



COSE

A Message from Governor John Hoeven

On behalf of North Dakota, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you, all our state employees, for your dedicated services, and offer best wishes for the New Year.

In early December, our 2003-2005 Executive Budget was presented to the North Dakota Legislature. In the next biennium, we are focusing on three key areas: building our state's economy and creating opportunity; exercising good fiscal management; and taking care of people.

We are doing things differently to get the job done. To build our state's economy, we recently introduced Smart Growth, a host of initiatives that tie education and economic development together in new ways to create quality opportunities for the people of North Dakota – especially our youth. Smart Growth is a comprehensive series of fiscally responsible programs linking education, job creation and career development to build our economy, build our communities, and build our state.

North Dakota stands among a very few states with a relatively strong economy. During a time of national recession, we in North Dakota are managing the taxpayers' money well -- in large part, due to the great job each of you do, day in and day out. We are finding new ways of doing things to generate savings through good fiscal management. We are spending less money on government bureaucracy so that we can spend more on people and services. As state employees, you play a critical role in finding new and innovative ways to do things differently that will help shape North Dakota's future. Because of this fiscal responsibility and the resulting savings, we are able to provide services to people who need them and fund our priorities for the future.

Finally, even as we move forward with Smart Growth and work to hold the line on taxes, we are committed to taking care of those in our society who need help – our elderly, our young and our disabled. We must ensure that those who need help get it. Our budget conserves dollars and establishes programs and policies that serve the people of North Dakota.

With our proposed budget, we are funding education, promoting a dynamic economy for the future, and providing services and programs for our young, our elderly and our needy. I am especially pleased that our budget enables us to provide a salary increase to state employees, and assumes the full payment for the cost of health insurance premiums – a 20% increase from last year.

Working together we are making a difference in the lives of the citizens we serve. I wish you the best in 2003.

Happy New Year!

BUILDING A NEW BRIDGE

New initiative designed to foster business and government partnership

Harley Engelman, ND Vocational Rehabilitation Business Services Administrator

North Dakota Vocational Rehabilitation, a unit of the Department of Human Services, has launched an initiative that is intended to foster long-term partnerships between VR and ND employers. The REHABILITATION CONSULTING & SERVICES (RCS) initiative is designed to help individuals with disabilities and employers who have disability-related issues.

The RCS initiative strives to develop and build business relationships by offering services in four areas: Staffing, financial incentives, accessibility/accommodation options, and education/training. RCS consultants provide these services at no cost to the employer and can perform on-site job and work station assessments, conduct continuing education and workshops, and provide up-to-date information and resources on disability legislation.

The initiative moves to address concerns employers and business owners may have about employing individuals with disabilities, complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act, or other disability-related issues.

“Vocational Rehabilitation has always been known for its work on finding employment of individuals with disabilities, but we are far more than that. Our consultants have the knowledge and expertise that can help employers and businesses with disability-related issues,” explains Jerry Severson, Grand Forks RCS Business Services Consultant. “Working as partners, we can assist employers in assuming positive and proactive approaches to disability issues and by doing so, change their attitudes towards individuals with disabilities in a positive way.”

The RCS initiative works for North Dakota employers and business owners facing challenging issues in the state. The aging of the state’s population, the continued out-migration of the state’s 18-32 age population and the competitiveness of the global marketplace, has left them looking for answers to hard questions. RCS strives to help them realize that the answers to their disability-related issues may also provide solutions to these other issues.

Severson is also quick to point out that the RCS initiative may also help change employers’ perceptions on working with government employees.

“We want employers to view us as an asset, someone they can feel free to call, knowing that we are here to help. Customer service is a key ingredient to business success. Employers are right in expecting that same high-quality service from us and that is one of our objectives,” he explains. “We want the experience of working with a state agency to be an extremely positive one. Once they realize that the state has many gifted and talented people working on their behalf, barriers will fall.”

Realizing that changing business and employers attitudes towards working with government is pivotal to the success of the RCS initiative, VR is actively encouraging its consultants and administrators to become more involved in community and civic organizations. Severson explains. “We want employers to get to know us outside of the office. We want to develop friendship not just business relationships. Just as importantly, we want our people to grow personally as well as professionally. Giving back to the community is an important part of that growth.”

