

Chairman Bletz & House Committee Members,

Thank you for inviting us to come and speak to you on behalf of the Pierce County Fair in Rugby and county fairs throughout North Dakota. My name is Don Jelsing, vice president of the Pierce County Fair.

To just give you a quick summary of my life with our county fair. In 1990, I came up with the thought that Rugby should have some type of fair in the community, as there had not been one there for many years. Another gal and I started planning to have a county fair in 1991. Cleaning brush, removing dead trees and removing old dilapidated buildings, we had our first year in 1991. With nothing more than determination and volunteers, it grew from there. It wasn't very long and we had 240 volunteers within the first 9 years. I don't think that we have to say anymore about how the community feels about their county fair. I personally funded the county fair with my own money. I have been with the county fair ever since. After the first 9 years, I went to work raising money through sponsorships, donations, live auctions, grants and on-line auctions. We were getting by with using a piece of land that was owned by the Rugby Park Board. OK, so much about the past. Why do we have to re-locate the fair? A few things. **HOLD UP PHOTO** .. This is the future land of the Pierce County Fair Grounds.

1. Carnival – not enough room – more rides, larger rides
2. The past ground is sloped too much – cant block rides safely enough - A SAFETY ISSUE
3. New ground has more room, period. Room for roads for EMT'S, LAW ENFORCEMENT, FRIE FIGHTERS, MEDICAL DOCTORS & NURSES, if needed. A SAFETY ISSUE
4. Room for pathways for pedestrians, wheel chairs and families walking together. A SAFETY ISSUE
5. New land provides an area for parking on the grounds. Old land had no parking. SAFETY & CONVIENIENCE.
6. Provides a pierce of land for an outdoor horse arena.
7. More exhibit area
8. More room for shaded areas for senior citizens, mothers, their children and others. SAFETY & COMFORT. We have no infrastructure such as water, electricity, sewer, buildings, bleachers. We are here to talk about the future. About the future of our communities and the things that bring communities closer together, county fairs and their future, for the families who rely on organizations such as 4-H Clubs, to help teach young citizens the work ethics that 4-H can teach them.

Repairing holes in an exhibit building, re-doing water lines throughout the grounds, replacing bathrooms that are 50 plus years old. We could go on. We are not solely here to talk about patching a hole in a roof or replacing a bleacher. Yes, it's important! But we all need to look into the future. Why did county of Pierce spend a ton of money repairing the court house a few years ago? Because there was a need for that structure into the future, for the people in the community. We talk about fixing the infrastructure of the fairgrounds. Why? Because its important. Its investing in the future of our youth. You are investing in the future of our communities. Not a single person here should be thinking that fixing that barn isn't really important, unless you are just storing a Bobcat, some rodeo panels etc. But you know, good usable fair buildings store memories, they hold educational dreams of families spending time together, that will stay with not only our youth but adults also. I want to tell you a little story that should hit your heart..... **1999 STORY of 2 kids.**

There is not a single person in this room that can not see and feel, how life's experiences at the county fair can or did change their life forever. Are we looking for more money to pay the people on fair boards?? 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 seriously consider being a major part in the future of our youth and our communities in North Dakota.

Before I leave you, I want you to seriously look at something. **PUZZLE**, A 300-piece puzzle. Take a real good look at this, A REAL GOOD look at this. What do you see? What do you **really** see? **TURN PUZZLE.** I see the names of 300 people who were all volunteers at last year's Pierce Couoty Fair. 300 people who were proud to be part of a community event, a county fair, that looks toward the future. Our county fair is very much an agricultural fair and heavily supported by the community and it's businesses within. The hotels have many reservations from reunions and visiting family gatherings.

We seriously ask you today to consider being a major part in the future of our youth and our communities. I respectfully ask this committee to give House Bill 1591 a DO PASS to recommendation.