Rising to the Top
BY KRIS BEVILL

The northern Plains is known for its skilled, hard-working people, and this year’s selection of the top 40 business professionals under the age of 40 exemplifies the high level of talent that exists in our region. Honorees this year include small business owners, investors, scientists, economic developers, technology experts and other professionals who have risen to the top of their respective fields at young ages, whether in careers they have worked in for years or new ventures.

We noticed a common theme throughout the nomination review process this year and that is the large extent to which nominators value the strong leadership qualities and positive attitudes reflected by those who have achieved success. Many of the honorees serve in mentorship roles for others in their profession and/or community and continue to inspire others to work toward their professional and personal goals. We are humbled by their dedication and proud to present this year’s honorees.
Jake was a sophomore majoring in computer engineering at North Dakota State University when he built his first mobile app and made $500, selling it at 99 cents per download on the Android app store. He says he always knew he was “an idea person,” but he never considered himself an entrepreneur or someone who would launch a business until after he joined an extra-curricular group at NDSU called ICE (innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship) and experienced success from his first mobile app. It encouraged him to pursue mobile technology as a potential business idea, but he knew it would be next to impossible to create a profitable business by building and selling 99-cent apps. He decided it would be more profitable to establish a company that could provide mobile app-building services directly to other companies.

Jake set out to build a mobile app technology company along with a couple of partners and founded Myriad Devices in 2010. (One of his first employees was his 16-year-old brother, Nathan. After an introduction into coding by way of a YouTube video, Jake says Nathan quickly became one of the company’s most-skilled employees). The company was accepted into NDSU’s Research and Technology Park incubator and expanded under the guidance of the tech incubator until 2012, at which point the young tech firm had grown to include 12 mostly part-time employees and was deemed ready to strike out on its own.

The company then moved to its current location in north Fargo and has continued to grow, without any outside financial backing, led by Jake, President and Chairman Ryan Raguse and Chief Strategy Officer James Dravitz. By the end of this year it will have doubled its number of employees and made the majority of them full-time positions. This year will also mark the company’s first $1 million in annual revenue. The firm has snagged a number of big-name clients, including NDSU, Bobcat Co., American Crystal Sugar Co. and Microsoft, all looking to increase efficiency through the use of in-house apps developed by Myriad. The company also continues to build apps for the app store. One of them, developed in partnership with NDSU Agriculture Communication, recently earned White House recognition for its usefulness in assisting people in disaster situations. The app, called the Winter Survival Kit, is designed for motorists who become stranded in winter weather. It allows them to alert authorities and selected contacts to their location and provides the user with safety tips and a tool to calculate how long their vehicle’s fuel will last. The Federal Emergency Management Agency recognized the app this fall for its innovative use of technology and nominated it for recognition by the White House as part of its Champion of Change program. “It was a pretty incredible feeling,” Jake says. “The partnership with NDSU has been really awesome because they were also one of our first customers, so to see one of the apps that we worked on with them for three years succeed like that was really cool.”

A native of tiny Rolla, N.D., Jake is a firm believer in former Great Plains Software/Microsoft leader Doug Burgum’s philosophy that a world-class company can be built with Class “B” students, and he intends to continue growing Myriad Devices rapidly. The company has set its sights on becoming one of the nation’s top five mobile app development firms within the next five years from its base in Fargo. “No doubt about it, that’s our game plan,” he says.

The tech sector in general has a very bright future in Fargo, he says, and he predicts the city will soon serve as the region’s tech epicenter, thanks in part to a strong base established years ago by Great Plains Software. But there are also challenges associated with being a young business leader in a young industry in the northern Plains that need to be addressed in order for the sector to blossom as it could. Jake says more students need tech-specific training and he hopes the region’s universities will continue to collaborate with businesses to develop a skilled workforce and attract additional students to the area. There is also a lack of investors willing to support tech companies and Jake says he would like to see more successful business people take on mentorship and guidance roles for young business leaders like him. “I don’t see a lot of the older generation who have been involved in big things like this come back and help in an advisory role,” he says. “If there were more people looking to give back to the young generation who are trying to build the future of North Dakota, I’d love to talk to more of those people.” Despite the challenges, however, Jake says he enjoys being a business owner in Fargo and is excited to be part of an emerging sector in a community that supports it. “The tide’s rising for everybody,” he says. “I think the future is really bright for tech companies in Fargo.”
Greg Tehven (29)
Connector
Fargo, N.D.