Arizona Foundry Working to Make Sakakawea Statue Replica

*Submitted by: Rick Collin, Communications Director,
State Historical Society of North Dakota*

An Arizona foundry with a North Dakota connection is busy this winter working to create a replica of the Sakakawea statue on the state capitol grounds in Bismarck, for placement in Washington, D.C. Arizona Bronze Fine Arts Atelier was in Bismarck September 9-18 to make a mold of the statue. The mold was then transported to their foundry in Tempe, where it is being used this winter to create a second bronze statue that will be dedicated in ceremonies in the U.S. Capitol Building's National Statuary Hall this fall. The replica statue will first be brought to North Dakota for events and viewing before being transported to its final destination in National Statuary Hall. Details will be announced later this year.

A native of Bismarck, foundry owner Tom Bollinger grew up on Lakota Sioux reservations in North Dakota and South Dakota, and earned a bachelor of arts degree from Dickinson State University. A professional sculptor for over 25 years, his foundry's work includes two sculptures on the Capitol Mall in Washington, D.C. To follow the replica's progress, visit the State Historical Society of North Dakota's web site at DiscoverND.com/hist.

The original Sakakawea statue was dedicated in ceremonies on the state capitol grounds October 13, 1910. North Dakota is one of only three states (the other two states are Nevada and New Mexico) to currently have only one statue in the U.S. Capitol Building's National Statuary Hall - each state is allowed two. North Dakota's lone statue is that of former governor and U.S. Treasurer John Burke (1859-1937).



ARTICLES NEEDED:

For information on submitting an article for the COSE newsletter, please contact your area representative listed on the back of this newsletter.

We're on the Web!!
<http://www.state.nd.us/cose/>

To Good To Be True: Spamming—Unwanted Email

Submitted by: Kerrie Helm

ADVANCE FEE LOANS

Attorney General Wayne Stenhjem warns consumers about advertisements for "advanced-fee" or "guaranteed" loans. Stenhjem says unscrupulous companies target financially strapped consumers and small business owners in these "loans by mail" rip-offs.

Advance-fee loan schemes should not be confused with legitimate offers of credit from money brokers, mortgage brokers, banks, savings and loans, and credit unions. Legitimate credit grantors may charge fees to process your loan application, but they will not guarantee that you will qualify for a loan. Advance-fee loan schemes, on the other hand, promise or strongly suggest that a loan will be provided in exchange for an up-front fee. Such up-front fees are illegal.

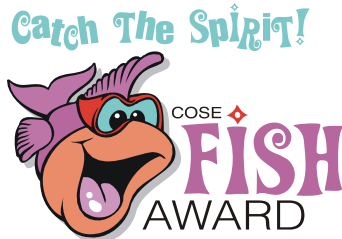
Here are a few precautions you should follow before responding to advertisements for advance-fee loans:

*Be wary of advertising. *Check out the company. *Be cautious of lenders who use "800" and "900" numbers.

Any company that offers to find a loan for you must register with the state Department Financial Institutions as a money broker. You can call 701-328-9933 or check the agency's Internet site at <http://www.state.nd.us/bank/> to find out if a company is registered as a money broker.

For more information on advance fee loans, see the Attorney General's website listed below.

The Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division investigates allegations of fraud in the marketplace. Investigators also mediate individual complaints against businesses. If you have a consumer problem or question, call the Consumer Protection Division at 328-3404, toll-free at 1-800-472-2600, or 1-800-366-6888 (w/TTY). This article and other consumer information is located on our website at www.ag.state.nd.us.



Friendly
Initiative
Smile
Helpful

Developed by the COSE Board of Directors, the Fish Award:

- ◊ Symbolizes excellence in customer service,
- ◊ Recognizes employees who promote customer service in state government,
- ◊ Acknowledges employees who model excellence in customer service to other fellow State Employees,
- ◊ Exemplifies the standard " We all have a customer, we all provide service to others." And,
- ◊ Recognizes employees who understand that " Providing customer service is part of our job."

For more information on this award, or to nominate someone, contact your COSE representative. All nominations must be received by March. 31, 2003 to be eligible for the 2nd quarter award. Nomination forms can be found on the web at www.state.nd.us/cose/ or from your COSE representative.

This newsletter is published three times a year by the North Dakota Council of State Employees (COSE). State employees are encouraged to submit articles or information about their agencies or institutions to their subgroup listed below. Any comments and concerns should also be directed to your subgroup chair listed below. Editorial Board: COSE Board of Directors. Publisher: Valerie Larson, PO Box 5638, Fargo, ND 58105. valerie.larson@ndsu.nodak.edu.

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