

Chairman Terry Wanzek and members of the Senate, thank you for the opportunity to speak before you. My name is Don Jelsing. I represent the Pierce County Fair in Rugby. All of the county fairs in North Dakota have been in existence for a different number of years so we all have different needs for our infrastructure. Saying that, we all do have our own needs that need to be addressed. The Pierce County Fair in Rugby is totally in need of help, right from the start as we have needed to move our fair completely to new grounds. We basically don't have any infrastructure. We have no electricity, water, building or bathrooms. We have a long road ahead of us. Maybe I shouldn't have stated it quite that way, because we don't have any roads at all. Other fairs have some infrastructure but are still in need of some help. Many structures around the state are 50 plus years old and some are even close to being condemned. Some fairs take some money from general funds to fix and repair, just to get by.

The Pierce County Fair is 27 years old and we are questionably the newest fair in the state. Some fairs get some local help but it's not enough to keep up with what's needed for infrastructure upkeep. So here we are. Welcome to our world they say. I was one of the two people in Rugby who started the fair 27 years ago. I can honestly tell you all that I have gotten to know many of the people who operate their county fair in the state and believe me I don't know of any other group of people who are more dedicated to working hard to see their fair succeed in their community.... And most of us do it with no pay. Some of us even put in our own money to keep it going. I've been the president of the Chamber of Commerce, leader of the Ag Committee in Rugby, been on the board of our local Heart of America Medical Center and more. I can tell you that county fair boards care deeply about our fairs and the youth involved in them. The fairs bring such a blessing, not just to the communities as a whole but to families, their children and the elderly. We are not just some people who make a phone call to hire a carnival. Any of you who have been on a fair board know this. We all have some trouble finding volunteers to be on our boards.

WHY?? Because it's a a lot of work and hours. In saying all of this, don't get me wrong, I'm not complaining about it. Just stating some facts. We all relish the sight and thought of all the youth in 4-H clubs and the ladies in the community who enter a project in the open class division. The youth involved in fair projects have worked on their projects for months. So, how does this tie in with infrastructure, the reason we are all here. Because, without some decent infrastructure, we have no fairs, we have no livestock shows, we have no static exhibit shows, we have no youth to show their projects that they have worked on most of the year with their families and GUESS WHAT? We have no fairs, period! I believe that you can see the importance of keeping this strong family organization. Our communities, our families, our youth in North Dakota are asking for your help. We also ask you to reconsider the idea of putting a 1 to 1 matching funds stipulation onto this original bill, as many of the smaller fairs can not afford that. time ??.....We respectfully ask you to give HB1591 a DO PASS. God bless you all and we pray that you do the right thing.....

MEMORIES?? Well, how in the world do memories fit in with talking about fixing a water line? If you would be so kind to let me tell you a little story. In the year 1999..... I believe that there is not a single person in this room that cannot see and feel, how life experiences at the county fair can or did change your life or someone else's life, forever. Are we looking to get paid more on the board? OOPS! That's right, most of us DON'T GET PAID! We do it for the community. Without maintaining the infrastructure of those memories, there won't be those county fairs, along with those memories. Sometimes there are facilities that can be repaired, many times they just have to be replaced. We ask that you be a major part in the future of our youth and our communities in North Dakota. Some of us receive some funding from a mill levy through the county. Some of us don't. But when it comes to having to make major infrastructure repairs, it does not go very far. We at the Pierce County Fair receive no mill levy because a few years ago

the legislature passed a law with prohibits county commissioners from allowing them to put a mill levy on for a county fair. That does not pertain to fairs that are grandfathered in.

Before I leave you, I want you to seriously look at something. A 300-piece puzzle. What do you see? Take a real good look at this, what do you see? You can certainly see a county fair, cattle, crops, barns and more? What I see is the names of 300 people, all volunteers, who were proud to be a part of a community event, a county fair that looks toward the future. Looking forward to watching their children grow up with good working values in their 4-H and FFA projects. Our county fair is very much an agricultural fair and heavily supported by the community and its businesses. The hotels have many reservations from reunions and visiting families coming to town to spend time with their community friends at the county fair. Our local newspaper is owned by the Minot Daily News. I think they believe an awful lot about saving our county fairs, otherwise, they would not have put this issue front and center on their paper. We seriously ask you today to consider being a major part in the future of your youth and our communities. I respectfully ask this committee to give House Bill 1591 a DO PASS recommendation. Thank you and God bless you.