

DRAFT Nickel Trophy Talking Points

Proposed change in wording to "...the nickel trophy must be permanently displayed in the heritage center."

- Since 1895, the State Historical Society has been collecting and preserving artifacts and documents that tell the important stories of our history and culture. We've grown this significant collection to well over 2 million state artifacts and archives materials. Out of that large collection, the Nickel Trophy is the only piece that is mandated to be permanently on display.

This law, created during the last legislative session, has created some ongoing challenges for our agency.

- One is that this law goes against our state museum collections policy. Per our state collections practices and based on national best practices for museum collections care, we do not ever guarantee that a donated object will be placed on exhibit at any time or in any state building. This Century Code required the Nickel Trophy to be on exhibit forever.
- Because of the current wording, the Nickel Trophy may never be loaned to UND, NDSU, any community organizations or museums, or even be on exhibit at our own agency's state historic sites. It is permanently limited to viewing by only visitors to the North Dakota Heritage Center. Greater flexibility could potentially help more diverse audiences see this artifact.
- Part of our agency's mission is to provide the highest level of care, protection, and preservation to the state's artifacts. As worded in current Century Code, this artifact may never leave a display area within the North Dakota Heritage Center. As a best practice for artifact care, any artifact should not be continuously on view forever and ever, because it will be damaged over time with a long-term exposure to the elements of light, dust, pollutants, and more. Just like a chair in your living room will fade over time if exposed to rays of sunlight, artifacts are also affected by light levels in display cases and their surroundings. It is our museum curators' practice to regularly evaluate the condition and periodically remove artifacts from being on exhibit after certain lengths of time to allow the artifacts to "rest" from exposure to the elements in storage. Those artifacts may be exhibited again at a later time. Like all artifacts, the Nickel Trophy will likely deteriorate over time if left on permanent display. We would prefer to have the flexibility allowed by our professional curators' assessments to manage this state artifact's public availability based on the best methods for protecting and preserving its condition. Changing the word "will" to "may" would allow for a higher standard of care for this important collections piece.