PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE
Mark Jobman, PLA, ASLA, CLARB
Elevate Design Studios, LLC

First, thank you for being members of our great chapter. It has been my pleasure to serve as your president this past year. As Landscape Architects, we have the key role in leading the way to great and sustainable design. By creating, connecting, and activating our design ideas, our clients and communities will build solid long lasting projects. Our downtowns are all critical destinations within our region. Creating strong destinations that connect with our communities, and activate our destinations are key goals to establishing a strong sense of place for our downtowns. Working closely with our government, allied professionals, and community leaders we as Landscape Architects can lead the future for our communities.

Our annual Awards Program and Conference for 2018; Creating, Connecting, & Activating - Landscape Architects Leading the Way; was focused on the essential building blocks for our communities and our profession. We had over 35 of our professionals and 25 of our students from NDSU, SDSU, and UNL attend this successful event in Fargo, ND. We awarded four awards to outstanding projects that emerged from professionals within our chapter. Congratulations to those recipients. This past year our chapter has continued our growth in numbers, financials, and member benefits. Throughout 2017 and 2018 we have successfully grown our Partnership Program which has brought great benefits and networking opportunities to our membership body. We have continued to grow our support to our three university programs; NDSU, SDSU, and UNL.

This past year we were faced with two legislative acts that compromised our licensure in South Dakota and Nebraska. Working diligently amongst key professionals in each state and working with our allied professionals we were successful in defeating the Interstate Temporary Licensure Legislation in South Dakota and we are on a clearer path to positively passing legislation within Nebraska that will strengthen our profession. Unfortunately nationwide defense of our Licensure will be an ongoing advocacy effort. Our Chapter, three states wide, must stay on top of legislation compromising our license. Our Executive Committee has begun to lay the ground work for future events, member benefits, licensure advocacy, and future chapter conferences as well as Central States Conference which we will be hosting in 2020. We
hosted our first annual Executive Committee Retreat in Fargo during our annual conference. This annual retreat will assist our chapter leaders to build upon the successes as well as plan out the future. Finally, this past year we have paved the way to better clarify our chapter and region. We will be moving away from the Great Plains Chapter name. The Nebraska-Dakota Chapter of ASLA was approved by the ASLA Board of Trustees this past October in Philadelphia. This new name will allow us to better define our states and represent our membership.

Once again it has been my pleasure serving as your president for a second term. Since my first term as president in 2011-2012 our chapter has grown, developed and become a chapter that clearly benefits our members. Landscape Architecture within our chapter and region continues to grow and strengthen our communities. Continued collaboration with our allied professionals will allow us to build upon our leadership and profession. Thank you again for this opportunity.

Thank you,

Mark Jobman, PLA, ASLA, CLARB
ASLA Great Plains Chapter President
Elevate Design Studios, llc
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In response, the city Parks and Recreation Department initiated a planning process in 2009 to revitalize Centennial Mall. The outcome of the planning process produced a design that addressed the site’s function, safety, aesthetics, accessibility and sustainability. The subsequent renovation allows for more gathering space and flexibility of use while becoming a stage to communicate the history of Nebraska and to provide a place for future stories to be added. Centennial Mall is a place Nebraskans can be proud of once again.

AWARD OF HONOR
Centennial Mall Renovation
Lincoln, NE
Clark Enersen Partners

In 1922 Nebraska State Capitol Building architect, Bertram Goodhue, envisioned and proposed a seven block “wide avenue” to create a formal approach to the Capitol Building. Goodhue’s vision became reality in 1967 when in honor of the State of Nebraska’s 100th birthday Centennial Mall was constructed. The new Mall stretched seven blocks from the north entrance of the Capitol Building to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus. The innovative design closed four city blocks to traffic which created Lincoln’s first major urban plaza and a significant thread in the city’s urban fabric. Not only did the Mall serve as a connection through a portion of Lincoln’s downtown, it also served as an area for public discourse and a place for the community (both local and state-wide) to gather. However, forty years after construction the Mall fell into disrepair. Numerous areas of the Mall were closed to access and several important original design features were removed. In addition, the original design did not conform to current ADA standards. Pavement and steps had deteriorated posing serious liability. The city had lost an important civic feature which required renovation.
The project purpose was to;

1) Restore the dilapidated 6.8-mile-long urban segment of the Smoky Hill River, isolated since a levee and bypass channel were constructed in the 1960s to alter the waterway’s flow as a means of flood protection, through a complete channel and riverbank reconstruction project.

