

40

under 40

On the Rise

BY LISA GIBSON AND KAYLA PRASEK

Selecting the list of 40 inspiring and dedicated professionals under the age of 40 this year was no easy task. Nominations included company presidents, CEOs, accomplished men and women in the fields of finance, architecture, engineering, energy, higher education, health care, communication, technology and so many more. They all have worked their way to the success they enjoy today, and they all will continue to climb that ladder, working harder and achieving even greater things.

Some dreamed of the career they have since they were small; some fell onto their paths through unexpected changes in plans or a realization of raw talent. However they got where they are, they are leaders in their industries and Prairie Business is pleased to present this year's honorees.



ANDREW EITREIM

Age: 32
Principal Architect and Partner
Architecture Inc.
Sioux Falls, S.D.

Andrew Eitreim's favorite project thus far in his architecture career was one of his first — the Children's Museum of South Dakota in Brookings.

"That was a fun project," he says. "It was a long project, design process was long and construction was lengthy, but it was just an interesting project because of all the different aspects that were involved in it."

He and his team at Architecture Inc. in Sioux Falls coordinated with exhibit designers and others "to turn this 1930s elementary school building into a modern, fun, interesting, exciting, vibrant children's museum.

"The best part of that project, really every project, but that one in particular, was seeing the end result and seeing people enjoy it."

With several other projects in his portfolio in the past 8.5 years he's been with Architecture Inc., Andrew has seen plenty of finished projects. He landed a job with the company immediately after graduating from North Dakota State University with a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Design and Master of Architecture. Now, he's a principal architect and a partner.

"I'm involved both in some management things around the office, day-to-day stuff, but then also managing design projects, from getting the projects, interviewing for projects, networking, those types of things, through the whole design and construction process until the project is complete."

Andrew is a native of Jasper, Minn., just an hour drive from his current home in Sioux Falls. He chose NDSU after taking a tour of the architecture facilities and learning about the programs there.

"It's kind of like everything else, where you try to find something that fits your interests. I enjoy science and math but I also enjoy the creative artistic side. And so it really is a perfect blend of the two — creativity, problem solving, technical issues, project management, coordination, teamwork. There's a lot of things about the profession that I enjoy."

Andrew is active in Rotary Club, where he takes all opportunities to do volunteer work. He's also a classroom volunteer for Junior Achievement and is on the board of directors for the annual Sculpture Walk in Sioux Falls.

He and his wife Kayla keep busy with their son Connor, who is almost 1, and in his free time, Andrew enjoys golfing and spending time at Eagle Lake near Fergus Falls, Minn.

A couple years ago, he led the charge in putting together a proposal for a competition to design a home for Architects for Humanity in Sioux Falls. His team's design won and the home was built and sold at cost.

After all his projects in the years he's been in the architecture industry, he still loves the same aspects of his job. "Working with people, be it the engineering consultants, or the owner. Just being part of a team to accomplish a goal. I enjoy that."



ASHLEY KINGDON-REESE

Age: 38
 Founder/CEO
 Independent Health Solutions
 Huron, S.D.

When Ashley Kingdon-Reese was finishing nursing school in 2014, she saw the need for a different type of care for elderly patients. "I had a patient named Ethel, who was 93 and had broken her hip," Ashley says. "Ethel hated riding the physical therapy bike. She was never going to need to ride a bike. She just wanted to be able to walk around her house."

Ashley's experience with Ethel led her to open Independent Health Solutions, a home health care agency and onsite medical company based in Huron, S.D. "We opened with the intent of keeping South Dakota's elderly population in their homes as independently as possible. We cater to a rural area, and we cater to each individual. We're passionate about care and compassionate about people."

Ashley attributes her success "100 percent to the team of people around me." When she started her company, she also owned a day care center and had previously owned a restaurant and production and promotion company, "but it was the team around me, helping me network. Everyone believed in it," she says.

In April 2014, Ashley entered and won the Governor's Giant Vision Business Competition, which is administered by the South Dakota Chamber of Commerce & Industry and South Dakota Governor's Office of Economic Development. "That was the backbone of what started this company. The group of women I entered that competition with have been behind me the whole time, to this point."

Independent Health Solutions opened in September 2014 and has grown to 24 full- and part-time employees and the company has expanded to providing medical services for businesses, something Ashley says she didn't expect to happen.

After opening Independent Health Solutions, Ashley founded the Coalition for Alzheimer's Leadership and Legislation, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing free care for those suffering from dementia and Alzheimer's, raising public awareness and providing research to caregivers. "I could not believe the number of dementia patients, especially in rural areas," she says. "South Dakota is No. 2 in Alzheimer's-related deaths, and I asked what can we do to best take care of them."

Her community efforts include collaboration with Kiwanis International, Lions Club International, the National Association of Retired Federal Employees, Aging Adult Services Coalition, United Way and Beadle County (S.D.) Safety City.

Ashley graduated from Dakota Wesleyan University in Mitchell, S.D., with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and is currently pursuing her Master of Business Administration in Health Care Management.



