



EMERGING
PRAIRIE



2024 ANNUAL REPORT



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A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

Looking back on 2024, it's clear that Emerging Prairie has had a significant and transformative impact. Our talented team successfully defined our goals, focus, and approach, leading to a truly remarkable year.

The year began on a high note in January when the National Science Foundation awarded an Engine 2 grant to our region, focusing on agriculture technology. This nationally competitive opportunity solidified Emerging Prairie and Grand Farm as core partners in collaboration with several key stakeholders, with a shared mission of advancing ecosystem development.

Throughout 2024, we consistently delivered on our mission of energizing communities. Our weekly StartupBREW Fargo program thrived, fostering tremendous community engagement. We hosted several high-profile conferences, supported three cohorts through Emerging Digital Academy, and proudly opened Grand Farm's brand-new Innovation Campus near Casselton, ND.

Additionally, we were honored to host a U.S. Senate Agriculture hearing, expanded our work to Georgia, and witnessed countless entrepreneurs making significant strides in building their businesses.

As we look ahead to 2025, we are energized by the progress we've made and the opportunities before us. We've strengthened our team by adding a Chief Financial Officer and clearly defined our top three priorities:

- **ENERGIZE OUR THREE CORE COMMUNITIES** - We are committed to amplifying our impact by fostering deeper connections within our three core communities—startups, technology, and innovation.
- **ADVANCE OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE** - As we grow, our focus is on building a sustainable foundation by enhancing organizational efficiency and ensuring long-term impact.
- **UNLOCK THE NEXT PHASE OF THE INNOVATION CAMPUS** - We aim to unlock new opportunities for research, collaboration, and technological advancement at our 590-acre Innovation Campus in Casselton, North Dakota.

We are optimistic, hopeful, and committed to working alongside the community to solve problems, advance our region, and support a thriving hub of activity and innovation.

GREG TEHVEN
// Cofounder & CEO, Emerging Prairie
// Cofounder & Board Chair, Grand Farm



A NOTE FROM

OUR 2024 BOARD CHAIR

BYRON SNIDER

Reflecting on the past year, I am immensely proud of the work Emerging Prairie has achieved. The mission of Emerging Prairie goes beyond the immediate—it's a holistic approach to empowering people and businesses, making Fargo and the region a better place to live, work, and thrive.

In 2024, Emerging Prairie has continued to make a profound impact through its key initiatives. Our Startup Programs have fostered innovation by connecting and supporting local entrepreneurs, fueling the growth of ideas that contribute to our regional economy. Emerging Digital Academy has been a catalyst for career transformation, equipping individuals with in-demand tech skills and opening doors to new opportunities in an ever-evolving digital landscape. Additionally, Grand Farm remains at the forefront of AgTech innovation, pushing boundaries and positioning North Dakota as a global leader in the future of agriculture.

As 2024 Board Chair, I am honored to serve Emerging Prairie and to support the important work happening across these programs. Together, we are driving meaningful change, inspiring others to step forward, and building a vibrant ecosystem that empowers everyone who calls this community home.

Sincerely,

BYRON SNIDER
// VP of IT, Scheels
// 2024 Board Chair, Emerging Prairie



2024 BOARD MEMBERS



KODEE FURST // Vice Chair
Director, 50 South Capital



MIKE DERHEIM // Secretary
Cofounder, Bunnycup Winery



JONATHAN WARREY // Treasurer
VP of Managed Services, Marco
North Dakota State Representative



HOWARD DAHL // Member
President & CEO, Amity
Technology, LLC



HEIDI HEITKAMP // Member
Former U.S. Senator / Founder &
Chair of the One Country Project
Director, University of Chicago's
Institute of Politics (IOP)



MARY SNAPP // Member
Vice President, Strategic
Initiatives, Microsoft



GREG TEHVEN // Member
CEO & Cofounder, Emerging Prairie
Cofounder and Board Chair, Grand Farm



ABOUT

EMERGING PRAIRIE

Emerging Prairie exists to energize communities by weaving together the startup, innovation, and technology ecosystems. Founded in 2013 with the goal of elevating entrepreneurial stories, our journey has expanded to create connections, launch impactful initiatives, and foster collaboration across the region. Today, we serve as a catalyst for economic growth and innovation, supporting community leaders, entrepreneurs, technologists, and innovators as they pursue bold visions and transformative projects. By nurturing these efforts, we believe our region can maximize its potential and inspire progress — locally and beyond.

OUR VISION

Energizing communities.

OUR MISSION

The relentless pursuit of improving the human condition.



OUR VALUES



TRUST FIRST



LEARN FAST



BE BOLD



MOVE TOGETHER



THINK HOLISTIC



BE SCRAPPY

2024 STATS

EVENTS

105 EVENTS HOSTED

9,141 TOTAL EVENT ATTENDEES

40+ DIFFERENT COUNTRIES REPRESENTED AT EVENTS

LOCAL ENGAGEMENT

\$7M SPENT ON LOCAL GOODS AND SERVICES

24 LOCAL ARTISTS FEATURED

PARTNERSHIPS

92 NEW OR CONTINUED ANNUAL PARTNERSHIPS

40+ COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS LAUNCHED WITH PARTNERS

YEAR IN REVIEW

A GROUNDBREAKING WIN FOR NORTH DAKOTA: NSF FARMS AWARD ANNOUNCED

January 29, 2024
North Dakota was awarded up to \$160 million in funding from the National Science Foundation, led by a coalition including NDSU, ND Tribal College System, the FMEDC, the FMWF Chamber Foundation, and Grand Farm. This NSF Engine will drive innovation, job creation, and economic growth in agriculture technology.



