

DCN connections

CEO'S MESSAGE



Seth Arndorfer, CEO

Being a life-long North Dakotan, I am prone to talking about the weather. The temperature, the humidity, the wind, the wind chill...the list goes on. Well, it's April, so naturally I can't help but talk about spring. Spring is an amazing time because the brown of winter starts to give way to the greening of grass, trees, and crops. Before we know it, fields will sprout, trees will bud, and colorful flowers will start to bloom.

Similarly, I think the theme of this issue of Connections is also about growth – growth in partnerships, growth in our team, and growth in expertise.

If you've ever heard me speak, you've probably experienced my passion for agriculture and specifically technology in agriculture. I'm really excited about DCN's partnership with the Grand Farm and how we can help them help entrepreneurs, researchers, and many others with their efforts in precision ag. It's research like this that will help North Dakota producers maintain strong, profitable operations and the state continue to be a leader in agriculture.

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DCN AND GRAND FARM PARTNER FOR CONNECTIVITY

North Dakota is leading the way in precision agriculture, in large part thanks to the work and research being done at the Grand Farm Innovation Campus just outside of Casselton. Precision ag, like almost anything these days, requires reliable, secure, high-speed internet connectivity and that's where Dakota Carrier Network (DCN) is offering expertise.

DCN and Grand Farm have partnered for the wireless infrastructure at the farm, an investment of \$200,000. There are four primary components to the connectivity DCN is providing on the Grand Farm Innovation Campus:

- **Gigabit fiber optic connection** – providing the Innovation Campus with connectivity and supporting the wireless needs throughout the Grand Farm Innovation Campus
- **Radio Access Network** – similar to the technology used by cell phone companies, multiple private 5G networks will allow connectivity to every square foot of the campus
- **CBRS spectrum** – a radio frequency to securely carry data with predictable performance
- **Connection to a core** – a secure off-site core to manage and run the system



In addition, MLGC, a broadband company based in Enderlin, N.D., and one of the owner companies of DCN, is providing the "last mile" fiber for the connectivity.

This infrastructure is critical for the research, development, and validation of connective ag technology that is being done at Grand Farm. Combining these technologies optimizes the research processes because the fiber optics ensure fast data transfer,

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Just because you might consider yourself "city folk," don't think there's nothing in it for you! The research and other work being done on the Grand Farm campus and other sites across the state will also benefit businesses of all types and sizes throughout North Dakota. Advancements in precision ag will have broad effects on economic development, bringing in new, innovative organizations and well-established international companies. Just as important, it will allow others in the farming family to have outside careers and still live at the farm.

We've also had some new faces sprout up around here in the last few months. The natural ebb and flow of people retiring or moving as well as recognizing the need for additional support created opportunities to bring new people into the DCN family, a place where we are committed to helping our team members grow in their skills.

Speaking of retirements, this column wouldn't be complete without talking about Nancy Bjorndahl retiring. Nancy was the second employee ever hired at DCN and was integral in cultivating and growing the culture of this organization. Over the course of 20+ years working with her, she became not only a trusted colleague, she became a friend. If I said I didn't choke up speaking at her retirement party, I'd be lying. But I couldn't be happier for her. DCN wouldn't be the place it is today if it weren't for Nancy's dedication to our team, Owners, and customers.



DCN-GRAND FARM PARTNERSHIP, con't from page 1

the radio access network expands coverage, and CBRS spectrum offers additional bandwidth.

"This network will tie together the entire ecosystem of the Grand Farm Innovation Campus, enabling research that is critical to maintaining North Dakota's position as a leader in agriculture," explained DCN CEO Seth Arndorfer. "DCN is making this investment because successes at the Grand Farm will bring positive effects to main street North Dakota – increasing the demand for skilled workers, keeping young people in the state, and benefiting businesses from gas stations to software companies. Groundbreaking work is being done at Grand Farm and DCN is excited to be part of it."

"The connectivity being provided will be critical for the work being done on Grand Farm's Innovation Campus," says Dr. William Aderholdt, Director of Grand Farm. "We are excited to be working with DCN which is known for its investments and thought leadership in innovation of rural and agriculture connectivity."

This partnership creates a stronger program for this unique test bed for small businesses, large corporations, startups, and research institutions to solve problems in agriculture. ✿

WHAT IS GRAND FARM?

Grand Farm is a network of growers, corporations, startups, educators, researchers, government, and investors working together to solve problems in agriculture with applied technology.

Grand Farm creates events, conferences, and workshops to accelerate problem-solving, and works directly with innovation



teams to help them apply innovative thinking within their organizations and provide Field Management and Innovation-as-a-Service.

Grand Farm's Innovation Campus is located near Casselton, N.D., and includes 590 acres used for collaboration, research, and demonstrations, and a 25,000 square foot Innovation Shop to host groups, demonstrate technology, and upskill the region.

Learn more at grandfarm.com.

DCN TEAM GROWS

DCN has hired new team members serving DCN, its Owners, and customers in administrative, support, and technical roles.

