Every December, Prairie Business magazine recognizes some of the most inspiring young business people in the northern Plains with a list of the top 40 professionals under the age of 40. This year’s list includes an eclectic group of business owners, entrepreneurs, executives, community leaders and organizers dedicated to improving the areas in which they live and work. Among them are a new U.S. citizen who has already spent years serving the underserved in his community while also building his own technology services business, an accidental entrepreneur who went into business because it could help his community prosper and a self-proclaimed “nerd herder” who built the platform for one of the fastest growing e-commerce companies in the country.

Several people on the list spend every day helping businesses launch, expand, and recruit and retain employees at a time of historic unemployment. Whether they are providing advice and support for women-owned businesses, offering leadership courses for executives, or finding workers and attracting them to their company through the development of good company culture and employee-focused programs, these individuals are passionate about what they do and energize everyone they meet.

Many honorees are members of the millennial generation, which will soon become the largest percentage of the U.S. workforce. The representatives on our list offer a glimpse into the great potential of this biggest generation and we are proud to recognize their accomplishments.
A few years ago, engineering firms in the northern Plains were laying off recruiters as they scaled back on new hires to weather the Great Recession. What a difference a few years make. Now, as the region rolls through an historical economic boom, recruiters are back in full swing and working overtime to help firms staff up to meet project demands.

At just 34, Michelle has already experienced both ends of the spectrum in her profession and she is currently enjoying her “busy, sometimes chaotic” role as recruiting manager for regional engineering firm KLJ. After earning bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the University of Mary, Michelle worked in various human resources and recruiter roles before joining KLJ four years ago as a human resources assistant. She was quickly promoted into a larger role and as the company has grown significantly over the past few years — its staff has doubled in size to about 750 people currently — so have her responsibilities. Along with the catching up that comes along with quick company growth, her tasks now also include finding qualified applicants in an area with the lowest unemployment in the nation and stiff competition from the high-paying Bakken.

“New graduates or even mid- to senior-level people can go and work in the oilfields and make a lot more money than they can at an engineering firm,” she says. “Everybody’s trying to be creative.”

Rather than rely heavily on headhunting, Michelle has focused some of her efforts on developing a pipeline of new talent through internships and an improved high school job shadowing program that better illustrates the variety of engineering projects and careers that are available. She also volunteers at the Bismarck Career Academy, which offers a range of courses including pre-engineering for interested high school students, and serves as a table mentor for Ethics Day.

Within the firm, Michelle is actively involved in the company’s wellness program. She manages and facilitates the HR aspects to best serve the employee’s personal well-being. Now in its third year, the program continues to evolve and plays into the firm’s focus on work/life balance, which is an effort that she expects to continue influencing potential employees’ to join the firm.

Michelle also contributes to the greater community by organizing food drives at KLJ to benefit Ruth Meier’s Hospitality House and the Backpacks for Kids program and by serving as a member of the Bismarck-Mandan Leadership program. Her leadership skills are inspirational for those who work with her but she credits those around her for serving as inspiration and feeding her desire to never stop learning.

“The people I work with and hire serve as mentors,” she says. “I have learned a great deal since starting my career at KLJ, we learn from each other every day.”
Ashley says she worked long hours in her 20s for all the wrong reasons. Now, although she continues to work long hours as owner of a consulting firm and a clothing store, and as leader of a nonprofit she created, her motivation has evolved. It’s less about money or professional advancement and more about constantly improving herself so she can inspire and help the people around her. “That’s what life is about,” she says.

Ashley initially dove into the world of entrepreneurism in 2003 when she launched Twin Cities-based web design company Brand Logic. The company focused on providing services to small businesses and the real estate industry until 2012, when changes in her personal life inspired her to revamp the company with a new focus on delivering consulting services to both aspiring and established business women. “I really want to inspire and empower women and to allow them to see that anything they want to do, including owning a business, is possible,” she says.

As part of Brand Logic’s services, Ashley dedicates much of her time to providing mentorship and guidance to women (and some men) who are starting businesses or need a little help with their established businesses. She also recently began developing a mentorship program to inspire and develop college and high school students, and she will soon be collaborating with University of North Dakota’s School of Entrepreneurship.