AGTECH WEEK 2024

June 10-15, 2024
In collaboration with Bushel, the FMWF Chamber of Commerce, and Grand Farm, AgTech Week brought over 30+ events and 5,000+ attendees to the Fargo-Moorhead area this summer to celebrate our region's advancements in agriculture technology.



TEDxFARGO 2024: EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITIES OF "IF"

July 25, 2024
TEDxFargo returned with the theme "If," inviting attendees to explore uncharted possibilities in an imaginative setting. With over 20 speakers sharing their ideas on the red dot, three of their talks were proudly featured on the official TED YouTube channel!



BIGGEST EMERGING DIGITAL ACADEMY IN-PERSON COHORT GRADUATION TO-DATE

August 1, 2024
The Minsky cohort, with nine graduates, celebrated Emerging Digital Academy's largest in-person graduation to date, reflecting this initiative's growing role in tech workforce development.



SENATE AG APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE DISCUSSES FUTURE OF PRECISION AG

August 15, 2024
Hosted at the Innovation Campus, this hearing—organized by Sen. John Hoeven—focused on the future of agriculture research and included discussions with USDA leaders and industry experts on advancing precision ag in North Dakota.



INNOVATION CAMPUS GRAND OPENING

June 10, 2024
Grand Farm's Innovation Campus Grand Opening near Casselton drew in leaders, innovators, policymakers, and community members to celebrate a new era for regional AgTech development, showcasing cutting-edge spaces like the Innovation Shop and initiating collaborative field projects for the future.



SBA VISIT BRINGS NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT TO GRAND FARM

July 2, 2024
U.S. Small Business Administration Administrator Isabel Guzman visited Grand Farm's Innovation Campus on her Small Business Boom tour, where she joined North Dakota leaders for roundtable discussions on agriculture, innovation, and tribal business ownership.



RIGHT TO START'S VICTOR HUANG INSPIRES FARGO'S ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT

August 2024
Victor Huang, CEO of Right to Start, visited Fargo to discuss reducing barriers for entrepreneurs, meeting with local leaders and community builders on his cross-country road trip.



STARTUP WORLD CUP PITCH COMPETITION

September 11th, 2024
Our Startup Programs and Grand Farm partnered with Pegasus Ventures to bring the \$1M Startup World Cup competition to North Dakota, where Troy Vareberg of Blue Comply won the AgTech-focused event and advanced to the semi-finals.



AT&T BACKS DIGITAL LEARNING AT ELEVATE WITH \$22K AWARD

November 14, 2024
During the Elevate conference, AT&T presented a \$22,400 Digital Learning and Cyber Security award to support Emerging Digital Academy, emphasizing AT&T's commitment to expanding regional tech opportunities.





AWARD WINNERS

One of the ways we celebrate our different ecosystems is by recognizing work done by individuals and organizations that impact our region. These awards are given out each year at our 1 Million Thanks event.

U.S. SENATOR JOHN HOEVEN

2025 Lifetime Impact Award Winner

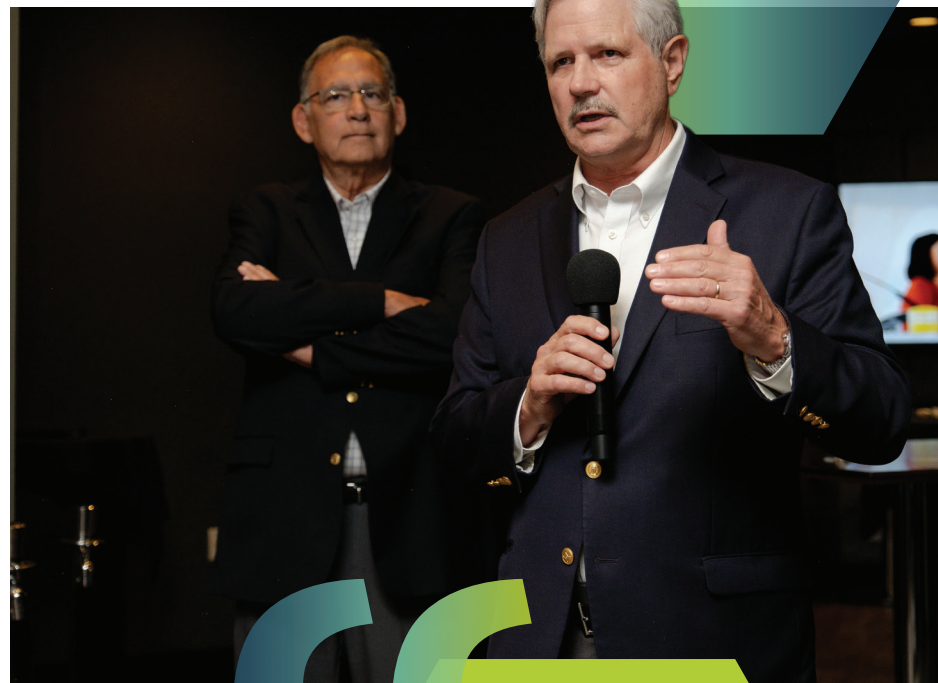
This award is given to individuals whose impact has left a mark on North Dakota and beyond, inspiring others and shaping a lasting legacy.

