

# DAKOTA LEADER

pathway to progress

North Dakota's Spotlight on  
Community | People | Projects

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A publication of CENTRAL REGION ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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**Amanda Jump**  
Editor-in-Chief

ND transplant and enthusiast, Amanda earned a B.A. in Sociology and spent several years working with youth in residential care settings in various states. She home-schooled her three children for five years before transitioning back to the workforce as a freelance writer and dietary aide. She enjoys meeting new people and telling their stories.



**Dennis Lindahl**  
Executive Director of Central Region Economic Development

ND native, Dennis, has spent the last seven years in economic development, desiring to connect and improve the lives of all North Dakotans. As a communications specialist and knowledgeable resource officer for the area, he founded Central Region Economic Development to better spotlight the needs, people, projects, and potential of NoDak's interior swath. He enjoys encountering the 'divine spark' in others.

# CRED The Director's Report

## OPPORTUNITY SURROUNDS US



Dennis Lindahl  
Central Region Economic  
Development Director

How many times do we find ourselves saying, “Oh, I wish I would have seen that”? Or “I wish I would have known about that sooner”? Or maybe, “I wish I knew what we could do about that”?

In elementary school, I was a terrible student. I was always getting in trouble for frequently daydreaming. It's one of the things at which I most excel! I like to daydream - dream about the endless possibilities and allow my imagination to run wild while trying to peer into the future. I like to think about how little actions that we take during the course of our day frequently have big impacts on our communities.

In Western North Dakota we drive a lot in our big spaces, and I know there's a lot of big dreams out there that are incubated under the hot sun behind the windshield and, sometimes, with frozen feet.

Great leaders in Western North Dakota are often thinking about the possibilities and always evaluating our tremendous assets, our abundant resources, and trying to figure out ways to pull better performance from underutilized assets.

Central Region Economic Development is dedicated to finding the stories of the imaginative people that make innovative projects and our communities better. Our ultimate goal is to find and spotlight opportunities presented today that have the potential to create an improved quality of life for tomorrow - for ourselves and for our successors.

We all know that North Dakota is a great place and that there's nothing stopping us from using our imagination to make it better. Here, we like to showcase those who are already doing that work - turning wishes into walkways and replying, “Hey, I know what to do about that!” or “I have an idea!”



Walking path leading into Stanley, ND

## NEW PATHS

We had three primal interests: Pizza, coffee, and church...

Yes, every North Dakotan instantly warned us about the winter weather, told us horror and glory stories about the oil boom, and made sure we knew where to find the nearest lake for summer fun – all good and pertinent information. However, what we *really* wanted to know, after relocating from Iowa to North Dakota two years ago, was how far we would have to drive to find good pizza. Our very first visit to Stanley, ND was a carefully selected *this-*

*place-looks-good-on-the-map* venture to answer that question.

Since that time, we've visited Stanley several times though we knew no one who lived there, it was an hour out of the way to anything else, and no one had invited us. There was always a natural lure about Stanley that compelled us. We liked the layout of the park and the community events offered; we found pizza and coffee; and the *word-of-mouth* recommendation from our friends back in Iowa also pointed us to a church in Stanley.

But *why Stanley?* Situated a little more than an hour between the larger cities of Williston and Minot on US 2, Stanley is a small community with a population of around 2,500. At its present size and condition, it is a hidden gem yet balancing between its modest origins and future luster. Stanley retains a small town quaintness while still offering family-centered, valuable, and popular conveniences like a coffee shop, theater, bakery, cafe (open later than everything else!), drug store, and thrift shop.

Still, Stanley was not a convenient drive for us. We had no ties to North Dakota or any reason to prefer one place over another. Nonetheless, if an outsider's word counts for anything, I'd say Stanley just *felt friendlier* to us than a lot

Continued on page 6...

of other places.

Our second visit to the city was during a 4<sup>th</sup> of July event in the park, where we interacted with some very friendly food truck vendors.

More recently, my children finally experienced the one-of-a-kind pleasure of eating a ‘World Famous’ Whirla-Whip – *with a friend from Stanley*. And, while I hate to cough up selfishly guarded secrets, I might have found a \$500 coat for \$6 at the local thrift store in town...

### Curb Appeal: Local Routines

Mining Stanley for hidden gems is now my new favorite pastime.

When driving into Stanley on Hwy 8, you might notice the freshly paved walking path merging from a residential zone, running alongside the golf course, and extending an arm to try to shake hands with downtown. It is one of two new walking paths freshly paved, each addition running approximately one-third of a mile, according to the former Mayor, Fritz Weisenberger.

The second footway can be found at the southeast side of town and also conveniently feeds into a housing development.

Weisenberger spoke enthusiastically about the project, mentioning a downtown walking path completed two years ago, as well as the city’s open Walking Path Fund. He hopes more trails can be paved in the future. The two new tracks, glistening like onyx when not snow-covered, were funded by grant money and a strong desire to “get people off of the highway”.

With one local resident already expressing a wish for

the trails to extend further, it may be beneficial for future plans to consider *how* people like to use these walkways. When used for an exercise discipline such as walking, biking, jogging, or running, most enthusiasts will want to access *at least* a mile long track. Others may enjoy a shorter route for the sole purpose of unwinding after work or taking a pleasure stroll with their dog. With potential future expansion of these routes already sandwiching the downtown area, walking to a local summer job becomes a safer option as well.

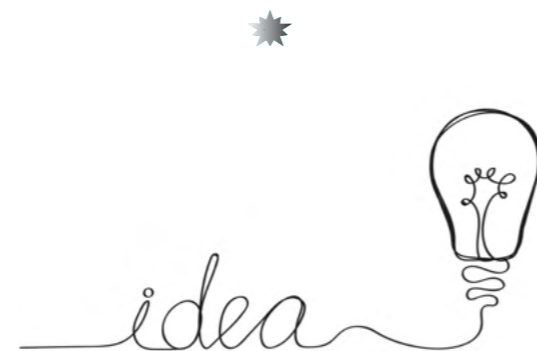
Increasing the overall walkability of a neighborhood or city has become an attractive asset to any real estate listing over the last decade with websites like Zillow offering a ‘Walk Score’. Most listings in Stanley receive a low walkability score today, meaning residents are considered to be ‘Car-Dependent’. While this is relatively commonplace in many rural areas (especially this far north in frostbite territory), smaller cities and towns *can* capitalize on their appeal to new residents by literally paving new lanes for walkers, moms with strollers, workers who have limited or no vehicle access, bikers, and the Abominable Snowman workout-freak who persists in a regular exercise of discipline – come blizzard or sweaty sheen.

Having walked circles around my local park this summer – after carefully incubating internal layers of fat like waffled thermals during the long months of the winter womb – I can attest to the incredible benefits of having a place to go let off steam without having to start my car. Something about ‘the

path of least resistance’ comes to mind here.

If I have to drive thirty minutes to go stretch my legs and get motivated, it might not happen.

