. The expanded plant will be able to clean and package 140 million pounds of soybean seed a year. ■

*From an article by Jeff Zent in The Forum, Fargo*

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### GOODSPELL.COM LAUNCHED IN MINOT

Earlier this spring, a highly interactive portal for use by the public, educators, students, and businesses went online in Minot.

Goodspell.com has 23 chat rooms, 23 discussion boards, and thousands of articles featuring news feeds and custom insertions. The site enables users to contribute prose, poetry, short stories, and inspirational content if they're members — and membership is free.

Also featured are free email accounts, a game room, and, coming soon, free web sites and hosting. Users will be able to create a web site using an extensive library of tools that require no technical skills. The site will also have a gift shop and computer warehouse with thousands of items.

Goodspell.com has already won two Internet awards for design and functionality. ■

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### ROADMAP FOR THE ED&F WEB SITE

ED&F launched its new web site last summer to help create new wealth through the start-up, retention, and expansion of primary-sector business. Since the launch, more than 26,000 visitors have visited the site. Here are the key links from its home page, [www.growingnd.com](http://www.growingnd.com).

- **ND PROFILE** helps businesses unfamiliar with the advantages of locating in North Dakota. Users will find information about the business costs, labor force, taxes, and quality of life here.
- **BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT** contains information about regional, county, and city economic development. **Manufacturing Extension Partnership** information explains how existing ND manufacturers receive help. Also in this section is information about **Women in Technology**, a program funded by the U.S. Small Business Administration and ED&F. It's designed to offer technical assistance and training to women who are in business or about to start a business.
- **MAJOR COMPANIES** contains information about existing ND businesses. Users can search for companies by type (food, services, or manufacturing). In **Company Profiles**, users can search for companies by geographic location, SIC/NAICS codes, or product. An expansion listing shows how companies have grown each year.
- **ED&F SERVICES** details what the agency offers. The section includes an agency overview and information about the Agricultural Products Utilization Commission, Rural Development Council, ND Development Fund, international trade, upcoming events, research, and workforce development.
- **BUSINESS TOOLKIT** directs new businesses to agencies that help with licensing, employment training, financing, international trade, minority certification, new business forms, patents and trademarks, regulations and permits, and statistics.

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A listing of economic development professionals across the state is included.

- **CAREERS** offers a variety of information and links for people interested in moving — or returning — to North Dakota.
- **MEDIA CENTER** contains news releases, newsletters, photos, and speeches. ■

of the top manufacturers in the country and to supply all 50 states with our products.” ■

**ND MEP = LEAN MANUFACTURING = BULLSEYE!**

The ND Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) was introduced to the state’s manufacturers last year, beginning with nearly 200 in-depth, face-to-face interviews to determine industry needs. Because of the demand from manufacturers, Lean Manufacturing workshops were initiated last fall.

Lean Manufacturing is a systematic approach to identifying and eliminating waste through continuous improvement. Since last October, 330 manufacturing staff representing more than 50 ND small- to medium-sized companies have attended one of 16 Lean Manufacturing seminars. Follow-up site visits are helping many of those companies determine ways to implement Lean strategies. ■

**NDDF HELPS MANDAN BUSINESS GO GLOBAL**

Botanical Silk Accents, Inc., Mandan, recently received \$100,000 from the ND Development Fund. Additional funds came from BNC National Bank Bismarck, the Lewis & Clark Regional Development Council, and an SBA guarantee. The company needs to expand its inventory to meet a growing clientele.

Company owners Mike and Julie Dolbec started Botanical Silk Accents in 1998. They manufacture, market, and sell artificial plants and trees to furniture stores, manufactured housing builders, and interior decorators. The company currently targets a 1,200-mile radius of Bismarck-Mandan, but also has clients in Canada and overseas.

With the Development Fund investment, the company is exploring contracts to market its products in all 50 states and eventually worldwide.

“We want to be able to keep the company in North Dakota,” said Mike Dolbec, a ND native. “Our goal is to become one

**“Without the involvement of the ND Development Fund to help secure short-term financing and long-term debt restructuring, our company’s growth would have been halted.”**

**Tom Erickson, president  
TSR Parts, Inc., Colgate, ND**

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