BRAD KROGSTAD

Age: 38
Bismarck Municipal
Workgroup Manager
KLJ
Bismarck, N.D.

Brad Krogstad went into civil engineering because he thought it made sense for him, but during his 15-year career, he's found job satisfaction from a different place. "My father was a civil engineer and he seemed like he had the ability to be out in the field a lot, which I knew I would enjoy. I also wanted to be able to use my science and math skills, which I was good at. But now, I enjoy being part of building a community, which is really where I get the most job satisfaction."

Brad is the manager for KLJ's Bismarck Municipal Workgroup, where his responsibilities include managing clients and projects, including numerous roadway, storm water, utility, land development, site planning and parks and recreation projects. He joined KLJ in 2006 as a civil engineer in the municipal group, working on large land development projects. After one year with KLJ, he was promoted to workgroup manager.

"I've been involved with a number of interesting projects over the years," Brad says. Those projects include the Shiloh Christian School Arts and Athletic Complex, Lions Hillside Park and Pool, Sunrise Town Centre and Whispering Bay residential development, all in Bismarck, and 4 Bears Casino and Event Center in Newtown, N.D. Currently he's working on the Mandan sports center, North Dakota governor's residence, University of Mary campus center, Haight Creek Shops and a number of residential developments.

"I love helping people realize their dreams, realize their developments and helping grow communities," Brad says.

Brad earned a degree in civil engineering from North Dakota State University in Fargo and earned his registered professional engineering license in North Dakota and Minnesota. He has been recognized by the local chapter of the National Society of Professional Engineers as Young Engineer of the Year and nationally recognized by the National Society of Professional Engineers with the National New Faces in Engineering award.

Within the community, Brad graduated from Leadership Bismarck-Mandan and serves on the board of the Leadership Bismarck-Mandan Alumni Association. He is a committee member of the Bismarck-Mandan Arthritis Walk, is on the board for North Dakota Junior Golf and volunteers for MathCounts and the annual St. Mary's Central High School Carnival. He has served as an advisory committee member for the Bismarck Growth Management Plan and the Shiloh Business Group Committee.



DEANA WIESE

Age: 34
CEO
Clearwater Communications
Bismarck, N.D.

As a fresh 2003 graduate of North Dakota State University with bachelor's degrees in animal science and mass communication, Deana Wiese landed her first job as a communications specialist with Clearwater Communications in Bismarck.

From there, she worked her way up to vice president of the company, then partner and in January 2014 became CEO. Still, she's humble in discussing her rapid rise within the company's ranks. "Honestly, titles don't mean a lot," she says. "It's kind of a 'dig in and get it done' type company ... It's a very close-knit group. High quality, high productivity."

Clearwater Communications is an association management and public relations firm. The group works with volunteer boards of trade associations and nonprofit organizations to develop strategic goals.

"We provide contract association management services for organizations that maybe don't have the resources for a full-time staff," she says. "And that's really what I love: Working with the boards, managing the boards of directors and working with them to prioritize, identify goals and work toward those goals ... They have great ideas and you help them make that happen."

Clearwater deals with mostly organizations in North Dakota, but also manages the U.S. Durum Growers Association.

Deana also is active in her community, serving on the board of the Missouri YMCA and volunteering at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. She enjoys spending time outdoors with her husband Russ and sons Bridger, 6, and Brodie, 2, hiking, skiing and running. She also enjoys travel and has an interesting and ambitious goal.

"I want to see all the national parks in my lifetime," she says, adding there are 59. "I've only got nine down. I've got a ways to go."

But her family is on board with her plan and she says the cold doesn't stop them from spending time outdoors. "We just bundle up and go outside. You can't keep us inside."

With a background in animal science, Deana says she fell into her role at Clearwater Communications but appreciates numerous aspects of her career.

"It's just been so great to work with all the different industries," she says. "My background is agriculture, but I've also gotten the opportunity to work with the information technology industry and the energy industry. Great people across the board. No day is ever the same."



JENNI HUOTARI

Age: 35
Partner,
Eide Bailly LLP
Fargo, N.D.

Jenni has worked at Eide Bailly LLP, a CPA and business advisory firm, for the past 13 years. During that time, she has risen to partner within the firm, overseeing numerous staff and various projects. An auditor by trade, Jenni is currently working to build a new suite of services within Eide Bailly focused on small businesses and entrepreneurial startups in order to help them grow and succeed. She is also chair of Eide Bailly's firmwide First Focus initiative, a program designed to nurture a culture where women are as likely to succeed as men. Jenni is an active alumnus with Minnesota State University Moorhead and a board member for the Jeremiah Program.



GABRIEL MEJIA

Age: 27
Director of Sales,
Hyatt House Minot
Minot, N.D.

Gabriel's work in hospitality began at the Staybridge Suites in Minot before his transition to director of sales at Hyatt House. He is responsible for all negotiated rates and group business, and is passionate about fostering a positive, results-oriented team culture. In 2014, Gabriel received state recognition by winning the North Dakota Legendary Governor's Front-line Tourism award. He is the current president of Minot Young Professionals, a Souris Valley United Way board member and an honorary commander for 5th Logistics Readiness Squadron for the Minot Air Force Base.