2) Create, alongside the restored river and waterfront, a greenway and trail system that provides residents and visitors alike a continuous, context-appropriate open space amenity. Along the trail, at strategic locations near existing public facilities and historic neighborhoods, design unique trailhead and canoe/kayak put-in facilities to provide easy and open access to the transformative waterway.

3) Design several central public amenity areas along the riverfront, situated at high-activity locations within the community, that can accommodate recreational use and large public gatherings oriented toward the river.

4) Develop a comprehensive framework that will inform the selection and/or design of all site features unique to the riverfront, greenway, and amenity areas, creating a unified aesthetic throughout the project area.
"The Casper Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Board had a vision for Casper’s downtown that would create generational change [for Casper, WY]. The board wanted to bring businesses, jobs and economic stimulus to the entire city via downtown growth by providing free activities for families. The concept of David Street Station was developed as a central outdoor gathering place for Casper, with events and activities hosted here year-round.”

From Our Story by David Street Station

The design team was tasked with designing a civic space that articulates the spirit of Casper. The design requirements were:

• A plaza space for concerts and events
• An ice skating rink
• A splash pad
• A hospitality / rest room / mechanical building
• On-site storage
• Be an inviting place for all types of planned and impromptu community activities.
• A vibrant place during all seasons and expandable for events the space must also mitigate the constant Wyoming wind and take the changing urban context into consideration.
Metropolitan Community College, Fort Omaha Camps Expansion was a 17-acre campus expansion that included three new centers for innovation and learning. The landscape architectural intent was to create outdoor spaces to accommodate student life and offer learning opportunities while providing a campus identity that rivals that of traditional 4-year universities. The expansion engages faculty, students and guests with new outdoor community spaces that can be programmed for a large variety of events. From learning to weddings the new campus is continually booked and has become a community-changing project.

The original project scope included only infrastructure - with no landscape architectural component. As a team, Lamp Rynearson LA’s were able to promote the benefits that placemaking could provide. Due to their efforts, Landscape Architecture was added as part of the project scope.

“ThelandscapearchitectsatLampRynearsonpresented a creative opportunity to us. They recommended a way to enhance the property surrounding our three new educational buildings by extending the learning space to the outdoors. The finished product has been popular to say the least – a place for socialization and education used by staff, students and visitors.”

~RandySchmailzl,President,MetroCommunityCollege
Girls’ night out since 1962.

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Contact Becky Whelan at rebeccaw@victorstanley.com


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North Dakota State University

The Landscape Architecture program at North Dakota State University recently celebrated its 35th anniversary with an all-school reunion held at the Downtown Fargo Campus buildings of Klai Hall and Renaissance Hall. The celebration marked the launch of the Master of Landscape Architecture degree which will be reviewed by the Landscape Architecture Accreditation Board in 2019.

The reunion and anniversary coincided with the annual meeting of the Great Plains Chapter of ASLA and with a cumulative attendance of 190+ people it was perhaps the largest gathering ever of landscape architects in North Dakota. Evidenced by a standing room only presentation by Priti Patel of Project for Public Spaces. We also sponsored a tailgating tent for the football game, Go Bison!

