

Northern

View

Far and wide.

DL National Guard unit alerted for mobilization

By Kevin Bonham
Grand Forks Herald

DEVILS LAKE — A North Dakota Army National Guard unit based in Devils Lake has been alerted for possible mobilization.

About 60 members of the 136th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion were placed in an alert status Wednesday.

If mobilized, the unit will provide area logistical support to U.S. and Coalition forces assigned to the combined joint operational area-Afghanistan early next year, Maj. Gen. Alan Dohrmann, North Dakota's adjutant general, said.

"The men and women of the 136th CSSB are fully qualified logisticians trained to employ their skills in a myriad of support operations," he said. "In addition to the technical competence of our soldiers, the support of their families, friends and employers during this overseas deployment, will help ensure their overall mission success."

The decision to mobilize has not yet occurred, he said.

The unit is led by Lt. Col. Brock Larson, Bismarck, and Command Sgt. Maj. Darcy Schwind, Mandan, N.D. Soldiers in the unit hail from more than 25 communities across North Dakota, Minnesota, Kentucky and Nevada.



Hagerott pushes for university partnership

Projects could influence region, nation, NDUS chancellor says.

By Wade Rupard
Grand Forks Herald

North Dakota University System officials are looking to promote more research and collaboration within the system in key technology areas at UND and North Dakota State University.

NexusND is an initiative that would combine three high-tech "pillars" — unmanned aircraft systems, cyber security and high-performance computing — which would create opportunities for regional partnership. UND would take the lead with unmanned systems, NDSU with cybersecurity and the university system on high-performance computing.

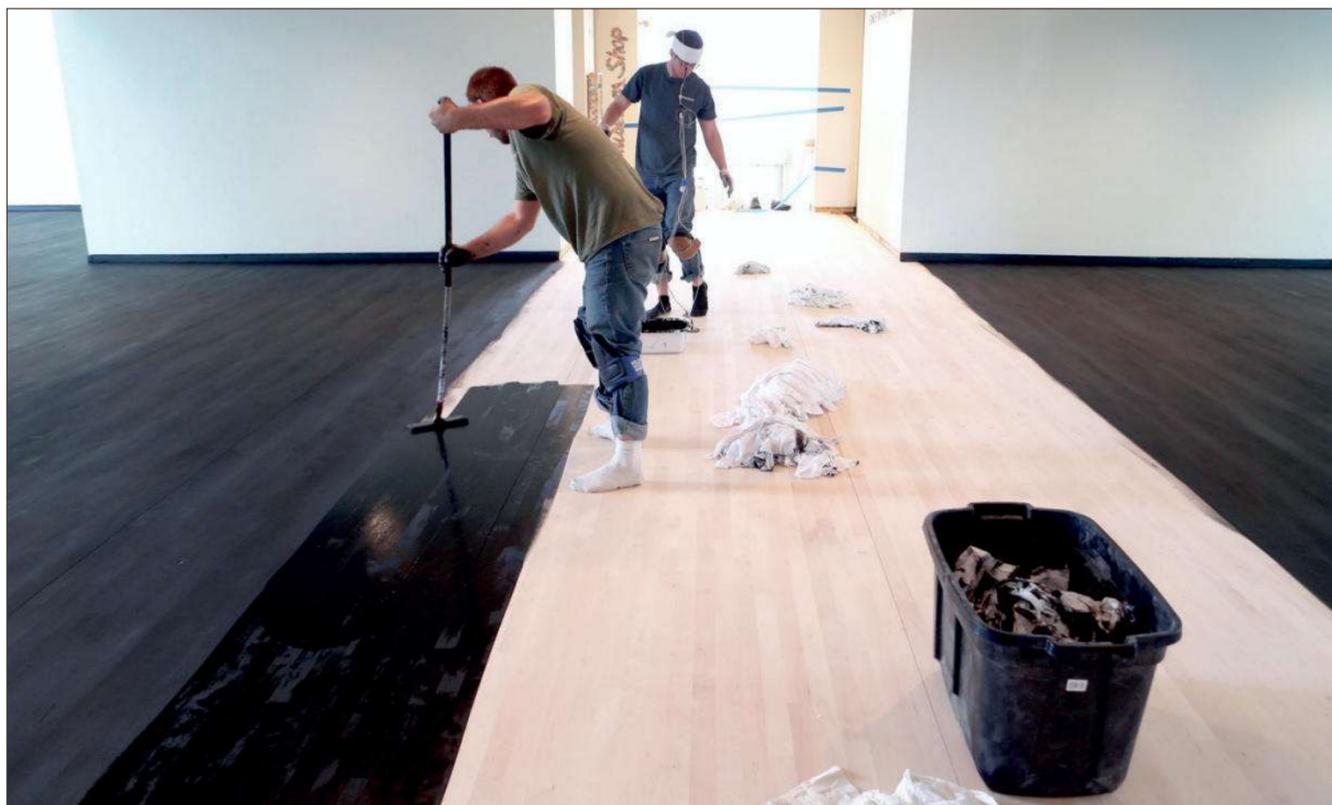
NDSU Chancellor Mark Hagerott told the Herald's editorial board Wednesday the initiative is vital to making the system better and more well-rounded, as well as diversifying the state's economy.

