Location information can be found at: www.ndsbdc.org

MISSION
We help North Dakotans to start, manage, and grow their businesses.

VISION
We are North Dakota’s collaborative small business development resource.

CORE VALUES
Collaboration-Accountability-Teamwork-Service-Professionalism-Integrity
As most who receive or read our Annual Report know, the North Dakota Small Business Development Network is a partnership between the federal government (U.S. Small Business Administration), State of North Dakota (Commerce Department) and North Dakota University System (University of North Dakota) that provides training and technical assistance to entrepreneurs and small businesses across the entire state. As a statewide partnership, programs and network, we serve all 53 counties of and have clients in all 53 counties of our state and produce significant benefits and impacts by our nationally-accredited network and network staff. Our mission, vision, values and 2019 impacts are contained in this report.

When I became State Director in 2015, we began providing monthly reports to our primary stakeholder group (our federal, state and university funding partners, network staff and State Advisory Board) and producing annual reports like this one. We began doing this in a spirit of accountability, transparency and collaboration and to share our activities and accomplishments broadly with our primary stakeholder group and our clients, referral sources and others interested in our important work, including members of our state Congressional delegation, state legislature and local/regional program sponsors.

Federal mandates for federal SBDC networks include a requirement of state-and-local matching funds for federal dollars provided to operate and a requirement that our confidential business advising services be provided free to eligible clients. Clients are entrepreneurs and small businesses across the state, and referrals come from lenders, economic developers and other clients who have benefited from our free business advising services. Clients can self-refer on our website, but others can refer them for service by visiting the home page of our website, www.ndsbdc.org.

We appreciate our many important relationships and are proud to serve our entire state from geographically-dispersed service centers across the state. We are also grateful for the financial support we receive from our federal, state and university funding partners and from a variety of local/regional program sponsors that are all listed on page five of this annual report. As our state’s comprehensive small business development resource, we are committed to prudent and frugal use of all funds that enable and support our programs, network and important work and believe that collaboration among our programs, partners, referral sources and others is beneficial to all.

I am retiring after five years of dynamic and dedicated service to our programs, network, stakeholders and state and appreciate everyone who has been supportive of our efforts. Please continue that support in the future knowing that ‘we serve our state’ and help to grow our state and local economies.

David K. Martin
State Director
**IMPACTS**

- **1,062** Individual Clients Advised
- **5,834** Hours of Advising
- **$54,924,162** Client Capital Formation
- **91** New Businesses Created
- **3,607** Jobs Supported
- **585** Training Attendees

**CUSTOMER DEMOGRAPHICS**

**BUSINESS STATUS**

- **551** Not Yet in Business
- **24** Not Yet in Business - Purchase
- **449** In Business
- **28** In Business - Workout/Turnaround
- **5** In Business - Selling Existing Business
- **4** In Business - New Mkts/Expansion/Improvements
- **1** Closed Business

**INDUSTRY SEGMENT**

1. Other Services (110)
2. Retail Trade (91)
3. Accommodation & Food (59)
4. Technical Services (52)
5. Transportation & Warehousing (34)
6. Construction (31)
7. Manufacturing (30)
8. Health Care (29)
9. Arts, Entertainment & Rec (19)
10. Education Services (14)
11. Ag, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting (9)
12. Real Estate (7)

*Only top 12 categories displayed due to space limitations*

**GENDER**

- **565** Male
- **466** Female

**RACE / ETHNICITY**

- Asian
- Hispanic
- Black
- Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- Native American
- White
- No Race Response
MANDAN – Rob Knoll saw the need for a full-service, family-friendly restaurant in Mandan and took advantage of the opportunity with a franchise. Plans began in the spring of 2017 and Mandan Bennigan’s opened its doors for business August 20, 2018.

Knoll had worked in community development for several years and never dreamed of being a restaurant owner. However, he wanted to be able to go out with his family for dinner or have a place to go eat some wings and watch a sporting event, without having to drive over to Bismarck to do it.

When first developing the idea, Knoll shared with Monte Stein, a friend with decades of restaurant business experience.

“It was kind of meant to be,” said Knoll. “When I told Monte, he said if he ever opened another business it would be a restaurant in that area.”

