

Six tips for your next driving vacation

Modern professionals are working more and taking fewer days off each year. Allina Healthcare estimates that more than 765 million vacation days are unused by Americans each year. One of the reasons people often give for not vacationing is that travel costs too much. A 2024 summer travel report from Deloitte Insights found that after two years of strong gains in the travel sector, Americans were planning fewer trips in 2024 than a year prior, with travelers indicating the high cost of travel as their reasons for staying home.



on various travel services, such as car rentals or hotel stays. Members may be eligible for percentages off on meals at popular restaurant chains. Membership in these programs may help to save money.

• Get a vehicle checkup. If you'll be relying on your personal vehicle, then it is best to ensure that everything is in good working order. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration offers a Recalls Look-up Tool to check to see if your vehicle has any critical safety issues. It's also best to make sure that tires are in good shape and filled to the manufacturer's recommended pressure. Double check all fluids and get an oil change if it is close to the time of service.

• What's the destination? Some people find that road trips are fun even without a predetermined destination in mind. A handful of smaller stops can make for a fun, spontaneous trip. Maybe you want to drive a classic roadway like Route 66? Or take to a scenic coastal roadway like the Pacific Coast Highway or Route 1 along the eastern seaboard? Choose a destination that suits your budget.

• Consider a travel club membership. Membership in programs like AAA or AARP enable members to get discounts

• Plan early. Spring and summer are popular times to travel, particularly during weeks when children are off from school. It's important to book campgrounds or other lodging well in advance if you're planning to visit popular places like national parks and other tourist-heavy areas.

• Be realistic about mileage goals. Some drivers may be on autopilot and fall into commuting habits of trying to get from point A to point B in the least amount of time. Slowing down to take in the scenery can make a trip more enjoyable. AARP also says to be mindful of the personal needs and abilities of drivers. Sharing the load of driving can make it possible to cover more miles in less time.

• Hit a few quirky or local attractions. The best way to see the country is to take in what's unique along the way. Although a stop at a popular fast food chain might save time, it won't offer the same memories as visiting a local haunt or roadside attraction, such as Carhenge in Alliance, Nebraska.

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Tips to protect your hearing over the long haul

Hearing is easily taken for granted. Many people do not experience hearing loss as children or young adults, which perhaps creates a false sense of security that hearing will always be there. But studies have found that billions of people's hearing is under threat, and that threat could present itself a lot earlier than they realize.

According to the World Health Organization, 1.1 billion people under the age of 35 are at risk of noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL). And many are already confronting issues with their hearing, as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that one in five teens in the United States already has measurable hearing loss.

The Hearing Health Foundation notes that once hearing

is lost it cannot be recovered, which is why the organization is working diligently to change how people think about their hearing. Preventing hearing loss is part of the organization's mission, and it offers the following recommendations to individuals seeking to protect their long-term hearing.

• Move away from noise if possible. The term "noise" is unique because it can be hard to measure and is often seen as relative. Moving away from particularly noisy situations can prevent hearing loss, but how is one to know if a situation qualifies as noisy? The HHH notes there are apps, including the NIOSH SLM app, that measure noise levels and predict allowable exposure times. These features can indicate when a setting is too noisy and/or how

long a person can be in a situation before his or her hearing may be adversely affected.

• Lower the volume. It's simple, but effective. Lowering the volume on a car radio, television or personal device can protect long-term hearing. It's also beneficial to heed noise warnings on devices such as over-ear headphones. Such warnings may involve a beep and/or smartphone notification indicating that an attempt to raise the volume on headphones is exceeding the recommended maximum decibel levels. Some users may disregard those warnings, but those who want to protect their long-term hearing should make use of this often built-in feature and heed its warnings.

• Utilize noise-canceling devices. Noise-canceling capa-

bilities on over-ear headphones are perhaps more helpful than users realize. By blocking out all external sounds, noise-canceling headphones reduce the likelihood that users will increase the volume when listening to music, watching a show or movie or talking on a phone. Keeping volume low is a great way to protect long-term hearing.

• Schedule routine hearing exams. Hearing exams should be part of everyone's preventive health care routine. The HHH notes that regular hearing tests can help to uncover early hearing loss. When individuals learn they have hearing loss, they're more inclined to take steps to prevent further deterioration.