BRADY HANSEN

Age: 39
President,
BeMobile Inc.
Grand Forks, N.D.

Brady has been president and owner of BeMobile since 2009. As CEO, Brady's vision and foresight have been instrumental in expanding from two retail locations to 40, making the company one of the largest Verizon Wireless Premium Retailers in the Upper Midwest. BeMobile currently has locations in North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa and Wisconsin. In 2012, Brady initiated a mentorship program within BeMobile. The Transition Mentor Program helps leaders transition into their leadership roles more easily and ultimately become more successful. Brady is an active member of the board for the Grand Forks Chamber of Commerce, serves on the advisory board of the Grand Forks Young Professionals Network and is actively involved on the leadership board for Freedom Church in downtown Grand Forks. Brady earned a bachelor's degree in business and management from the College of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minn.



CAM KNUTSON

Age: 26
Business Development
Manager, Kilbourne
Group; Co-Owner,
The Sanctuary
Events Center
Fargo, N.D.

Cam attended North Dakota State University in Fargo, where he served as student body president, served on the cabinet of the NDSU president and led a staff of 10. During his term, he led the effort to bring Great Rides Bike Share to the Fargo community, raising more than \$500,000 to purchase the program's equipment and developing an innovative business model that fully incorporated the students of NDSU. He has since served as the board president for Great Rides Bike Share, leading it into a successful first year. Following his graduation, Cam began working at Kilbourne Group, a real estate development company focused on revitalizing Fargo's downtown urban core, where he currently serves as the business development manager, with a focus on building customer relationships, identifying business opportunities and project development. Cam is also co-owner of The Sanctuary Events Center, soon to be Fargo's newest venue for weddings, concerts and private events. This business will be operating out of the former St. Mark's Church, a 105-year-old historic property in downtown Fargo.



CIARA STOCKELAND

Age: 37
Founder/Chief
Operating Officer,
Mode/Mama Mia Inc.
Fargo, N.D.

Ciara successfully launched her first business at the age of 13. Third Street Acting Co. operated in Fargo for 12 years and provided classical theater training and performances for K-12 students from home, public and private schools. Third Street Acting Co. performed throughout North Dakota and Minnesota communities. At the age of 21, she recorded and released her first flute and piano album. In addition to her theater and music achievements, Ciara founded and operated Ciara Nichole Knits, creating pieces that were sold in boutiques from Minnesota to California and featured in Victoria magazine. Within the Fargo-Moorhead community, Ciara was active as a teenager with the Haitian refugee community, taught herself to speak Haitian Creole and was interpreting for local refugees at 18. In 2006, with no retail experience, she founded Mama Mia, a fashion-forward baby and maternity store. By 2007, she opened her second store, Mode, which featured high-end products at discount prices. In 2008, Mama Mia and Mode merged. Mode has 12 locations throughout North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, Kansas and South Carolina. As the founder of an emerging franchise company, Ciara is passionate about mentoring young women in business and is actively involved with the International Franchise Association and the National SCORE Foundation. She received SCORE's Outstanding Franchise award for 2015 and was invited to the White House and testified before the U.S. Senate on behalf of small business.



EMILY O'BRIEN

Age: 23
President, Dakota
Venture Group
Grand Forks, N.D.

Emily is president of the Dakota Venture Group, the nation's first full student-run venture fund in the U.S., formed in 2006. Emily has been with Dakota Venture Group since February 2013. She is the chair of the first national Student Venture Capital Summit, which was held in November in Grand Forks for college students who are engaged in angel and venture financing. She is also an entrepreneur coach for the Center for Innovation, where she has worked as an intern and on staff since 2013, helping entrepreneurs with strategic and startup projects. Emily serves as president of the University of North Dakota College of Business and Public Administration Student Advisory Council, which encourages communication between students, faculty and the administration, and serves in an advisory capacity to the dean of the College of Business and Public Administration. Starting in high school, Emily has worked for entrepreneurs, including Pink Door Boutique in Lakeville, Minn., where she still participates in buying trips. She has served as general manager of Sublime Aesthetics Professionals in Grand Forks and worked on developing its St. John's Block Hotel in downtown as a boutique location.



TANA TROTTER

Age: 26
CEO,
Proximal 50 Life Center
Bismarck, N.D.

Tana graduated from the University of Mary in Bismarck with a doctorate in physical therapy in May. During the past six years, she also has worked as a personal trainer and group fitness trainer. In 2013, she decided to move forward with her dream of building a wellness center, and Proximal 50 Life Center is currently under construction and slated for completion this fall. The wellness center will offer physical therapy, exercise and all other aspects of healthy living.



RYAN LAGASSE

Age: 31
Facilities and
Transportation Director,
Mandan Public Schools
Mandan, N.D.

