



# Built on Grit

*ND Business Hall of Fame*

Media Press Kit

*Herold Schafer Heritage Center  
Medora, North Dakota*

June 16, 2026





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## News Release

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### NEWS RELEASE

June 16, 2026  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **NEW “NORTH DAKOTA BUSINESS HALL OF FAME” EXHIBIT IN MEDORA NOW OPEN**

FARGO, N.D. – *Built on Grit™*, the first ND Business Hall of Fame designed to honor and celebrate businesses in North Dakota, is now open. This new exhibit, created by Dakota Business Lending (DBL) in partnership with the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation, is located inside the Harold Schafer Heritage Center in Medora, welcoming visitors of all ages during a historic time for the region as the nation celebrates the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United States and the opening of the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library.

*Built on Grit: ND Business Hall of Fame* highlights the ingenuity, grit, and vision of North Dakota businesses, from humble small-town startups to globally recognized companies, while inspiring the next generation of business leaders. Visitors can read stories, learn about 17 North Dakota businesses, and participate in interactive features created for all ages...all free of charge.

*“For over 40 years, Dakota Business Lending has had a front-row seat to the resilience, creativity, and determination of North Dakota entrepreneurs,”* said Steve Dusek, President & CEO of DBL. *“We’ve seen firsthand how a simple idea can grow into a business that strengthens communities and shapes our state and future. “Built on Grit” was created to honor those stories and share them with visitors from across the country, while inspiring the next generation to pursue their own bright ideas.”*





Just like Medora and the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation, *Built on Grit* exists to honor the stories that define North Dakota and the people who helped build it. The exhibit highlights 17 businesses from across the state whose ideas, partnerships, and perseverance helped make North Dakota the great state that it is, including those rooted in Medora's own business history.

*“Every business begins with a dream,” said Dusek. “We hope visitors get a new or renewed appreciation for those that have followed their dreams right here in North Dakota...and feel inspired to pursue their own.”*

The exhibit is open daily from 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. inside the Harold Schafer Heritage Center in Medora - 335 4th St, Medora, ND 58645. Learn more about Built on Grit or submit a business to be inducted in the future at [www.builtongrit.com](http://www.builtongrit.com).

### ***About Built on Grit: ND Business Hall of Fame™***

*Built on Grit: ND Business Hall of Fame* is an interactive and educational exhibit created to celebrate the entrepreneurs, industries, and organizations that make North Dakota great. The exhibit, designed by 44-year-old financing company Dakota Business Lending in partnership with the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation, highlights businesses from across the state that have grown, impacted, and left a lasting legacy throughout North Dakota and beyond. The exhibit is open daily from June 5 – September 13, 2026 and is free for visitors of all ages.

### ***About Dakota Business Lending***

Founded in 1982, Dakota Business Lending is the oldest, largest, and most experienced 504 CDC in North Dakota and the first North Dakota based financing entity to be chosen by the U.S.





Treasury Department's Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) Fund to receive a New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) allocation. With staff throughout their service area, Dakota Business Lending serves North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, and Minnesota. The mission of this private, not-for-profit entity is to build lasting relationships and drive economic growth by being the premier small business resource in their footprint. Since inception, Dakota Business Lending has provided over \$600 million in loans with total project impact exceeding \$1.2 billion to small businesses and local economies.

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## Built on Grit Fact Sheet

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Built on Grit is an interactive and educational exhibit that highlights the entrepreneurs, industries, and organizations that have shaped North Dakota.

### Mission/Purpose

The ND Business Hall of Fame exists:

*“To honor the entrepreneurial spirit that built North Dakota and inspire the next generation to build what’s next.”*

### Quick Facts

- **Name:** *Built on Grit: ND Business Hall of Fame*
- **Focus:** North Dakota small businesses
- **Location:** Harold Schafer Heritage Center in Medora, ND
- **Created by:** Dakota Business Lending and Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation

### Exhibit Highlights

- Profiles of **17 ND Businesses**
- **Historical business photos** and imagery
- **Interactive** walk-through elements for visitors of all ages (ex. kids scavenger hunt)
- **Exhibit mascot** for further story telling opportunities

### Why Medora?

Medora has always been a **community defined by grit** and, through Harold Schafer’s vision, it became a place where business, tourism, and **North Dakota storytelling** could grow.

Just like the community **honors the history and impact of people that helped form North Dakota**, *Built on Grit: ND Business Hall of Fame* does the same by honoring the businesses and entrepreneurs that have shaped this great state.

Thank you to the **Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation** for providing the space for the **Built on Grit** exhibit inside the **Harold Schafer Heritage Center**, helping bring this celebration of ND business grit and entrepreneurship to life.





## Featured Businesses & Categories

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Built on Grit features **17 businesses across 4 categories**. The businesses were thoughtfully selected for the lasting impact they have made on North Dakota with the following criteria:

- Founded or headquartered or operating in ND
- Active and in operation OR have a lasting legacy through their brand, innovation, or industry impact
- For-profit entity
- Variety of industry, location, type, etc.
- Demonstrated measurable community impact
- Ethical, reputable standing
- Fits further category specifications

### From ND to the Nation

*Businesses founded and headquartered in North Dakota that continue to operate in the state while making a national impact.*

- Baker Boy
- Eide Bailly
- GIANTS Seeds
- Steffes

### Grew Beyond North Dakota

*Businesses that began in North Dakota before expanding, scaling or being acquired beyond the state.*

- Bobcat
- Dot's Pretzels
- Gold Seal Company
- Great Plains Software
- Swanson Vitamins

### Stood the Test of Time

*Longstanding North Dakota businesses whose legacy continues across generations.*

- Alerus
- Cloverdale
- Hebron Brick Company
- Little Missouri Saloon & Dining

### Trailblazers

*Innovative North Dakota businesses shaping the future through innovation, technology and industries.*

- Branick Industries
- GoodBulb
- Killdeer Mountain Manufacturing
- Packet Digital/Badlands Batteries





## About Dakota Business Lending

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Founded in 1982, Dakota Business Lending is a mission-driven business lending organization dedicated to helping small businesses access the financing and resources they need to start, grow, and expand their business. Through programs such as the SBA 504 Loan program, Direct Business Loan program, and other lending resources, Dakota Business Lending works alongside entrepreneurs, banking partners, and community leaders to support business growth and continued economic development across their footprint.

### Organization Quick Facts

- **Founded:** May 10, 1982
- **Who We Are:** A mission-driven business lending organization
- **What We Do:** Help small businesses access financing and resources to start and grow
- **Programs:** SBA 504 Loans, Direct Business Loans, New Market Tax Credits Program
- **Footprint:** North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, and Minnesota

### Why Create *Built on Grit*?

As a 44-year-old organization rooted in small business growth, Dakota Business Lending understands the grit, risk, resilience, and long-term commitment it takes to build something lasting. This exhibit exists to honor those stories, preserve North Dakota's business history, and recognize the incredible people and businesses that make our state great.







## Visual/Media Assets

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A full press kit is available for you to download and use. Please visit [www.dakotabusinesslending.com/built-on-grit-press-kit](http://www.dakotabusinesslending.com/built-on-grit-press-kit) or scan the QR code for copies of:

- Press Release
- Information + Quick Fact Sheet about Built on Grit
- Businesses Featured + Selection Criteria
- Logo/Mascot Variations
- Exhibit Images
- Event Images (coming following event)
- Social Media Graphics
- Information about Dakota Business Lending



### Follow us on socials!

- Facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/BuiltOnGritND/>
- Instagram – <https://www.instagram.com/builtongritnd/>

## Media Contacts

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