One of the most interesting questions to ask Greg is, “What do you do?” A self-proclaimed contrarian, Greg plays various roles in many activities throughout the area and hesitates to name one particular employer or job that best describes his career. His nominators describe him as “a connector, a leader in elevating whole communities, a mover and a shaker, good at mobilizing ideas.” But what does that mean? For Greg, it means collaborating with many people to achieve a goal of moving the community forward, embracing startups and young thought leaders and inspiring everyone to contribute to making Fargo, and the entire Midwest, the best place for business and life.

“My vision is to create this as the world’s greatest community to live, to be a creative entrepreneur . . . To create a community of contributors,” he says. “I think it’s a really special place right now.”

Originally from West Fargo, N.D., Greg’s first entrepreneurial venture was born 10 days after entering the University of Minnesota’s Carlson School of Management. There, along with a group of friends, he launched Students Today, Leaders Forever, to promote leadership among students. Greg continued his involvement with the group for seven years before establishing a succession plan to ensure the group’s longevity after his exit. Now in its 10th year, STLF has welcomed more than 20,000 participants in 14 states since its launch, accounting for more than 250,000 hours of service work.

Following the success of STLF, Greg spent about a year traveling the world before returning to the U.S., where he was offered a Rotary Ambassadorial scholarship to study social change at the University of Manchester. Needing to wait a year before classes started, he joined Fargo-based development firm The Kilbourne Group as a fellow and special assistant to Doug Burgum and he served in that role for more than a year. The experience engaged him so deeply in the community that he decided to forgo the opportunity for graduate school in order to continue to serve Fargo.

Greg currently serves as an adjunct professor for Concordia College’s Offutt School of Business in Moorhead, Minn. Greg helped design and is implementing the school’s Global Business in India program — a three-week course he teaches in Bangalore which focuses on social entrepreneurship and corporate market capitalism of transnational companies. He is also one of four founding members of Emerging Prairie, a platform launched this year to highlight Fargo’s emerging tech sector. He organizes midnight brunches, which are held regularly in Fargo as a method of connecting community members with local artists. He is the curator of TEDxFargo events and helped to organize the city’s first Start-Up Weekend as well as monthly social entrepreneurialism discussion groups. His overall goal through all of these events is, of course, to connect people, as well as to provide newcomers and their families access to the community.

In 2014, Greg intends to participate in recurring events like TEDx as well as help to unveil some new ideas, including a startup district which would subsidize young entrepreneurs’ rent in a specific neighborhood with the dual goal of providing financial support and encouraging a collaborative environment among young entrepreneurs. He is also part of a group that intends to launch a website called DinnerTies.com. The concept of the site is to match the culinary preference of Fargo visitors to residents who are willing to invite them over for dinner and, literally, give them a taste of Fargo.

While he often gets singled out as being a driving force behind a number of the area’s unique events, Greg is quick to point out that he is always part of a team. “I get to do what I do because of so many amazing people.”
Rosemary Hunter (29)
Managing Member
Titan Oil Field Services
Dickinson, N.D.

Rosemary was a stay-at-home mom prior to founding Titan Oil Field Services in 2011 along with a group of investors from Washington state and Bryce Shypkoski. The company, which provides roustabout services at well sites, has been growing ever since and currently employs more than 40 people. This year, the company generated more than $6 million in sales.

Rosemary is a native of Washington but has lived in Dickinson for the past seven years and says the booming economy of the Bakken inspired her to become a business owner. “It’s unlimited opportunities right now for the types of businesses you can start out here,” she says.

Her parents owned multiple businesses, so she says she had always been interested in becoming her own boss, although never anticipated that she would one day co-own an oil field services company. She credits her parents for setting an example to follow in business and says she’s received valuable guidance from small-business experts at the U.S. Small Business Administration and the Strom Center at Dickinson State University.

