

## North Dakota's State Website Platform and ND.gov Refresh

A better citizen experience, and a more secure statewide system

Category: Digital Government – Government to Citizen

Great State of North Dakota

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Project Initiation: 2017 - Ongoing

## Executive Summary

In 2017, ND began implementing a state website platform that now has 39 agencies (23 live, 16 staged). The unified state website platform (SWP) **has decreased development time, enhanced security, and created a more consistent user experience.**

**The result? Nearly \$1 million (\$920k) in cost avoidance to date.** In conjunction with the state's focus on enhancing its brand and digital presence, the refreshed "North Dakota Be Legendary" brand launched in Oct. 2018, and the new ND.gov website launched in early Jan. 2019.

The SWP, part of a broader Citizen Experience Strategy launched in 2018, includes the newly reimagined ND.gov. Benefits of this enterprise approach includes:

- Consistent look and feel that elevates the state's newly refreshed "Be Legendary" brand, and holistic efforts to present the State's unique assets and attributes to help attract and retain new visitors, workers and businesses.
- Knowledge sharing and decreased learning curve fosters a level of collaboration and partnership that creates efficiencies across agencies.

The SWP project continues to grow as agencies see the value in a standard approach to web development, maintenance, security and the user interface. Additionally, smaller agencies are benefiting from a robust platform they could not afford had they paid for development individually. The platform allows agencies to follow a simple roadmap for refreshing sites, whether they are two years old or more than a decade old, and all agencies benefit from a streamlined approach. We anticipate even more agencies coming on board throughout 2019 and 2020.

Future goals include launching an ideation platform in 2019 to provide a user-friendly way for citizens and employees to share ideas on a myriad topics.

## Project Narrative (concept, significance, and impact)

The scope of the project, in addition to the launch of the new “Be Legendary” brand and Citizen Experience Strategy reflect the innovative approach North Dakota is taking to improve how citizens interact with agencies.

Be Legendary is a promising and inspirational call to action for visitors, businesses and our people. It conveys a renewed spirit and the unprecedented possibilities that lie within our state and is a true expression of our brand promise for the people who live here and those who visit, from century farms to new businesses.

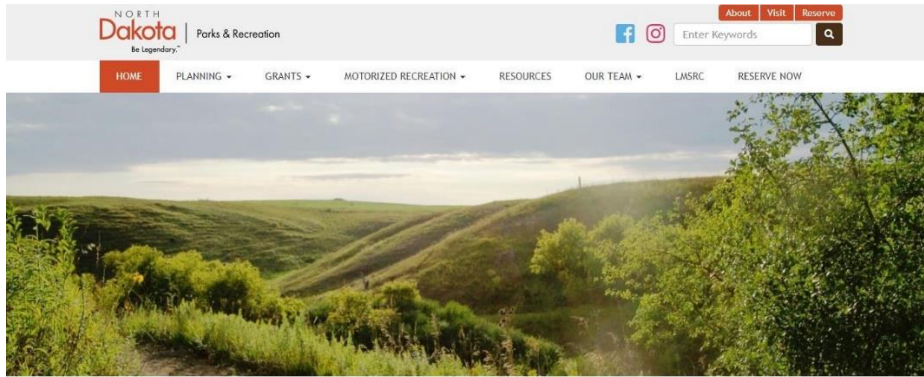
The small change from “Legendary” to “Be Legendary,” is intended to make a big impact and show the active role that visitors and citizens can make in North Dakota. It is also part of a broader marketing strategy to help attract and retain workforce to fill thousands of job openings in the state.

By embracing an enterprise approach to the state’s online presence, incredible efficiencies have been created, security has been enhanced and significant taxpayer dollars have been saved (nearly \$1 million) while growing awareness of “Be Legendary.”

The value of this collaborative approach is evident in the organic growth as agencies see benefits and opt in to the state website platform as well as brand adoption. In addition to the 39 agencies currently live or in staging, five more are planned. Cost sharing is another benefit, as any specialized/customization needed (paid for) by one agency, can be shared with others on the platform.

The innovation of implementing a single platform has:

- Enabled agencies to have modern, feature rich websites for a fraction of the traditional cost.
- Allowed agencies to maintain their own identity while creating an more cohesive state branding across sites. This is done by standardizing certain website elements while giving agencies control over other elements.