Emerging Prairie is proud to honor U.S. Senator John Hoeven with the Lifetime Achievement Award for his unwavering support of North Dakota innovation and agriculture. A long-time advocate for Emerging Prairie and Grand Farm, Senator Hoeven has played a vital role in advancing the AgTech sector and positioning North Dakota as a leader in agricultural innovation.

In 2019, Senator Hoeven invited Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue to help launch the Grand Farm Test Site, establishing a strong foundation for future advancements. He later invited Grand Farm to testify before the U.S. Senate and hosted the U.S. Senate Agriculture Appropriations Committee Field Hearing at the Grand Farm Innovation Shop in 2024, bringing national attention to North Dakota's innovation efforts.

His commitment to fostering collaboration has strengthened partnerships between Grand Farm, North Dakota State University, and the USDA Agricultural Research Service, accelerating groundbreaking research and development.

We are deeply grateful for Senator Hoeven's vision, leadership, and enduring dedication to empowering North Dakota's agriculture and technology sectors.



"We are building on this incredible foundation that we have in agriculture. And the only way to really build—at least in the North Dakota way of doing it—is you build relationships. You build relationships with really good people."

Senator Hoeven at the U.S. Senate Agriculture Appropriations Committee Field Hearing



AGCOUNTRY FARM CREDIT SERVICES Innovation Champion 2025 Award

AgCountry Farm Credit Services is a member-owned cooperative providing financial services to farmers, ranchers, and agribusinesses across the Upper Midwest. Headquartered in Fargo, ND, AgCountry serves over 25,000 members and manages assets exceeding \$13 billion. As a Sky Tier partner of Grand Farm and a capital campaign donor, AgCountry played a key role in the 2024 Grand Farm Partner Trip to Nebraska, connecting participating partners to the regional AgTech ecosystem in that area.



JARYD KRISHNAN, JOHN DEERE Technology Community Champion 2025 Award

Jaryd Krishnan, a software engineer with a background spanning finance, technology, and community engagement, transitioned from banking to tech leadership as Director of Technology at dogIDs before co-founding Harvest Profit, which was acquired by John Deere in 2020. Jaryd actively mentors students at Emerging Digital Academy and serves on its advisory board, where he champions the innovation and growth of the Fargo-Moorhead tech community.



U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION Ecosystem Champion 2025 Award

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) fosters nationwide networks to expand small business access to federal R&D and capital funding. A strong advocate for Emerging Prairie, the Small Business Administration helped facilitate Administrator Guzman's visit in 2024 and connected Emerging Prairie to key national opportunities to further our mission of energizing communities.



AIGEN Startup of the Year 2025 Award

Founded in 2020 by Rich Wurden and Kenny Lee, Aigen develops solar and wind-powered autonomous robots that weed and analyze row crops without chemicals or diesel. Since becoming involved in North Dakota through their collaboration with Grand Farm, Aigen has deployed 50 Element robots, which have completed work across 420 acres. Their presence has demonstrated how introducing outside technology to the region can foster impactful partnerships and drive innovation, benefiting both local agriculture and the broader AgTech community.



GRAND FARM

ENGAGING INNOVATORS

Grand Farm’s mission is to solve challenges in agriculture through applied technology by fostering collaboration within a global network of innovators. In 2024, we advanced this mission across three key focus areas: **establishing the Innovation Campus** near Casselton as a hub for research and demonstration; **growing federal engagement** through intentional collaboration; and **strengthening partnerships** across the agricultural ecosystem. These efforts show how innovation, rooted in our region but shared across the planet, can deliver solutions that impact agriculture worldwide.

“This year has continued to show immense growth and impact of Grand Farm. This included the opening of the Grand Farm Innovation Shop, utilization of the Innovation Campus, the ~\$235 million in federal awards supporting both partners and our own platform, the partnership leading to UGA Grand Farm, and the increase in our partnerships and ecosystem. Grand Farm was built to complement the existing ecosystem, and through that work, clear value has been created – this value is now extending throughout the world. In 2024, we announced formal partnerships with Georgia, Montana, and Japan, and we grew our platform to include 70+ partners. As we look to 2025, we look forward to continued development of the Grand Farm Innovation Campus, strengthening our public and private partnerships, and continuing to identify ways to create unique value for the agriculture industry.”

DR. WILLIAM ADERHOLDT
// Cofounder and Executive Director of Grand Farm



2024 ANNUAL CONFERENCES



CULTIVATE CONFERENCE
June 13th, 2024
Held during AgTech Week 2024, our seventh annual Cultivate Conference focused on industry collaboration and real-world solutions in AgTech innovation.

30 SPEAKERS

1000+ WEEK-OF VISITORS AND ATTENDEES

ATTENDEES FROM 26 DIFFERENT STATES & 6 COUNTRIES



AUTONOMOUS NATION CONFERENCE
September 12th, 2024
For the first time, Autonomous Nation was hosted at the Big Iron Farm & Construction Show, where we showcased live demonstrations and workforce solutions for integrating autonomy into agriculture.