Knowing that its business is currently based on an industry that can boom and bust in a flash, Rosemary says the company is keeping its eye on where the industry is headed and would like to diversify to serve other industries as well. “We don’t think it will slow down anytime soon, but I think it will steady out,” she says. “So we’re always looking at diversifying our customer base and finding other services that might have a little more longevity, just in case.”
Mark Luecke (39)
Managing Director and CEO
South Dakota Innovation Partners
Sioux Falls, S.D.

Until recently, eastern South Dakota was in need of a venture firm willing to support innovative startups through the difficult “valley of death” stage of development. According to his nominators, Mark has been the answer to this need. He joined the early-stage venture capital firm shortly after its creation in 2009 and has since served as the organization’s “ace-in-the-hole” on all fronts — raising capital, securing grants, supporting researchers’ ideas and creating companies. He has raised more than $6 million in investment capital and led the review of hundreds of investment opportunities, resulting in, to date, 10 new companies, more than 35 patent applications and millions of dollars in grant funding to support the companies’ efforts. He has fostered collaborations with more than 35 strategic partners and played a key role in creating the Ag Tech Center in east-central South Dakota to further support aquaculture and bioprocessing research activities in the region.

Before joining SDIP, Mark served as the president and chief operating officer of an early-stage private equity firm in Denver and as managing director of a merger and acquisition advisory services firm. Since joining SDIP, his hard work and skill level have won him the respect and admiration of all who work closely with him. Firm co-founder Van Fishback says he has “a gift” for encouraging inventors and doing whatever necessary to support their projects. Pat Costello, commissioner of the South Dakota Governor’s Office of Economic Development, commends his leadership skills and ability to seek out new business concepts and support their successful launch.

Researchers at South Dakota State University say their collaborators at other universities are envious of the active system Mark and his team have developed with the university’s technology transfer office and they commend his fluency in science, engineering and business. They describe his leadership style as inspiring, inclusive, honest and approachable. “In a nutshell, Mark’s work and business ethics are beyond compare,” say SDSU researchers William Gibbons and Michael Brown.

Mark credits the team members at SDIP for its success and says he is motivated by them and the firm’s focus on producing solutions to global challenges. “I have had the good fortune to work with thousands of good people at good companies throughout my career, but the talent and passion of our team members at Innovation Partners is unmatched,” he says. “Without them, it would be impossible for us to build new businesses focused on important issues such as food security, human health and sustainable energy.”

A native of South Dakota, Mark left the state after college to pursue a career with a global accounting firm. He has since lived and worked in a number of places around the country, but he eagerly accepted the chance to return to his home state when SDIP’s original limited partners, Gene McGowan, Van Fishback and Al Kurtenbach, offered him the opportunity to lead the firm. “We are providing opportunities for faculty and students to stay in the area and pursue challenging career opportunities that would not otherwise exist,” he says.
Amber Larson

(33)  
Marketing Manager  
Bartlett & West  
Bismarck, N.D.

Amber joined engineering firm Bartlett & West in 2012 after having already racked up an impressive career in marketing working for companies including MDU Resources Group Inc., St. Alexius Medical Center and the Bismarck Tribune. Her experience in social media marketing along with her creativity and detailed execution make her a stand-out in her field. Her determination to accomplish goals is obvious in her work as well as in her personal life. Last year, she convinced her husband to run the Bismarck half-marathon to celebrate their sixth anniversary. Together they trained and ran all 13.1 miles side by side.

David Wald

(38)  
Financial Advisor  
Securian Financial Advisors of North Dakota  
Bismarck, N.D.

David’s dedication to his clients and knowledge of the industry has qualified him for the firm’s Advisor of the Year award every year since joining Securian in 2008. His outstanding client service skills, ethics and professionalism have also earned him recognition from the Million Dollar Round Table – The Premier Association of Financial Professionals. David has qualified for MDRT four times and has also qualified for the MDRT’s Top of the Table, an exclusive forum for the world’s most successful life insurance and financial services professionals. David is chairman of the board for Easter Seals/Goodwill of North Dakota, serves as secretary of the National Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors board, board member of Dakota West Arts Council and has been a participant in Junior Achievement for seven years. He is also a past U.S. and Canadian kickboxing champion and currently referees professional Mixed Martial Arts matches in his free time.