Ryan started his career after college in business and banking before being hired as the business manager for the Rolette, N.D., and Wolford, N.D., school districts. He then was hired as business manager for the Rugby, N.D., school district, where he maintained and executed all accounting and financial decisions. He was then hired by Mandan Public Schools to be its facilities and transportation director, where he manages one high school, one middle school and six elementary schools, as well as all school construction projects. He also organizes and charts the busing system for the school district, which includes 26 daily routes. Between maintenance workers, janitorial crew and bus drivers, Ryan manages more than 80 employees for Mandan Public Schools.



CALEB BULOW

Age: 38
Mechanical Engineer,
Prairie Engineering P.C.
Minot, N.D.

Caleb graduated from North Dakota State University in Fargo in 2003 and has been a mechanical engineer at Prairie Engineering since 2006. Caleb became a registered mechanical engineer in 2011 and accepted a partnership position with Prairie Engineering in 2014. He is the mechanical department head at the Prairie Engineering office in Minot, N.D. Caleb is a member of the North Dakota Building Officials Association, North Dakota Society of Professional Engineers, American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Engineers and the American Council of Engineering Companies.



RYAN RIVETT

Age: 32
President/Chief
Operating Officer,
My Place Hotels of
America; Co-Owner/
Vice President, Legacy
Builders Inc.; President,
Legacy Management
LLC
Aberdeen, S.D.

Since 2005, Ryan has organized and been involved in many business ventures, mostly centered around the hospitality industry. As president and managing member of the Paramount Estates' group of companies in Aberdeen, Ryan developed, built and managed more than 100 apartment and condo units while acquiring more than 50 additional units from 2007 to 2014. As vice president of development for Utah Hospitality LLC, a hotel development and management company, Ryan worked closely with the principals of the company on development and construction management on new build, acquisition and refurbishment projects totaling more than 500 hotel units around the U.S. from 2008 to 2012. As co-owner and vice president of Legacy Builders Inc., Ryan has led the administration of the commercial contracting company through more than \$150 million worth of construction work across the U.S. since 2008. As president of professional hospitality firm Legacy Management LLC, Ryan has led the administration, overseeing hundreds of employees in more than 40 hotels in 13 states since 2013. In 2013, Ryan and Ron Rivett developed a new hotel brand and franchising concept, focused on the underserved segment of the hotel industry — economy extended stay. My Place Hotels of America LLC was founded in May 2011 and opened its first hotel in Dickinson, N.D., in February 2012. Since then, My Place has expanded to 20 hotels across the country. As co-founder, president and chief operating officer, Ryan is responsible for leading the vision and execution of the My Place concept.



JACOB MILLS

Age: 31
Owner, J-Wheelz -
Creative Solutions;
Managing Partner,
Access Storage
Brookings, S.D.

Jacob attended Concordia University in St. Paul, Minn., where he graduated with a bachelor's degree in business administration. An entrepreneur from an early age, Jacob ran a mowing and landscaping business during the summers from the age of 11 until he was 20. During his senior year of college, he won first place in the 2008 South Dakota Chamber of Commerce and Industry Governor's Giant Vision student competition and moved home to start the business for which he won. J-Wheelz - Creative Solutions designed a bolt-on attachment for ATVs that provides traction in mud and snow and 310 pounds of flotation. J-Wheelz is manufactured and sold in the U.S. and internationally. Jacob is also a managing partner with Access Storage, a multi-facility, self-storage operation in Brookings that provides indoor/outdoor storage, climate-controlled storage, warehousing storage and mobile container storage options.



TANYA SHAFER

Age: 34
Human Resources
Manager,
Twin City Fan Cos.
Aberdeen, S.D.

Tanya graduated from Northern State University in Aberdeen, with a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology with an emphasis in Human Service. She started her career as operations supervisor for Wyndham Hotel Group in Aberdeen in 2006 and was promoted to technical support services. In 2010, she was hired as human resources information systems administrator for Dacotah Banks Inc. in Aberdeen, and in 2012, she was hired as a human resources generalist at Midstates Inc./QQP in Aberdeen. In May 2014, she was hired as human resources manager for Twin City Fan Cos., where she oversees hiring, recruiting, developing employee relations and supervises the human resources employees and payroll. Tanya is a member of the Aberdeen Chamber Board, Aberdeen Chapter of the Society of Human Resources Board and South Dakota Chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention Board.



KATIE MARCOTTE

Age: 39
President,
Coldwell Banker
Forks Real Estate
Grand Forks, N.D.

Katie's first business was a home day care center, which she started so her children didn't have to go to day care while she worked. Once all of her children were in school, Katie earned her real estate license and in her first year was voted by her peers as Grand Forks Board of Realtors' Rookie of the Year. Katie and her business partner had a dream of building a family-friendly real estate company where all the agents are like family. In 2012, they purchased Coldwell Banker Forks Real Estate, of which Katie is president. Since then, Katie has helped grow the company's sales volume by four times, proving the family model with corporate structure is a success.



AMANDA GODFREAD

Age: 36
Director of Strategic
Engagement,
Odney
Bismarck, N.D.

