

Women’s Way, a source for free breast cancer screenings

Survivor reminds women that regular mammograms save lives

On National Mammography Day, which was observed Oct. 17, and Breast Cancer Awareness month being recognized this October, a breast cancer survivor has joined North Dakota Health and Human Services and Women’s Way in reminding women that mammograms are key to early detection, which saves lives.

A breast cancer diagnosis in 2022 blindsided retired nurse Sharon Whitmer and her family. Despite the shock, Whitmer reflected on her dedication to getting routine mammograms that potentially saved her life.

“I realized that if I had not been faithfully getting my mammograms, that it probably would have been missed,” said Whitmer.

Women’s Way, N.D.’s breast and cervical cancer early detection program, emphasizes the importance of getting routine mammograms. This screening may find cancer early when it is most treatable.

In 2024 about 76% of women ages 40-74 in N.D. reported having a mammogram within the past two years, according to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System survey.

Women earning \$50,000 or more a year screen at a higher rate (79%) compared to women earning less than \$25,000 (60.9%). Uninsured women also screen at a lower rate.

Because of Women’s Way, uninsured and lower income women have access to free breast cancer screenings and can feel empowered to make routine screenings a priority in their lives.

Women in North Dakota who need help paying for a mammogram can visit hhs.nd.gov/womensway or call 800-449-6636 to learn more and be connected with a Women’s Way representative in their area.

In addition to offering free mammograms and transportation help to those who qualify, Women’s Way works with partner clinics to implement evidence-based interventions to improve screening rates for all women in N.D.

The United States Preventive Services Task Force recommends that women ages 40-74 and are at average risk of breast cancer get a mammogram every two years. Women with a family history or other risk factors should talk to their health care provider about which breast cancer screening tests are right for them and how often to screen.

While there is no sure way to prevent breast cancer, individuals can reduce the risk of breast cancer by:

- Limiting alcohol consumption
- Quitting smoking or tobacco use
- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Staying physically active
- Eating a balanced diet
- Limiting the dose and duration of combined hormone replacement therapy
- Getting regular medical check-ups and recommended breast cancer screenings

To learn more about reducing the risk of breast cancer, visit hhs.nd.gov/health/women/womens-way/tips-reduce-your-risk.

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‘HUNTING’ CON’T FROM PAGE 3

Dress accordingly

In addition to wearing blaze orange, hunters should be dressed for the weather to avoid frostbite and hypothermia. Layering clothing can be helpful, as layers can be taken off or added to stay comfortable.

Be sure of your target

The FWS advises certifying a target before taking a shot. This can help ensure people, pets or other animals are not in the line of fire.

Recognize hunting seasons and lands

Non-hunters must practice safety during hunting season as well, even if they are not participating. FWS advises nature lovers to learn where and when hunting is taking place and plan recreational activities based on this information. Staying out of designated hunting areas is essential. It’s also important for non-hunters to choose bright clothing to be visible when in the woods. A brightly colored bandana or piece of fabric tied around a dog’s neck will help to protect the animal. Sticking to trails also improves the safety of the public and will reduce the likelihood of entering designated hunting areas.

Treat every firearm as if it is loaded

Hunters should treat every firearm as if it is loaded. The muzzle should be pointed in a safe direction, and the only time a finger should be on the trigger is when one is ready to shoot. Never assume a firearm is unloaded.

Fall is prime season for hunting, and hunters and non-hunters can benefit from a refresher course in hunting safety.

‘NFIB’ CON’T FROM PAGE 2

More firms reported declining sales than reported gains. The net percent of owners expecting higher real sales volumes fell 4 points from August to a net 8% (seasonally adjusted).

The net percent of owners reporting inventory gains rose 3 points to a net negative 3%, seasonally adjusted. Not seasonally adjusted, 10% reported increases in stocks, and 12% reported reductions. A net 1% (seasonally adjusted) of owners plan inventory investment in the coming months, unchanged from August.

Price increases remain above the monthly average of a net 13%, suggesting continued inflationary pressure. Unadjusted, 33% of owners reported higher average selling prices and 10% reported lower average prices. Seasonally adjusted, a net 31% plan to increase prices in the next three months, up five points from August.

The frequency of reports of positive profit trends improved 3 points from August to a net negative 16% (seasonally adjusted). September’s reading was the highest since December 2021. Among owners reporting lower profits, 33% blamed weaker sales, 17% cited the rise in the cost of materials, 10% cited price change for their product(s) or service(s) and 9% cited labor costs. Among owners reporting higher profits, 58% credited sales volumes, 21% cited usual seasonal change, and 6% cited higher selling prices.

A net 7% of owners reported that their last loan was harder to get than in previous attempts, up 4 points from August and the highest reading of the year. Furthermore, a net 7% reported paying a higher rate on their most recent loan and the average rate paid on short maturity loans was 8.8% in September, up 0.7 points from August. Twenty-six percent of all owners reported borrowing on a regular basis, up 3 points from August.

Owners’ overall assessment of their business’ health was generally unchanged. When asked to rate

the overall health of their business, 11% of owners reported excellent (down 3 points), and 57% reported good (up 3 points). Twenty-seven percent reported the health of their business was fair (unchanged) and 4% reported poor (unchanged).

In September, 11% (seasonally adjusted) of owners reported that it is a good time to expand their business, down 3 points from August. This is, comparatively, a relatively weak reading.

Eighteen percent of small business owners reported taxes as their single most important problem, up 1 point from August and ranking as the top problem alongside labor quality. The percent of small business owners reporting government regulations and red tape as their single most important problem fell 3 points to 6%.

The percent of small business owners reporting poor sales as their top business problem remained at 10%. Five percent reported competition from large businesses as their single most important problem, unchanged from August.

In September, 8% reported the cost or availability of insurance as their single most important problem, down 1 point from August. Four percent reported that financing and interest rates was their top business problem in September, unchanged from August.

The NFIB Research Center has collected Small Business Economic Trends data with quarterly surveys since the fourth quarter of 1973 and monthly surveys since 1986. Survey respondents are randomly drawn from NFIB’s membership. The report is released on the second Tuesday of each month. This survey was conducted in September 2025.

Students invited to help shape N.D.’s transportation future

The North Dakota Department of Transportation is seeking input from students across the state through its Transportation Connection Update: 2025–2050 Young Driver & Student Survey. The short, anonymous survey helps planners understand how students travel—whether by car, bus, bike, or on foot—and what improvements could make transportation safer and more accessible for all.

School leaders are encouraged to share the survey link with their students to ensure young voices are represented in North Dakota’s long-term transportation planning.

The survey is expected to only take five to 10 minutes to complete and can be completed at https://hdr.jotform.com/252155439356865?utm_source=chatgpt.com

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