On the other hand, if I can hook a left from my local neighborhood and hit a path long enough to make me feel better about my waistline *and* it just happens to spit me out near a drug store selling Whirla-Whips... well, who am I to complain? - Amanda Jump



Do you want to spotlight a project or community? Submit story ideas or persons of interest from central North

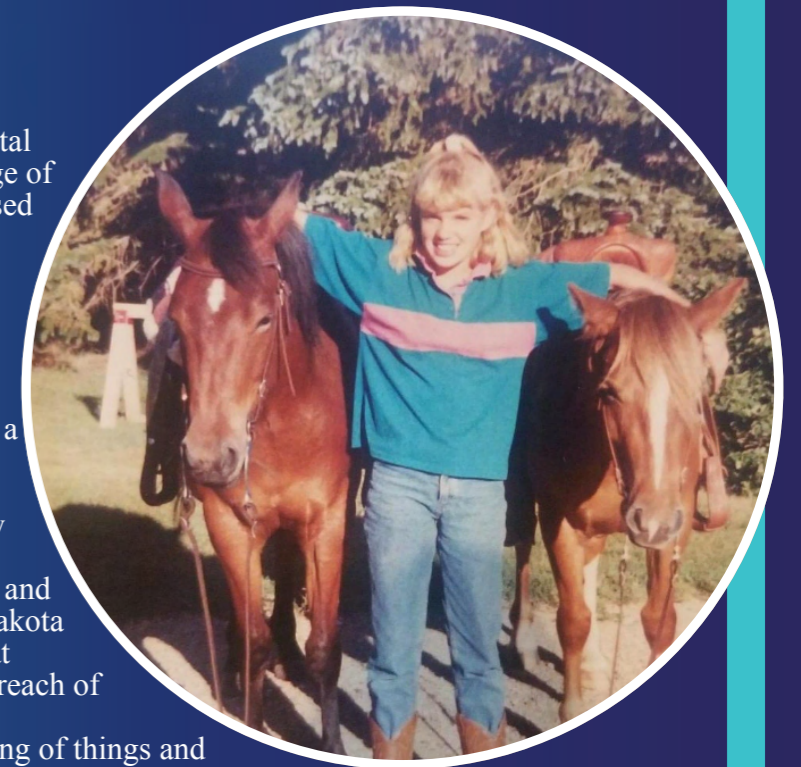
Dakota to:

[editordakotaloader@gmail.com](mailto:editordakotaloader@gmail.com)

“Idea” graphic: ISTOCKPHOTOS.COM

# Returning To ND

Natalie Johnson’s Story



According to the USPS Postal Facts page, thirty-six million change of address request forms were processed in the U.S. in 2021. While that is huge, the Pew Research Center reported the same year that more than half (55%) of the nation’s population still resides within an hour of extended family members.

Natalie Johnson grew up in a small community in North Dakota. After a long time away, enhancing her résumé and expanding her view of the world, Natalie loaded up her possessions, along with two horses and four dogs, and returned to North Dakota this summer. She is now part of that percentage living within an hour’s reach of family and roots.

“It’s easy to see the beginning of things and harder to see the ends,” says Natalie, summing up her travelogue.

A lively palomino named Duncan prances around, while a dark bay (described as Natalie’s “unicorn horse”), Sayda, holds an expression between half curious and half bored, looking for reassurances from her owner – the blonde mending fences in blue jeans and boots. Two large dogs, Meeko and Farley, roam the yard scrounging for any leftover attention anyone will give them, while two smaller dogs, Timber and Tango, enjoy the indoors.

There’s a lot of work to be done to transition the retired grain farm into a space fit for several horses, four dogs, and a returning North Dakotan. Much of Natalie’s first summer back is full of backbreaking work.

“It was hot, windy, stormy, muggy, buggy; but it was great,” she says.

Traveling from northwest Montana last summer, back to her beginnings in Noonan, North Dakota, Natalie fully embraced the nostalgia of returning to her family’s fourth generation farm where she was raised. She says “everyone had a part and a job” when she was growing up. She describes herself as “infatuated” with animals from a

*Continued on page 8...*

young age but especially with horses.

“I found ways to dress up our cats, our dog, and even our bottle lambs weren’t safe from bonnets and jackets,” she says.

Eventually, as a child, she talked her parents into getting two horses, which she rode “in every direction” – including the seven miles from her family’s farm into Noonan (one way) to visit her grandma.

The sharp focus of her eyes forecasts the entrepreneurial spirit Natalie has had since her youth. As a pre-teen she mailed permission slips out to neighborhood parents for their children to participate in group horseback riding lessons.

“They came! It was great!” she says, exuding the enthusiasm of that memory.

During high school, she offered a horsemanship program with another classmate for a summer Bible camp.

Overall, Natalie has spent only a handful of years without horses.

**“Communities can grow by choice or by chance.”**

Attending a massage school in Wisconsin, Natalie received National Certification in Bodywork and Massage Therapy. After working three jobs at once in Colorado – working for an art gallery, a chiropractor, and a day spa – she opened her own massage practice in Tioga, ND. However, a soft tissue injury caused her to step away from her practice and pursue expanding her résumé again.

“I was in the airlines for five years. I was also a patient coordinator for a couple medical offices in the area.”

Natalie moved to Bozeman, MT in 2008 and spent the next fourteen years in Montana. She began training horses for a private party and somehow managed to cram in working for Lewis and Clark Caverns, as well as going to Alaska to work as a help guide at a Dall sheep camp. She also worked several years as a patient coordinator in a dental office before becoming self-employed and centering her work on her beloved and life-long favorite animals, horses.

“Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn’t do than by the ones you did do,” she says, quoting Mark Twain.

Natalie opened her own private, full-care, horse boarding facility that stalled twenty-five horses full-time. She offered care for horses in rehab from injuries, training, clinics, and open riding. During her last four years in Montana, she also managed another private full-care horse facility for a friend.

Though Natalie moved

back to North Dakota last summer, she says the idea was conceived three years prior, as she watched the Montana landscape change around her. Traffic increased. More and more people moved into her city and state looking to escape the uncertainty and chaos of the national and social currents. Infrastructure suffered, local communities were stretched thin, the small-town feel disappeared, and recreation areas weren’t the same. Gradually, these things “chipped away” at the area’s appeal for the ND native.

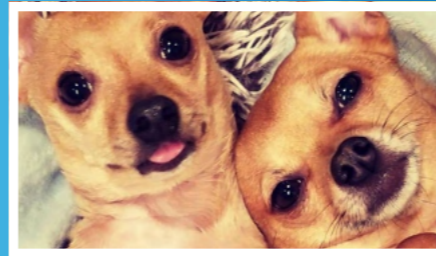
“Basically, I felt it was time for a change. I want to ride my own horses more, practice relaxing, and maybe pick up hobbies I haven’t had time to enjoy,” she says. “I also moved back to ND to be closer to my parents.”

She is now within walking distance of her parent’s home. She can see her horses from her own windows and watch her dogs run around the farm without leashes.

Thanks to technology, Natalie went through the process of selling her place in Montana while already living at her new place in Noonan, ND. Nonetheless, getting six animals (two Quarter Horses and four dogs) and herself moved was a big challenge. During the process, she sometimes needed to be in two places at once.

“People argue about technology but without the convenience of electronically signing documents from my cell phone this summer would have looked entirely different.”

She and her dad spent a lot of time installing horse corrals and fences prior to getting the horses moved – time technology, perhaps, provided. Her primary concern was whether some projects would



Tango & Timber



Natalie & Sayda



Natalie & Duncan

get completed before winter.

“Getting onto contractors’ lists has been challenging,” she says.