Earlier this year, Ashley decided she needed to set yet another example for women entrepreneurs. So she purchased a struggling retail clothing store in Grand Forks, N.D., and set out to turn the business around. “If I’m the person trying to inspire women to take that leap and follow their dreams, I want to lead by example for them,” she says.

Ashley’s passion for entrepreneurism and life in general is immediately evident when she speaks and she readily shares it with the greater community through events like 1 Million Cups, which she recently helped to organize in Grand Forks. She is also active with the Greater Grand Forks Young Professionals group. But perhaps her most inspiring venture to date has been the formation of a nonprofit organization called The Cope Well Foundation, which provides emotional support for cancer survivors. As with her business, Ashley’s motivation to develop the nonprofit stemmed from personal experience. In 2008, she was diagnosed with melanoma and after battling the disease she recognized a need for continued emotional support for all cancer survivors. She began developing the organization in 2009 and launched it to the public in 2011.

Ashley says she will continue to focus on serving the people around her and setting an example for others to follow, but she leaves the window open for unknown opportunities as she looks toward the future. “I never want to look back on life and say, ‘What if I would have taken that opportunity?’”
Shane has spent years in leadership roles and has a passion for using his skills to make an impact on those who surround him. So when he had the chance to become president and CEO of Fargo-based Intelligent InSites earlier this year, he jumped at the “fantastic opportunity” to apply his experience in the health care industry and lead a passionate group of individuals focused on making profound impacts on health care. The company develops software which can be used to track both equipment and patients with the goal of improving efficiency and the patient experience. It has already successfully impacted the industry through its use by a number of health care organizations around the country, including Sanford Health and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Since joining Intelligent InSites in May, Shane has continually added team members to meet business opportunities. He expects that even more team members will be needed in the future as Intelligent InSites continues to deploy its operational intelligence solution to hospitals and clinics in the U.S. and abroad. As he grows the company, he intends to continue to emphasize the importance of company culture, knowing that good company culture is proven to positively influence a company’s overall performance. Shane believes that company culture is influenced more than anything by the people who are employed there and how they are treated by leadership. “When you are establishing organizations, they embody the habits of people,” he says. “There’s an importance to all of us to have consistency … we often see it in the way people get recognized or promoted in the workplace. There is an important connection in the way people are valued and the way they behave.”

The company’s culture initiative has already earned recognition from Modern Healthcare Magazine — this year the company nabbed 10th place on its list of the 100 best health care employers in the nation — and by Prairie Business magazine, which named it one of the 50 Best Places to Work in the northern Plains.

Shane also sees great value in contributing to his community and has served on numerous volunteer boards, including the North Dakota State Board of Higher Education and the Village Family Service Center. He currently serves as a board member for Junior Achievement of the Upper Midwest. He says his experience as a leader has proven to him that people share a common desire to make a difference in their world, a desire which he believes can’t be accomplished through work alone and is uniquely benefited in the Midwest by the genuine willingness of people to help others succeed. “To be in that environment — that’s a tremendous incubator for businesses and leaders and for people who are engaged in meaningful work.”
Scott never planned on becoming a business owner, but a love for his community and willingness to be proactive in helping others succeed inspired him and his brother, John, to launch Brookings-based digital marketing firm 9 Clouds less than six years ago. Scott says they went into it because they realized businesses in rural communities weren’t utilizing technology as well as those in metro areas, but knew that with a little help they could hold their own against competitors anywhere in the world.

“We thought that for our communities to survive and thrive, we need to not only do it for people, but also teach them,” he says.

9 Clouds was born to meet both those needs, serving as a digital marketing services provider and offering education opportunities to help small businesses gain the web knowledge they need. The first few years of business were a learning curve for the “bro-founders,” as they like to say, but about three years ago things started to click. They began adding employees and created a second company called Lemonly that specializes in creating infographics. Lemonly has grown rapidly and racked up an impressive list of clients including Marriott and Major League Baseball. The two companies now employ more than 20 people and have a combined annual revenue over $2.75 million.