25 SPEAKERS

900+ WEEK-OF VISITORS AND ATTENDEES

12 LIVE DEMONSTRATIONS WITH 5 STARTUPS REPRESENTED

space ag CONFERENCE



SPACE AG CONFERENCE
October 24th, 2024
Space Ag 2024, held at the University of North Dakota, highlighted the intersection of space and agriculture and North Dakota’s role as a hub for space farming innovation.

12 SPEAKERS

380+ STUDENTS & ATTENDEES

55% OF ATTENDEES WERE STUDENTS OR EDUCATORS



ESTABLISHING THE

INNOVATION CAMPUS

When Grand Farm first began its work on donated land near Horace, ND, we envisioned a future where we could fully activate agricultural innovation. In 2024, that vision became a reality with the Grand Opening of the Grand Farm Innovation Shop and the first full year of operations at the Grand Farm Innovation Campus.

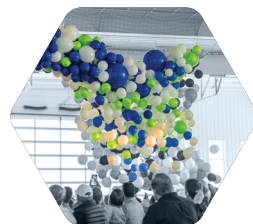
KEY MILESTONES



2022
Groundbreaking at the Casselton location laid the foundation for Grand Farm's expanded vision.



2023
AGCO announced as anchor tenant, establishing the Precision Technology Institute - North Dakota on 300 acres.



2024
Grand Opening of the 25,000 sq. ft. Innovation Shop, featuring state-of-the-art facilities for collaboration, research, and demonstrations.



18 PARTNERS
FEATURED ON
OUR FIELDS

231 ACRES UTILIZED FOR
OUR FIELD PLOTS

33 TRIAL PLOTS
SHOWCASING INNOVATION

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT OFFICE: DRIVING COLLABORATION

The Grand Farm Program Management Office (PMO) plays a vital role in advancing agricultural innovation by facilitating partnerships, managing projects, and connecting stakeholders across the ecosystem. Focused on collaboration rather than ownership, Grand Farm accelerates AgTech advancements by providing the resources and infrastructure for partners to thrive.



FEATURED EVENT

SENATE AG HEARING

In August, Grand Farm hosted a U.S. Senate Agriculture Appropriations Field Hearing at the Innovation Campus. Led by **Senator John Hoeven**, it included **Senators Amy Klobuchar, John Boozman, Tina Smith**, USDA leaders, and industry experts. The hearing focused on advancing agriculture technology and bringing innovations to market for producers, consumers, and agribusiness.



GROWING FEDERAL ENGAGEMENT

As Grand Farm's initiatives expand, our collaboration with federal partners has deepened, enabling us to collaborate to address the evolving needs of the agricultural sector.



NATIONAL ENGAGEMENT WITH USDA ARS

Grand Farm collaborates with USDA ARS to advance AgTech, cataloging over 200 IoT (Inter of Things) sensors in Lincoln, NE, and strengthening research ties in Fargo and Mandan, ND.



MONTANA HEADWATERS TECH HUB

Grand Farm supports the Montana Headwaters Tech Hub by providing precision agriculture test bed support for testing and validating smart sensors and photonics to advance autonomous innovations.



SBA GROWTH ACCELERATOR

Through the SBA Growth Accelerator Fund, Grand Farm supports AgTech startups by partnering with AgLaunch, the University of Georgia, and Colorado State University to provide training, capital, and resources across multiple regions.



NSF FARMS - NORTH DAKOTA ADVANCED AGRICULTURE TECHNOLOGY ENGINE

In January, the U.S. National Science Foundation awarded FARMS core partners—North Dakota State University, the North Dakota Tribal College System, the Greater Fargo Moorhead Economic Development Corporation, Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber Foundation, and Grand Farm—up to \$15 million over the next two years, with the potential for a total of \$160 million over a decade through the Regional Innovation Engines program.

The regional partnership, called Food systems Adapted for Resiliency and Maximized Security (FARMS), was named an award winner out of 188 concept outlines originally submitted throughout the U.S. This funding is designed to accelerate innovation that solves food insecurity and cross-cultural engagement through AgTech innovation. This group of core partners inspired stakeholders from across the region to create, collaborate, and accelerate a platform that engages intentional interactions, formalizes AgTech innovation projects and investment, and solves real world food challenges, all centered on improving cross-cultural relationships across the state.



Since the award announcement, NSF FARMS has been involved across the Grand Farm ecosystem engaging in events and collaborations:



GROW HORIZONS

This event focused on intentionally supporting the BIPOC population of the Fargo-Moorhead area by learning about challenges and identifying ways of supporting careers in AgTech.



EDUCONNECT, TECHCONNECT, & SPACECONNECT

In connection with our annual conferences, we hosted education-focused workshops for educators and students, provided bus tours of real AgTech facilities allowing direct conversations with leaders, and hosted startups and industry folks to connect with students and educators to provide career options.

STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS

In 2024, Grand Farm focused on building deeper relationships with our partners, fostering stronger collaboration to tackle agricultural challenges. By enhancing engagement, we worked closely with the different groups in our ecosystem to create impactful solutions.

GROWER PAIN POINTS

Identifying and addressing growers' challenges is central to Grand Farm's mission. We focus on the needs of the upper Midwest while leveraging global innovation to develop actionable solutions for agriculture. By collaborating with growers, commodity councils, grower associations, and stakeholders, we gather insights, prioritize pain points, and ensure our efforts remain aligned with the most pressing needs in the agricultural ecosystem.



COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

Innovation-as-a-Service advances agricultural innovation at Grand Farm by facilitating projects, promoting collaboration, and guiding technology development. In 2024, efforts included the Palmer Amaranth Project, which began the process of developing AI tools to detect and mitigate the spread of this harmful weed. Regular drone flights and sensor deployments also provided valuable data insights for field plots, enhancing research and technology validation.



FEATURED PROJECT

SENSOR SANDBOX

Piloted in 2024, the Sensor Sandbox is Grand Farm's innovative initiative to explore the potential of IoT (Internet of Things) sensors in precision agriculture. This cutting-edge testing ground enables the collection of real-time, actionable farm data to address critical challenges in modern farming.

The project focuses on:

- Testing Communication Protocols:** Evaluating connectivity solutions like LoRaWAN, Cellular, and Private Cellular (4G) in rural environments.
- Assessing Sensor Types:** Piloting sensors to gather data such as soil moisture, nitrogen levels, and weather conditions.
- Demonstrating Practical Use:** Showcasing how real-time and historical data optimize practices like irrigation and field management.



8 PARTICIPATING COMPANIES

16 SENSORS DEPLOYED

4 COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS TESTED



UGA GRAND FARM

UGA Grand Farm, a partnership between Grand Farm and the University of Georgia College of Agricultural & Environmental Sciences, will serve as an AgTech innovation hub for the Southeast, providing space to test, demonstrate, and validate new technologies. By hosting events and programs, we aim to connect growers, industry, policymakers, and students with innovations to advance agriculture for future generations.

In 2024, we secured access to a 250-acre site, finalized plans for irrigation systems, and began construction on our first building, opening Spring 2025. We also hired our first employee to oversee development and built key partnerships.



ENGAGING TECHNOLOGISTS

Emerging Digital Academy (EDA) is a 20-week immersive coding bootcamp that equips students with the skills needed for entry-level software development roles. Our mission is to bridge the technology workforce gap by cultivating a new generation of skilled developers and fostering a connected, supportive tech community. In 2024, Emerging Digital Academy launched several new initiatives, including the co-op internship program, and graduated three cohorts (**Leavitt, Minsky, and Neumann**), marking a significant year of growth and community impact.

In 2024, Emerging Digital Academy focused on building tangible pathways into the workforce for its students. A cornerstone of this effort was the launch of the co-op internship program, which allows students to gain hands-on experience in real-world settings while providing employers with a flexible hiring model that reduces risks. This year alone, **nine new employers** joined the program, offering students invaluable opportunities to apply their skills and gain meaningful work experience. To further align the program with industry needs, our team initiated a survey of local tech companies to identify the skills and technologies most sought after by employers. Insights from the survey will inform **future curriculum updates**, positioning Emerging Digital Academy students to meet the evolving demands of the tech industry.

44 UNIQUE EMPLOYERS ENGAGED WITH EDA

22 STUDENTS GRADUATED THE PROGRAM IN 2024

14,800 HOURS OF CUMULATIVE WORK BY 2024 GRADUATES

12 CO-OP COMPANIES ENGAGED IN OUR EMERGE PROGRAM

EMERGING DIGITAL ACADEMY

“2024 was a milestone year for Emerging Digital Academy as we continued to grow and evolve. We graduated 22 students from our full-stack development program and launched a co-op internship initiative, providing more hands-on learning opportunities. Our impact extended beyond the Black Building with a pilot auxiliary program in partnership with the Pelican Rapids school district. We also hosted our largest in-person cohort to date, highlighting the increasing demand for our program and the growth of our community.”

Looking to 2025, we aim to expand our programs, strengthen internship partnerships, and refine our curriculum with feedback from industry partners. Our employer network remains central to our success, and we anticipate a year of innovation, collaboration, and growth. We're grateful to our mentors, employers, and community partners for supporting a program that fosters technical talent and meaningful connections.”

BLAINE BOOHER
// Program Director,
Emerging Digital Academy



STUDENT SUCCESS

Emerging Digital Academy's impact is best reflected in the journeys of its students, who bring their unique stories and ambitions to the program. One such story is that of **Riley Dubord**, who joined Emerging Digital Academy with a determination to redirect his career path after years in the service industry and a recent battle with stage three cancer. Riley's resilience and dedication led him to a co-op internship with local startup Kirkwall, led by EDA alumnus Ujjwal Adikhari, where he was one of five interns. At the end of the summer, Riley was offered a full-time position—a testament to his commitment and skill.

"Emerging Digital Academy was definitely a challenge, but it was also one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. The program pushed me to grow, and the support from the instructors and my peers kept me motivated. EDA was definitely a challenge, but it was also one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. The program pushed me to grow, and the support from the instructors and my peers kept me motivated."

**Riley Dubord,
Leavitt cohort**



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Throughout 2024, Emerging Digital Academy strengthened its ties within the local tech community and formed new partnerships that enhanced opportunities for our graduates. A partnership with **Bell Bank** led to the hiring of two Emerging Digital Academy interns, while collaboration with the **NDSU Research and Technology Park** provided graduates with direct connections to startups seeking tech talent. Additionally, in response to the challenging job market, Emerging Digital Academy expanded its alumni program by introducing guest speakers and workshops, offering ongoing support, training, and networking resources to graduates. These initiatives underscore EDA's commitment to building a connected, resilient tech community and supporting graduates beyond the classroom.



