



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Blake Crosby, Executive Director

blake@ndlc.org

701-223-3518

Mandan named 2017 City of the Year

Mandan was named 2017 City of the Year by the North Dakota League of Cities (NDLC) during the League's 2017 Annual Conference, Sept. 30, in Fargo. Commissioner Dennis Rohr accepted the award on behalf of the city.

In his presentation of the City of the Year award to Mandan, NDLC Executive Director Blake Crosby outlined many recent accomplishments of the city.

- In 2003 ordinances were passed to restrict exotic dancing. These were challenged by a group of citizens and in turn the issue was placed on the ballot. Citizens overwhelmingly supported the commission actions by 76%.
- 2004 brought closure to a long-standing legal battle with BNSF related to an underground fuel spill in the downtown area. The underground spill had brought building improvements and the transfer of property to a standstill for many years. The settlement with BNSF, along with legislative changes, brought about a remediation system that continues its work and is in its final stages today.
- As part of the remediation project, several properties were acquired and subsequently razed by the city. Through these acquisitions, several new mixed-use, combination multi-family and commercial buildings have been constructed, including a new park along Main Street.

410 E Front Avenue · Bismarck, ND 58504-5641

Phone: 701-223-3518 · Toll Free (in state): 800-472-2692 · Fax: 701-223-5174 · Web: www.ndlc.org

- The City Commission recognized that it needed a champion for business development and created such a position in 2006, and has been looking to the future ever since.
- 2008 saw the opening of a new middle school, a mixed-use building in 2010, assisted living centers and a Walmart supercenter opening in 2013, new elementary school in 2014, and a universal playground for all persons of all abilities in 2015.
- 2015 also saw the city and park district address the recreational needs of a growing community. With a combination of voter approval and public/private partnerships, Mandan has invested \$36 million in recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. This investment includes a sports complex for use by local youth and a wellness center in partnership with the YMCA and a local healthcare provider that is available for all ages and abilities. The existing recreational facilities are being repurposed into a multipurpose gymnasium with volleyball and basketball courts and the existing football/track area will repurposed for two baseball diamonds. A new sports complex will be a further economic driver, giving businesses more reasons to locate in the area.
- Recently, a former historic school has been sold to a developer that will lead its transformation into 39 affordable housing units.
- The city has developed a brochure for new residents who may have questions about housing choices, recreation and education and has installed 24 “Wayfinding Signs” to help orient and direct visitors.
- Citizen surveys have all indicated the desire for more eating establishments. In response the city created several incentive programs directed specifically for restaurants. This past year, six new eating establishments have opened or are in the process of opening.
- Another recent major project dubbed “The Rail Yard” includes the re-facing of an existing building and plans for new construction of two additional buildings on-site. This project

strives to bring life back to part of downtown that has struggled since losing its grocery store.

Mandan's theme is "Great Things: Made in Mandan".

The City of the Year Award was established in 1984 to recognize North Dakota Cities for the quality, number and progressiveness of activities undertaken in the community.



Photo L to R: Chris West, NDLC Past President; Katie Andersen, NDLC President; Michael Braun, Mandan Commissioner, Dennis Rohr, Mandan Commissioner; Jim Neubauer, Mandan City Administrator; Blake Crosby, NDLC Executive Director

The North Dakota League of Cities provides service, advocacy, leadership, education and support to the state's 357 cities. The League's mission - Strong. Dynamic. Cities" - expresses the value of services offered by the League.