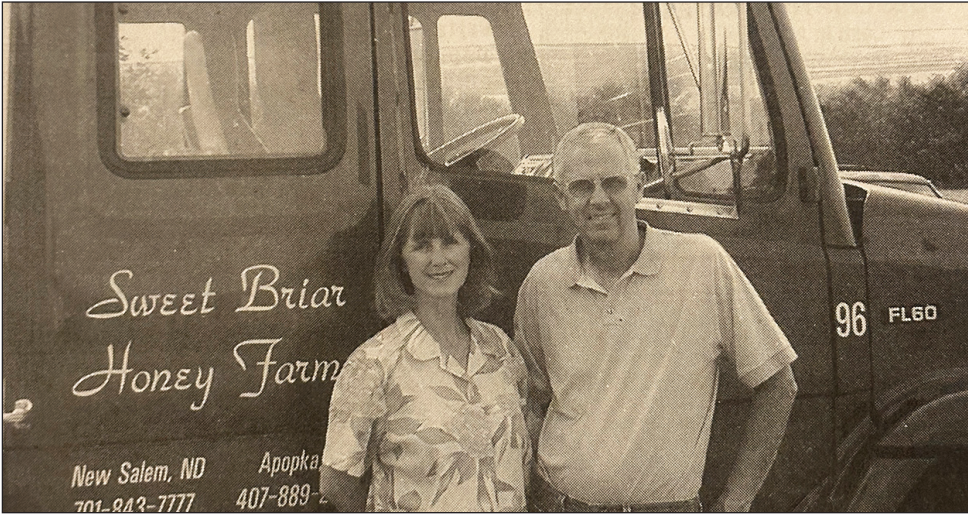


A Look Back... 25 Years Ago



LAST DAY IS SEPT. 10 After 34 years of business here, Karen and Tom Emde have sold their honey business, Sweet Briar Honey Farm, and will operate on a smaller scale at their home in Apopka, FL.
New Salem Journal

Emdes’ Sell Bee Business; Plan To Return To Florida
Sweet Briar Honey Farms is a business that has spanned 34 years in New Salem. That’s 34 years of operating two bee keeping businesses 2,000 miles apart. Tom and Karen Emde first began keeping bees in New Salem in 1966, and the business, operated between New Salem and Apopka, FL, has been a family enterprise. September 10, though, marks the last official day of business for the Emde’s here. Tom cited health concerns as the main reason for their decision to sell their business here. “I had heart surgery last year which precipitated this decision to sell the business here. It’s very stressful trying to operate two businesses 2,000 miles apart.”

Tom and Karen plan to keep a smart part of the business to operate in Apopka. The Emde’s have sold their business here to John and Trudy Gilbert, a German couple from Saskatchewan, Canada who winter their bees in California. Tom grew up in the bee business, so it was just natural that he follow his father’s footsteps and get in the business. The couple began keeping bees in New Salem in 1966 and moved here in 1972. The Emde’s became very familiar with many of the people in and around New Salem when Tom taught fourth and fifth grade at Prairie View Elementary here in 1973 and 1974. In 1976 Sweetbriar Honey Farms was moved to its present location about 7 miles east of New Salem on Old Highway 10. In all the years they have

been doing business in New Salem, the Emde’s have also become familiar with farm families from the Heart River to Beulah and have been working with about 40 farmers. During much of their 34 years of business, the Emde’s two sons were also a part of the business, from little boys to college-age, but neither chose to go into the bee keeping business. Tom and Karen will make their home full-time in Apopka, where Tom grew up, a very agricultural area known for beef production, citrus fruits and indoor foliage. Both Tom and Karen agree that they couldn’t have been happier with their location here in New Salem. “The farmers in the area, the community and businesses have been so good to us and our business in the 34

years we’ve been doing business here,” Tom said. “We couldn’t have had a more receptive community to work with.” Karen said they will also miss their home here and the North Dakota countryside. “This part of North Dakota is beautiful, and I’ll especially miss the wind and the prairie around New Salem.”

Almont Dairy Farmers Dump Milk in Protest

Many dairy farmers around the area are feeling the effects of declining milk prices, which have reached a 26-year low, and in protest of the market prices, nine producers across North Dakota joined some 2,600 dairy farmers in 22 states and dumped their milk on Monday, Sept. 4, which was dubbed “White River Day.” Among those producers were Jim and Linda Erhardt, who have operated a dairy farm for some 20 years in rural Almont. “It all went down the drain,” Linda told the Journal on Tuesday. They weren’t alone in their effort, though only nine of the state’s 900 dairy operations signed up with the effort. Linda said when all was said and done, 850 pounds of milk went down the drain at their farm. At the \$9.50/hundred-weight being paid by some creameries, that’s a far cry from prices a year and a half ago.

Zone

Continued from page 1

expanded businesses, 21 new businesses, and \$30 million in private investment. It has also resulted in a massive 109.08% increase in assessed values, from \$9.9 million to \$28.6 million over 2005 to 2024.

Under North Dakota state law, the initial lifetime of a Renaissance Zone cannot go beyond 15 years, and the Mandan zone previously received an extension from 2020-2025 upon reaching its limit. However, a recent proposal passed during the state’s 69th Legislative Assembly featured amendments that allowed renewal periods of ten years instead of five. As such, the new proposal aims to extend the zone’s lifespan until 2035 at the very least, in the hopes of creating a stronger and more modern Mandan for present and future residents.