An off-the-cuff Facebook message to another longtime friend is what led to the choice of Bennigan’s franchise. Turns out, the corporate owner grew up with and was classmates with Knoll from grade school all the way through college. He sent a message saying they should bring the franchise to Mandan and that’s how this all got started.

Knoll was familiar with the ND SBDC from his time with Lewis & Clark Development Group, however he was also advised by the City of Mandan and other partners to seek our assistance. He went with the hope to get some advice and historical information on restaurant development and expenses.

Knoll met with Nancy Krogen-Abel, long-time center director in Bismarck. They began with work on a detailed business plan and worked through several versions of financial projections so they could work with lenders on the best options and programs to use for financing.

“Nancy is very supportive and knowledgeable – it’s the first place I knew I needed to go,” said Knoll. “I joke that we went through about 55 versions of the pro forma. One detail would change and it meant everything changed. It got to be kind of a joke between me and Nancy.”

“She even questions some of the numbers I provided, thinking they were too low. And she was right. She was very helpful throughout the process.”

In the end, the incentive package was put together in partnership with the City of Mandan, Lewis & Clark Development and the Bank of North Dakota. It included a tax rebate of 1% of sales proceeds for the first 60 months and an interest rate buydown.

“The incentives and buydown were really key in our plans and a foundation for success,” said Knoll.

As with others across the state, their most challenging issue has been labor, but they have the advantage with their location. A portion of the restaurant labor force that fills the jobs across the greater Bismarck-Mandan area lives in Mandan so it was nice for several of them to take jobs closer to home. This Bennigan’s location is the only franchise in Mandan.

“North Dakota has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country and attaining and retaining employees and managers that are dependable and motivated can be very difficult.”

Mandan Bennigan’s is approaching the one and a half year mark and has gotten great support and feedback from the community.

“We hear every day from happy customers and from people that are so glad to have us in Mandan. It’s been a huge learning curve for me having not been in the (restaurant) business before, but customer service is customer service.”

“Talk to as many organizations similar to what you are developing as possible, but also be sure to work with professionals like the SBDC. We would not have been able to do it without their help.”
BOWMAN - The rural grocery industry is an ever changing and increasingly challenging industry to be a part of and Kelly and Kim Kessler have proven they are up for that challenge.

The Kessler’s enjoy small business ownership and say, “It offers satisfaction and a feeling of accomplishment. Enjoying your career is important, and by running your own business you have control of over that.”

They saw an opportunity for continuing to control their careers when in 2015, Bowman peaked their interest for a potential expansion of their operations based in Beulah at the time. The grocery store in Bowman was exploring options for transitioning and Bronson’s was the right fit at the right time. They took over ownership in May of 2016 and began construction on a new store which opened February 2017.

After a referral from the Bowman County Development Corporation, the Kessler’s were referred to the ND SBDC and specifically looking for assistance with loan packaging. Their SBDC advisor’s knowledge and understanding of a wide variety of programs as well as application procedures, helped to ensure that the project could continue to move forward with the best circumstances in place.

“We were able to lock into an interest rate for 20 years, which at the time was a worry about what interest rates would do,” said Kim about their loan package. “Our SBA loan guarantee was a feeling of security with the risk we were taking on with this new business.

Their SBDC advisor, Laura Weber, agreed that there are options when it comes to financing and you have to feel comfortable with your package before moving forward.

“Kelly and Kim were willing to put in the work and research to really go after financing options that were going to provide the best leverage and ability to succeed.” Weber also indicated this to be as important as any other element of building a business.

The new location created a much larger operating space and a need to double their staff, now employing 19 full time employees and 16 part time employees. Kelly and Kim value their employees and know they would not be able to operate two locations without empowered and engaged staff and they are proud to offer benefit packages that are not typical to their industry.

Kim shared, “These employees are trained well and they care about what they are doing, which in turn creates a better grocery store. Our company has grown because of the people working, and because of the good decisions they make for our business every day.”

“We attribute our success to upholding high standards.” Kim believes that is how they best overcame the biggest hurdle of operating in a new location.

Bronson’s Marketplace strives to provide a great shopping experience to their customers and a comfortable place for their employees. It also understands that there are challenges working to please the public.

“It is hard to please everyone, and at the end of the day, you have to be confident that you have done your best, and have been fair to everyone with decisions that must be made. And then ‘let it go’ if possible.”