**100
ATTENDEES**

11 SPEAKERS

**3 THEMED
INTERACTIVE
GAMES**

FEATURED EVENT

ELEVATE CONFERENCE 2024

November 14th, 2024 | Ivy & Rose Warehouse

Emerging Digital Academy hosted its second annual Elevate conference, bringing together a diverse group of tech enthusiasts, industry professionals, students, and community members. This year's event celebrated regional tech advancements and inspired curiosity in attendees of all backgrounds. Elevate continues to affirm that the tech community in our region is vibrant, welcoming, and ready to make an impact.

FEATURED SPEAKERS

DAN HECKAMAN

// AVP for Finance and Administration and CIO, Minnesota State University Moorhead

JESSICA PARKER

// Software Engineering Manager, Launchward



**OTHER IMPACTFUL
EVENTS AND MEETUPS:**

Coffee + Coding

Full Stack Fargo

Intro to Coding Workshops

STARTUP PROGRAMS



STARTUP PROGRAMS

“2024 was a year of dynamic growth, engagement, and new opportunities for Startup Programs! StartupBREW Fargo continued bringing together entrepreneurs and innovators, with college takeovers from NDSU, Concordia, and MSUM showcasing student entrepreneurs. Partnerships with Gener8tor, 50 South Capital, and area colleges expanded resources and fueled local innovation. The Prairie Capital Summit hit record attendance, attracting investors from cities like Seattle and New York,

while the Founders Retreat provided entrepreneurs with time to recharge and reflect.

In 2025, we're launching Entrepreneur Day at the Capitol to connect founders with policymakers and planning quarterly women and BIPOC founder meetups to foster mentorship and growth. Together, these efforts will continue building a supportive, inclusive ecosystem for the next generation of Midwest entrepreneurs.”

SADIE SCHAEFFER
// Startup Programs Manager



4,200 TOTAL
EVENT
ATTENDEES

70 SPEAKERS

10 LOCAL ARTISTS

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Startup Programs at Emerging Prairie foster a vibrant ecosystem for founders, innovators, and investors across the Midwest. Our initiatives focus on empowering entrepreneurs through resources, networking, and community-building events that champion local and regional startups. In 2024, Startup Programs expanded its reach with high-impact events, strengthened partnerships, and initiatives that brought new perspectives to the Fargo-Moorhead area and beyond.



StartupBREW
FARGO

In 2024, StartupBREW Fargo continued to be a cornerstone of our Startup Programs, bringing together entrepreneurs, innovators, and community members every Wednesday morning to share ideas, build connections, and energize the startup ecosystem. This year, StartupBREW hosted 28 weekly gatherings, drawing over 3,800 attendees who came together to share stories, spark ideas, and build genuine connections over entrepreneurial stories and coffee. Cheers to a great and impactful year!

STARTUP PROGRAMS

IMPACT

In 2024, Startup Programs launched impactful initiatives that broadened our reach and strengthened support for regional startups. The Startup World Cup Pitch Competition, in collaboration with Grand Farm, offered local founders a platform to showcase their ideas on a national stage, culminating in Fargo-based founder **Troy Vareberg** winning the regional competition and securing a spot at Pegasus Ventures' World Cup event in California. Additionally, our Women Who Scale event brought together inspiring voices like **Betsy Fore**, a serial venture-backed founder, and Amanda Schneider, President of ThinkLab, who shared their experiences as scaling female founders, inspiring the next generation of women entrepreneurs.

Through partnerships with key organizations, Startup Programs expanded access to mentorship, resources, and funding, empowering founders to take bold steps in their ventures. These initiatives continue to build momentum for a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem in the Midwest.



FOUNDER HIGHLIGHTS

2024 saw exciting success stories from regional founders engaged with Startup Programs. Bryce Wuori, past StartupBREW speaker, has gained attention in the industry, speaking at SXSW in Austin and scaling his company, Pavewise, through investments and local accelerator support. **Lisa Esberger**, founder of Verdethos, relocated her business to Fargo to connect with Emerging Prairie's startup ecosystem. Since then, she's become deeply involved with Startup Programs and Grand Farm. Lisa has chosen the Prairie Den for Verdethos' headquarters as they launch their business and grow their leadership and software development teams.



215 ATTENDEES

27 SPEAKERS

7 PANELS AND BREAKOUT SESSIONS

FEATURED EVENT

PRAIRIE CAPITAL SUMMIT 2024

October 1st, 2024 | Brewhalla

Prairie Capital Summit united entrepreneurs, investors, and leaders to explore the Midwest's private capital landscape. With inspiring talks, panels, and educational tracks, attendees gained insights into raising capital and building connections. Startups accessed valuable resources, while investors met promising founders, highlighting North Dakota's vibrant startup scene and fostering opportunities to drive Midwest innovation.