The current program was set to expire on August 31st, pressing Business Development and Communications Director Madison Cermak to seek an extension of the plan. During a meeting on Tuesday, August 5th, she presented a PowerPoint to the Mandan City Commission requesting their continued support.

“The creation of the Renaissance Zone was an effort to provide some assistance and incentives to commercial and residential property owners, specifically in and around the city’s core, to encourage improvements and redevelopment for the attraction of businesses and residents. The extension is simply to allow the incentives to be available for another ten years.”

When changes to their program must be made, Mandan staff will review all properties in the Renaissance Zone’s boundaries (399 as of this article’s publication) to determine which areas require the most

redevelopment. The Renaissance Zone committee also frequently reviews the boundaries to recommend properties to be included or excluded, as well as to decide to make certain areas of the city into ‘islands’ that receive additional support. This careful review ensures that every dollar that flows into the area is used as effectively as possible, and that the committees can rapidly respond to any changes in their plan.

“The continuation of the RZ keeps in place one of the tools to assist redevelopment and new development in a community,” said Cermak. “Economic development is a dynamic and ever-changing process, and needs to be flexible as the needs of businesses are very different. All of our incentive programs are regularly reviewed and updated as the economic environment changes.”

The City Commission has already approved the extension and its accompanying tax credits, but there are still multiple steps that must be completed before the proposal can be fully approved. The Department of Commerce must not only provide an updated development plan for the Renaissance Zone, but also a full explanation of why the expansion is necessary, the results of the recent public hearing, and letters of support from both the Mandan School District and Morton County as a whole.

For more information on the Renaissance Zone and applications for projects, visit the program page on the City of Mandan’s website. Further questions can also be asked by contacting Mandan’s Business Development office at 701-66-3485, or by emailing bizdev@cityofmandan.com.

Morton County Commission Proceedings

MORTON COUNTY COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS REGULAR MEETING JULY 22nd, 2025, 5:30 p.m.
Morton County Courthouse
The Morton County Commission Regular Meeting was called to order on July 22, 2025 at 5:30 PM by Chairman Boehm at the Morton County Courthouse, 210 Second Avenue NW, Mandan, North Dakota. Others present were Commissioners Zachmeier, Buckley, Morrell and Tokach and Auditor Rhone. Also present were States Attorney Koppy and Sheriff Kirchmeier.
Tokach moved and Morrell seconded to approve the agenda as amended. All voting aye, motion carried.
Zachmeier moved and Tokach seconded to approve the minutes of the July 10, 2025 regular meeting. All voting aye, motion carried.
Zachmeier moved and Morrell seconded to approve bills and payroll and to forward a bill

from Walk n Roll, Havre MT to the Road Commission for further review and scrutiny. On a roll call vote, all voting aye, motion carried.
Melanie Hanson from CENTRE gave an update and presented a request for 2026 funding.
Morrell moved and Tokach seconded to grant a letter of support requested by Luke Schafer, ND Country Fest for the 2025 North Dakota Destination Development Grant. All voting aye, motion carried.
Chair Boehm opened the public hearing for the 2026 Western Plains Public Health at 6:07 PM. Erin Ourada, Western Plains Health presented the 2026 budget.
Chair Boehm closed the public hearing at 6:08 P.M.
Debbie Lafferty, Morton County Council of Aging, presented the 2026 budget.
Barb Sandstrom, Morton County Library, presented the 2026 budget.
Bill Robinson, Lower Heart Water District, presented 2026

budget.
Morrell moved and Buckley seconded to approve abatement #7131. All voting aye, motion carried.
Buckley moved and Tokach seconded to approve abatement #7132. All voting aye, motion carried.
Morrell moved and Zachmeier seconded to approve the authorization to have the Morton County Commission Chairman Boehm sign the proposed proclamation designating August 2025 as Emergency Management Awareness Month. All voting aye, motion carried.
Morrell moved and Buckley seconded to authorize \$850,000 for the Law Enforcement Center improvement project to replace generator, repair concrete and replace boilers using the remainder of the half-cent sales tax collections. On roll call vote, all voting aye, motion carried.
Morrell moved and Buckley seconded to amend the motion to move forward on the Law Enforcement Center improvement projects contingent on the

NDCC requirements on the bidding process. On roll call vote on the amendment, all voting aye, motion carried.
Chase Lingle, Assistant States Attorney presented 2026 budget.
Morrell moved and Buckley seconded to adopt the policy Public Comment - Regular Meetings of a Public Entity as presented. On roll call vote, voting aye Morrell, Buckley, Zachmeier and Boehm voting nay Tokach, motion carried.
The total of all county funds expended from July 11, 2025 through July 22, 2025 equals \$1,006,539.38.
A detailed list of funds expended by check is available for public inspection anytime during regular business hours at the Morton County Auditor’s Office.
Morrell moved and Tokach seconded to adjourned the meeting at 8:57 PM.

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Tell them you saw it in the Morton County News Journal



photo |Brendan DeLuca-Rodenberg
DOWNTOWN MANDAN A portion of Mandan’s Main Street, and also part of the city’s Renaissance Zone.