A common complaint in rural western North Dakota. It was October before water, sewer, and electrical lines were finally linked to her new home.

Nonetheless, as a returning resident, Natalie says the support she’s received has been tremendous. But especially her parents.

“My dad gets a big shout out for helping me fence in some ridiculous hot weather with ticks crawling on us!”

Going forward, Natalie is offering Bemer (Bio-Electromagnetic Energy Regulation) therapy to equines in need. Over 90% of working horses suffer from back pain, and it is difficult to treat. The treatment ultimately benefits the horse and rider.

The local communities are small. Nonetheless, Natalie says, “Change is going to happen whether we like it or not. Communities can grow by choice or chance.”

She has seen some wonderful changes in the surrounding communities since moving back and says she likes to focus on what a community has to offer rather than what it does not have.

She jokes that her favorite thing about North Dakota is winter –

“I know what I’ve signed up for. There’s always snowmobiling and ice fishing. I’ve got this.”

Still, there are many things she loves about ND.

“I love the sunsets, the Badlands, the small towns and their history,” she says.

Wide open spaces, Lefse, and tradition top her list too.

“I love that everyone still waves at you when you meet them on the road. I love the people.”



PROJECT

The Pursuit Church of Stanley is reclaiming and renovating downtown with passion and purpose...

# THE PURSUIT

## STANLEY, ND

Growing Pains...

Windswept change jostles your heart, reroutes your eyes, whistles through your ears. A transformation is coming and, for a moment, catching a glimpse of all that could be, you smile. The dream is noble; the hope is tangible; the winds are friendly. But the terrain beneath your feet is rock-hard. Between the terrain of your feet and the rivers of your heart, growing pains emerge from the work required in

following the windfall of a dream...

For Jesse Barlow, Campus Pastor of The Pursuit Church in Stanley, ND, that dream exists in finding a permanent sanctuary from which to “invest in downtown and give back to the community”.

On August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022, The Pursuit Church in Stanley broke ground on a dream – the old Food Pride (CashWise) facility being renovated for

their future fixed campus. After sitting empty as an eyesore for eight years, the purchase was a welcome relief for a community poised for downtown growth.

While The Pursuit Church began meeting in Stanley about four years ago, its founding hub in Minot was established in 2013. With its first few years of services being held in a former strip club, The Pursuit was destined to be anything but ordinary,

certainly not ‘traditional’, and welcomed 100 congregants for their opening service. As they eventually outgrew this facility, the church became a ‘mobile church’, moving to various venues around Minot, until they purchased the Harley Davidson building in 2018. They planted the Stanley campus during the same year. From its very conception, The Pursuit has sought to improve upon existing city infrastructure and

work with the resident surrounding communities in its growing ventures.

With a current population around 2,500, Stanley already had six existing churches with approximately 100 people in attendance each week in each fellowship. From The Pursuit’s perspective, that’s about 1,900 residents yet unreached or not attending a church service weekly. According to Jesse Barlow, the Stanley campus’ current pastor, reaching the lost and unchurched in Stanley is part of their direct mission.

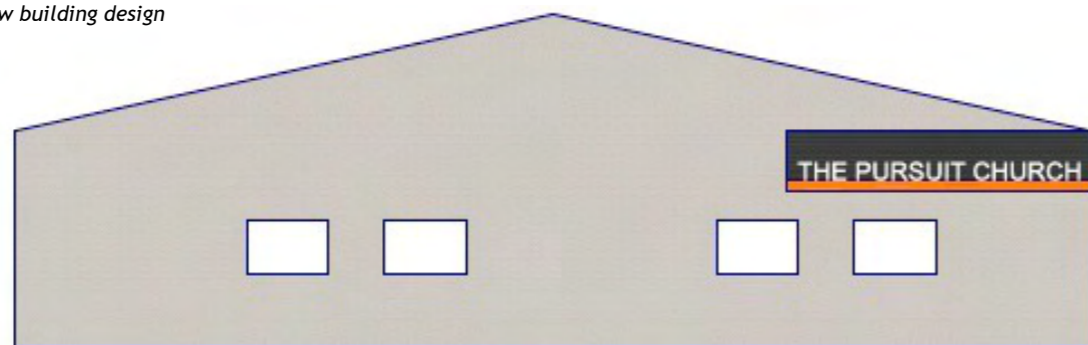
“A building is just a tool; it’s going to help us reach our mission,” he said. “The Pursuit is here to stay.”

JESSE & ELISE BARLOW, *Campus Pastor*

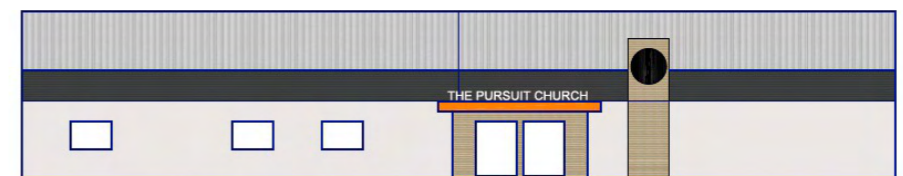
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New building design



NORTH ELEVATION



WEST ELEVATION

There is a lot of excitement around the acquisition of a permanent structure in Stanley, as the church has been mobile, without a dedicated space, for several years now. After initially meeting in the Stanley Elementary School, COVID constraints forced them to regroup in homes for a while. Later, they met in the Mountrail County Fair

Building and eventually returned to the elementary school. This year, a leak in the gym of the school displaced them to the cafeteria for several months. They are currently back in the school gym for regular services.

The set-up and tear-down involved in hosting from a temporary shelter is reason enough for those involved to be pleased about

the new building. Designating space for three childcare rooms, setting up sound equipment, chairs, welcoming tables (for information or refreshments), banners (signage), and décor for monthly service themes every week requires a rotation of volunteers to spend their Saturday evenings setting up for Sunday morning's ease

Continued on page 14...

and glory. This commitment involves one to three hours of serving, depending upon how many volunteers show up. While tear-down takes less time, it is no less work. What is a one or two hour appearance for guests and visitors requires a six to eight hour investment every weekend for those serving the community at The Pursuit.

The church purchased their new building in Stanley for \$100,000. Their fundraising goals for renovation, however, reach to \$1.74 million. They are currently pushing to raise \$800,000 by April 2023 to keep the project on track for an expected completion date of Easter 2023. Their financial goals and project plans are clearly stated and delineated in readily available bulletins and brochures anyone can pick up and peruse from the church on a Sunday morning.

Ty Mitchell of Revelator Services, LLC, the General Contractor working on the renovation of the former grocery store for The Pursuit Church, estimated

about 95% of the outside work was done by the end of October last year, including a new metal roof, paint job, and some stucco facade. The windows were boarded up until January, when he anticipated receiving them. Being a local Stanley contractor, Mr. Mitchell is pleased to have secured around 80% of the project's subcontractors from Stanley, reinvesting into the local community as a way to support the city about which he and the church have become passionate.

Mr. Mitchell also served as the Stanley Campus Pastor during its first year, which puts him in a unique position of interest over the project. After his business exploded a few years ago, he requested to pass the responsibility of pastoring the campus to a fellow member of the church (Jesse Barlow). Nonetheless, Ty Mitchell can still be found praying for people or stacking chairs at the end of a service, with a smile, and remains an active part of the church community.