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OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS BENSON COUNTY NORTH DAKOTA April 1, 2025

The Benson County commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, April 1, 2025 at 8 a.m. in the commissioner room of the Benson County Courthouse, Minnewaukan, ND. Commissioners present: Dick Horner, Doris M. Griffin, Ron Stadium, David Davidson and Tammy Kuk. The meeting was called to order by Chair Stadium. Other people present: Kelly Glover, Benson County Farmers Press; James P. Wang, Benson County state's attorney; Ethan Rode, Benson County sheriff, and Scott Todahl, DEM and highway superintendent.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

A motion was made by Horner, seconded by Griffin, to approve the minutes from the regular meeting of March 18, 2025. All members voted yes. The motion carried.

Scott Todahl, DEM and highway superintendent, met with the board to give a report for the highway department. He stated a review will be done on beavers causing damage to roadways. Todahl stated his department will start placing road signs when the weather permits. Davidson discussed the amount of graveling that will be done in 2025 with Todahl.

State's Attorney Wang discussed the easement for the Flora curve project. The property owners were questioning whether or not the property can come off of the tax rolls. Randy Thompson, tax director, came to the meeting. It was concluded to review this issue at a future meeting to get more input from State's Attorney Wang.

Todahl gave a report for the DEM department.

Sheriff Ethan Rode gave his sheriff's report. He stated Deputy Brorby will be graduating from the Law Enforcement Training Academy toward the end of April 2025.

Emily Yri, clerk of court, came to the meeting. She stated she was having issues with her camera system in her office and questioned if she could be added as an authorized user. The conclusion of the board was to have the auditor's office continue to be the authorized user for NDTC.

Rhonda Allery, MLHSZ director, met with the board via Teams regarding repayment of money to Ramsey County for rental amounts paid on behalf of Benson County in the estimated amount of \$30,600. The board concluded to revisit this issue at the next meeting when more information is available from Allery.

The board reviewed a contract for cleaning along with a job description for the BCEC. A motion was made by Griffin, seconded by Kuk, to approve the contract for cleaning and job description and have the chair sign the documents. All members voted yes. The motion carried.

Davidson left the meeting at 9:25 a.m.

The board reviewed a quote from BEK Communications regarding commissioner room livestreaming. The board concluded to get more information prior to proceeding on this issue.

An email regarding the mini boiler removed from the BCEC was presented to the board. The board concluded to hold off advertising for bids as there may be additional items to bid out. Horner suggested keeping the mini boiler in the event it can be used in the new courthouse garage.

Horner discussed the bids received for entryway work for the Little Bobcats Daycare along with the door installation and new windows at the BCEC. The board concluded to proceed with getting additional estimates regarding these projects.

The board reviewed an estimate for the ramp repair at the Social Services Admin Building in Minnewaukan. A motion was made by Horner, seconded by Griffin, to accept the bid and proceed with the repair. All members voted yes. The motion carried.

The auditor discussed the information received from Susan Fossen, Benson County Transportation director, indicating that volunteers cannot be bus drivers for her department and that she has been driving the bus and is currently keeping up with ridership.

State's Attorney Wang discussed the issue of the SAAF program closing and what will be done with the \$12,000 monetary contribution given by Benson County.

The board reviewed and discussed the monthly county bills. A motion was made by Kuk, seconded by Horner, to pay all county-approved bills. All

members voted yes. The motion carried unanimously. The following bills were paid:

