



THE DAKOTA BEAT

NEWSLETTER | JUNE 2026 EDITION

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LEGENDARY PARTNERSHIPS: NDMHOF AND ND COUNTRY FEST JOIN FORCES

Here at the North Dakota Music Hall of Fame, our mission is to celebrate the incredible soundtrack of the Peace Garden State. That is why we are absolutely thrilled to be working hand-in-hand with our friends at ND Country Fest to make live music louder, prouder, and more accessible all across North Dakota.

Over the years, ND Country Fest has experienced absolutely amazing growth, exploding from a young, local event into a world-class, premier summer destination. It has truly become the ultimate celebration of music, camping, and community on the high plains. We are so excited to build a bridge between our two organizations—supporting them at their spectacular events while welcoming them as a major part of ours!



Laila Noelle | NDCF Your Town Tour

Memories from the "Your Town Tour"

Our partnership officially hit the road this past March during the unforgettable "Your Town Tour." We had the absolute best time traveling with the NDCF crew and hanging out with music fans at incredible stops in Dickinson, Jamestown, and out at Prairie Knights Casino.

The energy at every single venue was unmatched. It was a true joy to mingle with the crowds, chat about the Hall of Fame, and watch elite home-grown talent open up the stage. From rocking out with regional favorites like **Rogue Royal**, **Drift North**, and **Laila Noelle** to hanging out backstage with the hit-making **Frontmen**, it was a beautiful reminder of how powerful live music is when it brings North Dakotans together.



Bill Palanuk, Luke Shafer, Kayla Lawson | NDCF Your Town Tour

Next Stop: New Salem!

The fun is just getting started. This summer, the NDMHOF team is packing up and heading out to experience the magic of ND Country Fest firsthand—and we want you there with us!

From July 8th through July 11th, the Morton County Fairgrounds in New Salem, ND will transform into a music-lover's paradise. Under the watchful eye of Salem Sue—the world's largest Holstein cow—attendees can take in an unbelievable four-day weekend packed with top-tier camping, mouth-watering food vendors, and non-stop fun.

The main stage talent this year is absolutely stellar, featuring heavy-hitter headliners:

- DARIUS RUCKER
- NATE SMITH
- BILLY CURRINGTON
- TERRI CLARK
- PARMALEE
- AND MANY MORE!



Plus, the festival is strongly committed to honoring heritage; on Saturday, July 11th, they will host a spectacular tribute celebrating America's 250th Anniversary (ND250), blending national pride with the rich history of North Dakota. Alongside these global icons, the festival's secondary stages will be packed to the brim highlighting the very best local and regional musicians our area has to offer.

The Beat Goes On into September

Our collaboration doesn't end when the summer stages are packed away. We are proud to announce that the ND Country Fest team will be swinging back around to join us at our upcoming NDMHOF events this September! Having their team present to celebrate our musical history is a true honor, and we are so excited for what the future holds.

If you are ready to party with Salem Sue, take in some legendary country music, and support the state's musical heritage, grab your tickets and camping passes at www.ndcountryfest.com. We'll see you out on the prairie!



Photo courtesy of ND Country Fest.



The Voices of the Prairie: A Father's Day Tribute to Our NDMHOF Legends

Following our celebration of the incredible women of the North Dakota Music Hall of Fame last month, June brings a wonderful opportunity to turn up the volume for the men who helped build the very foundation of our state's musical heritage.

This Father's Day, we are celebrating the trailblazers, the storytellers, and the mentors who have shaped the North Dakota sound. From local radio pioneers to Hollywood scorers, rock icons, and sacred indigenous traditions, the ten men of the NDMHOF represent the best of the 701.

MEET OUR FEATURED INDUCTEES...

Lawrence Welk: No tribute to our musical roots is complete without the King of Champagne Music. A true North Dakota pioneer from Strasburg, he brought joy into millions of American living rooms every single week.

Bobby Vee: Fargo's own teen idol and rock 'n' roll gentleman, whose smooth vocals and timeless hits like "Take Good Care of My Baby" captured the heart of a generation.

Alf Clausen: The masterful composer who gave television its most recognizable melodies, scoring decades of The Simpsons and proving North Dakota talent reaches the highest peaks of Hollywood.

Mitch Malloy: The pride of Dickinson, who turned a passion for rock into global success as a singer, songwriter, producer, and powerhouse vocalist for bands like Great White.

The Blenders: Fargo's celebrated vocal quartet who have harmonized their way into our hearts for over three decades, becoming a true North Dakota tradition.

Richard Torrance: The Bismarck-born singer-songwriter and Capitol Records artist whose soulful guitar playing and blues-rock melodies continue to inspire musicians across the Northern Plains.

Chuck Suchy: Our official State Troubadour from Mandan, whose heartfelt folk songs perfectly capture the beauty, relationships, and history of rural life on the Great Plains.

Keith Bear: A masterful traditional Nueta (Mandana/Hidatsa) flute player and storyteller from the Fort Berthold Reservation. His beautifully crafted melodies and educational work have shared the sacred, deep-rooted sounds of North Dakota history with audiences worldwide.