Perhaps that smile betrays firsthand knowledge of the relationship between his work and the windfall of dreams-made-reality...

Grow ND is an initiative of the church to plant more campuses around the state of North Dakota. Stanley is just the beginning of this effort.

One of the things The Pursuit prays for is that this building project will bring more unity to the Stanley community. Mr. Barlow specifically expressed his desire for unity amongst the local church leaders, as he believes that a concerted effort from those desiring to spread the Gospel of Christ Jesus is the best way to bless the community.

Within the framework of their own venture, however, no one can accuse The Pursuit of being unambitious in their efforts to offer alternative activities and warmth to the Stanley community. Mr. Barlow's wife, Elise, expressed delight in her future hopes of being able to offer events like Vacation Bible

School, 'block parties', and a Fall Spectacular (Halloween alternative) from their own facility when it is completed. Mr. and Mrs. Barlow, having both formerly attended The Pursuit Church in Minot, are looking forward to finally tasting a fruitful bit of permanence, since the Minot campus purchased their facility the same year the Barlows were transferred to Stanley. (That's a lot of years of homeless set-up and tear-down!)

During my interviews, the theme rang loud and clear over and over again from each church member: They want to *"be a resource for the community"*, *"bless the community"*, *"coordinate with local business"*, *"invest in downtown"*, and *"give back to the community"*. Whether one enjoys attending a satellite campus church, knows anything about a self-branded non-denominational church, or likes modern worship music, it's hard to fault or misconstrue their stated mission. When it comes to benefiting the local community, their hearts speak as one unified amplifier.



Ty & Kim Mitchell,  
Revelator Services, LLC

At the forefront of this stated theme is The Pursuit's desire to partner with a local daycare in their new facility as a way to invest in the people, children, and economic success of the city of Stanley. With several daycares closing locally (and across ND and the nation) over the last two years, there is tremendous need to support any existing and new daycare business.

According to a recent report by Vision West ND, a collaborative team of representatives for economic sustainability in Western North Dakota, "...the lack of child care availability consistently ranked as one of the top three topics brought forward" at every planning meeting. They also rightly noted that the lack of childcare throughout the state is a workforce, social, family, and community issue – making The Pursuit's future endeavor that much more compelling.

To have a successful partnership with a daycare, however, the church must acquire a green space for playground and recess accessibility. Right now, on the Food Pride lot they are renovating, no such space exists. While the church has set its sights on an available lot across the street, it has not yet (at the time of this writing) been secured. Again, thinking ahead, Mr. Barlow also stated that the church would plan to bequeath the green space back to the city if the church ever folded. In short, there is no down-side where the city is concerned. Whether used as a green space for the children of the city or handed back to the city for repurposing later, the community directly benefits from the church's plans and foresight.

To the city, Mr. Barlow says, "Be expectant and excited. God is moving in Stanley."

Certainly, if one cannot see God on the move in the city, no one will be able to miss the waves and smiles rippling through downtown from The Pursuit.



**When it comes to benefiting the local community, their hearts speak as one unified amplifier.**



You can visit [www.thepursuit.church](http://www.thepursuit.church) to learn more about The Pursuit Church



# SMALL TOWN, ND



Amy Ones  
Ones Consulting

## LEARNING, LISTENING, AND LIVING

### MEET AMY

Amy Ones grew up in the Donnybrook and Kenmare communities but admits that she never imagined herself in the position of influencing and bettering the six small towns that she serves today. She does, however, credit her parents' public service and sense of responsibility for her perspective on being involved.

Her dad, Dennis Huff, was a farmer and cattle rancher in Donnybrook his entire life. He also served as the president of the school board in both Donnybrook and Kenmare. Her mom, Alexis, worked as a piano teacher and office manager for several local businesses.

Reflecting on how the eventual loss of the school in Donnybrook must have impacted her dad, and certainly changed her school placement as a child, Amy understands the importance of community initiative

**"...Someone has to serve, someone has to step up."**

and involvement in economic development and politics. Her grandfather (Ralph Anderson) and her brother (Blaine Huff), along with Amy, also all served on local school boards and township boards in the past as well.

"I was always raised that someone has to serve, someone has to step up."

### LEARNING

Amy is employed as the City Auditor by Flaxton in Burke County. After earning a degree in accounting and working as a tax accountant for seven years, she saw an ad for the auditor position.

"Like everyone else, I thought it was about money, and I knew accounting," she says. Laughing, she also stated her hatred for her Government Accounting class in college: "I was never going to do that."

Looking for more time to spend with her children, however, the position was appealing. They told her she would be in the office 'once a week'.

Smiling, she notes, "I was there two or three times a week."

Having never been an auditor before and describing herself as a 'self-taught' one, she soon learned that money is only a minor part of her duties for the city. As Auditor, she provides PR for the community, answers questions and concerns with the public daily, organizes and runs projects, and constantly seeks new opportunities to improve the quality of life in Flaxton.

Much like Donnybrook, Flaxton's school closed back in the '80's. There's no church, no post office, no bar, and a population of about 40. Still, in the last ten years,

*Continued on page 18...*



Danish Windmill  
Kenmare, ND

she's helped guide the process of putting in a new water depo, a municipal water well, new sewer lines, a park, and recently had pipes tested for lead.

of her success as a civil servant, business owner, and community leader.

She is helping Bowbells with grant writing for a new food pantry building, advocated for a park renovation in Coleharbor, and she is especially proud of the new Tolley firehouse that was 100% funded by the grant she wrote on their behalf.

"Every small community has the same infrastructure problems as large cities but not enough funding," states Amy.

She also notes that property taxes are *not* enough to keep these rural communities viable. People living here desire the same quality-of-life amenities as urban centers, but they want to retain that small-town feel. A thriving business district, good schools, a post office, and some place to gather (church, community center, etc...) are all vital for a large or small community to flourish. Because funds are always lacking in rural development, Amy has become an expert grant writer advocating for the small places she loves on the

map. She knows that finding and detailing what is special about each unique city she serves is the key to funding.

She describes living in these rural places as "living the good life" and says that people who grew up here assume the good things rather than realizing the prime selling points of these communities.

"We take for granted the good things that are here," she says, after recounting how a couple from Oregon recently moved to Flaxton and renovated an old church as their new home. Soon after, a few of their relatives followed them here seeking a better quality of life during COVID restrictions.

(They're not the only ones. My own family did the same, relocating from Iowa to Columbus, ND in 2021.)

Transplants are seeing North Dakota with fresh eyes in light of social, cultural, economic, and political movements that feel harsher than the once-detering harsh weather of this midwest prairie-land.

In all of her work, Amy sees it as her job to provide the best information possible to these small cities so that they can make informed decisions regarding progress and development. The contention she encounters most centers around using the size of these communities as the excuse for not supporting a project. Still, she understands that oftentimes people simply feel neglected. Regarding naysayers, she simply replies, "People just want to be heard. They want their perspective heard."

As a rural North Dakota native, Amy is as empathetic as she is resourceful.



Columbus, Burke County

When other communities began to reach out to her for help, she started Ones Consulting out of necessity. She now assists Berthold, Coleharbor, Kenmare, Bowbells, and Tolley with various projects, alongside working for the city of Flaxton.

Amy is also the Executive Director for the Kenmare Community Development Corporation. One of the things this has taught her is the distinction between running a city (as an auditor) versus attracting residents and visitors as an economic developer.

