



Honorable Ray Holmberg
State Senator
600 E Boulevard Ave
Bismarck, ND 58505

Senate Appropriations Committee:

The hospitality industry has been devastated in 2020. Businesses from local boutiques to hotels to restaurants to visitor attractions had to shift, plan and rethink everything they knew about their work. In a year that we never could have imagined, there are stories of hardship and pain, but as a place, North Dakotans are never really down and out. It's part of our DNA as settlers that we look for optimism and point to a future with hope and gratitude. These are the stories of three Jamestown businesses:

On March 17, the Gladstone Inn in Jamestown closed its doors. The property has remained closed over these past 10 months. The Gladstone Inn has served the community of Jamestown for over 100 years. Plans are being made to resume operations mid-May. Confident to weather this uncertain time and come out stronger, they've invested dollars using the HERG grants and can now provide contactless check ins.

Sabirs Buffalo Grill, a local watering hole in the downtown district and the place everyone takes their out-of-town guests to, saw a 24% decrease in revenues including eight weeks when COVID or government restrictions closed their doors. The Payroll Protection Plan and the HERG helped with their operational overhead, and the ERG grant allowed Sabirs Buffalo Grill to implement a new touchless payment system and outdoor seating.

The National Buffalo Museum paid admissions were down 51% in 2020. The American Alliance of Museums surveyed institutions across the nation. As of a November 2020 report, 30% of museums remained closed, and for those who had reopened, their admissions have seen on average a reduction of 65%.

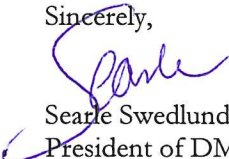
What do the hospitality businesses throughout North Dakota need? They need people. Much like the common themes of the public, these businesses strive to get back to normal. Businesses that support and benefit the hospitality industry need people. This can be accomplished by supporting the marketing budget for ND Tourism. These dollars will do two things:

1. Tell visitors North Dakota and its wide open spaces are open for business.
2. Broadcast North Dakota's investment in infrastructure that will make their visit safe and comforting.

Data shows a pent-up demand for travel. We know that there is a growing, and yet uncertain confidence for travel. North Dakota Tourism is well position to create an invitation to the state that addresses these concerns. If ever there was a time for North Dakota to act, it is now.

Please support the ND Tourism marketing budget – SB 2018. The dollars that can be invested in the coming biennium will bring the much-needed visitors that businesses throughout the state need now.

Sincerely,



Searle Swedlund
President of DMAND
Executive Director, Jamestown Tourism