



The Valley Prosperity Partnership (VPP) is focused on developing a unified, shared vision for high value and sustained economic growth for all Red River Valley residents.

Private sector industry and higher education leaders, joined by economic development partners, formed the Valley Prosperity Partnership to identify common strategic economic development opportunities for the Red River Valley region of North Dakota and Minnesota.

The VPP has identified five priority areas for Valley-wide action.

1. Attract, develop and retain talent
2. Ensure water security and management
3. Expand research capacity and relevancy
4. Accelerate entrepreneurial activity and output
5. Invest in critical infrastructure development and capital improvement

## Priorities for North Dakota's 2019 Legislative Session

### Research Capacity and Relevancy

- ✓ Use Legacy Fund earnings and/or other state funding for universities to perform collaborative research with technology and business innovators, compete for federal and corporate research dollars, and proactively build expertise and capacity in high potential research clusters. Research will diversify our economy and has the strong potential to broaden our state's economic reach for a generation.
- ✓ Give more decision-making autonomy to the universities who meet required benchmarks so that they can better meet the research and workforce needs of the private sector.

### Talent

- ✓ Foster growth of regional two and four-year training institutions, including establishing a **Career Workforce Academy** in Fargo.

### Water Security and Management

- ✓ Implement the **FM Area Diversion** by providing state funding totaling \$\$\$\$\$
- ✓ Provide a **supplemental water option for the Valley** by providing \$50 million of funding for the 2019 - 2021 biennium for design and construction.

The following recommendations represent the VPP's highest priorities seeking legislative consideration and action that will help the Valley build on its current momentum and take advantage of opportunities that will diversify the economy and foster sustained economic growth for the future.

## The Valley Prosperity's Priority Action Agenda

Immediately following the May 2014 unveiling of the VPP's strategic plan – **An Action Agenda for Sustained Prosperity** – working groups came together to start putting the strategy into action. Using the plan as a point of departure working groups on talent, water and research developed plans for the region's most promising prospects and best next steps. In the summer of 2015 the research group reconvened and the working groups on entrepreneurship and infrastructure convened to develop their action plans.

The VPPs 2017 legislative priorities focused on water issues and financial resources for entrepreneurs. Most recently the VPP has focused on issues related to funding for university research, water security and management, and workforce development.

### **Talent Attraction, Retention & Development**

*The VPP will help to coordinate regional talent attraction, development and retention initiatives to ensure the Valley can meet and sustain the current and future employment demands while helping to give North Dakota, Minnesota, and the Valley a greater voice in national policy.*

### **Ensuring Water Security & Management**

*The Valley Prosperity Partnership will collaborate with internal and external stakeholders to ensure the Valley's water security infrastructure and management systems are fully funded, constructed and operational, effectively protecting against future flooding while providing for a readily sustainable water supply at all times.*

### **Expanding Research Capacity & Relevancy**

*The Valley Prosperity Partnership will work to ensure that the Valley's universities' research and technology commercialization activities are fully funded, can attract quality faculty, and can support regional industry and their unique competencies. Within this priority, a critical focus should be placed on the Valley's opportunities associated with the convergence of specialized areas of technology and innovation to include:*

- *autonomous systems, including UAS*
- *agriculture and food safety*
- *healthcare and medical services,*
- *energy and natural resources*
- *advanced materials and manufacturing*
- *computing sciences/big data*

### **Accelerating Entrepreneurial Activity & Output**

*The Valley Prosperity Partnership will work to ensure that a strong and vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem and culture exists within the Valley that cultivates, encourages, and supports new business creation, innovative ideas, and adds value to existing organizations, products, and services.*

### **Investing in Critical Infrastructure Development and Capital Improvement Projects**

*The VPP will identify and advocate for the continued investment in critical infrastructure development to include (but is not limited to) highways, freight-rail, natural gas, utilities, airport, broadband communication and civic space improvements for both North Dakota and Minnesota stakeholders.*



## Steering Committee



Tammy Miller, CEO  
Border States Electric  
Co-Chairperson, Valley Prosperity Partnership

Steve Burian  
AE2S  
Co-Chairperson, Valley Prosperity Partnership

Marshal Albright, President & CEO  
Cass County Electric Cooperative

Tom Astrup, President & CEO  
American Crystal Sugar

Barry Batcheller, Chairman & CEO  
Appareo Systems

Karl Bollingberg, Executive Vice President  
Alerus Financial

Dennis Bona, President  
Northland Community and Technical College

Dean Bresciani, President  
North Dakota State University

Mylo Einarson, President & CEO  
Nodak Electric Cooperative

Chad Flanagan, Partner  
Eide Bailly

Jim Galloway, Principal  
JLG Architects

Hal Gershman, Owner  
Happy Harry's Bottle Shops

Judd Graham, CEO Fargo Region  
Bremer Bank

Tim Huckle, President & CEO  
Blue Cross Blue Shield North Dakota

Brian Johnson, CEO  
Choice Financial Group

Mark Kennedy, President  
University of North Dakota

Keith Lund, President & CEO  
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Jeff Melgaard, President  
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Altru Health System

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Joe Raso, President & CEO  
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John Richman, President  
North Dakota State College of Science

Jim Roers, President & CEO  
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Thomas Shorma, President & CEO  
WCCO Belting, Inc.

Richard Solberg, Chairman & CEO  
Bell State Bank & Trust

Steve Swiontek, President & CEO  
Gate City Bank

Nate White, COO & Executive Vice President  
Sanford Medical Center Fargo