



202 N. 3rd Street
Grand Forks, ND 58203
p: 701-772-7271
www.gochamber.org

DATE: January 15, 2025
TO: ND Legislature
FROM: The Chamber Grand Forks / East Grand Forks
RE: Base Retention Funding

On behalf of the Grand Forks/ East Grand Forks Chamber of Commerce and the Grand Forks Mayor's Base Retention Committee we respectfully request your support of the Base Retention Funding request.

Grand Forks Air Force Base (GFAFB) is an Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) Base. The mission of the **319th Reconnaissance Wing** is to provide decisional advantage to our warfighters and national leaders through support of our Nation's Global Hawk High Altitude ISR mission. The **Space Development Agency (SDA)** also operates the DOD Low Earth Orbit Satellite array from Grand Forks Air Force Base.

Additional Base Retention Grant Program funding will support:

Advocacy and Awareness with regular strategic meetings with U.S. Air Force leadership at the **Pentagon, Air Combat Command, 16th Air Force, and at GFAFB** to support **existing missions** and explore and pursue **future mission opportunities** such as an Arctic Mission, space missions, and additional ISR missions. The USAF supports communities who care and support airmen/guardians and their missions.

Community and stakeholder education on new **Intelligence Surveillance Reconnaissance (ISR)** designation at GFAFB and the additional cyber, communications, UAS and technology assets.

Brief rotating **senior Air Force leadership** on GFAFB infrastructure, ISR and cyber-capabilities, and the eco-system among GFAFB, Grand Sky tenants, Cavalier Space Station, UND, and Grand Forks community partners. Constant briefing are needed because of regular turnover.

Quality of Life. Research, studies, and investments into quality of life for service members and their families to include support of K-12 public education, student services, higher education programming and research, medical care and behavioral/mental health, spousal employment, and educational and recreational opportunities.

Utilize the Support of Military Families Report, which is weighed by Air Force leadership during mission and basing decisions, to identify and address how to best support the military family. New missions go to bases where airmen can be attracted and retained.

Strategic Advising & Guidance to raise national awareness and align the community and GFAFB with current and future Air Force initiatives.

Utilize experts to arrange meetings with top Air Force leadership and to help **craft strategic priorities and messaging** such as preventing base encroachment from airspace, land and electromagnetic radio installations including from Chinese investments.

On behalf of the Mayor's Base Retention Committee thanks in advance for your consideration of our joint request with Fargo and Minot.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Barry Wilfahrt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a blue ink color.

Barry Wilfahrt
President & CEO
The Chamber Grand Forks / East Grand Forks
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