

Lucas Paper

Director of Strategy
Folkways
210 Broadway #202
Fargo, ND 58102

Chairman Bekkedahl

Senate Appropriations Committee
600 East Boulevard Avenue
Bismarck, ND 58505

Dear Chairman Bekkedahl and Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee,

My name is Lucas Paper, and I am honored to represent Folkways, a Fargo nonprofit dedicated to making Fargo the best small city in America through community events where everyone belongs. I am testifying in support of continued Destination Development funding to encourage the creation of events that attract tourism to our state.

Since 2015, Folkways has welcomed over 750,000 attendees to our events, generating \$11.4 million in economic impact while supporting 80 local small businesses and hundreds of performers and artists. Ranked as Fargo's #1 "Thing to Do" by TripAdvisor, we now attract 125,000 annual attendees to our 40 events—comparable to major attractions like the North Dakota State Fair and the Fargo Street Fair.

Community events like ours play a vital role in drawing visitors to our state. Often, North Dakota is the last state people visit. With Destination Development support, we can create experiences that attract tourists, support local businesses, and strengthen our cultural appeal. Allocating funds toward community events builds on the program's success and is a natural next step in its evolution.

Thank you for your ongoing support of Destination Development. With continued funding, Folkways can create even more experiences that drive tourism, foster community, and boost the local economy.

Sincerely,
Lucas Paper
Director of Strategy
Folkways

FOLKWAYS



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