

Kreidt wary of fewer federal dollars in upcoming biennium

By Chris Gessele
BHG News Service

Get while the gettin's good. That's what the State of North Dakota is doing right now thanks to the flurry of oil rig-drilling activity in the western part of the state.

On April 28, the 62nd State Legislative Assembly closed with 2013 projections of a \$51 million balance in the general fund and \$386 million in a budget stabilization fund.

But how about when the gettin's not so good any more? That's what legislators must keep in mind when financing new road construction and property tax subsidies financed by surplus oil revenues.

District 33 Rep. Gary Kreidt, New Salem, said the state will have some big bills to pay in the next biennium, including about \$371 million for those counties adversely impacted by oil activity and \$962 in both federal and state dollars to be spent on state roads and highways.

"That's a pretty good chunk of change," Kreidt said. "We're fortunate, we've generated quite a bit of revenue off those oil-producing counties."

Kreidt, who serves on House Appropriations and Human Services Committee among others, is in favor of the \$342 million in property tax relief provided by the state, and felt it right that some money goes back to the citizens. The sustainability of that relief—\$300 million in 2009-2011 and \$342 million in 2011-2013—will be closely examined in the next biennium.

"That's some big numbers," Kreidt noted. "Can we continue to do that or are we going to have to look at some other way to have a reduction in property tax?"

"We're fortunate in the state of North Dakota where we can do these things. You look at other states, and they don't have the resources we do. We're pretty fortunate."

Legislators have heard from constituents that the state should simply write out a check to residents. State law prohibits such action, Kreidt noted. Kreidt is also opposed to the abolishment of all property taxes, which will be a measure on the ballot come election time in 2012.

"It sounds good, but if you

really think about it, that money has to be replaced by something else. People are going to have to put some thought into that when they cast that ballot," Kreidt said.

What he does favor, however, is tax incentives for those willing to drill for oil in the state.

"We never talk about income tax they pay federally and to the state. They're some of the biggest taxpayers out there. Some believe that all of that revenue is all going into their pocket," he said.

Other energy-related matters that hit close to home was the recent news that the Environmental Protection Agency is poised to impose heightened environmental regulations on coal-fired power plants. The increased emission standards could mean crippling cost increases to both the energy-generation sector and energy-consuming sector. All of the state's coal-fired plants are in District 33 except for one.

If such increased federal regulation does come to pass, the state will be ready to fight the decision. Kreidt introduced an amendment to the Department of Health's budget securing \$500,000 from the general fund and a \$500,000 loan from the Bank of North Dakota to file a lawsuit against the EPA.

"And it looks like it's probably gonna happen," Kreidt said. "I thought it was a pretty big win."

One piece of legislation that didn't go Kreidt's way was controversial House Bill 1258, which dealt with the contribution retirement plans for teachers. Kreidt voted yes on the bill, which would have closed the teacher's fund for retirement and established a contribution retirement plan for teachers hired after June 30, 2012. The bill failed 38-56 in the House.

"It wasn't the way I wanted it to go," Kreidt said. "I felt 'wolf' was being cried a lot there."

The retirement fund was still 75-percent funded, Kreidt said, and felt the matter isn't of great urgency.

"I didn't see any major catastrophes happening. We'll survive another two years and I'm sure we'll be looking at it again in two years," he said.

Kreidt was one of the

legislators to work with the state's largest budget, the \$2.5 billion budget for the Department of Human Services. The budget is experiencing the hit in federal dollars now being realized by the state. Last session, the state had to make up about \$171 million in lost federal dollars.

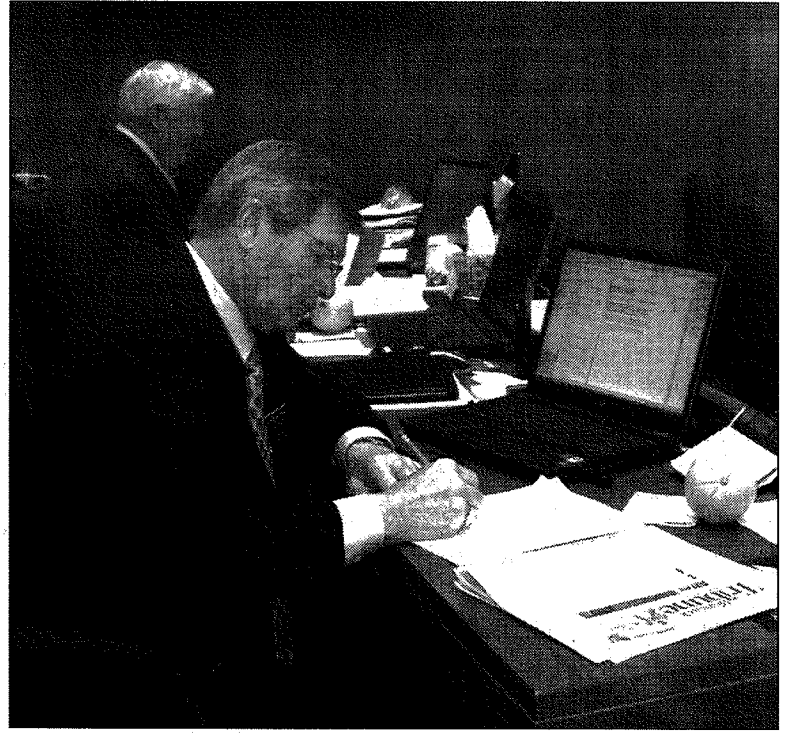
"We're fortunate in the state of North Dakota that ... we can make up for those lost federal dollars. The way our economy is and the way the federal government is spending money like it's going out of style, we're going to continue to see the loss of federal dollars coming to the state.