Amanda graduated from the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks with a Bachelor of Arts in Communication and French. She worked in public relations for the UND Alumni Association and UND Foundation for seven years, including more than three years as director of alumni relations and marketing, overseeing the organization's international publications, nationwide events, online communications, outreach strategies, crisis communications, media and public relations, student involvement and marketing. She then served as editor of UND's website for one year, coordinating a content update of more than 500,000 web pages. Amanda then served as the communications director for the Dalrymple for Governor campaign, and then worked in the Governor's Office writing speeches and coordinating the governor's appointments to various state boards before being hired by Odney in 2014. At Odney, Amanda leads the Strategic Engagement Team, which encompasses digital and social media, as well as traditional public relations. She works closely with the Odney team to develop media, social media and public relations strategies and approaches for the company's clients.



JONATHAN SICKLER

Age: 38
General Counsel,
AE2S
Grand Forks, N.D.

Jonathan graduated from the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks in 1999 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science. After earning his law degree from Harvard Law School in 2002, Jonathan became an attorney in the Washington, D.C., office of Clifford Chance LLP, where he practiced antitrust law, advising clients regarding mergers and acquisitions. In 2003, he accompanied his practice group in a move to the Washington, D.C., office of Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP, where he continued to practice antitrust law until 2013. Jonathan moved back to Grand Forks in 2013 to become the first general counsel for Advanced Engineering and Environmental Services Inc. (AE2S). AE2S is an engineering consulting firm specializing in drinking water, wastewater, water resources and rural water solutions with 17 offices in North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Montana, Wisconsin and Utah.



JOHN BERDAHL

Age: 38
Owner/CEO, Equinox
Sioux Falls, S.D.

John specializes in advanced cataract, corneal and glaucoma surgery, in addition to Lasik surgery. He earned his medical degree from Mayo Medical School in Rochester, Minn., and finished his internship at the Mayo Clinic in Scottsdale, Ariz. He completed an ophthalmology residency at Duke University, where his published work, research, teaching and care of patients brought him many honors, including first place winner of the Resident Writers award. John pursued additional advanced surgical training in cornea and glaucoma at Minnesota Eye Consultants. As a fellow, he received the Claes Dohman Award from Harvard University, which is given to the top cornea fellow in the country. In 2013, he received the top young physician award in South Dakota and was recently selected as part of the Vision for Mars team, which is working with NASA and the National Space Biomedical Research Institute to help solve vision problems related to long-term space travel. He recently started a medical device company called Equinox, which is developing technology to treat diseases of the optic nerve, such as glaucoma.



ERIC SIVERTSEN

Age: 34
CEO/Partner,
Epicosity
Sioux Falls, S.D.

In 2006, Eric co-founded video production company New Wave Productions. When Eric and his business partner were looking to expand the company's capabilities, they formed Epic Multimedia, a full-service marketing agency, in 2008. The agency saw a great deal of growth in both its client base and internal staff and went through a rebranding in 2013, led by Eric. Epicosity, as it is now called, provides a diverse variety of services, from video production and digital marketing to web development and creative design. The agency was also recently listed on the Inc. 5000 list of fastest-growing companies in the U.S., as well as the Prairie Business magazine 50 Best Places to Work list.



JOHN DWYER

Age: 39
President/CEO,
Solid Rock
Financial Group
Bismarck, N.D.

John co-founded Solid Rock Financial Group in 2009 with the goal of educating people about wealth distribution strategies, teaching them about how to harness the laws of economics and helping them create clarity around how money really works. It's a unique method that allows clients to enjoy remarkable financial progress as part of a macro-planning strategy designed to build wealth, minimize risk and maintain lifestyles. John began his career in the insurance and financial services industry in 2005. Since then, he has focused on learning about the best models and resources that would differentiate his approach from other financial professionals. Today, he has built Solid Rock Financial Group into a premier team of 10 specialists located in both Bismarck and Minneapolis.



PAUL JARVIS

Age: 34
Managing Director,
United Capital
Fargo, N.D.

Paul leads United Capital's office in Fargo and was brought on as the company's youngest-ever partner. He works with both individual and corporate clients with an emphasis on retirement planning and family transitional wealth. His overarching goal is to help clients better understand their financial life and make objective and informed decisions. Paul's responsibilities include advancing and coordinating the advice and financial planning activities at the Fargo office. His specialties lie in integrating and enhancing the advice and planning process and working strategically with clients on a variety of wealth counseling issues. He was recognized as the only North Dakotan named to the Medical Economics magazine's 2011 and 2012 Best Financial Advisors for Doctors list. He also serves as an ambassador for the CFP Board. Paul is a Certified Financial Planner professional, Certified Trust and Financial Advisor certificant and earned his bachelor's degree from the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, where he studied business law and English.



LINDSEY MEYERS

Age: 35
Vice President for
Public Relations,
Avera Health
Sioux Falls, S.D.