NDSU students this semester have completed studio-related traveled to New York City, Chicago, and Minneapolis and are currently working on projects related to Introductory Design for a River Site (2yr), Site Planning and Design (3yr), Urban Design in NYC (4yr), and Landscape Performance at the regional scale (5yr Graduates and Undergraduates). Faculty are actively conducting research on various topics such as harnessing machine-learning and hyper-aggregating social media data for expedited placemaking, collaborating on a National Science Foundation sponsored project to create off-grid zero energy homes for tribal nations in North Dakota, and historical research on isolated rural cemeteries in North Dakota and the Greek island of Naxos, and finally work continues on the sustained influence of early landscape architectural work at Theodore Roosevelt National Park (which we hope will be home to a Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library soon).

In addition to courses and research we are actively engaged in service-learning projects for our community and students and faculty have assisted in work for the Northern Plains National Heritage Area, the National Park Service, the preservation of the BNSF Missouri River High Bridge, and modeling and visioning for the expansion of the North Dakota Veteran’s Cemetery. We are excited about the next chapter for our growing program.
During three weeks of the summer 2018 SDSU Landscape Architecture students participated in the School of Design's Study Abroad Program, travelling to Sicily and Rome. The trip seeks to foster international perspective, and immersed design experience.

A few of the students were kind enough to share a bit about their experience and what they most enjoyed.

Joshua Goeden, SDSU Student

"On the trip, I had the opportunity to see some of the most famous historic piazzas, villas, and architecture in the world. It was truly an inspiring experience- these sites helped to form the foundation for which our practice has been built. Getting to see these places up close and examine how they functioned within each city was a great way for me to expand my knowledge of public spaces and has provided me with great background for many of the projects I am currently working on.

My favorite place we visited on the trip was the city of Enna in Sicily. This city is located on the top of a tall mountain, and is home to Castello di Lombardia- a castle regarded as one of the most impenetrable fortresses of the ancient world. This was the first castle I had ever seen, so it was a great way to start that day. The rest of the city was just as spectacular, and we got to see it all. My group decided to try and find a park located on the other side of the city. On the way, we got to truly experience the Italian city style as we ventured through a maze of narrow alleys to find the park. Overall, this was probably the most memorable part of the trip for me. However, we also got to see many other incredible sites. One of my other favorites was Villa d’Este. This is one of the most famous villas in the world, and it was easy to see why. The fountains in the villa are created using just gravity- no pumps or mechanical parts. Knowing this and seeing how elaborate and large the fountains were just expanded the majesty of the villa. Another one of my favorite sites was Parco Gregoriano, which was also in Tivoli. This site also began as a villa, but was a polar opposite take on the concept. Instead of the strict formality, Parco Gregoriano took on a more naturalistic approach that felt much more like a nature park. The park was set in a deep valley that was carved by a number of spectacular waterfalls. Overall, I was really impressed by both the quality and the diversity of the sites we visited on the trip.

In addition to the sites, I was also amazed by the culture of the country. The food was phenomenal, especially the pizza. They also had a different take on life, with a much less rushed attitude that we have in the U.S. Instead, they take the time to appreciate everything about their culture. Even though they don’t have the same luxuries that we see as necessary, they tend to be much more thankful for what they have. This was very eye-opening to me, and really put into perspective just how over-the-top we tend to live in the U.S.

Overall, my trip to Italy was definitely worthwhile. Not only did I learn a lot about the practice of landscape architecture, but I also came back with a more diverse and appreciative view of the world. It was truly an incredible opportunity, and I am grateful for the support the Great Plains ASLA provided to our program to help make it possible. It is these kinds of out-of-the-classroom experiences that really help to enhance our education and broaden our understanding of landscape architecture."
Payton N. Schafers, SDSU Student

Throughout these three weeks, we traveled to four major cities (Palermo, Naples, Perugia, and Rome), along with day trips to countless smaller towns. This was one of my favorite aspects of the trip because it allowed us to visit and see as much of the country as possible. It was captivating to see how the landscape, people, and way of life changed as we moved into different regions of the country. For example, local residents in the southern cities were more friendly and willing to extend a helping hand when we struggled with the language barrier, than residents in the northern cities. Not only that, but viewing the different farming practices and simple equipment fascinating when comparing it to the types we see in the Midwest.