They spent extensive time working through training while continuing to operate a good grocery store using those high standards to attract more people from the area. They serve a customer base that has a large radius and they continue to feel and appreciate the support that they have received from the community and surrounding area.

“The Bowman community is extremely supportive which has made this venture and risk worthy of taking.”

And, there are big things coming in Bronson’s Marketplace and Liquor at both of their locations as they will soon be introducing online shopping. The opportunity to serve their clientele in a new and convenient way is going to be worth the extensive investment it will take to cover software, additional fees and adjustments in staffing and responsibilities.

“Smaller communities do not typically have the large customer base of recurring online shopping, but we are hoping to make it a success in our rural areas and are excited to bring this to Bowman and Beulah,” Kim says.

These upcoming plans fit in with continuing to evolve the business and follow what consumers are looking for.

They encourage other entrepreneurs to explore their options when it comes to financing and consult with the ND SBDC for assistance in understanding how these programs can best help. And shop for interest rates, “be confident that you are receiving the best interest rate, find what works best for you.”
NEW ROCKFORD – Amy Wobbema was working as the executive director of the New Rockford Area Betterment Corporation back in 2010 when she first thought about owning her own business. At that time, the owners of Transcript Publishing approached her about the idea of buying the business but it took her five years to take the plunge.

Amy had worked with the Devils Lake SBDC office in her role as an economic development professional. Seeing other business owners go through the process from start to finish made her know right where to start when she seriously began thinking about buying the business.

“Having watched the process from the other side made completing my business plan so much less intimidating,” says Amy. “The SBDC is a proven resource and the first place to go. The financial projection was explained to me early on so I knew what this could show a person about their business. It provided me the opportunity to know I could be successful.”

Amy began meeting with the SBDC to plan and prepare for the business purchase. At the time, Transcript Publishing’s main products were the newspaper, travel guides, and some minimal commercial printing. Amy knew she wanted to build on that and even expand.

“I needed brutal honesty, which I thankfully received,” remembers Amy. “I wanted a third party without a stake in the game to look at it with me, removing the emotion from decisions.”

Together, Amy and SBDC advisor Sandy Shively looked at the feasibility of the business and Amy’s future plans for it. With their work together, Amy was able to secure the loan and get some much needed operating capital.

Despite her strong planning and preparation, Amy had another hurdle to overcome. Shortly before she took over the business, the office was destroyed in a fire.

“After the fire, I received such support from the community. It really let me know I made the right decision to buy this business,” she recalls.

In her first year of ownership, she doubled sales for the commercial printing portion of the business and since then, has seen it double again. Amy has enjoyed adding new products and services to meet the her customer’s needs. Her goal is to provide a wide variety of advertising and marketing services to help area businesses succeed.

She very much recommends others thinking of starting or buying a business – even those that are already business owners – look to the SBDC for help and support.

“The SBDC has the resources and tools that small business owners need to evaluate a potential business opportunity – and to help prepare the information that financers need to make a lending decision.”

As for advice to other entrepreneurs, she says, “Don’t give up! It may be overwhelming when you meet with an advisor, but it’s worth it. Be honest with yourself when making decisions and then be brave enough to move forward.”

Amy is taking that ‘moving forward’ bit to heart as she moves her business into a new building in the first quarter of 2020. They will have double the square footage and production space as well as more visibility in the community.

“I really enjoy helping business customers solve their marketing challenges. Transcript Publishing is in the business of providing news and information to readers as well as helping businesses gain visibility. And my staff has really gone above expectations to help bring my vision to fruition.”
FARGO - Working in construction management after college, Jack Lelwica and his wife, Ashley got their first dog, a Brittany named Mazie. Little did they know, this hunting dog would change their career, if not their lives, forever.

Jack first realized his passion for dogs and training when some of his friends began to take notice of how obedient Mazie was in just a few short months. He started training other dogs on the side as a part-time job. Not long after, Jack and Ashley together pursued dog boarding, training and later breeding as their full-time career and opened Prairie Peak Kennels out of a renovated barn at their home near Alexandria, MN.

"This is where my passion and calling in life is," shared Jack. "I would love to see a dog's life flourish and see the owners get the most out of their relationship with their dog. We train dogs to be obedient and, in turn, teach their owners how to get them exercise so they are happy with their life."