Lindsey attended South Dakota State University in Brookings, where she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Broadcast Journalism, and then graduated with a Master of Business in Healthcare Administration from the University of Sioux Falls. She began her career as producer and reporter for "Today Ag," a weekly agricultural program on KELO television, and then became producer and host of "On Call" on South Dakota Public Television. In 2007, she joined Avera as director of marketing for the Avera Heart Hospital. In 2012, she was named director of communications at Avera McKennan Hospital & University Health Center. In 2014, she was promoted to vice president of public relations for Avera Health, a regional health network of 330 locations in 100 communities in five states. Lindsey has volunteered with Court Appointed Special Advocates, Special Olympics, American Cancer Society, United Way and American Heart Association. In 2010, she received the Sioux Falls YWCA Tribute to Women award in the marketing category.



PRESTON PAGE

Age: 28
Owner, Page Petroleum
LLC; Partner, Quantum
Industries; Owner,
Intuitive Innovation LLC
Bottineau, N.D.

Preston graduated from the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks with a bachelor's degree in entrepreneurship and a Master of Business Administration. He served as chairman of Dakota Venture Group, the nation's first completely student-run venture capital fund, and led investments on several companies. He also spearheaded the formation of Harvest Fund I, the nation's first for-profit private equity fund run by students. Preston currently operates three companies based in North Dakota. He started Page Petroleum LLC and has been involved in more than \$10 million in business deal transactions in the petroleum industry and owns an interest in numerous oil and gas wells across the Williston Basin. Preston is also a partner with Quantum Industries, marketing SolidiFy drilling waste mixing equipment manufactured in North Dakota. Aside from his focus in the oil and gas industry, Preston owns Intuitive Innovation LLC, which owns Glarestrips trademarked products. While in college, Preston purchased the remains of this failed business, and, for less than \$1,000, re-launched the Glarestrips product line into the promotional products industry.



BRADY NASH

Age: 29
CEO,
BNG Holdings Inc.
Fargo, N.D.

As CEO of BNG Holdings Inc., Brady leads the overall company direction, focusing his time on revenue-generating contracts and affiliate partnerships, as well as directing the overall growth for BNG's four distinct brands. Brady's ultimate responsibility is ensuring that each business is working together, while honoring the company mission and vision. Brady is also involved in payments processing, consulting for larger payments processing companies, and, most recently, he helped lead BNG Holdings Inc. to be named to Inc. Magazine's Fastest Growing Private Companies in America list, with a No. 2 ranking in North Dakota.



RIKKA BRANDON

Age: 38
Founder/CEO,
RikkaBrandon.com
Moorhead, Minn.

Rikka graduated from Mayville State University in Mayville, N.D., in 2000 with a bachelor's degree in business administration. She began her professional career with Von Maur as a human resources manager. She then went into the recruiting industry, first working at Kelly Services in outside sales, then at Evenium Group as a recruiter. In 2003, Rikka and her husband moved back to North Dakota and she started her own recruiting firm, Building Resources. She focused on the building industry and built her company to more than \$1 million in sales in less than three years. When the housing market crashed, so did the building industry and Building Resources. Rikka used this failure as a lesson and built a new company, Building Gurus, with a focus on being lean, profitable and exceeding her customers' expectations. In 2014, she started RikkaBrandon.com, to share her recruiting and hiring knowledge with entrepreneurs and small businesses. She is the creator of Hire Power, an online training and mentorship community built to help entrepreneurs hire with confidence and build the team they need to fuel their dream.



MIKE PAGÁN

Age: 39
Service Manager,
Network Center Inc.
Fargo, N.D.

After Mike graduated from Minot High School, he got a seasonal job for SYKES Inc. assisting with the setup of the network for its call center to support Disney software titles over the holidays. That opportunity led to a full-time position at the SYKES call center supporting Gateway 2000 computers. During his time at SYKES, he was promoted to team lead and also delivered technical training on new products. Mike then moved to Fargo to pursue other opportunities and took a position at SEI Inc. as a help desk technician, working on a number of software desks, including a custom ERP system for nuclear pharmacies. During his time at SYKES and SEI, Mike was introduced to technical certifications and earned his first series of Microsoft certifications, culminating in a Microsoft Certified System Engineer designation. Early in 2000, Mike found another opportunity to continue his professional growth at Network Center Inc. as a network systems analyst, where he was responsible for installing and configuring networking equipment and server systems for customers in many industries, including agriculture, banking, health care and manufacturing. He was then promoted to project engineer and given the additional responsibilities of network design, sales engineering and team mentoring. Mike was promoted to service manager in November and is currently transitioning to his new role.



KARI TEWS

Age: 33
Training and Development Specialist, Gate City Bank Fargo, N.D.

Kari graduated from North Dakota State University in Fargo with a bachelor's degree in mass communication. After graduation, Kari spent eight years working in higher education, with a focus on recruitment and admissions. During her time in higher education, she was a board member of the North Dakota Counseling Association, board member of the Dakota Association of College Admission Counseling, president of the North Dakota Association of College Admission Counseling board and member of the Bismarck State College Staff Senate. This past year, Kari took on a new challenge and joined the team at Gate City Bank in Fargo, working as an education and development specialist, where her team is responsible for fostering development in employees and creating educational material for employee training. Kari has been active in the Bismarck and Fargo Young Professionals Networks and attends Fargo Chamber events. She is also a board member for the North Dakota March of Dimes, serving as chair of the Volunteer and Revenue Committee, along with being co-chair of the 2016 Fargo March for Babies. She is president of the NDSU Sigma Alpha Sorority alumni board and serves as a mentor to the undergraduate chapter. She was recently named the 2015 Outstanding Alumni Member by the national chapter of the sorority. Kari also volunteers with Cass Clay United Way, North Dakota 4-H and North Dakota Farmers Union.