Tobin (Toby) Morris

(39)  
Senior Vice President  
Dougherty and Co.  
Pierre, S.D.

Unflagging energy, dedication to follow-through, attention to detail and a sense of humor are all qualities that make Toby an outstanding member of the region’s business community, according to his nominators. Toby’s passion is supporting private economic development in South Dakota’s rural communities, a passion which began in 1997 when he joined the South Dakota Governor’s Office of Economic Development. He spent six years at GOED, half of them as director of business and community development, before entering the private sector. Toby is known for his Tax Increment Finance expertise and has played a role in establishing many projects throughout the state in the past three years, including the Bel Brands Cheese Plant in Brookings, the Harrold Terminal in Harrold and Miller, Eagle Creek in Pierre and Liberty Grain in Kimball. Since 2003, he has helped finance over $1 billion of improvements in the state.

Dawn Kopp

(35)  
Executive Director  
Downtown Business Association of Bismarck  
Bismarck, N.D.

A native of Mandan, N.D., Dawn joined the Downtowners group in 2007 and has since launched the redevelopment of Bismarck’s city center into a vibrant and growing downtown. Under her leadership, millions of dollars have been invested in downtown projects and membership in the Downtowners has grown by nearly 70 percent. The group has also created annual public events including a ribfest, an art and wine walk and a monthly 1st Thursdays business event. The Downtowners also co-created the inaugural North Dakota Downtown Conference, held in late October in downtown Bismarck. Dawn is also a member of several local groups, including the Bismarck-Mandan Young Professionals, and represents the Downtowners on a number of city committees and task forces.
Jared Stober
(30)
Vice President
Marketing and Sales Flax USA
Bismarck, N.D.

Jared began his career with his family’s flax seed company when he was a high school senior. After earning a business degree in marketing and entrepreneurship at the University of North Dakota, he took on a full-time role at the company and expanded the company’s distribution to a national level, including major retailers such as Sam’s Club, Costco and Wal-Mart. He also recently accepted the position of program manager for the North Dakota Department of Commerce’s entrepreneurship program and looks forward to launching a revamped program by early 2014 that will provide specialized support for other entrepreneurs and foster a statewide entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Jon Godfred
(31)
Vice President Government Affairs
Greater North Dakota Chamber
Bismarck, N.D.

In the two years since joining the chamber, Jon has taken on weighty topics including leading a successful grassroots effort to defeat a ballot measure to move property tax decisions from local to state control, and helping to form the North Dakota Outdoor Heritage Fund. During the 2013 legislative session, his efforts helped lead to the largest tax cuts in the state’s history. A native North Dakotan, Jon attended the University of Northern Iowa and served as team captain for the NCAA Tournament team. He played professional basketball in Germany before returning to the U.S. to earn a law degree and master’s degree from the University of North Dakota. He was a manager at Alerus Financial and served in several state legislative roles before joining the GNDC in 2011.

John Weber
(39)
Product Line Manager for Enterprise “Applications”
National Information Solutions Cooperative
Mandan, N.D.

John joined NISC in 1997 as a software developer and has since led several large projects, including serving as lead designer on a three-year project to rewrite the group’s accounting software for telecom and utility industries. He is currently responsible for building new products, prioritizing and scheduling enhancements, and marketing products that generate more than $15 million in revenue annually. He is a past president of Junior Chamber International USA and has served three years on the group’s international board of directors. He has also served six years on the board for Missouri Slope Areawide United Way.

Jason Westbrook
(39)
Vice President
Barr Engineering
Bismarck, N.D.

Since opening the firm’s Bismarck branch in 2008, Jason has grown the number of Bismarck employees to 19 and has instituted a positive workplace culture, prompting the North Dakota Young Professionals Network to name it the best place to work in North Dakota and the Bismarck-Mandan YP Network to twice name it among the best local places to work. Following the 2011 Minot area flood, Jason was selected by the state water commission to develop a flood protection plan for residents of the Mouse River Valley. He currently serves as project manager for the Mouse River Enhanced Flood Protection project. He has also broadened the firm’s exposure in the energy industry and built brand recognition among its client sectors. His leadership, hard work and willingness to mentor staff have resulted in a dramatic growth of the firm’s revenues.
Quentin Obrigewitsch
(34)
West Region Survey Production Manager
KLJ
Dickinson, N.D.