After a few years with business booming in the Alexandria area, Jack and Ashley began looking at how they could continue to grow Prairie Peak Kennels and had their sites set on the Fargo/Moorhead community. They were referred to Paul Smith at the ND SBDC who assisted the couple with business planning, market research, financial projections and funding. After a thorough market and competitive assessment, Jack and Ashley decided to expand their business to Fargo.

Jack and Ashley wanted to build a state-of-the-art facility with both indoor and outdoor play areas for dogs to get the exercise and socialization they need. Their biggest challenge? Finding the necessary financing to make the project possible and affordable. The SBDC recommended looking at the SBA 504 loan program—a small business loan with a lower down payment, fixed market interest rates, and multiple term options. By working with Gate City Bank and Dakota Business Lending, they were able to purchase the land and construct the facility they needed at terms they could afford.

In August, 2018, Fetchers boarding, daycare and grooming opened its doors for business. "Paul was great to work with, responsive, and provided answers that we needed in order to move forward with our project," said Jack. "We are so relieved that this SBDC service is available to us."

Since then, Jack and Ashley's business has continued to thrive in Fargo with a passionate, animal loving team building the client base, promoting the wide range of dog related services, and continuing to help facilitate a win-win-win situation for all. "It's been an absolute blessing and it's everything we've hoped for," Jack said. "We're humbled and grateful to be able to make this dream a reality with the help of the SBDC and the other team members that put this deal together."

Today, Fetchers works with local businesses to offer different packages and promotions that are helping working families maintain a harmonious relationship with their dogs. Due to their success and growth, Fetchers has been featured in the local Fargo newspaper and on local TV news for their positive impact in the community.

When asked for words of advice in starting up a new business venture, Jack's suggestions were simple: do your research, stick to your values, and go for it. He noted the importance of creating a realistic business plan.

"If you have the drive and ambition to start a business, make sure the business plan is accurate and it shows that it's possible to make a profit. If that happens, take the plunge and go for it! Your passion and faith will help you with the rest."
GRAND FORKS CENTER

FRENCH TASTE

He realized that it was a sign when he had a trip planned to go to Cancun with his friends, arrived at the airport and was told that his passport was expired. No Mexico for him. He was faced with staying in Minneapolis or going to Chicago to face his dad. He figured now was the best time to tell him his plan to change majors.

Warren had fond childhood memories of making crepes with his mom from time to time. Each year, as he’d grown up, he’d gone back to France to spend time with family and would always go to a famous restaurant that served crepes. And, for a time, his dad had opened and operated a crepe restaurant in Chicago. The one thing Warren had not forgotten: his love for crepes.

Warren was working with Kathy Lund at the Pancratz Center in the College of Business and Public Administration and she referred Warren over to the SBDC. He didn’t want to feel stuck just going to class and a home, but was anxious to apply what he was learning to a business of his own. The SBDC helped Warren with his business plan as he wanted to make sure it was right. He received assistance in getting prepared for competitions and was able to feel more prepared and confident. “The conversations made me even more sure about what I was doing,” he said.

He took the plunge and opened up French Taste LLC in May of 2018 with the focus on spreading French culture through serving sweet and savory crepes.

“Nicole and the ND SBDC’s services were the best. She was always helpful and answered every question. She has knowledge, patience, many resources to provide, a relaxing atmosphere, and with her being a small business owner herself, she was able to help me with what I was feeling or experiencing with my journey,” he stated.

Warren started with a folding table serving crepes in downtown Grand Forks during the Farmer’s Market, Art on the Red, and other community events around Grand Forks. Next came a food court and within six months, he was able to open up in the Memorial Union at the University of North Dakota serving crepes during consistent days and hours where people could easily find him.

He placed third in a business plan competition, joined the Chamber of Commerce, accomplished his projected sales for the first year in month five, and received a Dream in Action award in January of 2019.

His biggest challenges have been learning the food industry and giving his start-up the time it deserved while still being attentive to his classes. He hopes to see the business expand and potentially franchise down the road.

Warren’s advice for other entrepreneurs, “Stay positive. Wake up at 5:00am. Know your goals, priorities, and your mission then put time and effort into what you want to accomplish.”
GARRISON, ND – David Jeffrey worked for the railroad for many years before returning to Garrison to purchase his parents shares in two local businesses. The Garrison Motel had been around for several years and owned by David’s parents since 2010. They had been working on plans for and were in the process of building the North Shore Inn and Suites around the time that David and his wife purchased their interests in the two businesses.