The local community inspired the pair to get into business so it is fitting that they have taken active roles in giving back to re-invigorate the area’s business community as a whole. Scott leads the weekly entrepreneurial gathering 1 Million Cups Brookings (John leads the Sioux Falls version), launched TEDxBrookings and recently cofounded a coworking space called Spark Brookings. He also teaches entrepreneurship courses as an adjunct faculty member at South Dakota State University. He intends to continue organizing events and contributing to the community in coming years while simultaneously growing his businesses, with no intentions of relocating the headquarters outside of the rural Midwest.

“We probably got into it thinking we were going to create a technology company and sell it for millions of dollars … but after awhile you realize there is extreme value, not just financially but also personally, to create something that’s long-lasting and creates good work and is also part of the community,” he says. “That’s our focus for the future and what we hope to build.”
Adam Wogsland
Age: 33
President/Co-Owner, SW&L Attorneys
Fargo, N.D.

Adam attended the University of North Dakota School of Law in Grand Forks, where he was named to the Order of Barristers, served on the Moot Court board, and graduated with distinction. He began his legal career clerking with the eight judges with the East Central Judicial District in Fargo. Adam entered private practice with the Nilles Law Firm, where he began practicing business law, real estate law and estate planning. He was named partner in 2012. In February 2013, he co-founded SW&L Attorneys with Greg Liebl and Nathan Severson. SW&L Attorneys has since grown to five attorneys and serves clients in nearly all practice areas.

Alex Halbach
Age: 29
Attorney, Cutler & Donahoe LLP; Owner, Ideal Weigh Inc
Sioux Falls, S.D.

Alex caught the entrepreneur bug while working his way through law school by owning and operating a technology services company. He continued to pursue his law degree, turning a 2009 summer internship with Cutler & Donahoe into a full-time career upon graduation in 2010. His entrepreneurial spirit led him to take on ownership of struggling weight management service provider Ideal Weigh in 2012. The business has since been revitalized and expanded to include locations in Sioux Falls, Yankton and Brookings, S.D.

Despite his many professional obligations, Alex remains actively involved with several nonprofits in Sioux Falls. He serves as president of the Co-Op Natural Foods board of directors and led the cooperative through a successful recovery process following a devastating building fire last year, providing invaluable expertise, leadership and positivity to all involved.

Anthony Rome
Age: 34
Marketing Director, Engage Media Strategies
Fargo, N.D.

Anthony has built expertise in the fast-changing realms of online marketing and social media over the last decade. In 2013, he launched Engage Media Strategies to provide internal ad agency services to Fargo-area businesses, specializing in social media marketing, ad buying, print production and promotional products. He currently also serves as vice president of marketing for Shale Plays Media, where he provides support for the company’s websites and social media platforms.

Arday Ardayfio
Age: 37
President, Blueprint IT Solutions
Fargo, N.D.

Arday’s curiosity about the world and enthusiasm for opportunities led him from Ghana to Concordia College in Moorhead, Minn., where he earned degrees in both business administration and computer science in just four years, along with the respect of the entire campus and local business leaders. After graduating, Arday continued his relentless pursuit of new opportunities as a technology consultant and through various roles in the banking industry until 2011, when he founded his own technology provider services firm, Blueprint IT Solutions. His eye for opportunity led him to identify and a capture a niche market in providing technology services and upgrades to area businesses. His firm is currently a preferred vendor for WiFi and security cameras at Choice Hotels throughout the country, an Aruba Networks authorized dealer and is an authorized Xerox agency for the Red River Valley.

Arday is committed to giving back to the community that has become his home. He currently serves on the boards of directors for the local Kiwanis International group as well as for Charism, a support center focused on improving the quality of life for underserved youth and their families. He also became a U.S. citizen this year.

Ben Hanten
Age: 33
Founder, Berri’s; Cofounder, Think 29/Two Bridges Capital
Yankton, S.D.