Quentin has more than 12 years of survey experience and currently leads all survey work for engineering firm KLJ’s west region offices. The continuous growth of western North Dakota’s energy industry requires him to be a consistent leader, manage an extensive workload and provide strong coordination and comprehensive oversight for multiple ongoing projects. Quentin is a graduate of North Dakota State College of Science and is a member of the North Dakota Society of Professional Land Surveyors.

Nathan Johnson
(34)
Administrator, CEO
PioneerCare
Fergus Falls, Minn.

When Nathan joined PioneerCare as administrator in 2008, a new care center was being constructed and an organization-wide shift was being made from an institutional model of care to a household model. He successfully steered staff and residents through the culture change and has since become actively involved in addressing workforce issues in the care provider industry. He is a member of the workforce solutions council for Aging Services of Minnesota and frequently speaks with public officials on the topic. This year, he was appointed CEO of PioneerCare and received a master’s degree in health care administration from Bellevue University in Omaha, Neb. He serves on the board of directors for the United Way of Otter Tail County, Aging Services of Minnesota and Care Ventures Cooperative and is a member of the Otter Risers Kiwanis. He is also a founding board member of the local chapter of Let’s Go Fishing, which is focused on making the sport accessible to older adults.

Tommy Leikas
(29)
Owner
Glisten.com
Fargo, N.D.

He’s not even 30 yet, but Tommy has already racked up an impressive record as an Internet entrepreneur. He launched his first e-commerce website while attending the University of North Dakota, with investment help from the student-run Dakota Venture Group. He eventually sold the site for a profit and launched TopHoops.com, which he also sold for a profit just three years after launching the site. He rolled the profits into Glisten.com, a high-end skin and beauty products site launched last year and based in Fargo. In June, he secured $1 million in angel investments and expects to soon offer more than 10,000 products through the site. In September, Tommy was inducted into the UND Entrepreneur Department’s Young Entrepreneur Hall of Fame for his outstanding entrepreneurial success.

Daniel Abeln
(29)
Project Manager Architecture
EAPC Architects Engineers
Grand Forks, N.D.

Daniel joined EAPC in 2010 and quickly became known for his excellent communication skills, with co-workers and with clients. He excels in project management and has a passion for providing a high level of quality control and efficiency improvements for customers. He holds a bachelor’s degree in environmental design and a master’s degree in architecture from North Dakota State University, and a master’s degree in business administration from the University of Nebraska. He is an associate member of the American Institute of Architects, a LEED accredited professional and has a knowledge base in Revit.
Brenda Wyland

Director of Marketing
Appareo Systems LLC
Fargo, N.D.

Brenda recently joined Appareo Systems after spending five years in various roles, including a year as interim executive director, at North Dakota State University’s Research & Technology Park. Her duties at the research park included managing a $1.7 million angel fund, fostering public-private partnerships, overseeing the park’s startup companies and representing the park at the local, state and national level. Prior to that, she served as economic development director at the South Eastern Council of Governments in Sioux Falls, S.D. Brenda holds a master’s degree from the University of Sioux Falls, a bachelor’s degree from NDSU and an associate degree from Southeast Technical Institute in Sioux Falls.

Sean Todd

Director of Managed Services
NetWork Center Inc.
Fargo, N.D.

After working in the IT field for the education and health care industries for several years, Sean joined NetWork Center in 2007 as a network systems analyst. He was soon promoted into management and served in several roles before being promoted to his current position in 2011. Sean has a diverse knowledge of the technical industry and stands out for his dedication to customers, teammates and the company. He enjoys providing guidance to employees and customers and has been named employee of the year by his co-workers for three consecutive years.

Jamie Lunski

President
HB Sound & Light
Grand Forks, N.D.