Visa	\$4,233.70
Capital One	78.72
Capital One Trade	
Credit	15.71
CenDak Cooperative	
--Maddock	2,742.04
GF Welding & Machine	182.72
H2O, Inc.	1,350.00
Linde Gas & Equip	432.85
Mac's Hardware	211.82
Nodak Electric Co-op	456.24
North Central	
International, LLC	38.75
Northern Plains Elec.	66.00
Otter Tail Power Co.	525.86
Pomp's Tire Service	258.50
BC Fair Association	224.38
Bravera Bank--Visa	285.87
CenDak Cooperative	
--Maddock	6,731.57
CenDak Cooperative	
--Maddock	1,079.01
Fireside Office	
Solutions	1,230.00
Minnkota	60.18
ND Telephone Co.	801.57
Northern Plains Elec.	82.48
Otter Tail Power Co.	2,987.10
The Sidwell Company	21,178.90
CenDak Cooperative	
--Maddock	527.95
Dukes Car Wash	
& Detail Center, Inc.	199.96
Verizon	412.81
Otter Tail Power Co.	33.58
Tim Finley	150.00
Aflac	1,276.21
Blue Cross Blue Shield	
of ND	3,140.60
Colonial Insurance	368.64
First Unum Life	
Insurance Co.	364.95
National Life Group	
One	450.00
Gessner Iron Works,	
LLC	563.30
ND DOT	582.46
Newby's Ace Hardware	378.04
Otter Tail Power Co.	439.30
AT&T Mobility	406.88
Ad-Scene, LLC	2,155.00
CenDak Cooperative	
--Maddock	1,094.06
HACTC	330.00
Kiesler Police Supply	757.65
Newby's Ace Hardware	489.73
Farmers Union Oil Co.	1,130.61
Verizon	412.79
BCTOA	725.00
NDTOA	6,075.00
Gaffaney's of Minot	1,754.48
James Wang	854.67

Michele Anderson	150.00
Renee Haagenson	1,836.00
Travis Carlson	400.00
City of Esmond	25.00
NAPA Auto Parts	46.48
Advanced Business	
Methods	287.05
ArcaSearch, LLC	296.75
BC Farmers Press	542.25
Information Technology	
Dept.	1,075.80
Information Technology	
Dept.	225.35
Jayla Smith	25.00
LR E-911 Authority	14,735.06
LR Law Enforcement	
Center	17,855.25
Matthew Bender	
& Co., Inc.	32.43
NDACO Resource	
Group	2,789.71
PS Garage Doors	2,241.32
SAAF	12,000.00
Service Tire	549.42
Thomson Reuters	
--West	219.97
Tasc	2,646.72
Nationwide Retirement	
Solution	732.00
ND Public Employees	
Retirement	24,786.81
City of Maddock	148.69
Dakota Implement	1,546.88
Minnewaukan City	76.50
Wind Engineering	3,787.50
BC Farmers Press	52.00
City of Leeds	28.00
Advanced Business	
Methods	412.87
City of Maddock	1,038.14
Dick Horner	512.98
Floodwater Properties	500.00
Laura Winslow	338.08
Maddock Business	
& Technology Ctr.	150.00
Minnewaukan City	221.50
Minnewaukan City	132.75
Spirit Lake Tribe	2,500.00
Sunset Law	
Enforcement	67.93
BC Farmers Press	20.94
ND Public Employees	
Retirement	32,394.02
ND State Tax	
Commissioner	1,201.00
Dist. to Entities	548,542.17
March 2025 NET PAYROLL	
Co. Road	\$39,435.78
General/DEM/Co. Agt.	93,852.63
A motion to adjourn was made at 10 a.m.	
Bonnie Erickson	
Benson County Auditor	
Ron Stadium	
Chair	

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OBERON SCHOOL BOARD March 10, 2025

A regular meeting of the Oberon School Board was held March 10, 2025. The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. Roll call was taken. Present were Faron Stensland, Robby Mock, Crystal Dubois, Bobby Stensland and Kim Krebsbach; Superintendent Jordan Brown; Dean of Students Brian Morie; and consultant Wayne Trotter. Business Manager Maria Dunlap was present by MS Teams.

Dubois moved to approve the agenda with additions. The motion was seconded by Krebsbach and approved by F. Stensland, Mock, Dubois, B. Stensland and Krebsbach.

Dubois moved to approve the consent agenda consisting of Feb. 10, 2025 minutes, list of bills and February financial reports. The motion was seconded by Mock and approved by F. Stensland, Mock, Dubois, B. Stensland and Krebsbach.

Discussion was held on teacher contracts.

Discussion was held on health insurance costs.

Annual financial audit was not received yet.

Superintendent's Report -- Student progress reports; professional development day; upcoming state assessments; received positive review on completed Cognia review; student engagement results; Dr. Small's Native Pride trauma training April 8-10; gym ceiling lights need wire protection; possible purchase of walk-in refrigerator for lunch room kitchen; Oberon Elementary School has one student advancing to state spelling bee and one alternate.