After some years of operating the two lodging businesses, David recognized another need in the community and set-out to open a Dairy Queen franchise in town.

“I first heard about the SBDC through my dad,” said David. “He used their services when he first put his proposal together to buy the hotel years ago.”

Mary Beth, Minot Center Director, began working with the Jeffrey family in 2009. Having worked first with Dennis and then later with David on the hotel projects, seeking her assistance again was a natural move when it was time to start the planning for a business in an industry new to him.

Opening a franchise was key for David knowing the national support provided on a local level as well as allowing consumers from Garrison and surrounding communities a dining option that offered quality, consistency and a fair price. A Dairy Queen was the right fit for him.

“Even though I had used the SBDC some in the past, I wasn’t fully up to speed on what they could do for me. Mary Beth and her team helped me put together my proposal and I was so impressed,” said David. “The knowledge that they have for a small business owner is by far the best I’ve encountered.”

“The team that I dealt with helped make it easy for me to understand what I was doing. They taught me many things along the way as far as my business plan and how to present it. And the resources at their disposal – the average business person just can’t find that information”

The Minot SBDC Center specifically helped with business plan development and financial projections for the DQ project, including working directly with BNC Bank on some of the specific details they needed when reviewing the financing package.

As with many in our part of the country, David credits the work ethic instilled in him by his parents at a young age to his success. That drive to work hard has stayed with him into adulthood and he says it will until the day he retires.

“I thought working for the railroad was hard,” said David, “but at the end of the day, business ownership is even tougher. You have to be willing to put in the effort and be married to it. You need to look at the bigger picture and what is on the horizon to ensure your business stays profitable.”

“We support the community of Garrison through employment and tax dollars and we see that come back to us on a daily basis. But if you aren’t doing what you can to make sure the business keeps making money, sooner or later the dollars stop rolling in and that’s not good business for anyone.”

The Dairy Queen in Garrison officially opened for business in May of 2016. The work ethic of the Jeffrey family, the support of a national franchise, and assistance from the SBDC along the way has helped them on the path to success.

“The wealth of knowledge that an SBDC can provide is pivotal in succeeding as a small business owner. They are definitely the people to turn to. Overall, working with the ND SBDC has been an awesome experience.”
JAMESTOWN – Natasha Benson had’t always planned on being a small business owner, but an opportunity presented itself for an in-demand business and she went for it.

A colleague of Natasha’s had a home that they wanted to keep as a long-term asset that had recently become vacant. After some market research to identify the best use, opening a daycare in the space became the plan in the spring of 2019 and Tasha’s Little Monkeys was born. The business opened its doors in November 2019.

Natasha had children of her own and had worked in child care for over five years so she certainly had the experience to run the operation, but she needed some assistance with the business side of things. After attending an orientation to opening a childcare business session put on by Child Care Aware and Social Services, she reached out to the ND SBDC and began working with Southeast Region advisor, Ian Carlstrom.

They started with a business plan. Natasha knew she needed some inspection work done on the house as well as installing a fence and purchasing equipment. She had been working on the parent handbook and needed to determine some policies and rates.

“I really enjoyed building a business that truly serves my customers,” Natasha said. Being her own boss, making policy decisions and determining contract details have all been enjoyable as well.

In addition to the business plan, ND SBDC advisor, Ian, and Natasha reviewed IRS details and information from the Secretary of State to help her understand factors that needed to go into the plans. Next they started looking at the numbers with a financial projections for the business and prepared for her to seek funding from a commercial lender.

When Tasha’s Little Monkeys first opened, Natasha began with her own children and quickly added five more as word spread. Jamestown has a private Facebook group for the childcare community and Tasha’s Little Monkeys has been welcomed in and has helped market the business.

For most in-home child care providers the business and their personal home are co-located. In this case Natasha is able to dedicate the whole property and really customize the experience for more tailored services. This allows Natasha to serve her clients better and leverages the property in the long term.

The demand for more daycare openings across the state is high. According to a Grand Forks Herald article from September 2019, the average need being met across the state is only 39%.