At the age of 19, Jamie turned a passion for music and theater into a business venture with the launch of his Grand Forks-based sound and light company, providing services for local shows, events and small commercial projects. Twenty years later, Jamie has grown his business to a regionally known technology company with locations in Grand Forks and Fargo, with more than 30 full-time employees and more than 250 part-time employees throughout North Dakota. The company provides services for customers of all sizes and has a flair for staging events. Jamie takes great pride in the community and the company often sponsors arts and entertainment activities.

Lyndsay Ulrickson

Executive Director
Souris Basin Planning Council
Minot, N.D.

Lyndsay joined the Souris Basin Planning Council as a development specialist a few months after the historic Mouse River flood of 2011 and immediately began work on flood recovery assistance for several affected counties. She also wrote grants for the city of Minot and obtained millions of dollars in funding for city projects, despite having no prior grant writing experience. She was named executive director of the council this year and continues to work on a number of projects for the region, including small business gap financing for businesses and grant administration. Lyndsay is second vice president of the Minot Sertoma Club and is a member of the Ward County Advisory Council and the Minot Area Chamber of Commerce Junior Achievements. Before joining the planning council, she worked for six years at Capital Financial Services Inc. in Minot, most recently as business development manager.
Ryan Ogaard
(36)
Vice President/
Chief Information Officer
American State Bank & Trust Co.
Williston, N.D.

In his spare time, Ryan is a talented magician and contributes his talents to a variety of community events. In his professional life, he is also a bit of a magician, delivering the magic of technology to his workplace. Ryan joined the $515 million community-owned bank in 2009 and has since created an intranet that has become the go-to place for all of the bank's internal needs, convinced the board of directors to use handheld devices for communications/information sharing and made the bank's IT department an approachable and comfortable environment for all employees, all while overseeing the bank's computer and information systems. Ryan is also a very active community member and was recognized for his efforts earlier this year with the Community Spirit award from the Williston Area Chamber of Commerce.

Matthew R. Kostelecky
(35)
President
B.J. Kadrmas Inc.
Dickinson, N.D.

A Dickinson, N.D., native, Matthew received a bachelor's degree in mass communications from Minnesota State University at Moorhead and worked for several years outside of North Dakota before returning to his hometown to take on a new business venture. He joined energy land service company B.J. Kadrmas in 2008 and purchased the 30-year-old firm in 2010. This year, Matthew also became president of the company. He manages approximately 20 employees and contracted landmen and oversees millions of dollars of right-of-way and lease acquisitions. The firm's business portfolio has increased by about 30 percent since Matthew bought the company and he plans to continue to expand its reach by adding wind, coal and other energy sources to its portfolio. Matthew is a member of many industry organizations, including the American Association of Professional Landmen, the International Right of Way Association and the American Petroleum Institute. Locally, he serves as advertising chairman for the Landman's Association of North Dakota and is a member of the Dickinson Area Chamber of Commerce.

Amy Krueger
(39)
Executive Director
Williston Convention & Visitors Bureau
Williston, N.D.

Amy joined the Williston CVB in 2006 as a sales director and was promoted to executive director in 2008. Since then, the organization's staff has doubled in size and the group has enhanced existing events and added new events to invite visitors to the changing city and to engage its current residents. In August, the CVB launched its new branding campaign, labeling Williston as Boomtown, USA, to acknowledge its history of booms in various industries and its current role as a major energy hub. Amy embraces the challenges associated with overseeing a CVB in a dynamically changing environment and serves on many local committees and boards, including Build a Better Tomorrow, the Clean City Committee and the Williston Downtowners Association. She was also recently elected to the board of directors for the Upper Midwest CVB.

Jaclyn Bugbee
(36)
Executive Director
Ruth Meiers
Bismarck, N.D.

Jaci is an accountant by trade and worked in that role for a number of companies in the region before focusing on fundraising and community development in positions with the Bismarck State College Foundation and the St. Alexius Foundation. In 2011, she joined the Ruth Meiers Hospitality House as executive director. The organization, which provides support for the homeless in Bismarck-Mandan, has grown significantly under her leadership, from an annual budget of about $800,000 in 2011 to $2 million this year. The group currently provides more than 200 shelter beds and eight supportive service programs in the community and is acquiring another facility in Bismarck in order to meet the community's needs for longer-term housing for homeless veterans and their families, as well as support the growing number of newcomers who are drawn to the area's energy industry.
Dane joined the North Dakota agriculture department after receiving a master’s degree in agriculture economics from North Dakota State University and participated in working groups with other key ag groups to pass the humane animal treatment law rewrite during this year’s legislative session. Afterwards, he accepted his current position at North Dakota Farmers Union and has already earned a reputation for leadership and effective management. He is passionate about agriculture, doing right by the state’s farmers and ranchers and growing the ag industry alongside its booming energy industry. He plans to one day return to his family farm in Wheaton, Minn., where he will become the fourth generation to farm his family’s land.