Ben is a serial entrepreneur with a serious commitment to connecting communities throughout the upper Midwest. In 2005 he founded Ben’s bar, followed by a speakeasy known as The Copper Room. In 2012, he cofounded angel investment fund Two Bridges Capital, which invests in early-stage companies in South Dakota and its bordering states. Two Bridges has backed seven companies to date and plans to support up to 15 companies over the life of the fund. Ben’s active role in networking opportunities throughout the region has led to several new events, including a conference he founded in 2012 to connect entrepreneurs, investors and creatives. Called Wire Me Awake, the fourth installment of that event will be held in March 2015 at the University of South Dakota. Earlier this year, he cofounded Two Bridges Capital, an investment fund that supports up to 15 companies. His passion for regional networking events stems from a belief that the region is stronger if it works as a whole. “Silicon Valley is a region, not a city,” he says. “I’d like to see this area begin to think regionally, too.”

Brian Ritter
Age: 31
President/CEO, Bismarck-Mandan Development Association
Bismarck, N.D.

A lifelong resident of Bismarck-Mandan, Brian earned a bachelor’s degree in business communications and a master’s degree in business administration from the University of Mary. He initially joined the BMDA as an intern in 2003. In 2005, he accepted a full-time position and served in various roles before being appointed interim executive director in 2013. He immediately led the organization through a strategic planning process to guide it through the next three years. After serving just three months as the interim, the board of directors unanimously agreed to make his new role permanent.
CASEY MCCULLOUGH
Age: 35
President, Green Street Promotions
West Fargo, N.D.

Casey founded logo merchandising firm Green Street Promotions in 2009. Under his leadership, the company’s revenues have doubled every year since, with revenues in 2015 expected to exceed $1 million. Originally launched in Rogers, Minn., Casey relocated his company to his hometown of Hope, N.D., in 2012 to be closer to the Fargo market. Earlier this year, the company expanded to include a showroom in West Fargo. Casey is also a partner in a quickly growing GPS fleet and asset tracking technology startup called Razor Tracking Inc. When he’s not advancing his companies, he can be found coaching t-ball and refereeing at local sporting events or donating his time to the United Way of Cass-Clay.

CHAD HASHELHORST
Age: 32
Vice President, Capitaline Advisors LLC
Brookings, S.D.

Chad joined Capitaline as a college intern in 2003 and worked his way up the ranks, ultimately being named partner in 2012. He currently manages the Brookings office and provides analysis and supervision for the firm’s $70 million of assets under management while continuing to research and analyze new investment opportunities. He has also represented the firm as a board member at various organizations including Bushmills Ethanol in Atwater, Minn., and South Dakota State University Brookings Angel Fund II.

Chad is also actively involved with his family’s 7,000-acre farm, where he has a direct interest in operating approximately 1,200 acres of corn and soybeans.

DAN HURDER
Age: 33
President/CEO, Great Plains Hospitality
Fargo, N.D.

Dan’s career in the hospitality industry began with a job as night manager for a Hilton Garden Inn in Cleveland, Ohio. From there, he worked his way through the ranks to eventually open and manage various properties in the U.S., including the Fargo Hilton Garden Inn. In 2011, he ventured out on his own with the purchase of Otter Supper Club and Lounge in Ottertail, Minn., and the formation of a management firm, Great Plains Hospitality. Since then, Great Plains Hospitality has grown to include two dining establishments in downtown Fargo — Monte’s Downtown and the Boiler Room. Monte’s participates in the Dine to Donate program and gives 10 percent of every Tuesday evening’s revenue to the United Way. The recently opened Boiler Room was named through a unique “name the business” Facebook competition, which successfully generated customer interest and contributed to its early success. Dan intends to continue building on his successful hospitality management style by growing Great Plains’ portfolio to include 10 properties by 2020.

ERIC ISTA
Age: 38
Director of Design/ Senior Creative Strategist,
Sundog
Fargo, N.D.

Eric, a.k.a Fish, has been making his creative mark on the advertising and marketing industries since 1997, when he joined a Fargo advertising firm as a production artist. In 2005, he was named Sundog’s creative director, and he has since contributed his creative talents to countless companies. He has also continually advanced within the company, receiving his most recent promotion in November. He contributes his talents to the community as well, having served as an adviser and teacher at Minnesota State University Moorhead and Minnesota State Community and Technical College. In 2012, he cofounded an organization for designers known as DSGNX. He plans to also open a creative studio in Fargo in early 2015.