FEATURED SPEAKERS

ELIZABETH TWEEDALE

// Founder & CEO of Coco Coders

MICHAEL LEDECKY

// Managing Partner of Clay Path Partners



OTHER IMPACTFUL EVENTS AND MEETUPS:

StartupBREW Fargo

Fall Founders Retreat

Founders Hours and Startup-Investor Meetups
EMERGING PRAIRIE 25



TEDxFargo

What if a single idea could change your perspective, your path, or even your community? At TEDxFargo 2024, we embraced the theme “If,” inviting attendees to journey into the unknown and explore possibilities beyond the ordinary. With a lineup of visionary speakers—including our youngest speaker yet!—and spanning fields like artificial intelligence, soil regeneration, early childhood education, and space innovation, this year’s event celebrated TED’s original mission of “ideas worth spreading”. TEDxFargo 2024 brought together

dreamers, doers, and disruptors to spark conversations, foster connections, and inspire action—proving once again that the boldest ideas often begin with “If.”

In 2025, TEDxFargo will push boundaries like never before, weaving a multi-day format with global speakers to inspire attendees and embody TED’s new tagline: “ideas change everything”. Each talk will weave a rich tapestry of inspiration and innovation into the fabric of our Fargo-Moorhead community. We’re excited for this new format of TEDxFargo—are you?

THE WORLD HAS VIEWED
TEDXFARGO TALKS
ONLINE 12,432,819 TIMES

“TEDxFargo 2024 was an unforgettable milestone, sparking meaningful conversations, bold ideas, and a powerful sense of community. From inspiring talks that challenged perspectives to intimate auxiliary events where connections flourished, this year brought a level of engagement and excitement that truly elevated the experience. We saw incredible growth with a packed house of 1,000 attendees, 24+ local and national speakers, and countless interactions that left everyone buzzing with energy. Our wins went beyond numbers; they were felt in the personal connections, the moments of shared vulnerability, and the ideas that sparked something new in Fargo and beyond.

As we look ahead to TEDxFargo 2025, I’m filled with excitement about building on this momentum with an even more immersive experience. Next year’s event will span multiple days, creating opportunities to engage deeply with Fargo’s vibrant community and local culture. With over 40 speakers planned, we’ll dive into new perspectives and stories, creating a space where ideas can be explored in greater depth and connections can flourish. I can’t wait to see where the journey will take us next and am already counting down to welcoming everyone.”

LIZ CAMPBELL
// Director of Experiences and Events



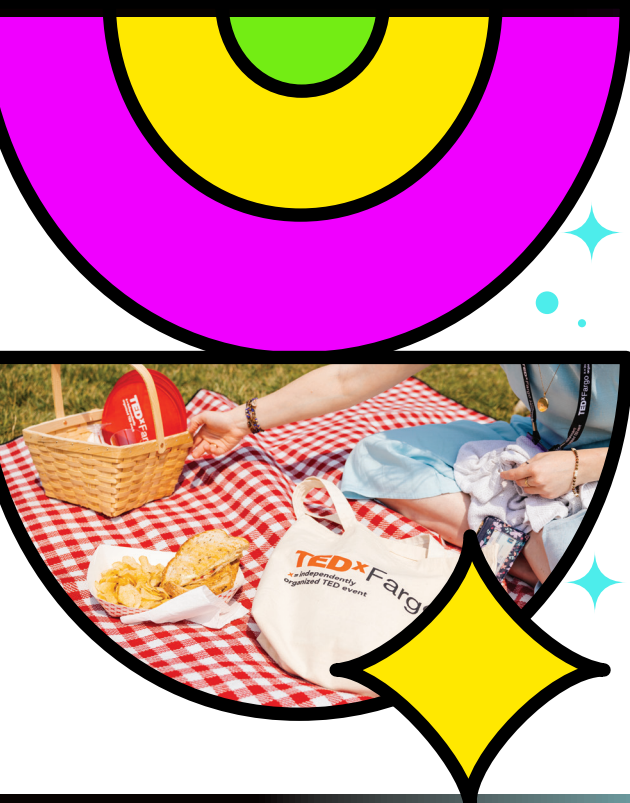
PRODUCED 258 TED
TALKS TO DATE

“Not only is this a great place to open your mind and learn new things, but it is a great place to grow your personal network! This event was well put together and provided me with an amazing opportunity to learn and grow!”

Feedback from 2024 Attendee

HOSTED 13,883
TEDXFARGO ATTENDEES
SINCE 2012





A LOVE LETTER TO OUR COMMUNITY

TEDxFargo is more than an event; it's a reflection of Fargo-Moorhead's vibrant spirit. In 2024, local engagement and collaboration took center stage. From the businesses that embraced TEDxFargo week with creative offerings, to local artists who shared their talents on stage, and community leaders who opened their spaces to inspire connection and conversation, this year was truly a love letter to our community.

PAINT THE TOWN RED

During the week of TEDxFargo If, Fargo became a vibrant hub of curiosity and connection, thanks to the enthusiasm of over 24 local businesses, organizations, and artists participating in our Community Amplification program. From red velvet pancakes at neighborhood diners to branded coffee sleeves and creative window displays, these partnerships turned TEDxFargo week into a city-wide celebration.

THIS YEAR'S HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDED:

Drekker Brewing Company: TEDxFargo Sloosh and Eye Scream

West Acres Mall: TEDxFargo Lounge and scavenger hunt

Studio FSR: 1,500 custom TEDxFargo candles for attendees

Red River Market: TEDxFargo event booth

CELEBRATING LOCAL ARTISTS

TEDxFargo 2024 was elevated by the creativity of local artists who brought their unique talents to the event, infusing it with wonder, imagination, and... bald eagle costumes? From music to mindfulness, their contributions created moments of connection and inspiration, reflecting the rich artistic spirit of Fargo-Moorhead.