As regional vice president for modular housing provider Target Logistics, Travis oversees the company’s 12 Bakken properties which provide lodging for approximately 4,000 energy industry workers. Travis and his family live in Williston, where he is based, and in the few years that he has lived and worked in North Dakota he has become the face of Target Logistics in the Bakken as well as a recognized authority on workforce lodging, site construction, catering, transportation and security. He is a member of the Williston Area Chamber of Commerce board of directors.

Greg joined NISC after graduating from Minnesota State University at Moorhead in 1998 and has been a key member of numerous major initiatives that have helped the cooperative grow by ten-fold, including a methodology to leverage web tools to increase the speed of implementation for accounting software for clients throughout the country. In his current role, Greg oversees 50 employees across four offices located throughout the country. His group provides accounting and business solutions software and services to 640 cooperative members and contributes $15 million in annual revenues to NISC.

Diana has spent nearly her entire professional career at the bank and has worked her way up from bookkeeper to her current role, which she has held since 2005. Diana has overseen the bank’s state and federal regulatory compliance since 2000, when the bank had $600,000 in assets and 24 locations. Currently, the bank has $2 billion in assets and operates 33 locations. The compliance and security department has grown from one employee to a staff of 10. Diana is a member of the bank’s steering committee and has participated on panels sponsored by the Federal Reserve System addressing various regulatory compliance issues.
Josh Buchholz
(39)
General Manager
Fargo-Moorhead RedHawks
Fargo, N.D.

Josh has spent 18 seasons with the Fargo-Moorhead RedHawks, serving in a variety of roles including clubhouse manager and director of baseball operations. He has served as the team’s general manager since 2005 and was named Northern League Executive of the Year in 2008 and 2010, and American Association Executive of the Year in 2012. He has been a part of five league championship teams, three of which he led as general manager. Josh is a native of Moorhead, Minn., and is a graduate of Concordia College in Moorhead.

Djamel Khali
(34)
Vice President
North American Operations
Ally Precision Industries
Sioux Falls, S.D.

Djamel possesses the ability to identify the gaps and needs of the agriculture application industry and to provide solutions that both minimize cost and increase efficiency. He has taken on the challenge of introducing a product suite that meets the requests of the application world and has brought leading manufacturers together to meet that goal. His technical expertise is unmatched, he favors a hands-on approach to learning and embraces change rather than accepting existing industry standards, characteristics which have made him a leader in his industry.

Mariah Prussia
(36)
Owner
Xtreme Measures
Fargo, N.D.

Mariah opened Xtreme Measures, a women’s fitness facility, in 2007 with the goal of empowering women one rep at a time, one voice at a time. She is also the co-founder of The NOW Project, a nonprofit organization focused on teaching women and children self-defense, and is collaborating with Positive Motion to create workout videos focused on incorporating daily exercise in schools.

Matt Fischer
(33)
Promotional Consultant
S & S Promotional Group
COO, GW Gear
Grand Forks, N.D.

Matt began his career as a promotional consultant with S & S Promotional Group after graduating from North Dakota State University in 2005. A native of Grand Forks, he was a key member of the Greater Grand Forks Young Professionals group during its formation and continues to guide other young professionals and inspire them to take on leadership roles in their community. He frequently participates on advisory boards and boards of directors for various organizations and community projects and is well respected among his peers.
Ryan Goehner
(29)
Chief Financial Officer
Dakotaland Federal Credit Union
Huron, S.D.