Hagerott, who has held numerous leadership positions within the U.S. Navy, likened these partnerships to those in the military, where the most important goal is that the team wins, he said, not the individual.

Hagerott said competition is great, particularly when it comes to athletics, but for research, development and economic growth, all of the schools within the system must work together.

"If the team wins, the state wins, and your school wins with collaboration with other schools," he said. "Of course, with sports, there's a winner and a loser. But if we have a collaborative research project on unmanned systems or whatever, both schools can win."

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Eric Hylden, Grand Forks Herald

Bryan Francis (left) and Taylor Meland apply stain to the new maple floor Wednesday at the North Dakota Museum of Art.

The final touch

North Dakota Museum of Art renovations near completion

By Jonathan Streetman
Grand Forks Herald

The fumes from the varnish hung in the air Wednesday where priceless works of art normally hang in the North Dakota Museum of Art.

Blue painter's tape hung across the doorways to keep wayward boots from interrupting the process of four men in socks at work. Two would Swiffer in the stain while the others got on the ground and removed the excess varnish, leaving behind a dark, century-old look.

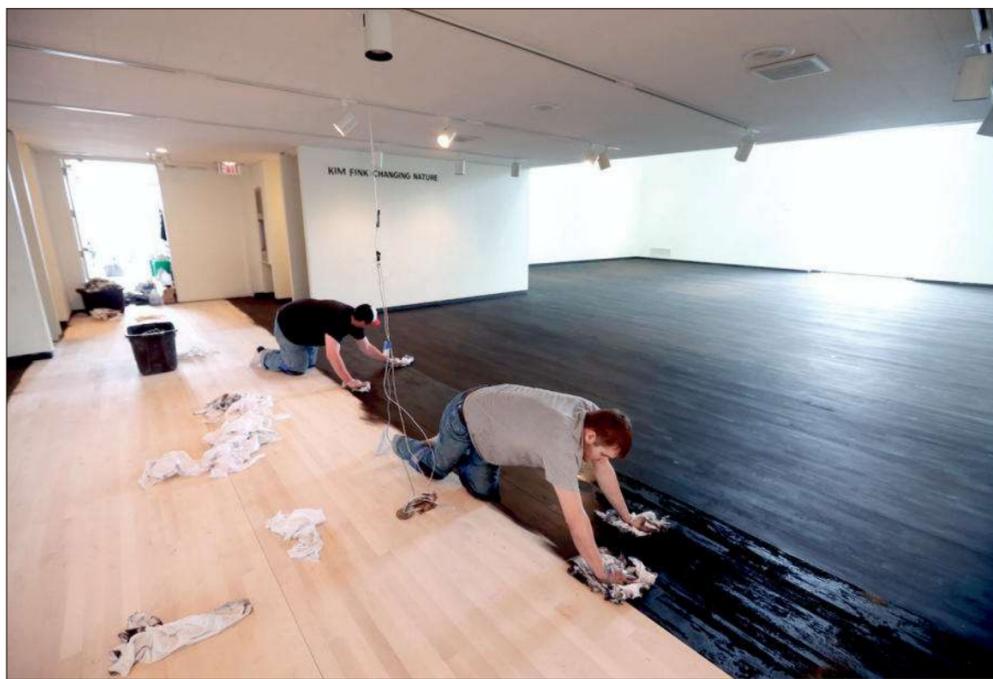
For a day, instead of a treat for the eyes, the 109-year-old building was an assault on the nose, but it was all for a good cause as the third phase of the recent renovations are about to come to a close.