The business plan and financial projections put together with the assistance of the SBDC helped Natasha receive a commercial loan to complete the work needed on the house and by needed supplies to open her doors.

Natasha said, “The assistance was very helpful! The ND SBDC offers such a variety of services and they meet each client where they are at – both with their planning and in physically the town you’re in.”
WILLISTON – The oil and gas renaissance in western ND has provided unprecedented opportunities for entrepreneurs, including three cousins from Williston. In 2014, Wyatt Black, Kevin Black, and Malachi Black founded Creedence Energy Services, following in the footsteps of their fathers, grandfather, and great-grandfather.

“We were all born in Williston and are fourth generation oil field,” said Wyatt Black. “Being from the area and really understanding where oil development was taking place, it was the most strategic location for our operations to kick off.”

Wyatt and Kevin developed the business plan for Creedence, an oil and gas chemical company servicing the Williston Basin, but it was Malachi that delivered the operational expertise that really helped make the dream a reality.

“When they asked me if I would join, it was a no brainer. I knew instantly the company would be a success because of the talent and expertise both Kevin and Wyatt brought to the oilfield,” said Malachi Black.

One of the early obstacles of growing the business was securing funding for a $1.3 million-dollar building. The Blacks set up an appointment with Keith Olson, longtime SBDC advisor, who was intrigued with the owners and their ideas.

“This is a great project where the owners saw an opportunity based on what they experienced in the industry and created a business that matched what was happening,” said Olson.

Olson introduced them to the Flex PACE Interest Buydown Program; a Williston STAR Fund/Bank of North Dakota product that encourages investment in industrial and commercial projects. The STAR Fund provides a fifty percent match to the BND’s overall commitment. Creedence initially qualified for a STAR Fund grant of up to $82,500 and $165,000 from BND for the $1.3 million project.

Wyatt Black, who accepted the SBDC Existing Business of the Year Award on behalf of Creedence in May 2019, said Creedence is proof that the STAR Fund works.

“So many years ago, you guys (Williston residents) voted to put tax dollars back into the economy, specifically the STAR Fund. That gave Williston a vision; a vision that it was going to support the business community,” praised Wyatt Black.

“The Star fund has been instrumental in our company’s growth,” said Malachi Black. “Because of the Star fund, we have been able to expand our lab and facility.”

Wyatt continued that the SBDC, BND and Williston Economic Development’s support has been critical to their success.

“It’s already scary enough starting a business; the sleepless nights, the anxiety. Then as your business grows; the expansion and going back to the bank and signing that personal guaranty - putting your house up, cars up, Malachi even tried to put his kid up as collateral,” Wyatt Black joked.

Malachi Black said, in his defense, that ‘offering to put up his firstborn child was only partially true.’

Kidding aside, the business (like children) has experienced quite the growth spurt since it started. Creedence started with 8 employees in 2017 and hoped to add 8 more over the next year. Despite a slowdown in the energy sector, they have grown to 55 employees and are still hiring.

Wyatt Black said their seemingly overnight success was due to the quality of their employees and the market conditions.

“When we committed to starting this business in the fall of 2014, oil was over $80-90/bbl, and by the time our first truck showed up it was under $40/bbl and dropping,” said Wyatt Black. “What that did was provide a need for oil and gas operators to find more efficient and economical ways to treat their wells and our unique streamlined pump truck gave them that option. It was safer, more efficient and priced right.”

The future continues to look bright as Creedence prepares to expand. In June of 2019, Creedence received an additional $26,000 STAR Fund grant and up to $52,000 from the BND to expand its existing facilities.
Duane has been with Dakota Western Bank for over 20 years and currently serves as the Executive Vice President/Senior Lending Officer. In addition to his involvement with the SBDC, he serves on the boards for the Bowman County Development Corporation and Southwest Healthcare. He sees the SBDC as a valuable partner to lenders, helping clients prepare business plans that greatly increase their chances for success.

Duane Bowman

After retiring from a long career in engineering and business development, Jim has gone on to serve on numerous boards and work with many development organizations in the greater Jamestown area and across the state. He also owns Strategic Plan ND, a management consulting business as well as being a part owner in Sabir’s Buffalo Grill. He has served on the ND SBDC Advisory Board since 2017.