Similar to the extensive diversity of the natural landscape in Italy, their historical architecture and built landscapes also varied widely in style. However, the large scale appeared to be a common theme throughout them. Noticing themes like this also helped me to understand more about the history of the sites and about the country as well. For example, the reason why these sites were so grand in scale was to show power, wealth, and beauty.

A final aspect from the trip I really enjoyed was experiencing a completely different culture. This helped me to be bold and try new things. For example, we could not read most of the menus in the restaurants, so we would just order something that sounded familiar. I ended up with a salmon pizza one time, and it was one of my favorite meals over the three weeks."
Jayden Tschimperle, SDSU Student

“Italy was amazing, and I would recommend it to anyone. We got the opportunity to visit four main cities and multiple smaller towns on day trips. I've seen some of the best views and land features ever. The infrastructure in the area was hard to comprehend at first. Knowing some of the history behind some of the structures, and knowing that they are still standing to this day is something that needs to be taken in.

I got to see so many views that will last a lifetime but my favorite place that I visited would be Cefula. This smaller town was tightly tucked up by this large cliff. The cliff also looks over the whole city along with the ocean and beach that separates the town and water. The crystal-clear water was an experience of a lifetime. When we were swimming, we could see bottom that looked to be 7', but when we would swim to the bottom to check, it would be 15’ or so. The four main cities that we visited were Palermo, Naples, Perugia, and Rome. All these cities had a different feel and were a great four city selection, in my opinion. Palermo was the first city we stayed in and it was a very welcoming city and a great place to start off the trip. We also got the opportunity to visit 14 other towns.

Overall, this trip has given me the opportunity to look back into my sketchbook from this trip years down the road and to realize how lucky I was. The structures are landscapes in some of the plazas were very thoughtful and I sketch many of the features to help me reference back to these places. One of my favorite things about this trip was the friendships that I gained that will last a lifetime. Since the trip was open to the entire school of design, I got the opportunity to meet people in other disciplines of the design process.”

The Nebraska-Dakotas Chapter is proud to support this trip now and in the future. We value enriching the learning experiences of our future leaders. A special thank you to Joshua, Jayden, and Payton for sharing your reflections on the trip!
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ABOUT US

Big Muddy Workshop, Inc. is an Omaha based landscape architecture firm, founded in 1990 by John Royster, PLA FASLA. The name “Big Muddy” is a nickname for the Missouri River, and most of our projects are in the Missouri River region. We work in a collaborative, “workshop” style with designers, clients and contractors working together to create and implement projects the client will love.

Most of our work is for government agencies and non-profit organizations. Big Muddy is the prime contractor for about half of our projects, and a subconsultant to architecture and engineering firms for the other half of our work. We provide master planning, landscape architectural, and green infrastructure design services, and are fortunate to see the public benefitting from the projects we design.

Recently we implemented Ajera project management and accounting software, which ties project schedules, deliverables, milestones and invoicing into a seamless system. This has improved our firm’s productivity and ability to manage projects.

OUR PROJECTS

Genoa Fish Hatcher is a US Fish and Wildlife property located in Genoa, Wisconsin. Big Muddy was the site planner and landscape architect for the design team for a new administrative and visitor center building. The site design included extensive retaining walls due to the site’s challenging grades, parking, and several bioretention basins.

The Mason Park permaculture project in Bellevue Nebraska, proposes revitalizing an under-used public park into a dynamic and biologically-diverse location for public education on permaculture concepts. The revitalized park will also serve as a venue for nature-themed outdoor sculpture that will be scattered throughout the park. An open-air pavilion will serve as a locale for teaching individuals and families about the benefits of permaculture, earth-friendly gardening, and building community through caring for the earth. Big Muddy Workshop developed the master plan for an Omaha non-profit spearheading this project.
Historic Spring Lake Park was redesigned to help the City of Omaha meet clean water requirements and facilitate park redevelopment. It achieved its goals for the watershed of improving water quality and keeping rain water onsite in the park, while significantly reducing overall project costs – letting nature do the work.