Trotter gave a Legislature update. The next regular meeting is scheduled for April 14, 2025 at 5:30 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Maria Dunlap Business Manager

NXKEM USA, LLC	949.50
OTC Brands	178.67
Otter Tail Power Co.	1,387.43
Paul's C-Store	3,718.76
Pye Barker	514.00
School Specialty	74.01
Schwan Oil Co.	56.00
Spirit Lake Grocery	27.57
Survey Monkey	468.00
Tap House	75.83
Thunder Taxi	55.14
Trotter, Wayne	1,034.00
United Airlines	1,069.32
US Foods	3,487.91
UVA Darden School	
Foundation	12,000.00
Vestis	567.50
View, The	769.25
Walmart	815.13

Krebsbach moved to approve the superintendent's evaluation with a satisfactory rating. The motion was seconded by Dubois and approved by F. Stensland, Mock, Dubois, B. Stensland and Krebsbach.

Discussion was held on teacher contracts.

Discussion was held on health insurance costs.

Annual financial audit was not received yet.

Superintendent's Report -- Student progress reports; professional development day; upcoming state assessments; received positive review on completed Cognia review; student engagement results; Dr. Small's Native Pride trauma training April 8-10; gym ceiling lights need wire protection; possible purchase of walk-in refrigerator for lunch room kitchen; Oberon Elementary School has one student advancing to state spelling bee and one alternate.

Trotter gave a Legislature update. The next regular meeting is scheduled for April 14, 2025 at 5:30 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Maria Dunlap Business Manager

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING LEEDS CITY COUNCIL January 8, 2025

A regular meeting of the Leeds City Council was called to order by Mayor Nick Parslow on Wednesday, Jan. 8, 2025 at 6 p.m. at Leeds City Hall. Present were council members Kyle Nelsen, Tony Gratton and Patrick Streyle. Also present were city employees Al Lundstrom and Gina Harkness. Council member Kris Larson was absent. Karl Follman joined the meeting for a short time.

Sheriff Report -- The Benson County sheriff did not attend the meeting but provided a report with the December patrol report for the city of Leeds.

Public Works -- A motion was made by Gratton, seconded by Streyle, to replace the heaters at the water plant. The motion carried unanimously.

Nelsen made a motion to accept the high-flow brush mower quote from Butler. The motion was seconded by Gratton. The motion carried unanimously.

Streyle made a motion to accept the public works superintendent's report; Gratton seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Financials -- A motion was made by Gratton, seconded by Streyle, to accept the employees' timesheets. The motion carried unanimously.

Nelsen made a motion, seconded by Streyle, to accept the financial report. The motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Gratton, seconded by Streyle, to approve the minutes with corrections. The motion carried unanimously.

New Business -- A motion was made by Gratton, seconded by Nelsen, to remove Kari Follman's name from the bank information. The motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Nelsen, seconded by Streyle, to approve payroll and accounts payable. The motion carried unanimously. The bills were as follows:

Banyon Data Systems	4,939.50
BC Sheriff's Dept.	600.00
Bobcat-Interstate	
Billing Service	5,612.86
Blue Cross Blue Shield	982.51
CenDak Cooperative	780.38
Cindy Ritterman	150.00
Diane Hoffman	200.60
First Dist. Health Unit	30.00
Gessner Iron Works,	
LLC	36.60
Hawkins	1,382.67
Leeds Airport Authority	445.01
Mac's Hardware	10.00
NCB Electric, LLC	1,507.81
ND Job Service	113.50
ND Tax Commissioner	111.72
NDTelephone Co.	252.12
Northern Plains Elec.	509.54
NRG Technology	
Services	1,208.52
Otter Tail Power Co.	2,329.28
Paulson Supply	77.54
Payroll	20,032.58
Plunkett's Pest Control	87.17
Quill Office Supply	81.17
Riteway	132.82
Solotek, Inc.	1,500.00
Verizon	593.98
Visa	378.33

Waste Management 5,641.11

A motion was made by Nelsen, seconded by Streyle, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

Gina Harkness City Auditor

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING LEEDS CITY COUNCIL February 12, 2025

A regular meeting of the Leeds City Council was called to order by Mayor Nick Parslow on Wednesday, Feb. 12, 2025 at 6:06 p.m. at Leeds City Hall. Present were council members: Kyle Nelsen, Tony Gratton, Patrick Streyle and Kris Larson. Also present were city employees Al Lundstrom and Gina Harkness. Hendrik Pretorius and Brent Johnson (NDTC representative) joined the meeting for a brief period.

