

NORTHERN VIEW

Air Force seeks greater buffer for wind farms

By Amy R. Sisk
Bismarck Tribune

BISMARCK — The U.S. Air Force is asking North Dakota regulators to consider requiring the buffer zone between wind turbines and intercontinental ballistic missile facilities to increase tenfold.

Representatives from the 20th Air Force, which oversees the 91st Missile Wing at Minot Air Force Base, say their concerns

stem from the risk the turbines pose to helicopters flying over missile fields. The missile wing operates the 150 ICBM launch sites and 15 missile alert facilities in North Dakota.

“As the windmills get bigger and there’s more of them, it’s starting to become an issue for flight safety,” Col. Todd Sauls told the Public Service Commission at a hearing

on Thursday, Sept. 19.

Lt. Col. Mike Toomer said helicopters are relatively slow moving and would have to do a lot of maneuvering to avoid groundfire if they were ever to come under attack. Air Force helicopters complete about 1,300 missions per year related to missile operations in North Dakota.

“Having wind turbines within their operation-

al space significantly impacts their ability to operate safely under high stress,” Toomer said.

Currently, a wind turbine must be at least 1,200 feet from an ICBM facility. The Air Force representatives asked that the PSC increase the setback requirement to 2 nautical miles, which is equal to 12,152 feet. Such a change would apply only to new wind farms, and it would

not affect existing turbines.

The request came during one of several PSC hearings held Thursday for proposed rule changes that would affect renewable energy. The setback change was not included among the proposals the commission was considering, but it’s something commissioners indicated they might pursue down the road.

“A 2-mile setback is pretty sizeable, and I would assume that industry would at least want to know that that’s forthcoming,” Commissioner Julie Fedorchak said. “It seems that there should be notice given to them to provide comments.”

The commission is weighing another rule related to wind turbines

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CHUCK HAGA
Columnist

My town, my paper, your stories

In late August 1987, the Grand Forks Herald put out “rack cards” announcing that I was leaving the paper and my last personal column would appear on Sept. 1.

“Chuck Haga’s last words,” it promised.

Well, we fibbed.

After 20 good years at the Star Tribune in Minneapolis, I took a buyout and came home to Grand Forks. Not quite ready to retire, I returned to the Herald and over the next six years produced a lot more words.

“That’s enough,” I said in late 2013, and no doubt some of you nodded in agreement.

In a “final column” recalling some of the favorite conversations I had had with readers over the years, I ended with a simple “Goodbye.”

Hello again.

The Herald asked whether I might consider writing again, just a column a week, reflecting on life and people and “doings,” as the old folks used to say, in this place we call home: Grand Forks and the surrounding region.

If it works out, I plan to drop in each Sunday for a visit, a conversation, that I really hope will be two-way. I’ve missed that personal connection with readers, the shared memories and perspectives, the respectful disagreements (especially when offered in a signed letter or a chance encounter at Darcy’s or Judy’s, in Cabela’s or on University Avenue).

Like many of you, I lament some of what’s happened in the news business. I regret but understand the economic necessity of paywalls, and while I still eagerly await the arrival of my printed newspaper in the morning, I accept the inevitability of the digital age. I cringe at typos and errors, a consequence of diminished editing staffs, because I know they diminish credibility and trust.

I spend way too much time on social media – no less an authority than the attorney general of North Dakota has declared as much – but I believe the thoughtless, malicious and hurtful messaging enabled by online anonymity and the absence of editors cheapens public discourse and threatens our democracy. We have retreated into our bunkers and silos and stopped listening to each other. We have stopped reading

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Nate Steinhaus sketches a box elder tree for the first page of a book that his fifth grade class will write this year in an outdoor language arts class at Sullys Hill National Game Preserve near Devils Lake.

LEARNING FROM NATURE

At Sullys Hill, students are immersed in outdoor education, from art to math

By Ann Bailey
Grand Forks Herald

Sullys Hill National Game Preserve

Pencils to papers and eyes scrutinizing the trees before them, Devils Lake fifth graders sketched illustrations for the first page of the book they will write this year in their outdoor language arts class.

Language arts is one of four classes 48 Central Middle School students have each morning at Sullys Hill National Game Preserve south of Devils Lake near Fort Totten. Besides language arts, the children have hands-on lessons in science, social studies and math. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Devils Lake School District signed an agreement to hold classes at the game preserve in 2008, and classes began there in 2012.

Central Middle School Principal Dan Kaffar called the immersion program “phenomenal.”

“It’s something that gets our kids excited — getting to be part of nature and it’s applicable. Learning can’t just be in the classroom,” Kaffar said.

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Anna Shorey, left, and Katie Vlasoff teach a group of fifth graders about aging trees during a class last week at Sully’s Hill near Devils Lake.

Learning about how diabetes treatment has changed over time

It’s a metabolic disorder. Not a disease.”

That was the description of diabetes by the late Dr. Edgar A. Haunz of Grand Forks, who was chosen in 1975 as the Outstanding Diabetes Clinician in the United States.

In fact, diabetes is a metabolic disorder and a disease, says Dr. Casey Ryan, one of the physicians here who has followed the late Dr. Haunz in caring for diabetics.

Other diabetes physicians who followed Dr. Haunz over the years have included Dr. Robert Warner, Dr. James Brosseau, Dr. William Zaks and



MARILYN HAGERTY
Letters from Cottonwood Street

Dr. Eric Johnson. Dr. Lori Sondreal manages pediatric diabetes. The physicians have had the help of nurse educators and dietitians in the Altru Diabetes Center started by Dr. Brosseau.

Diabetes treatment has advanced tremendously since the days of Dr. Haunz, according to local doctors. Finger stick testing began in the late 1970s. Now devices can monitor sugars without the need for stick testing. Insulin pumps began

in the 1990s, and now pumps can measure blood sugar and deliver insulin.

Dr. Haunz was unique in caring for diabetes when he came to Grand Forks in 1947, according to Dr. Ryan. “It was difficult to manage Type 1 diabetes patients taking five shots of insulin daily — one with each meal, one at bed time as well as at 3 a.m. There were no blood tests, other than in a hospital or clinic,” he said. “Patients could do primitive tests at home to assess urine sugar. And in essence, Dr. Haunz was using an insulin pump type treatment.”

“The rest of the world did not catch up to Dr. Haunz until the late 1970’s or early

1980’s,” Dr. Ryan said. “Because of his excellent care, there are many individuals who lived with Type 1 diabetes for more than 50 years.”

“And this,” Dr. Ryan said recently, “is considered amazing and a tribute to Dr. Haunz.”

Weight loss, thirst

Type 1 diabetes can occur at any age, but the most common onset is between 8 and 15 years of age, according to Dr. Ryan.

Usual symptoms are weight loss, thirst and frequent urination, he said. If not diagnosed, high sugars can lead to nausea and vomiting with a condition known as ketoacidosis requiring hospitalization.

“The latest technology with blood testing can prevent low blood sugars and help avoid high blood sugars,” Dr. Ryan said. “This is a life changing treatment for those who have lived with severe low sugar reactions that can cause confusion or seizures.”

Doctors find a serious problem now is the epidemic of Type 2 diabetes mellitus. This is due to obesity and can occur at any age. In Type 2 diabetes, the pancreas cannot produce enough insulin to overcome the negative effects of obesity. Most people with Type 2 diabetes make too much insulin, but not

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