

# 2025 Convention Highlights



Photo Credit  
<https://aero.und.edu/space/index.html>

The **Tour Bus** leaves outside of the Alerus Entrance Door #5 at 9:15AM on Tuesday, September 9, 2025, for the UND Aerospace Center tour. The tour is about an hour and a half, with walking involved as it will be a tour through the four Aerospace Campus buildings that are connected via the skywalk system. There are some steps included, but also there are elevators, and places to sit and rest as needed.

A tour for educators to see the training areas up and running. Areas include Virtual Reality Lab, Physiology Training, Air Traffic Control, and Drone education (to name a few).

Two **workshop sessions** will be available to convention attendees at the Alerus Center starting at 9:15 and repeating at 10:15 on September 9.

**Dr. Shelbie Witte** is the Dean of UND's Education and Human Development. Dr. Witte started her career as an English teacher in a small city in Oklahoma. Dr. Witte has taught every level of adolescents and adults, from middle school through doctoral students, in rural, urban, and suburban communities. She has a special interest in digital literacy.

The newly built **Career Impact Academy (CIA)**, the regional **Career and Technical Education building**, will be preparing students in specialized-skill development for high-paying, in-demand jobs. **Eric Ripley** explains how education, industry, and business interests will come together to provide exceptional training in the following areas at the CIA: Automotive, Precision Technologies, Culinary Arts, Building Trades, Architecture, Engineering, Robotics, Aviation, Information Technology, and Medical Careers.



Photos credit. Eric Hylden /  
Grand Forks Herald.



Our convention banquet entertainment will be Little Dakota Celtic, a North Dakota-based ensemble that brings the spirit of Celtic music to life with a vibrant blend of Irish, Scottish, and American folk traditions. Founded by accomplished violinist and fiddle player Tamara Bertram, the group is known for its energetic reels, heartfelt ballads, and joyful stage presence.

Tamara, an international performer (originally from Australia) and longtime educator, leads the group with deep musical roots and a passion for connecting people through music. The ensemble features: Tamara Bertram – violin, fiddle; Vedant Srivastava – guitar; and Matthew Fower – percussion. Their repertoire spans traditional jigs and reels as well as beloved folk songs such as The Wild Rover and Loch Lomond, and crowd favorites like Toss the Feathers and Duelling Violins. With every performance, Little Dakota Celtic invites audiences on a musical journey, full of rhythm, history, and heart.



Lillian Elsing inspires listeners when she tells about her family's involvement in the Resistance Movement during WWII in the Netherlands. Lillian served UND for over 37 years as the Associate VP for Student Services and Dean of Students

All Seasons Garden Center staff will present a workshop on succulents.

When a member of the Greater Grand Forks Retired Teachers Unit suggested a Cactus theme for the convention, planners were charmed by theme statements such as "Everybody has their Good Points" and "Sticking Together, We Stay Sharp." Learn what's great about succulents!



Connie Sherwood volunteers by fostering cats and kittens with Journey Home and will tell us about the work of this great organization. ND Retired Teachers Association loves to highlight and honor the great volunteers in our organization.



Strength      Balance      Strong Bones  
We'll have a workshop with tips and ideas for your physical health, too.

**Please plan to attend the 2025 State Convention!**  
**Inspiring, Informative, and tailored to Retired Teachers!**