ERIKA BAILEY-JOHNSON
Age: 39
Sustainability Director,
Bemidji State University/ Northwest Technical College
Bemidji, Minn.

Erika was studying for her master’s degree in environmental studies at BSU when she and a group of fellow students created BSU’s sustainability office, one of the first of its kind in Minnesota, in 2008. She has since served as its director and has successfully contributed to a culture-shift towards sustainability efforts throughout the entire community. She helped create Bemidji’s Sustainability Committee in 2009 and was a leader in the implementation of Bemidji’s NiceRide bicycle program earlier this year. She successfully applied to be a host site for Minnesota GreenCorps for three consecutive years, which has led to partnerships with other groups to educate the community on sustainable living. Her work has resulted in BSU installing solar transpired air units, real-time energy dashboard kiosks and native landscaping and incorporating a wellness component into its sustainability model. She also teaches a sustainability course at BSU, serves on the Rural Renewable Energy Alliance board of directors and is a member of the Upper Midwest Association for Campus Sustainability steering committee.

GARRETT MOON
Age: 32
Cofounder, Todaymade/ CoSchedule
Bismarck, N.D.

North Dakota native Garrett knew he wanted to live in North Dakota as an adult but he felt existing professional opportunities were lacking, so he created his own. In 2009, he cofounded web products company Todaymade. Last year, he and company cofounder Justin Walsh expanded by separating one of Todaymade’s products — a web-based marketing management tool for blogs and social media — into its own business. That company, CoSchedule, has already grown to include more than 2,000 customers. Garrett is also passionate about “creating the community that you want to live in.” He led the organization of Bismarck’s first Startup Weekend, which will be held in January. He also helped relaunch 1 Million Cups Bismarck and leads Start Bismarck, which promotes and organizes events geared toward technology-based startups.
Jeff’s 15 years of experience in the field of water resources and environmental engineering consulting has earned him a place on AE2S’ Leadership Group as well as shareholder status within the company. He is a founding member and current vice president of the North Dakota chapter of the North American Stormwater and Erosion Control Association, a nonprofit group dedicated to advancing the stormwater and erosion control industry. Jeff is also an advocate for STEM education and serves on the board of directors and governance committee for Gateway to Science, North Dakota’s only hands-on science center.

Jake began working as a product designer for a local manufacturer while still studying mechanical drafting and design at Minnesota State Community and Technical College. About three years ago, he began using a 3D printer as part of his profession and quickly picked up on the potential disruptiveness of the technology for many industries. After meeting fellow 3D fanatic Josh Schneider at a public event about 3D printing in 2013, the pair launched Fargo 3D Printing. The company has since expanded to include several employees and is being fostered at North Dakota State University’s Technology Incubator. Jake and John also recently cofounded 3DomUSA, which produces filament for 3D printers, and an online training platform for 3D printers and CAD (computer-aided design) called Triton Labs. They also devote time to providing 3D demonstrations at schools and libraries in hopes of inspiring students to become engineers, designers and entrepreneurs.

In her current role overseeing the construction of Sanford Health’s Medical Center in Fargo, Joanna manages a $375 million budget and is responsible for the construction of one of the 10 largest medical centers currently being built in the U.S. Prior to this project, Joanna worked on some of Mortenson Construction’s most notable projects, including the University of Minnesota’s TCF Bank Stadium in Minneapolis and the Sanford Health Dickinson Clinic and West River Community Center Expansion, both in Dickinson, N.D. A resident of West Fargo, she is a mentor to students at high schools and universities and serves on the advisory board of construction management and engineering at North Dakota State University.

Joe owned his own PC sales and repair business and spent several years honing his leadership skills as part of an IT team before joining NetWork Center in 2012. Since then, he has continued to grow into new areas of his profession. He currently manages a team dedicated to building mobile and web applications for the company’s customer base and deploying data analysis services for customers seeking more insight into their business and day-to-day operations.