The museum, which was renovated in 1989 from its past life as the UND gymnasium, was in desperate need of attention, Director Laurel Reuter said. The wood floor, original to the gymnasium, had been sanded down to close to nothing, and the skylight would allow rainwater to drip on valuable art.

"It was terrible," Reuter said.

The museum struggled with these issues, Reuter said, until State Sen. Ray Holmberg, R-Grand Forks, and his colleagues on the Senate Appropriations Committee allocated \$190,000 to replace the roof with its clay tiling and fix the skylight and then found \$760,000 more in the recent legislative session to aid the renovation.

"This museum was desperately



Eric Hylden, Grand Forks Herald

Ryan Anderson (left) and Jerome Malone wipe away excess stain on the new floor Wednesday at the NDMOA.

in need of deferred maintenance," Reuter said, praising Holmberg's dedication to the arts. "(He) really believes in a liberal education. He's our guardian angel."

Reuter added the building is on UND's campus, but it is state-owned and is the state's responsibility to maintain.

Last August, the renovations began, and Reuter is "marvel-

ously happy" to be nearing the end of the process. Along with the roof and skylight, the interior of the museum received a new coat of paint and solid maple floors, which were being stained Wednesday afternoon.

"We've been doing this piecemeal," Reuter said. "Contract by contract to see how much money we have left (after each project)."

With the renovations scheduled to be completed and the museum open for business March 28, Reuter said she appreciates the process of making old new again.

"It's a wonderful example of retrofitting of an old building," she said. "With these renovations, it will exist for decades longer."

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Marvin Nelson says N.D. is in 'crisis'

By Mike Nowatzki
Forum News Service

BISMARCK — A Democratic state lawmaker officially launched his bid for governor in Bismarck Wednesday, lobbing criticism at the man he's trying to replace and saying North Dakota's Republican-led state government is leaving some residents behind.

"I want a North Dakota that's for all North Dakotans, and this government has not done that," Rep. Marvin Nelson said at Democratic-NPL Party headquarters in Bismarck.

Nelson, a 57-year-old crop consultant from Rolla, criticized Gov. Jack Dalrymple's handling of recent budget cuts to most state agencies to offset a \$1 billion revenue shortfall.

Nelson said the agency cuts should have been deeper than 4.05 percent, which would have left more than \$75 million in the Budget Stabilization Fund as lawmakers head into the 2017 session.

"Very little was left in the rainy day fund, and it continues to rain,"



"I want a North Dakota that's for all North Dakotans, and this government has not done that."

Gubernatorial candidate Marvin Nelson

he said. Nelson also pointed to how the Dalrymple-chaired state land board recently had to suspend future grants from the Oil and Gas Impact Grant Fund and put a hold on \$7.4 million for projects that hadn't started yet after a revised forecast showed the fund will collect less than a quarter of the \$139.3 million lawmakers authorized for 2015-17. A recent state audit also found aspects of the grant program were operating ineffectively.

"I wish that I could say that that fund was somehow different from the rest of the funds in the so-called best-run state in the nation. I don't believe that it is," Nelson

said. "We are in a state of crisis, and it seems that our governor has left the room."

He also said he favors the governor calling a special session to make more targeted cuts to agencies instead of the across-the-board cuts triggered by the revised forecast.

In an emailed statement, Dalrymple spokesman Jeff Zent called Nelson's comment that North Dakota is in a state of crisis "ridiculous."

"Either Mr. Nelson hasn't bothered to study the details of our state economy, or he is just simply offering up political rhetoric. Our state continues to have the lowest unemployment in the nation and

we have more than 13,000 jobs openings statewide. Our diversified economy is going to hold up well despite the downturn in commodity prices," he said.

Zent said Dalrymple carried out the budget cuts as spelled out in state law, and a special session is unnecessary as the Legislature will convene in eight months.

"The governor is always willing to discuss the details of our state finances, and he is fully engaged in moving forward on the state's priorities," Zent said.

Nelson said he believes lawmakers will have no choice but to tap the state's \$3.4 billion Legacy Fund to fill funding gaps in the next biennium's budget, saying the only other choice is to raise taxes. The trust fund created by voters in 2010 is supported by oil and gas tax revenue, and spending its principal requires two-thirds approval from both chambers.

"What's going to be worse for today's economy in North Dakota

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