Soon after joining the credit union as a financial officer in 2011, Ryan became a certified public accountant and was promoted to chief financial officer. He volunteers for Kiwanis International, Junior Achievement, Meals on Wheels and United Way Day of Caring. He holds bachelor’s degrees in business administration and accounting, and a master’s degree in public accounting from the University of South Dakota. Prior to joining DFCU, he worked for four years as a senior accountant at Williams & Co. in Yankton, S.D.

Shawn Gaddie, PE
(33)
AE2S Nexus Division Manager
AE2S Nexus
Grand Forks, N.D.

Shawn has spent 10 years in the engineering consulting industry, nine of them with AE2S. He has been instrumental in the firm’s growth from a 60-person company to the more than 200-person company it is today. He has served in various roles within the firm, including Grand Forks office operations manager and his current position as manager of the firm’s financial division, where he focuses on developing new and innovative ways to bridge the gap between financing and infrastructure solutions for the firm’s clients. He also currently serves as a specialized consultant for evaluating a proposed billion-dollar fertilizer plant to be built near Grand Forks.

Michael Helt
(33)
Relationship Banker
Alerus Financial
Grand Forks, N.D.

Michael joined Alerus Financial in 2004 and is responsible for assisting customers in identifying solutions for their financial needs. He is a member of the Greater Grand Forks Chamber of Commerce small business and leadership committees, the Holy Family Catholic Church’s Knights of Columbus Council and the Greater Grand Forks Young Professionals. He plays a vital role in recruiting members for the young professionals group and is active in securing sponsorships and participation for group events.

David Batcheller
(31)
President and COO
Appareo Systems LLC
Fargo, N.D.

David joined Appareo Systems in 2005 as a sales analyst and quickly progressed through the ranks, becoming chief operating officer in 2009 and president in 2012. During his tenure with the company, it has grown from fewer than 10 employees to more than 115. It currently operates locations in Fargo, Phoenix and Paris and has positioned itself as a leader in aerospace and agriculture. David places emphasis on recruiting the skilled engineers the company needs to continue growing and makes every effort to meet with interested students in order to keep as many locally trained engineers in the area as possible.
Eric Newell
(39)
President
Stoneridge Software
Barnesville, Minn.

After spending 13 years at Great Plains Software-turned-Microsoft, Eric made the leap to small business owner in 2012 with the launch of Stoneridge Software, a Microsoft partner organization targeted toward improving the efficiency of business’ operational and financial processes. In one year, the business has grown to include 18 employees and has grossed more than $1.5 million in revenue, serving clients throughout the upper Midwest from its headquarters in tiny Barnesville, Minn. Eric chairs Barnesville’s Economic Development Authority Board and has served on the local school board and on the Community Education Advisory Board.

Kirsten Jensen
(39)
Director of Digital Marketing
Onsharp
Fargo, N.D.

She joined the company just months ago, but Kirsten’s 15 years of marketing and technology experience have already made her an invaluable member of Onsharp. Since joining the company, she has implemented a peer review process, rebuilt its digital marketing program from the ground up and increased the productivity of the digital marketing team by nearly 20 percent. She is also a member of the company’s leadership team. Before joining Onsharp, Kirsten worked for MeritCare Health Systems/Sanford Health for 13 years, most recently as director of digital marketing.

Karla Isley
(37)
Vice President of Contract Administration
Noridian Healthcare Solutions
Fargo, N.D.

Karla joined Noridian in 2000 as a systems coordinator and has since served in a number of leadership roles. She was recently promoted to her current position and is responsible for all contractual requirements of the company’s federal contracts and for providing support for the company’s state Medicaid and health insurance exchange programs, among other duties, and has earned a reputation for leadership and industry involvement in the evolving health care landscape.

Karla Olson
(37)
Associate and Owner
APEX Engineering Group
Horace, N.D.

APEX opened in 2010 and has since grown from two locations and 20 employees to five locations and 52 employees serving more than 200 clients. Karla is a process engineer specializing in wastewater treatment and regularly travels from her home in Horace, near Fargo, to work sites in Minot and Dickinson. Some of her current projects include the expansion of Dickinson’s wastewater treatment system and the implementation of a system to supply reuse water to the nearby Dakota Prairie diesel refinery. Karla is a member of several industry groups and currently serves as the North Dakota delegate for the national Water Environment Federation. PB