## LISTENING

Upon sitting down to talk with Amy, it's clear that listening to the surrounding communities, understanding their needs and how to help them, is a large part

## LIVING

The gorge between wanting to make a difference and living out that impact is typically full of headaches, paperwork, disagreements, change, disappointments, and work. Multiply that by six and you'll get some idea of Amy's level of 'busy'.

"In the morning I have a plan in my head of what will happen that day, and it never goes that way," she says.

Inevitably, there's a phone call, a rescheduling, an emerging crisis. "I need this grant done – Oh, and it's due tomorrow" is a line she's heard more than once but tells me about in good humor, laughing.

The first two weeks of the month, she says, are full of city council meetings. The last two weeks of each month she spends "playing catch-up" and writing grants.

But her children keep her busy too. There's livestock judging and showing, overnight rodeo trips, and a new race car dream to manage. Enjoying the time she is able to devote to her children, Amy appreciates the flexibility of her work.

"I don't have a 9-5 job; I'm flexible."

She never planned to own her own business and all of her business for Ones Consulting comes by word-of-mouth. She doesn't hand out business cards or run a website for her company. She is "busy enough" - and thankful for that business.

Her only real complaint is in the interest of the communities that she serves:

"I want these cities to be successful... Flaxton and Kenmare are on the highway and near the border, but no one knows we're here."

Kenmare is a tucked-away gem. The Gathering Grounds cafe there offers great coffee, delicious lunches, and houses a cute clothing boutique. Kenmare Drug has a wonderful selection of décor, besides the usual pharmaceuticals, and a quaintly quiet soda shop (I don't want to tell you about because I want to keep it all to myself). This hill-nestled small city also has a wonderful thrift store, Kenmare Closet, as well as a hardware store, grocery store, and at least two restaurants visible from the highway.

With so much to offer, whether in the amenities of convenience and gathering places or in the unencumbered small-town living – where produce from your neighbor's overflowing garden easily makes up for anything lacking in the local grocery store – it's easy to understand Amy's frustration about the lack of spotlight for these small but vital hubs of North Dakota.

It can be tempting to stop at the intersection of frustration and obscurity. Amy Ones is one woman proving that we don't have to sell ourselves short just because the city is small, lost a school years ago, or doesn't have a marketing

team. Sometimes, all that's needed to move forward is one person's care and vision of what could be and why it matters.

Of course, there will be sacrifices to make along the way –

"I don't even do my own taxes any more," Amy says.

(There was no visible lament in her face on that topic...)

Amy, her husband of eighteen years, Ryan, and their two children, Grace and Brooks, currently reside in Kenmare, ND.



Downtown Kenmare, ND

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### Our Mission

We focus on building communities through workforce development with 21-Century technology education programs for both youth and adults.



### Early Workforce Development

North Dakota has tremendous agriculture, energy and natural resources exports, CREDND seeks to retain our human capital which is our most valuable resource. We believe this effort will build more diverse, interesting, and vibrant communities.



### Creating Future Workers, Customers, and Responsible Citizens

Our activities and programs create loyal employees for local employers, fanatic customers for business, engaged community members, and inspired leaders of the future.



### 21st Century Technology Programs

We have developed and implemented successful, award-winning, STEM-certified, training programs in numerous communities that have a proven track record of inspiring young students to reach higher to attain their dreams and goals.



[CREDND.COM](http://CREDND.COM)



1. Steve Pedersen unloads hay bales for insulating feral cat shelters

2. Glenda Ebert, Deirdra Eden-Boyd, and Susan Piek of Edenhaven

3. Mark Ebert, Treasurer for Edenhaven

4. Community meal hosted by Edenhaven

5. The old church in Flaxton, ND

## PROJECT

# EDEN HAVEN

A unique non-profit based out of Flaxton, ND with a big heart and big eyes towards the future....

“Edenhaven is a socially responsible organization that wants to uplift and revive small communities that have seen better days,” says Glenda Ebert, secretary for EdenHaven.

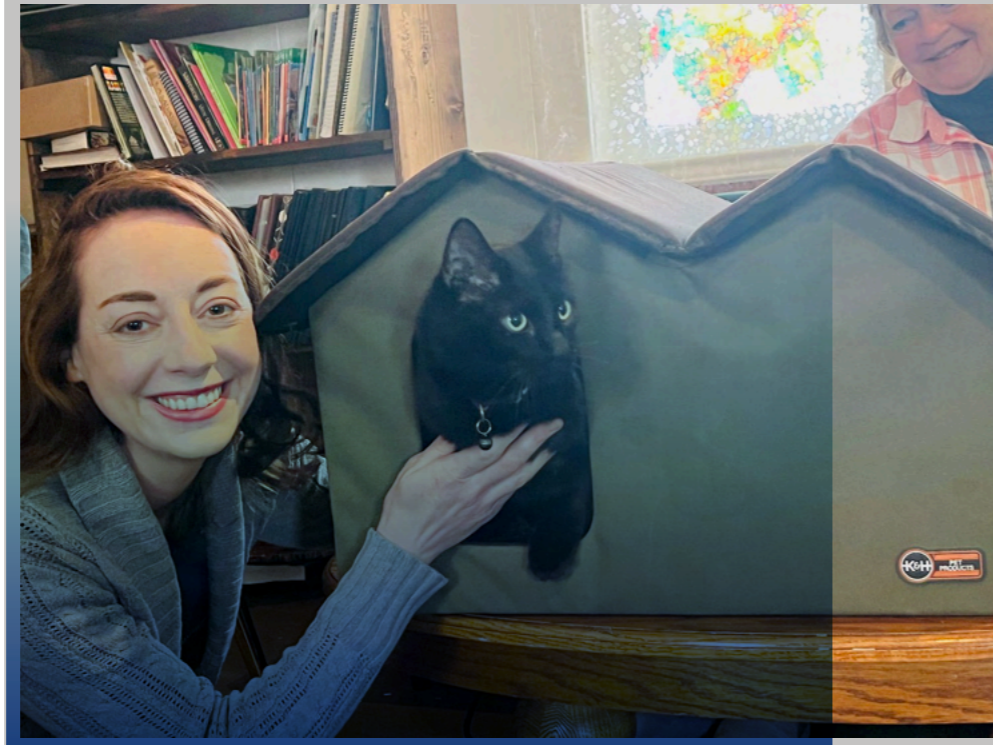
There’s never been a better time.

Deirdra Eden-Boyd, Vice-President of EdenHaven and Ebert’s niece, is living proof of the swell of interest in inhabiting and revitalizing rural spaces across the United States since COVID. Eden-Boyd and her family bought the old church in Flaxton, ND, and made the move from Portland, OR about a year ago. In that time, Eden-Boyd has already transformed the church into a home (with more renovations to come) and left a lasting impact on the community – including the feral cat population (of which she ‘homes’ at least seven).

EdenHaven’s vision is multi-faceted and holistic, seeking to address sociological, economic, interpersonal, emotional, physical, spiritual, and locational needs and problems from the ground floor. Every member of the EdenHaven team expresses the same devotion for the rural communities from their own unique scope of knowledge

*Continued on page 24...*

Deirdra Eden-Boyd with Ribbon the cat and one of the heated cat shelters donated to EdenHaven by the community.