Skitch Henderson: The legendary bandleader and New York Pops conductor who found his footing right here in Bismarck in the 1930s on KFYZ Radio before launching into late-night television stardom.

Arnold Christianson: A true radio and performance pioneer born north of Driscoll, who taught himself to play and became one of the foundational, beloved voices shaping early North Dakota broadcasting.

Whether they are international icons or local heroes, these ten men have left a lasting, visible imprint on our culture. They are the "musical fathers" who pave the way for the next generation of North Dakota musicians.

Happy Father's Day to all the dads, grandfathers, and musical mentors who keep the music playing across North Dakota!

JUNE NOTABLE NATIONAL DAYS

- National Accordion Month
- African-American Music Month
- National DJ Month
- June 21st- National Day of the Gong
- June 21st- Make Music Day
- June 25th- Global Beatles Day

MEET LAST MONTH'S FEATURE ARTISTS

An inspiring young Fargo native who is proving that huge musical talent and genuine kindness go hand-in-hand as she begins her next chapter.

- A recent high school graduate from Fargo who stepped into the local music scene with her first public performance at Tailgators in 2022.
- Became a popular local draw by performing solo acoustic gigs at regional staples like Swing Barrel Brewing.
- While many artists chase stadium lights, Lilly's dream venue is the streets of Nashville, driven by a deep love for the raw, "unstaged" beauty of street music and authentic human connection.
- With a passion for helping others through the power of song, Lilly is taking her talents forward to study Music Therapy.

LILLY DANIELLE



HOW TO STAY CONNECTED:

Instagram/TikTok: @lillydanielleofficial

Facebook: Lilly Danielle Music

Linktree: Links to her music and pages are available in her social media bios.

RICK ADAMS



A 40-year veteran of the regional music scene whose soulful country-western and soft-rock sounds are backed by deep personal purpose and resilience.

- Got his start in 1985 playing on the breaks for Albert Mikesch at his sister's wedding. He went on to play with regional bands like Burbank Station and The Roosters, eventually commanding the WeFest mainstage multiple times.
- Hit the national Billboard charts in the late 1980s with the Burbank Station track "An Angel Cries."

- Music with a Mission: His powerful 2020 anthem, "Peace, Love, and Positive Vibes," was written as a tribute to his late son, Payton Adams, who tragically passed away in 2014.
- Rick never had a "backup plan" for his music career, and today he uses his talents to give back, frequently performing for military heroes on the Veterans Honor Flight.

HOW TO STAY CONNECTED:

Website: rickadamslive.com

Facebook: Rick Adams Fans

JERRY SCHLAG



A certified living legend of the North Dakota music scene with a historic 75-year career of bringing joy through old-time waltzes, polkas, and country standards.

- After only 5 or 6 formal accordion lessons at age 10, Jerry taught himself to play 99% of his music completely by ear. He mastered the accordion, piano, organ, bass horn, trumpet, valve trombone, and string bass.
- Fronted the iconic JMB Band (honoring his late bandmates Myron Dammam and Bud Witty) and currently performs with Jerry & Friends.
- Inducted into the Dakota Music Association Hall of Fame in 2006. He is also a charter member of the Norsk Høstfest Accordion Club, having performed at the festival for 46 years!
- Recorded an incredible 23 CDs, performed for 14 years on Amtrak's Trails & Rails program, and held a 17-year residency playing twice a week at Four Bears Casino.
- Today, he primarily performs at local retirement and nursing homes, while actively teaching two current accordion students.



Don't forget!

K-Hits 106 in Minot, ND is partnering with the ND Music Hall of Fame! They will be spotlighting local musicians EVERY Friday at 7pm. Minot locals can tune in to 106.9FM or everyone can listen live at khits106.com.

TUNING UP TRIVIA

In which North Dakota town was accordion legend Lawrence Welk born and raised?

- a. Jamestown
- b. Minot
- c. Strasburg
- d. Hope

Answer to
May trivia:
a. Feb. 3rd

BOARD MEMBER OF THE MONTH...

MARK
Wagner

Position: Vice President

In his professional life, Mark works for the North Dakota Women's Business Center, bringing extensive executive and senior management experience to help entrepreneurs navigate complex problems and find strategic solutions.

Outside of his professional and volunteer work, Mark is a curious and open-minded learner who enjoys spending his spare time with his wife, children, and grandchildren.



EVENT SPOTLIGHT



IT'S NOT SUMMER WITHOUT BUGGIES-N-BLUES!

Get ready for a massive community street party combining vintage classic cars with live regional blues and rock music!

**Where: Main Street & Dykshoorn Park
(Downtown Mandan, ND)**

When: June 12th- 14th, 2026

- Started in 1993 by a committee of six local residents who wanted to bring classic cars and blues music downtown.
- Features street block parties, a classic car parade, local food trucks, open-air beer gardens, and live music played by The Randy James Band, Avantide, Unleashed!, The Dreamboats and The Pork Tornadoes.
- Over 35,000 to 40,000 people pack Main Street for the peak Sunday car showcase!
- 100% Free Admission and family-friendly.
- More Info: www.visitmandan.com/buggies-n-blues