Sheriff Report -- A motion was made by Nelsen, seconded by Gratton, to accept the Benson County sheriff's report. The motion carried unanimously.

Public Hearing -- Streyle made a motion to purchase an additional camera and conference phone from NDTC and to enroll in their voice messaging alert program. The motion was seconded by Nelsen. The motion carried unanimously.

Public Works -- Nelsen made a motion, seconded by Streyle, to contact ND Human Services about the living conditions of a house in the city limits. The motion carried unanimously.

Nelsen made a motion to not install a new water meter until the home's resident had paid for it before installation. The motion was seconded by Larson. The motion carried unanimously.

Streyle made a motion to accept the public works superintendent's report; Gratton seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Financials -- A motion was made by Gratton, seconded by Larson, to accept employees' timesheets. The motion carried unanimously.

Larson made a motion, seconded by Streyle, to accept the financial report. The motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Streyle, seconded by Larson, to approve the minutes with corrections. The motion carried unanimously.

Old Business -- Streyle presented Resolution 08-02-2023-01 to alter the city fee schedule. Kris Larson moved for its adoption. The previous fee schedule was last updated on Sept. 11, 2024 and took effect on Sept. 18, 2024. Be it resolved by the Leeds City Council, deeming it necessary to add to the city fee schedule: Illegal disposal fine \$250. City of Leeds residents will get one warning; after that they will receive a \$250 fine for every time they illegally dispose of items in the dumpsters. The motion for the adoption of the foregoing resolution was duly seconded by Councilman Tony Gratton, and upon vote being taken thereon, the following voted in favor thereof: Kris Larson, Kyle Nelsen, Patrick Streyle and Tony Gratton. No members voted

against the resolution. Whereupon the resolution was declared duly passed and adopted and was signed by the mayor and attested by the city auditor.

New Business -- A motion was made by Streyle, seconded by Larson, to have Kearyn Nelsen apply for a forestry grant for the city of Leeds and to have the city enroll in GrantFinder from ND League of Cities. Nelsen abstained; voting in favor were Streyle, Larson and Gratton. No member voted against the motion. The motion carried.

Larson made a motion, seconded by Streyle, to approve building permit 1180 submitted by Mary Schuler for building a garage on her property. The motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Gratton and seconded by Larson to enroll in the Demand Deposit Marketplace Program with Bravera Bank. Streyle abstained, and Nelsen, Larson and Gratton voted in favor. No member voted against the motion. The motion carried.

A motion was made by Streyle, seconded by Larson, to approve payroll and accounts payable. The motion carried unanimously. The bills were as follows:

Ace Hardware	\$18.99
BC Farmers Press	52.00
BC Sheriff's Dept.	600.00
BC Treasurer	1,171.13
Blue Cross Blue Shield	982.51
CenDak Cooperative	620.17
Central Painting	
& Sandblasting	1,800.00
Farmers Union Oil Co.	
--York	426.38
First Dist. Health Unit	30.00
Gessner Iron Works,	
LLC	131.28
Gibbins Law Office	620.00
Hawkins	381.64
Kurt Wensmann	200.00
LR Corporation	40.00
Leeds Airport Authority	17,341.49
Mac's Hardware	105.81
NCB Electric, LLC	5,032.29
ND League of Cities	753.00
ND Telephone Co.	251.94
Northern Plains Elec.	623.96
Otter Tail Power Co.	2,919.43
Payroll	11,893.60
Plunkett's Pest Control	139.23
Quill Office Supply	79.57
Verizon	145.97
Visa	664.83
Waste Management	5,641.11

A motion was made by Larson, seconded by Nelsen, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

Gina Harkness City Auditor

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING LEEDS CITY COUNCIL March 12, 2025

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