The green infrastructure project made 10 additional acres of the park accessible and “returned the lake to Spring Lake Park”. The lake, fed by the park’s natural seeps and springs and storm water run-off, temporarily stores up to 12-acre-feet of water after a 100-year rainfall event (6.65-inch storm). By incorporating the lake and 22 BMP features that detain storm water run-off, the project design repurposed former combined sewer pipes to convey stormwater, allowing use of smaller-sized new sanitary sewer pipes, saving $6.4 million from the project. The project has received numerous national and regional awards.
NEWS FOCUS

GPC ANNUAL CONFERENCE

On September 28th, the Great Plains Chapter ASLA, held their Annual Conference in Fargo, North Dakota. We hosted Landscape Architects, Professors, Students, our Partners and Vendors, from across our three states, with a total of over 70 participants. The conference, entitled: Creating - Connecting - Activating - Landscape Architects Leading the Way, was focused on how Landscape Architects have played a vital role in placemaking and the urban renaissance our three states have experienced in the last couple of decades. In an effort to better learn from one another and share collective knowledge and lessons learned, we gathered City Planners from Omaha, Sioux Falls, Fargo, West Fargo and Moorhead at a round table discussion. With each City being at a different spot along the urban redevelopment timeline, we were able to gain further insight in to how our Profession has impacted their trajectories.

Also, as part of the event, we were led on a walking tour of downtown Fargo, where we were able to learn more about several development projects that are just kicking off and at or nearing completion. Along the tour, we heard from a downtown advocate and popup-events planner of Folkways, who talked about the impact of their events, one of which - Red River Market, has been wildly successful. He talked about design and developing spaces from an objective approach, allowing the space to be designed through the process of use and not designing up front and building it. This has proved to be a major influence on how the Red River Market has grown in it’s short time in its existence. Lastly, in joint efforts with North Dakota State University, our speaker Priti Patel from Project for Public Spaces concluded our event with an excellent presentation entitled “Placemaking - Making it Happen.” She further reinforced how Landscape Architects play a vital role and interact in the design of our urban public spaces.

We’d like to thank all who came to our City and celebrated Landscape Architecture, our Chapter, Partnerships and Friendships. Congratulations to all who helped make this another incredible event!
NATIONAL ASLA IN PHILADELPHIA

By all accounts it was another successful year for National ASLA’s annual conference. Great Plains Chapter members had the opportunity to gather while there on Friday the 19th at the Iron Hill Brewery and Restaurant for a Chapter Social.

Students also from NDSU also had the opportunity to travel to Philadelphia this year.

“While at ASLA in Philadelphia, we were able to connect with other student chapters from across the country, meet up with our alumni, connect with vendors/suppliers as well as attend and hear some of the top leaders in the profession speak and educate the audience. I think as students, we left re-energized and excited to get back to studio with ideas that could relate to our projects as well as excitement to the future of our careers.

We also had time to play tourist in between sessions. We saw the five original squares and various other parks, took a tour of the top of city hall (photo with glass behind us), and took a couple group photos with our Adviser, Matthew Kirkwood at the expo.”

IT’S OFFICIAL! WE HAVE A NEW NAME!

In October, the Trustees voted unanimously in favor of a formal name change of the Great Plains Chapter to become the Nebraska Dakotas Chapter. This new name will aid in strengthening our identity as states and better represent our membership in advocacy efforts. We are excited for this change and hope you are as well!
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

2019:
Feb 21 | Winter Social
Apr (TBD) | Spring Social
Jul 18-19 | Design in the Hills
Oct 2 - 4 | Chapter Conference in Sioux Falls, SD - event will coincide with Sioux Falls Design Week

2020:
Feb 20 | Winter Social
Apr 22-24 | Central States Conference in Omaha, NE

* Socials time and location TBD for each state, but please hold this date.

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To feature your firm in Firm Focus, upcoming events or share an award winning project in Feature Story please contact Robin Fordyce.

See Chapter website for additional event dates