Kari Alme is DCN's new human resources/business manager. Based in the Fargo office, she is responsible for all human resources functions, including payroll, recruitment, and benefits administration. In addition, Alme coordinates DCN's safety program and general business management responsibilities for the organization. Alme has more than 15 years of experience in human resources policy, administration, and compliance. She earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from Mayville State University and has industry certifications in HR and payroll.

Trudy Boelter and **Heidi Daniels** joined the team as sales support representatives. In this role Boelter and Daniels provide support to the sales team, preparing paperwork for new and existing customers' broadband needs, monitoring pending service orders, maintaining records, and processing billing summaries. Both are in the Fargo office.

Boelter has more than 20 years' experience in the telecommunications/broadband industry. She has served in roles including installation and repair supervisor, dispatch, sales coordination, and technical support engineer. She has an associate degree in network support specialist.

Daniels comes to DCN with more than 15 years' experience in the insurance industry working in claims and credentialing, giving her extensive experience with processing paperwork and coordination with internal and external partners.

Logan Mitchell joined the Network Operations Center team in Bismarck as an Ethernet/IP technician I. In this role, he supports DCN's state-of-the-art carrier Ethernet and IP networks. Responsibilities include network monitoring and provisioning, trouble analysis, receiving and resolving trouble reports, and administration of equipment. In May, he will graduate from Bismarck State College with an Associate in Applied Science - Cybersecurity and Computer Networks. He plans to continue and earn a bachelor's degree.

"Kari, Trudy, Heidi, and Logan are all excited to be part of the DCN team," said CEO Seth Arndorfer. "With big projects on the 2024 calendar, they know there are many opportunities to immediately make contributions that will be beneficial to DCN, our Owners, and customers." ❁



L to R:
Kari Alme, Trudy Boelter,
Heidi Daniels, Logan Mitchell

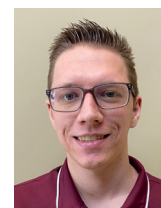
IS TEAM EXPANDS KNOWLEDGE

As part of DCN's ongoing commitment to ensuring the security and integrity of the systems for DCN and its customers, two members of the Information Systems team recently earned industry certifications.



Branden Rasmussen, cloud services specialist at DCN, recently earned two certifications from CompTIA: Security+ and Secure Infrastructure Specialist.

Security+ is a globally recognized certification that covers topics including network security, cryptography, identity management, and risk management. The Secure Infrastructure Specialist certification showcases expertise in securing complex and dynamic IT infrastructures. CompTIA is the largest vendor-neutral credentialing program for technology professionals.



Jordan Bartlett, systems administrator at DCN, earned the Microsoft 365 Fundamentals (MS-900) certification.

The MS-900 certification validates foundational knowledge of Microsoft 365 services, including cloud concepts, core productivity, security, and compliance features. It establishes proficiency in understanding Microsoft 365 offerings, facilitating effective collaboration, and ensuring data security, making it ideal for IT professionals. ❁

BJORND AHL RETIRES

In January, we celebrated **Nancy Bjordahl** as she closed her career in the telecommunications/broadband industry, just shy of her 26th anniversary at DCN.

After a number of years at US West, Nancy joined DCN on Jan. 26, 1998. Over the course of 25.99999 years, she wore many hats, most recently as business manager and a member of the leadership team. She always took on challenges head on and with a can-do attitude. The last of the original DCN team, Nancy will be missed for many reasons including her historical knowledge and expertise, her great attitude, and her bright smile.

Not only did Nancy help set DCN's values of reliable, responsive, and relationships, she lived out those values every day. For that, our team, Owners, and customers are forever grateful. ❁

Evan Hass, DCN's first CEO, and his wife Carol joined the celebration to wish Nancy well on her retirement. (Evan may have also jokingly wished Nancy's husband, Tom, good luck on Nancy's retirement.)



DCN CEO Seth Arndorfer shared how meaningful Nancy has been to the company "...It wasn't by accident that Nancy wore so many hats here at DCN. She always maintained a mindset of, 'If something needs to be done, let's do it.' ... We were blessed with Nancy's consistent commitment to providing the highest quality service, all while maintaining a very personal approach."



Nancy's family helped her celebrate as well. Jesse Heck, son-in-law and DCN director of operations (far right), shared his thoughts, "I've had the pleasure of working with you for over 23 years and although we will no longer be colleagues, I guess we still GET to see each other as family."



Does your business rely on the internet?

How much money do you lose when your internet goes down?

Carrier diversity – having two different service providers – ensures you always have internet access and reduces costs while increasing flexibility.

Since 1996, Dakota Carrier Network has been a dedicated internet provider, guaranteeing 99.999% uptime. As part of your team, we're here when you need us.

- Carrier Ethernet • Cloud Services • Co-location & Data Center • Cybersecurity Solutions • Dedicated Internet • Data Storage & Recovery • Private Line • SD-WAN • Wavelength Services