**“WE WANT TO SUPPORT PEOPLE IN THE GOOD THEY’RE ALREADY DOING...”**

Glenda Ebert, EdenHaven

and experience.

“My own children will likely never be able to own their own home due to the economic changes – wealth gap, paycheck-to-paycheck living, astronomically higher education loan costs – created over the last 30 years... Their only hope is to find a home in a rural community and have a service to provide or bring remote work with them to make a living. This is the norm for anyone in the 40ish and below demographic unless they were able to ride the ‘technological revolution’ wave...” says Susan Piek.

Piek is the Events Coordinator for EdenHaven and has a background in community development and non-profit management.

“Saving what’s left of the ‘heart-land’, cleaning up and revitalizing our small towns so that people can enjoy a better, more affordable, quality of life is the most expeditious and least expensive answer, combined with alternative housing design,” she concludes.

The last several years have certainly brought an influx of socio-economic, political, and cultural ‘refugees’ to America’s

heartland. The members of EdenHaven have taken their own personal turmoils and stories and looped a vine by which to pull others into their mission.

Steve Pedersen, in charge of Strategic Planning for EdenHaven, recounts one reason he believes rural revitalization is “a step in the right direction” by considering his sister’s situation.

“My sister lives in Minneapolis and in the same house for over 40 years, but she only knows a few people on her street. A coach from a neighboring school was shot and killed as he drove his young son home from school. An elderly couple had their car stolen and were thrown out onto the street. Do I want to live in a place that you need to fear for your life?”

He continues, “Many good well-educated people have left the region for economic opportunities that they could not find locally, but in doing so they also left behind the people that molded them and gave them their values.”

The EdenHaven project isn’t just about restoring a few old buildings so that the area looks more

inviting. It’s about watering the roots of these former communities so that they can grow into welcoming sanctuaries for those who seek a quieter or safer life away from the larger population hubs. It’s also about encouraging and supporting those who already call Flaxton and other rural areas home.

“We want to support people in the good they’re already doing... encouraging people to serve each other,” says Eden-Boyd.

In 2022, EdenHaven hosted a community Thanksgiving dinner at the Memorial Hall in Flaxton. They provided all of the food and ordered extra for anyone who might show up unannounced due to weather events.

Eden-Boyd admits that she was initially worried about how to decorate for the dinner – or, rather, how to afford such decorations. She says she realized that she had to pare down to essentials to begin meeting community needs.

Decor is nice, but not necessary. No one can eat a bauble, after all...

No longer stressing the décor, EdenHaven plans to

host monthly potlucks and events at Memorial Hall, and they are excited about it.

“We can’t always depend on the government to help us, but we can build a community that cares for one another,” she says.

Community Well-Checks are also at the top of the list of priorities for the team. They want to assist anyone who needs help with heat, food, transportation, or personal care. Eden-Boyd points out that small gestures can mean a lot to someone who is homebound or alone. Gestures like offering to pick up groceries for someone when you’re already out buying for yourself anyway.

“If I just check on five people and each person on the team is checking on others, then at least I know people [in the community] aren’t suffering for too long,” says Eden-Boyd.

Glenda Ebert discovered that her ideas about building a community were aligned with her niece’s (Eden-Boyd) after unexpected needs placed her also in Flaxton. Her brother, Mark Ebert, the Treasurer for EdenHaven, bought a house for Glenda in Flaxton.

However, unable to fix that house up before winter, Glenda bought another house in Flaxton. The first home purchased by Mark will likely be the spearhead of EdenHaven’s housing project.

“For years I dreamt of creating and living in a dynamic, self-sustaining, off-grid community. It would be a sanctuary for the homeless and displaced individuals and families willing to build and fortify their own spaces, share the community responsibilities, and provide a safe-haven for themselves and their pets at a low cost. They could become self-supporting while experiencing a sense of community and self-worth,” says Glenda.

Piek adds: “The ‘American Dream’ wasn’t truly available to all, and the pendulum has

swung to dysfunctional extremes. EdenHaven may be focused in Flaxton, ND, but, at its heart, it is speaking to all small towns that seem to have been left behind in the last century’s industrial revolution. With the increased ability to work remotely, our organic, cooperative, compassionate, inclusive needs-based, and community-focused approach to revitalizing Flaxton can be applied anywhere.”

Currently, EdenHaven’s ‘Donate and Wish List’ can be found on their website ([www.EdenHaven.org](http://www.EdenHaven.org)).

Eden-Boyd recounts how frequently items they need just show up at her doorstep and the excitement she’s encountered in the community for the EdenHaven project. She says she scarcely has to ask before someone is offering to help.

Deirdra Eden is also an accomplished fiction author. You can find her series, *The Watchers*, on Amazon.



# ELITE ENERGY SERVICES

How one family went from struggling to survive to Fire Tube Specialists in the Bakken...

## PEOPLE

David Allen began his career as a male nurse, went through bankruptcy, and almost fell back into bankruptcy before becoming an innovator in the oil and gas industry. He is now the VP of Innovation and Business Development for Elite Energy Services in Williston, ND, which today holds more than thirty contracts from North Dakota all the way down to Texas.

As a child, Allen wanted to work with heavy equipment and be a fireman, but he was always a tinkerer. His mom would pick up various appliances from the thrift store, like toasters, and bring them home for David to take apart and figure out.

"I was always trying to come up with an easier way to do something," says Allen.

He drove a big loader while in high school but says he eventually got tired of being cold and working really hard. His mom was a nurse and his dad worked as a guidance counselor in a school. With his mom's encouragement, Allen began work as an EMT in the early 80s. He later moved to the ICU, which he enjoyed because every day was something different.

Allen says people often asked why he became a nurse instead of a doctor. While working in the ICU over long weekends, he also worked as a fire chief during

the rest of the week. Jokingly, he comments, "So, I kept my masculinity."

Things came full circle when, after working as a unit nurse, travel nurse, and house supervisor (scheduling operations and life flights overnight) in various hospitals, Allen says he felt the need to do something different.

"I really wanted to get back in the hard work world," he says.

By this time, Allen, along with his wife and two sons, were strapped financially, had been through a bankruptcy, and the repossession of their house. They bought a 900 square foot farmhouse in Idaho in the aftermath. One son (Dillon) was finishing high school, while the other (Derek) got his LPN. Lois, Allen's wife, worked then as a transcriptionist.

But the boom was on in North Dakota.

Derek eventually got his CDL and went to drive a water truck in ND. Soon, he encouraged his dad to buy a truck because there was so much roustabout (a term applied to a general laborer in the oil field) work to do. Allen says the oilfield attracted him because it seemed like such a "large open book" - a wide open space for his natural curiosity.

Allen and his son, Derek, worked hard to secure contracts during this time and began changing fire tubes. Unfortunately, it was shortly after this that the boom ended and work dried up. Soon, the prospect of bankruptcy was facing him again. However, Allen had begun to put his tinkering and proactive skills to work prior to the bust.

Allen took his knowledge of the medical field and transposed and translated it into understanding how oil rigs, heater-treaters, and fire tubes function. Specifically, he recognized the need for certain processes to be more efficient and safer to improve the overall results of the oil industry's working body. Not unlike a human body...