Jim Boyd

Kevin, a long-time resident of the Devils Lake area, is currently the Lake Region Market VP for First Community Credit Union. He assists in the strategies, structure, and planning process while advocating for the SBDC in his role on our State Advisory Board. Kevin feels fortunate to have great staff, stakeholders, clients, lenders, and partners across the state that make the SBDC a key player in economic development and find success.

Kevin Davidson

Rachael Eider is the owner of RH Standard. She opened the business seven years ago, bringing quality service and luxurious goods to her customers. She is an advocate for fellow small businesses and the downtown community. Rachael is happy to bring that greater community and visionary outlook to the ND SBDC Advisory Board and has seen the difference this program can make for small business first hand.

Rachael Eider

Cherie Harms is President/CEO of Leonardite Products in Williston, a mining & processing facility serving the ag, foundry and oil industries. In addition to serving on the ND District Export Council and Western Regional Development Economic Boards, Harms is a founder and Secretary/Treasurer of the Humic Products Trade Assoc. She has personally used the SBDC and is happy to promote and assist the organization.

Cherie Harms

Ellen Huber has been the Business Development & Communications Director for the City of Mandan for nearly 14 years. She recently completed a term as president of the Economic Development Association of North Dakota (EDND) leading nearly 80 economic development organizations and stakeholders on the front line of growing businesses and communities across the state of North Dakota.

Ellen Huber

John is the Chief Innovation Officer for the Greater Fargo Moorhead Economic Development Corporation with a focus on the business development needs of primary-sector entrepreneurial companies and individuals, as well as supporting the regional innovation ecosystem. He helps organize Startup Weekend Fargo and Startup Digest Fargo. John also administers the Growth Initiative Fund loan pool.

John Machacek

Chuck started his career in the banking industry in 1999. His knowledge and passion allow him to help farmers and business owners with all of their banking needs. Chuck understands the impact a strong relationship with a bank and the SBDC can have on a small business. When working with businesses owners, he stresses the importance of utilizing the SBDC as a resource to help prepare realistic plans and projections for lenders.

Chuck Neubauer
PARTNER & NETWORK PROGRAMS

North Dakota Procurement Technical Assistance Center (ND PTAC) is a resource for assisting North Dakota businesses in obtaining federal, state, and local government contracts. ND PTAC advisors work with businesses to identify government contracting opportunities. They do this by providing confidential, no cost, one-on-one counseling on how to obtain, manage and comply with contracting requirements for the Department of Defense (DoD) and other federal agencies, state & local governments and businesses with government prime contracts. They emphasize the importance of understanding contracting requirements, and educate businesses on all levels of government contracting.

Michelle Kommer was appointed as the Commissioner of the ND Dept. of Commerce in December of 2018. She has more than 20 years of experience in the private sector, leading human resource, operational and legal functions in the financial services, health insurance and energy/manufacturing industries. She most recently served as chief administrative officer and general counsel for Western State Bank, where her in-house practice included contract negotiation and management, labor and employment matters, and corporate governance.

“The North Dakota Small Business Development Centers serve an imperative role in our state’s business expansion efforts by providing outstanding services to residents across North Dakota. Small businesses create healthy, vibrant communities which fosters innovation and invites a 21st century workforce by inspiring others to achieve their dreams,” says Kommer.

North Dakota Procurement Technical Assistance Center

Government Contracting Assistance

Michelle Kommer
Dept. of Commerce

U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Amy Henley is the dean and professor of management at the UND Nistler College of Business & Public Administration. She holds a Ph.D. from the University of Texas in Arlington in the area of organizational behavior and psychology. Henley’s research interests include distributive and procedural justice, compensation and pay fairness, and intragroup processes. Dr. Henley has co-authored papers that have appeared in numerous top tier academic journals.

“We are so proud to be the host of the ND SBDC and assist in supporting small businesses launch and grow across the state,” says Henley.

Dr. Amy Henley
University of North Dakota

VETERANS BUSINESS OUTREACH CENTERS

The Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC) program is a one-stop-shop for service members, veterans and military spouses looking to start, purchase, or grow a business. Located nationwide, VBOCs provide training workshops, including Boots to Business (B2B) and Boots to Business Reboot, as well as business development assistance such as training, advising and mentoring, and resource referrals. B2B and Reboot are entrepreneurial education and training programs. They are open to Service members. National Guard and Reserves, Veterans of all eras, and their spouses.

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