

“STICKING TOGETHER, WE STAY SHARP”

ND State Retired Teachers Convention

September 9 and 10, 2025

Alerus Center, Grand Forks

The focus of our **State Retired Teachers Conventions** may have changed from the days when, as active teachers, we attended the **State Teachers Convention**; however, many of the underlying purposes have stayed the same.

The “**person-to-person**” connections ... At the Bismarck / Mandan-Hosted North Dakota Retired Teachers Association (NDRTA) Convention last September, I connected with a teacher friend from the early 1980’s. At a state convention, a person has the chance to renew friendships, get to know others better, and to benefit from new acquaintances. I’m grateful for the convention attendee who recommended some books. At a convention, a person gets to talk to others one-on-one, to share ideas, and to get and give advice. These personal connections are a prime example of our theme of “Sticking together, we stay sharp.”

When I was in the classroom, I attended conventions to get ideas, gather handy tips, and dig deeper into topics of professional interest. **Professional development objectives have transitioned, in retirement, into personal development.** We get to **hear and share ideas from people who have similar backgrounds, interests, and challenges.** Whether it’s expanding our knowledge of yard and lawn care, learning to “up-cycle” products we have around the house, finding an uplifting, positive book, or practicing some exercises that are most beneficial for retired people ... these are just a few of the personal development topics explored at recent retired teachers state conventions.

Another aspect of teachers’ conventions that I loved/love is the **change of scenery**, getting out of town for a few days, and visiting

another city and the towns along the way. The NDRTA Convention planners strive to offer up some of the most delightful meals during the convention itself. Add to those meals, an on-your-own **unique dining experience** is such a treat, whether it's the Blue Moose Bar and Grill or Bernie's-Scandinavian café and bakery in East Grand Forks, or Grand Forks' Ely's Ivy or Harry's Steakhouse. **Unique shopping experiences** exist, too. Grand Forks offers many boutique shops such as Northern Roots (voted BEST boutique in Grand Forks), Badman Design that offers high-end, handmade metal jewelry and art, Curious with its cute and quirky items, Kitsona, and Key Bliss. Grand Forks also has antique stores, Widman's -- a renowned candy shop, coin shops, and thrift stores.

The state convention is a chance to hear and see how **Teachers Fund for Retirement (TFFR)** is progressing and any changes on the horizon with our pension fund. **AARP and North Dakota United** offer up insights into topics of interest to retired teachers, from speakers available for groups to legislative action.

Long after returning from the state convention, it's often the **inspirational speakers** whose words of encouragement, hopefulness, and insight remained and endured the longest. Whatever your favorite reason for attending a state convention, I sincerely hope you will attend this year's retired teachers convention in Grand Forks.