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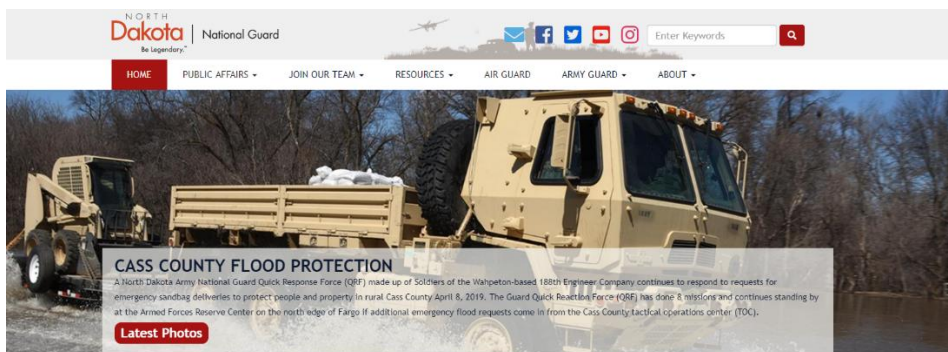
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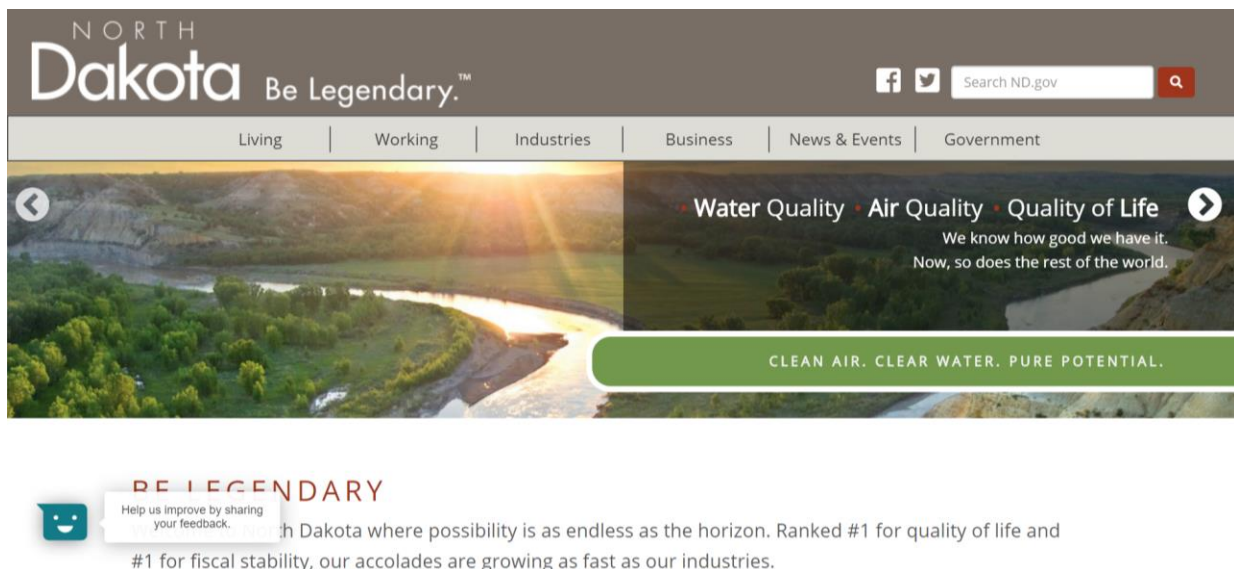
- Created a single code base that is continually patched and improved. Since each site on the platform would use the same code base, any resources invested into the platform benefit every site.
- Enables agencies to improve in highly specific areas that previously would have required subject matter expertise or outside consultants. For example, the SWP team employs subject matter experts in accessibility, search engine optimization, and user experience. This reduces the need for agencies to hire staff in these areas because their expertise is leveraged at a platform level.

Is built on an open-source content management system, Drupal, which eliminates licensing fees, benefits from an open-source community, and still provides opportunities for vendor support if desired.

This project takes a step toward rectifying what historically had been a fragmented, inconsistent approach to agencies' and the state's online presence by taking a holistic approach to promoting a coordinated online presence for state government. It builds on work the state has already done to create efficiencies in website development and follows enterprise approaches used by other states.

The scope of this project doesn't completely ameliorate issues associated with disparate brand identities (or related services), but it goes a long way in establishing technology solutions and business practices that move the state toward a strategic, coordinated online presence.

A common interface and standard functionality/structure means users don't have to re-learn how to navigate sites. The modern design is also optimized for a mobile-friendly user experience. Additionally, the consistent look and feel elevates the state's newly refreshed "Be Legendary" brand, and holistic efforts to recruit and retain workforce for more than 17k job openings.



ND.gov is likely the strongest channel for telling the North Dakota story. Our brand allows us to create a single image and aligned messages that set us apart and builds recognition, loyalty and pride.

North Dakota is a place where you can achieve your American dream. And in a highly competitive global economy, North Dakota's brand and online presence is a critical avenue to reach new business as well as tourists and citizens as we Work as One to Empower People, Improve Lives and Inspire Success – our shared purpose.