After replacing hundreds of fire tubes whether they needed it or not - a protocol that puts a two-year lifespan on all fire tubes *regardless of their condition*, and seeing the damage caused by heater-treater fires and leaks, Allen thoughtfully considered the challenges of the industry's processes and tools through the lens of risk management.

There had to be a better way, and he was determined to find it.



He began by seeking to understand corrosion, the primary issue that leads to fire tube failures. The fire tubes (U-shaped pipes) sit inside of the treater and are submerged in the salt water that comes up with the oil. Two-hundred times saltier than ocean water, the salt water surrounding the fire tube creates a very harsh environment perfect for facilitating heavy and targeted corrosion. Any prior damage of the fire tube structure itself

(occurring during transportation or installation) makes the corrosive effects worse and swift because of the electricity that is generated as the solution moves through the metal tubes.

The problem was that there was no way to determine how damaged the fire tubes might be without shutting down production, draining the heater-treater, and paying for a crew and crane to remove it.

Allen began to wonder: "If we can measure in the body, why can't we do that with these tubes?"

Many people simply told him it couldn't be done, but he knew better. The technology already existed in the medical field in the form of MRIs. A magnetic current and resistor sensors could evaluate the human body from the outside-in, so Allen thought it would be possible to penetrate the fire tubes without having to remove them and hamper production.

He was right.

Allen began working with a company to design a scanner made specifically for the fire tubes, but then came the bust. Money dried up with the work.

"We were within two weeks of going home, just walking away from all of it," he says.

Ultimately, he decided he could keep pushing for the scanners or he would have to return to the medical field as a house supervisor somewhere.

"2015 through 2017 was the worst time," says Allen, who pushed through and continued working to develop the scanners and picked up whatever work he could in-between.

After getting and testing the first scanner, he realized that it really might work, but it took about three years for him to be able to afford to purchase more scanners (needed at various sizes) ...and a truck that wasn't held together with baling wire.

*Continued on page 28...*

# From Innovator To Industry Leader...

While in nursing school, one of Allen's instructors informed him: "You won't make a very good nurse." Five years later, Allen was working as the charge nurse on a 24-bed unit, and the same instructor had to follow him around for three weeks while working on her preceptorship.

She later apologized to him for her prior words.

Allen's laughter while telling the story is founded in sincerity. "Don't ever diss on somebody because you never know..."

Not only was he successful as a nurse, but he craftily transferred that knowledge to a completely different industry.

Jumping ladders from one field to another is the kind of monumental move that makes many people sit back down in their black swivel chairs and take another dreaded phone call. Allen's story, however, inspires us all to ask more questions, make fewer assumptions, and find creative ways to apply what we *do* know (like an overlaid translucent blueprint) to guide us through navigating what we *don't* know.

In asking questions and evaluating each piece of equipment in the oilfield as if it were a patient in critical status in the ICU, Allen

successfully developed several industry-changing tools. Scanners for fire tube safety was only the beginning. Since that time he's also designed or improved upon anodes (for drawing corrosion away from the tubes), a High Velocity Hydrocyclone (to filter silty sand away and stop it from clogging valves), a heat shield (adding a protective layer to the fire tubes), and corrosion sensors.

All of these products are designed to extend the life of the 'patient' (fire tube), cause the least disruption to producers, and protect the safety of the laborers in the industry. Like screening for predispositions to various diseases in a medical office, Allen saw the need for preventative and proactive care in the oilfield and took the initiative to change it.

There are hundreds of fires per year due to fire tube failures. The extremely salty water that gushes from spills is toxic to anything it contacts. Diminishing the oil and salt water spills and reducing fire hazards "takes another point of argument away from environmentalists," he aptly notes.



Dillon, Derek, Lois, and David Allen

"What I really want people to understand is that if there is a product that can prevent something bad from happening, why wouldn't we use it? For fifty years there wasn't a choice. Now there is."



Learn more about Elite Energy Services at [www.treaterpro.com](http://www.treaterpro.com)



Commonplace heater-treater fire



Screwdriver showcasing fire tube damage found with scanner



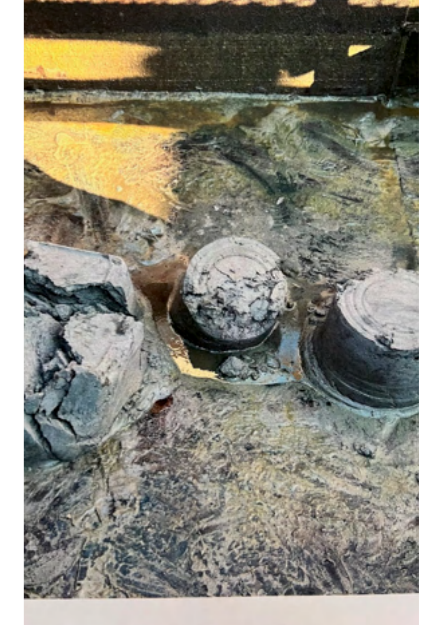
Allen standing next to scanner he developed



The High Velocity Hydrocyclone



Silty sand filtered by the Hydrocyclone



Silty sand filtered by the Hydrocyclone

Did you know that the word 'maze' has at least three potential historical sources?

**1. Old English Maes**

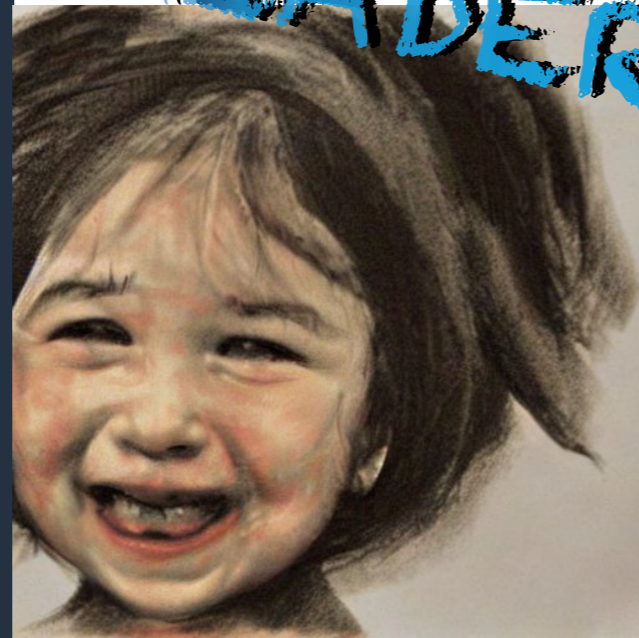
*Possibly from the word maes, meaning "delusion, bewilderment, confusion of thought"...*