We also launched our first ever exclusive t-shirt for attendees, designed by local artist and NDSU grad, Sydney Ulrich. We're excited to announce that Sydney will be designing the themed event logo for TEDxFargo 2025!



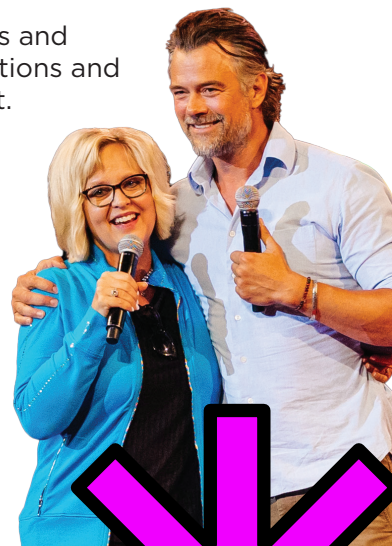
OUR GRATITUDE

TEDxFargo 2024 was made possible through the incredible support of our sponsors, advisory board, community, and attendees. Each of you played a vital role, threading together ideas, inspiration, and connection to bring this event to life. We extend heartfelt thanks to our advisory board members, Julie Peterson Klein and Dr. Sue Mathison (who is one of our first TEDxFargo speakers ever!), for their steadfast guidance and belief in our mission of sharing ideas worth spreading.

To our sponsors, your partnership fuels ideas worth spreading and ensures TEDxFargo continues to be a platform for inspiration and innovation. We're beyond excited for the possibilities to come in 2025.

A standing ovation to our speakers, whose bold ideas and thoughtful stories lit up the stage, sparking conversations and inspiring action long after the event.

Finally, to our attendees—whether this was your first TEDxFargo experience or you've been with us year after year—you are the heartbeat of this event. Your curiosity and commitment inspire us to keep pushing boundaries and exploring the power of "If." We'll see you next summer!



TEDxFargo SPONSORS



WITH GRATITUDE,

— EMERGING PRAIRIE



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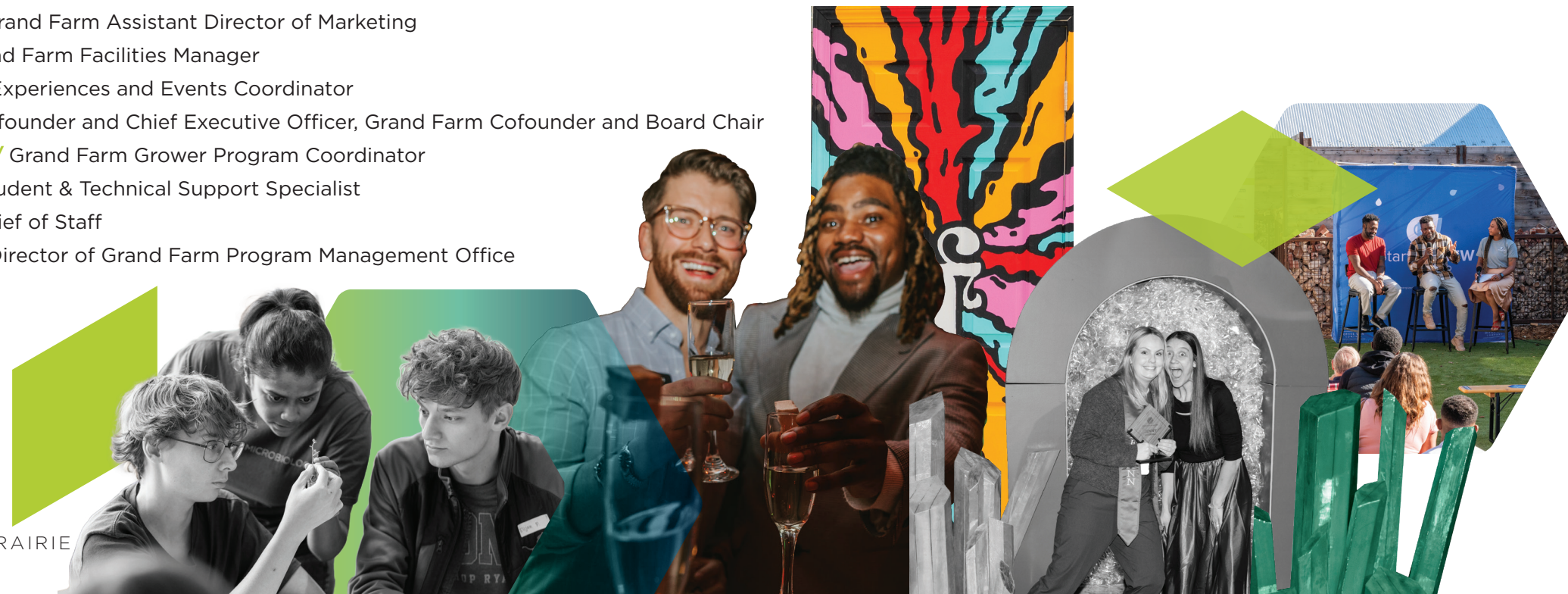
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