ANDREW CHRISTENSEN

Age: 29
Director, Arthur Ventures Fargo, N.D.

Andrew received his undergraduate degree in entrepreneurship from the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks and his Master of Business Administration from North Dakota State University in Fargo. While at UND, he participated in the Dakota Venture Group, at that time one of the only student-managed venture capital funds in the country. Andrew began his career with Arthur Ventures, a North Dakota-based venture capital firm, straight out of college in 2009. Andrew has led and managed Arthur Ventures' sourcing and screening efforts of new investment opportunities and actively participates in due diligence, investment recommendation, investment management and fund and portfolio analysis. Outside of Arthur Ventures, Andrew was a founding member of Emerging Prairie, a startup catalyst organization in Fargo, and also serves as a Startup Weekend organizer. Andrew also serves on the board of the Fargo Theatre, the iconic nonprofit theater in downtown Fargo.



DR. JESSICA RUHLAND

Age: 38
Radiologist, Mid Dakota Clinic Bismarck, N.D.

Jessica received her medical degree from the University of North Dakota School of Medicine in Grand Forks and completed an internship in family medicine at the UND Center for Family Medicine in Bismarck. She completed her residency in diagnostic radiology at the Mayo School of Graduate Medical Education in Rochester, Minn., and a fellowship in breast imaging at the Mayo School of Graduate Medical Education in Scottsdale, Ariz. She specializes in radiology and breast imaging at Mid Dakota Clinic in Bismarck, where she has provided care since 2011. She has been key in developing the comprehensive breast imaging center at the clinic. Jessica has helped the clinic obtain a Breast Imaging Center of Excellence certification by the American College of Radiology. She is board certified by the American Board of Radiology and is a member of the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society, American Association of Women Radiologists, American College of Radiology, Radiological Society of North America, Sixth District Medical Society and Society of Breast Imaging.



CHRIS THORKELSON

Age: 36
Chief Operating Officer, Lloyd Cos. Sioux Falls, S.D.

Chris joined Lloyd Cos. in 2003 after graduating from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he studied engineering and business. In 2008, Chris was promoted to vice president of construction and development and to chief operating officer in 2013. On Jan. 1, Chris will be promoted to CEO, as Craig Lloyd retires and transitions to chairman. In 2009, Chris graduated from Leadership Sioux Falls and is currently a member of Vistage, a CEO leadership development group. In addition to Chris's leadership, he is also involved in the community, serving on boards for the Sanford Health Foundation, YMCA, Southeastern Behavioral Health, University of Wisconsin College of Engineering Advisory Board and Dakotabilities.



BEN DOLD

Age: 32
Director of Marketing Analytics & Insights, Midcontinent Communications Sioux Falls, S.D.

Ben received his bachelor's degree in economics from St. John's University in 2005 and his Master of Business Administration from St. Cloud State University in 2009. He started his career as a financial analyst with Schwan's, and then was hired as a senior financial analyst at Navarre Corporation in 2008. Ben joined Midcontinent Communications in 2010 as the company's first marketing analyst and was promoted to marketing analytics manager in 2012. He was named director of marketing analytics and insights in February and is responsible for supporting customer acquisition and retention efforts through research, data modeling, forecasting and project oversight for Midco's residential and business services. He oversees market research for Midcontinent's entire footprint in North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota and Wisconsin. Ben is involved with Junior Achievement as a classroom volunteer, sits on the steering committee for the Sioux Falls Chapter of the St. John's University Alumni Association and is a member of the Sertoma Butterfly House & Marine Cove board.



JEREMIAH CHRISTENSON

Age: 36
Managing Principal, Obermiller Nelson Engineering Fargo, N.D.

Jeremiah graduated from North Dakota State University in Fargo in 2002 with a degree in mechanical engineering. He started working at Obermiller Nelson Engineering during his last year of college, and after graduation, he began his full-time career at ONE. In 2007, he became a managing partner. In his time at ONE, Jeremiah has worked on more than 650 projects at education, medical, athletics, office and government facilities. Jeremiah has been instrumental in helping ONE grow to five offices and more than 60 employees during the past 15 years. He has been instrumental in helping refine the culture and communications at ONE to help make the employees more satisfied and better skilled to help their clients. He is a LEED Accredited Professional with more than 15 years of heating, ventilating and air conditioning design experience, is a member of the American Society of Plumbing Engineers and has been a member of the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineers since 2002.



STEPHANIE SCHOENROCK

Age: 39
Vice President,
KK BOLD
Minot, N.D.

