



Public Service Commission

NEWS RELEASE
Nov. 18, 2025

For Immediate Release, Contact:
Randy Christmann, (701) 328-2400

PSC Presents Reclamation Award to the Falkirk Mining Company

BISMARCK, ND – The North Dakota Public Service Commission (PSC) recently awarded the Falkirk Mining Company as the recipient of this year’s Award for Excellence in Surface Coal Mining and Reclamation. The PSC’s Reclamation Division recommended the company be recognized for extraordinary efforts in maintaining public access to the Birka Church and cemetery in McClean County while mining around the church from 2010-2015.

“The compassion and empathy shown by Falkirk for the people of this little church on the prairie enhances the reputation of the entire coal industry,” said Commission Chair Randy Christmann, who holds the coal reclamation portfolio.

The Birka Church and the Falkirk Mine have had a unique relationship through the years. As mining progressed toward the church and its neighboring cemetery, maintaining access and utilities was an ongoing challenge. But with the mine’s efforts to limit hours of operations and to maintain access roads and facilities, along with the congregation’s patience and willingness to adapt, the little church on the prairie was able to carry on its identity without missing a service and today enjoys a vibrant and supportive membership.

According to history provided by the Falkirk Mine, the Birka Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church of Weller was founded in 1906. For several years, services were held in the nearby Leidholm and Carlson School buildings. In 1913, a church was built on the current site on five acres donated by Carl J. Carlson. Services were held there until 1953, when the church steeple was struck by lightning and a fire destroyed the church and most of its contents. The church was rebuilt and by the spring of 1954 services were being held in the building you see there today.

The award was presented to the Falkirk Mining Company during the Lignite Energy Council’s Annual Meeting held in Bismarck last week. Note to the media: Pictures on the next page show the mining activities around the church in 2014, 2015 and 2018. Photo credits to the Falkirk Mining Company.

The North Dakota Public Service Commission is a constitutionally created state agency with authority to permit, site and regulate certain business activities in the state including electric and gas utilities, telecommunications companies, power plants, electric transmission lines, pipelines, railroads, commercial weighing devices, pipeline safety and coal mine reclamation. For more information, contact the Public Service Commission at (701) 328-2400 or www.psc.nd.gov.

###

Find us on X: x.com/NDPSC or [@NDPSC](https://twitter.com/NDPSC)

September 2014



August 2015



August 2018

