

EDC Hosts Annual Meeting, Awards Altru 2025 Impact Award

The Grand Forks Region Economic Development Corporation hosts their annual meeting and presents the 2025 Klaus Thiessen Impact Award to Altru Health System.

GRAND FORKS, ND, UNITED STATES, April 1, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Grand Forks Region Economic Development Corporation (EDC) board of directors held its annual meeting on Thursday, March 27th, 2025, at the Alerus Center. At the meeting, they announced the 2025 Klaus Thiessen Impact Award, highlighted local businesses and workforce programs, and reported on key economic indicators for the primary sector businesses in the Grand Forks region. The theme, Plant & Prosper, was a nod to the region's agricultural roots and the prosperous economy we enjoy today.

The 2025 Klaus Thiessen Impact Award was bestowed to Altru Health System! The award was accepted by CEO Todd Forkel, President Dr. Josh Deere, and Chief Partnership and Philanthropy Officer Kristi Hall-Jiran on behalf of the health system. Instead of a traditional award plaque, the health system was presented with artwork titled 'Lineage of Healing' by Grand Forks local artist Eric Castle. The work captures three generations of Grand Forks' hospital buildings, connected by a bold roofline symbolizing their shared purpose across time.



Altru Health System Kristi Hall-Jiran, Dr. Joshua Deere, and Todd Forkel accept the 2025 Klaus Thiessen Impact Award presented by EDC Board Chair Shawn Gaddie and EDC President & CEO Keith Lund.



Altru Health System representatives are on stage accepting the impact award.

"The impact award has typically been presented to an individual, however, we do have a category for businesses or organizations," said EDC President & CEO Keith Lund. "The board felt that Altru stood out this past year. They provide significant contributions to the economic health of the region as one of the top employers. On top of their economic impact, they have established several community partnerships and investments to make the region a better and healthier place to live. The half-billion-dollar investment in a brand-new hospital demonstrates confidence in the region providing economic impact for years to come."



Since 2014, the EDC board has presented the award annually to recognize an outstanding business or individual who has made a positive impact on economic growth, vitality, and prosperity in the Grand Forks region. The award was renamed for Klaus Thiessen, the EDC's longest-serving president & CEO, serving 14 years. The most recent awardees include Karl Bollingberg - 2024, Dave Molmen - 2023, Wes Rydell - 2022, Lonnie Laffen - 2021, and Acme Tools - 2020.

Local businesses Ideal Aerosmith, Integrated Steel Solutions, North Dakota Coffee Roastery, and Three Farm Daughters were featured in the program, highlighting the impact of economic development programming. They discussed support from the EDC staff, the Grand Forks community, and economic development programs. The programs featured include PACE and FlexPACE through the Bank of North Dakota and the City of Grand Forks, Economic Development Authority Revolving Loan Fund, ADD and APUC funds through the North Dakota Department of Agriculture, LIFT through the North Dakota Department of Commerce, and InternGF through the EDC and UND's Center For Innovation.

Mollie Ficocello of Three Farm Daughters shared, "Along our journey, I have learned that North Dakota as a state is very business-friendly! The EDC helped introduce us to programs and helped us apply to be a primary sector business so that we could qualify for additional programs. Initial program support helped get us off the ground and running."

Workforce pipeline programs were also on display. Joe Zaharia of True North Equipment shared his experience attending the Northern Valley Career Expo as a high school sophomore. Bella Peterson, currently a UND student, shared her experience going through the InternGF Summer Cohort Experience as a college senior.

"The networking opportunities provided were invaluable," said Peterson. "Being able to tour local companies and have a direct connection to the leadership provided a better understanding of the opportunities available in the region and great exposure for future job opportunities."

Key economic indicators were presented, which included job and wage information, and regional purchases. In the last ten years, the primary sector businesses have shown a 10% increase in the number of people they employ, a 42% increase in the average annual salary they pay to those employees, and a 55% increase in overall payroll. This equates to a wage impact of \$645 million in 2024. Through a client survey, the same companies reported spending \$216 million on goods and services from local businesses. This brings the total economic impact of EDC clients in 2024 to \$861 million!

The numbers reported show that EDC clients have a large impact on the regional economy. By definition, a primary sector business has sales that come from outside of the region, meaning that this money infused into the economy was not here before. These outside funds go to employee wages, property taxes, goods, services, and more. Without these businesses, these resources and jobs would not be here.

The meeting concluded with EDC Board Chair Shawn Gaddie and EDC President & CEO Keith Lund sharing their thoughts on the economy and the future of the region. Lund shared, "I am very optimistic for the future of the Grand Forks region. Our leaders roll up their sleeves and get to work, and that is why we're enjoying a prosperous economy today."

Additional information and indicator numbers are available in the 2024 Annual Report at <https://grandforks.org/annual-meeting>

More information about the Klaus Thiessen Impact Award and previous award recipients is available at <https://grandforks.org/inside-the-edc/klaus-thiessen-impact-award/>

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