"We're spending more than we take in. You can do that for so long, but at some point it's going to catch up with you," Kreidt said.

Within the Department of Health budget, the legislators rejected over \$1 million of federal money to start new programs. After those federal dollars dried up, the funding to continue the programs would have come from the state's general fund.

Looking into the next biennium, lawmakers will have their interim committee assignments Wednesday and will convene in a special legislative session in November to look at the new healthcare legislation and redistricting.

North Dakota is listed in a lawsuit against the federal government declaring the new healthcare law to be unconstitutional. The mat-



District 33 Rep. Gary Kreidt works at his desk during the 62nd State Legislative Assembly in January at the State Capitol in Bismarck.

ter will likely be taken to the courts, Kreidt said.

As for the redistricting process, he assumed the borders of District 33 would remain mostly untouched. According to the latest

Census, the district—which includes Mercer County, Oliver County and parts of northern Morton County—gained almost 100 people since 2000.

PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF NAME CHANGE

Pursuant to NDCC Ch.32-28, NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Bruce Owen Walls, whose address appears below, will petition the District Court to

change his name to Bruce Allen Walls, dated this 19th day of May, 2011. Address: 2849 23 St SW, Center, ND 58530 (05-19-11-05-26-11-06-02-11-06-09-11-06-16-11)

PUBLIC NOTICES

**STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**
Minnkota Power Coop, Inc.
345 kV Transmission Line – Center to Grand Forks
Siting Application

NOTICE OF RESCHEDULED HEARINGS

Case No. PU-09-670
April 20, 2011
On February 18, 2011, Minnkota Power Cooperative, Inc. (Minnkota) filed an application for a Certificate of Site Compatibility for Transmission Facility Corridor for approximately 260 miles of 345 kV transmission line and associated facilities to be constructed from the Center Substation near Center, North Dakota to the Prairie Substation near Grand Forks, North Dakota, as shown on the attached map. Minnkota requests the Commission approve a 1,000 foot-wide corridor under N.D. Admin. Code section 69-06-04-02(b). If a corridor certificate is granted then a separate route permit application and hearing is required before designat-

ing a transmission line route within the approved corridor.

On March 24, 2011 the Commission issued a Notice of Filing and Notice of Hearing, scheduling three separate public hearings for May 3, 4, and 13, 2011. The Commission has since received several requests to postpone the hearings until after the spring planting season. Therefore, please take notice that Public Hearings on the application are rescheduled to be held:

June 16, 2011, 10:00 a.m. at the Northwood High School, 300 35th St. NE, Northwood, ND 58267.

June 17, 2011, 10:00 a.m. at the Chieftain Conference Center, Tepee Room, 60 4th Ave. S, Carrington, ND 58204.

June 24, 2011, 10:00 a.m. at Memorial Hall, 805 Main Ave., Washburn, ND 58577.

The issues to be considered are:
1. Will the location, construction, and operation of the proposed facilities produce minimal adverse effects on the environment and upon the welfare of

the citizens of North Dakota?

2. Are the proposed facilities compatible with the environmental preservation and the efficient use of resources?
3. Will the proposed facility locations minimize adverse human and environmental impact while ensuring continuing system reliability and integrity and ensuring that energy needs are met and fulfilled in an orderly and timely fashion?

4. Is it appropriate for the Commission to approve a 1,000 foot-wide corridor as requested in the application?

For more information contact the Public Service Commission, State Capitol, Bismarck, North Dakota 58505, 701-328-2400; or Relay North Dakota, 1-800-366-6888 TTY. If you require any auxiliary aids or services, such as readers, signers, or Braille materials, please notify the Commission.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
Kevin Cramer, Commissioner
Tony Clark, Chairman
Brian P. Kalk, Commissioner
(06-09-11)

OBITUARIES

Theodore (Ted) E. Barth

Theodore (Ted) E. Barth, 88, Center, died June 3, 2011 at the Mandan Living Center, Mandan. Mass of Christian Burial was at 11 a.m. Tuesday, June 7 at St. Joseph Catholic Church, Mandan, with the Rev. Patrick Schumacher as celebrant. Burial will be at the Mandan Union Cemetery.

Ted was born Oct. 4, 1922, in Center, to Kasper and Elizabeth (Hertz) Barth. He was married Oct. 19, 1943, to Vivian Lantz in Mandan. He spent his lifetime in Center as a dedicated farmer and rancher for 67 years.

As a young boy, he learned how to fish at Square Butte Creek, which was his favorite way to relax. Ted was a lifetime member of the Bismarck Eagles and Mandan Moose. Being at home, gardening and

taking care of his yard, were where he found the most peace and happiness.

Ted will be deeply missed by his wife, Vivian; his children, Arlene (Rod) Chambliss, Loveland, and Elaine (Gordon) Jensen Mandan; grandchildren, Michelle (Mike) Turner, Wesley Jensen and Leigh Jensen; great-grandchildren, Callie, Bradon and Cooper Turner; half-sisters, Betty Schaner, Center, and Katherine Schmidt, Illinois; half-brother, Ottmar (Mary) Barth, Mandan; and sister-in-law, Lorraine Barth, Illinois.

Ted was preceded in death by his parents; son, Duane; his sisters, Eva Ferderer, Caroline Barth, Barbina Tuthill and Barbara Hunter; brother, Leo Barth; and half-brother, Jack Barth.

Funeral arrangements are conducted by Weigel Funeral Home.