**2. Norwegian Mas**

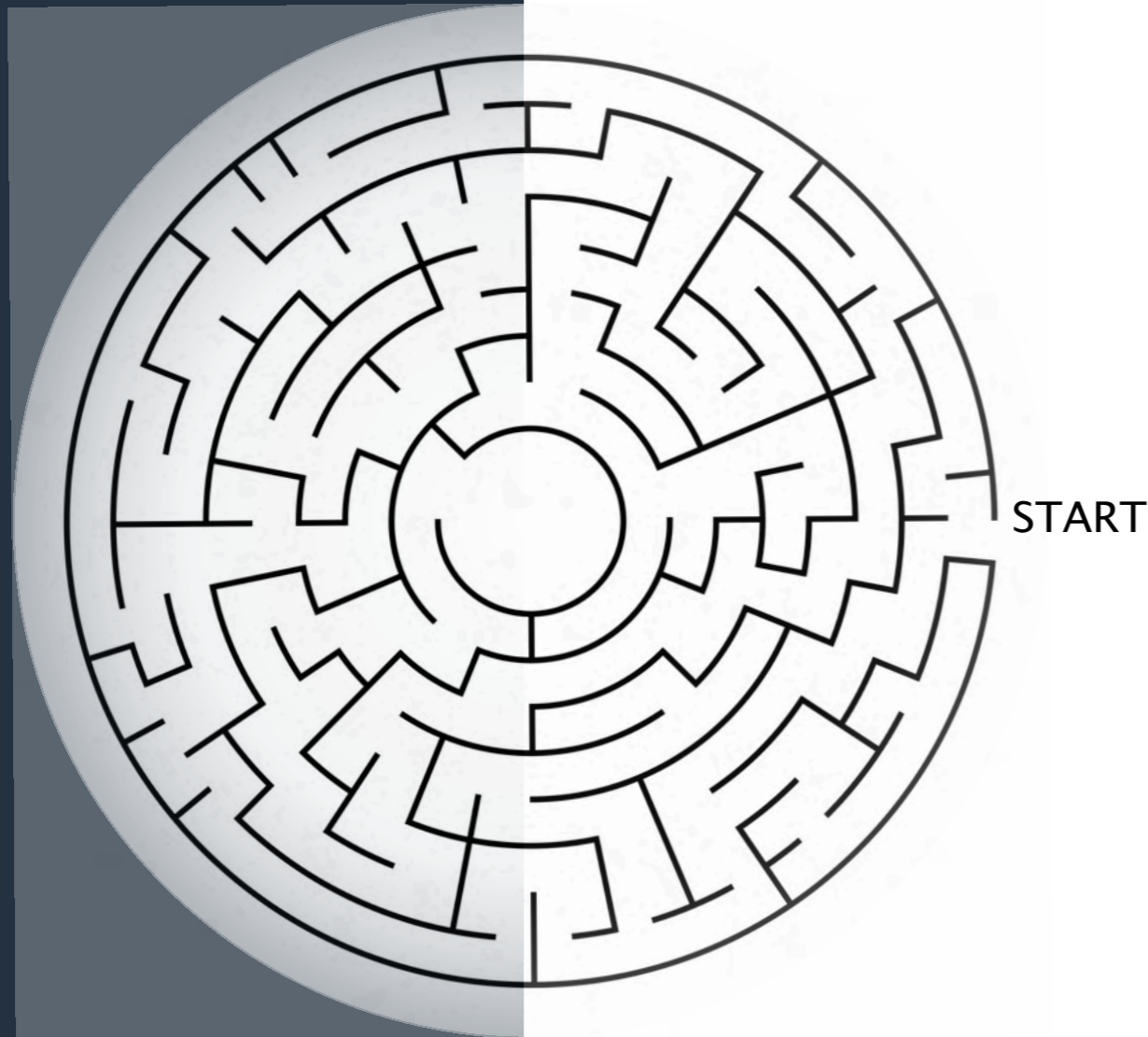
*Or it may be related to the word mas, meaning "exhausting labor"...*

**3. Swedish Masa**

*Or was it masa: "to be slow or sluggish"?*



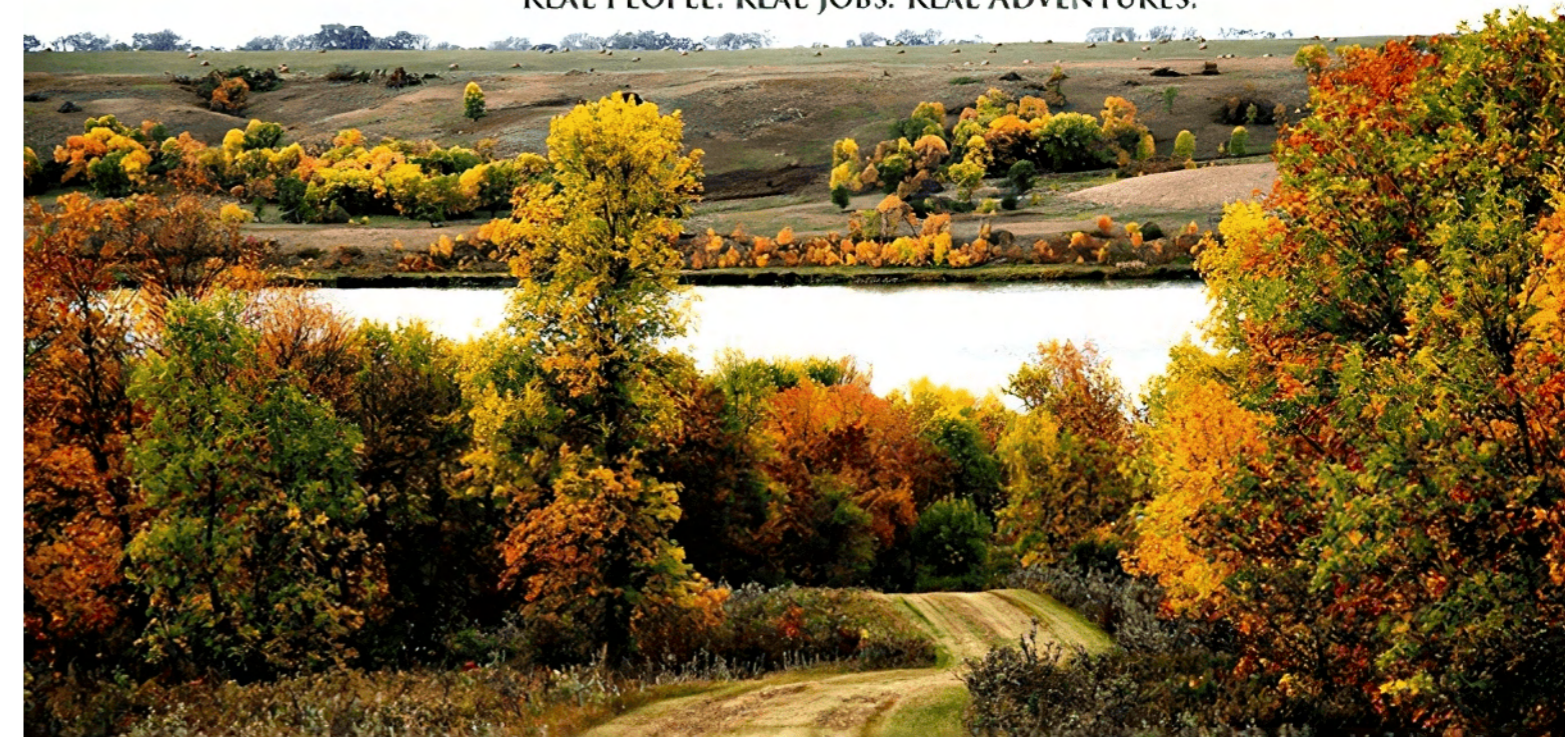
LAMBS' LEADER



'MAZE' HISTORY SOURCED FROM ETYMONLINE.COM

MAZE: ISTOCKPHOTOS.COM

ABOVE SKETCH: DALLEDEMO.COM



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