Stephanie graduated from Montana State University with a bachelor's degree in business administration and marketing in 1998. She started her career at Ryan Chevrolet in Minot as marketing director and customer relations manager. In 2000, she was hired to be marketing director for the North Dakota State Fair. In 2004, she joined KK BOLD as director of regional operations, was promoted to director of account services in 2010 and to vice president in 2014. Stephanie enjoys speaking to marketing students at career fairs and to professionals at area seminars and national conferences. She has also provided advisory marketing services that have helped a number of small businesses in the Minot area get off the ground. Stephanie has a lifelong interest in ranching and rodeos and provides volunteer marketing expertise to an annual local bull-riding event.



AIMEE COPAS

Age: 39
Executive Director,
North Dakota Council
of Educational Leaders
Bismarck, N.D.

Aimee is the executive director for the North Dakota Council of Educational Leaders, the organization that provides the strongest unifying voice representing and supporting educational leaders in pursuit of quality education for all students. Aimee is also an adjunct professor for the University of Mary in Bismarck and North Dakota State University in Fargo and is a governor-appointed commissioner to the Education Commission of the States, representing North Dakota. Previously, she was the associate vice chancellor for academic affairs and director of research for the North Dakota University System, a college dean, K-12 school principal, English teacher, basketball coach and national trainer for a pharmaceutical company. Aimee received her bachelor's degree from the University of Mary, her master's from Northern State University in Aberdeen, S.D., and her doctorate from the University of South Dakota in Vermillion.



TAYLOR CUPP

Age: 34
Senior Integrated
Construction
Coordinator,
Mortenson Construction
Fargo, N.D.

Taylor received his Master of Architecture from the University of Nebraska - Lincoln and joined Mortenson Construction in Fargo in 2012. Currently, Taylor provides leadership for many aspects of the Sanford Fargo Medical Center project, Fargo-Moorhead's largest construction project and one of the top 10 largest health care construction projects in the nation. Taylor is responsible for providing oversight into Mortenson's use of virtual technology in construction and standardizing tools and processes across the company. He is embedded in Mortenson's Last 100 Feet initiative, leading the charge in implementing Virtual Design and Construction in the field, at project closeout and through the facilities management operation process. He is actively involved in Emerging Prairie and Drone Focus, a Fargo-based group of unmanned aerial vehicle enthusiasts driving the use of the technology for local business.



BRANDON STORM

Age: 34
Senior Meteorologist
and Wind Resource
Analyst,
EAPC Wind Energy
Grand Forks, N.D.

Brandon received his Bachelor of Science in Meteorology from Iowa State University in 2003, his Master of Science in Geosciences from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 2005 and his doctorate in wind science and engineering from Texas Tech University in 2008. He has been with EAPC since 2008, when he was brought on as a senior meteorologist. During his tenure at the firm, Brandon has become a recognized expert in the wind energy industry, designing several wind farms throughout the country, providing energy production estimates used for financing purposes and giving testimony for his clients before the North Dakota Public Service Commission about sound and shadow flicker assessments. Brandon also conducts training courses for one of the industry's leading wind farm design tools, windPRO.



GERALD E. TRACY II

Age: 38
Executive Director,
SESDAC
Vermillion, S.D.

Gerry has been executive director of SESDAC since 2007, leading the organization to support and serve more than 100 adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. He also oversees four family support programs and Vermillion Public Transit through SESDAC. Gerry has led SESDAC through two national Council for Quality and Leadership accreditation processes. He was the president of the South Dakota Association of Community Support Providers, served on the St. Agnes Campaign Steering Committee, was Grand Knight of the St. Agnes Chapter of Knights of Columbus for two years, was president of the Vermillion Chamber of Commerce & Development Company Board for two years in addition to serving in board officer roles, is a member of the Vermillion Rotary Club, VFW, American Legion, SESDAC Foundation and volunteers with the Vermillion Special Olympics. He was a sergeant in the South Dakota Army National Guard from 1999 to 2007 and served in Operation Iraqi Freedom, for which he received the Army Commendation Medal and Good Conduct Medal. Gerry has been a certified SAP Integrated Business Solution consultant since 2005 and has taught SAP courses for Central Michigan University since 2007. SAP is a business solutions software.



MATT BITZEGAIO

Age: 36
President,
Peak Engagement
West Fargo, N.D.

Matt is the president of Peak Engagement, leading business and product strategy, software architecture and development and overall business operations for the company. Peak Engagement is an international brand with partners in more than 14 countries and customers in more than 17 countries. In addition to his responsibilities on the technical side of the business, Matt is also a product evangelist for Peak Portals, Peak NFP and Microsoft Dynamics CRM, and assists heavily in the sales and marketing aspects of the business. Before joining Peak Engagement, Matt gained broad experience in the technology industry, serving in various positions, including leading a Microsoft Dynamics CRM consulting practice, IT leadership positions and software architecture and development roles. Matt holds a Master of Business Administration from the University of Mary in Bismarck, N.D., and a bachelor's degree in information technology from North Dakota State University in Fargo.