Since accepting the position of CEO at Bismarck Aero Center in 2006, Jon has led the company through a sustained period of growth. The company currently employs 40 people, up from five in 2006, and offers seven hangars and 72,000 square feet of aircraft storage space at the Bismarck location, with additional space at its recently opened sister company, Mandan Aero Center. On paydays, Jon can be found personally delivering employees’ checks and thanking them for their work. Outside of the office, he promotes aviation through the North Dakota Business Aviation Association, the North Dakota Aviation Council, Aviation Education of North Dakota and Aviation Career Day. He also volunteers with Bismarck/Mandan Junior Achievement, the local Chamber of Commerce and the North Dakota Economic Development Foundation.
After practicing law since 2001 and serving as lead attorney for the city of Dickinson while employed at Ebeltoft-Sickler, Matthew agreed to serve as the city's in-house counsel in 2013. His duties initially included providing legal advice and strategy, leading the HR department and providing risk management, but his willingness to tackle more duties as the city has experienced unprecedented growth has quickly expanded his role. He has negotiated dozens of developers agreements, joint powers agreements and right-of-way acquisitions and has worked on the creation of new ordinances and resolutions, often addressing issues that have never been dealt with in the city's history. He also serves as acting city administrator when necessary and is an adjunct faculty member at Dickinson State University.

Juliette, the great potential for the web development industry and began working in web design and development in the 1990s. She owned her own firm, Santi Interactive, before merging with Deane Barker and Joe Kepley in 2005 to create Blend Interactive, where she initially served as partner and creative director. She was recently named CEO and is responsible for the daily management and operations of the company while continuing to focus on the company's mission and vision.

Justin took a big risk when he sold his own web development company to start RealTruck.com’s IT department. The risk has been worth it — for Justin as well as the e-commerce company. He and his team have played an integral role in aiding RealTruck’s rapid development and subsequent growth. The company is currently ranked as the fastest-growing company in North Dakota and one of the fastest-growing e-commerce companies in the U.S. Justin spearheaded the creation of the e-commerce platform the company’s website runs on, and is responsible for ensuring that it stays up and operating smoothly for customers. He leads the company’s IT team, affectionately known as Web Ninjas. He signs his emails with the title “Scruffy Looking Nerd Herder,” illustrating his humble nature and good humor, which, along with top-notch technical skills, have earned him the respect and admiration of his coworkers, IT industry peers and the automotive industry as a whole.

Justin signed on with HPN as an account manager when the company was formed in 2003 and has contributed significantly to the company's continued growth throughout its first decade of operation. In 2009, he was named partner and promoted to his current position, in which he is responsible for managing a sales team that spans five states and for adding technology solutions to the company’s offerings. His leadership positioned the company to be recognized earlier this year as one of the top 500 IT solutions providers in the U.S.

Julie joined Rapid City’s CVB in 2002 as an office assistant while attending college at National American University and Western Dakota Tech. After receiving her degree in business and marketing, she accepted a full-time position as convention sales manager. She worked her way up to her current role as leader of the tourism department. Julie also contributes her leadership skills to projects throughout the community including Day of Excellence Inc., the Western Dakota Tech Business Program advisory board and the Girls Scouts Dakota Horizons board of directors. She is also a graduate of Leadership Rapid City.
A Grand Forks, N.D., native, Sara initially moved to Fargo, N.D., and volunteered with the United Way since 2012 and became the state and regional coordinator of Adshark Marketing. While still only in his 20s, Ryan has already earned a reputation as having an astute business perspective, a farm-kid work ethic and top-notch management skills.

Nick joined NDGT in 2012 as manager of its Williston, N.D., office. In 2013 he was promoted to vice president of the northwest region and was named president of the company earlier this year. A natural leader, he oversees a continuously growing company while maintaining a culture that recently earned the company a spot on Prairie Business magazine’s 50 Best Places to Work list. In addition to his duties at NDGT, Nick currently serves as the legislative committee chair for the North Dakota Land Title Association. Before joining NDGT, he worked as a business development manager and real estate agent. He also served in the state senate from 2004 to 2008 and was the youngest senator in the state's history.

Mike's career took an about-face when he decided to launch his own consulting firm to help nonprofits and for-profits recruit the best talent possible. Since then, he's earned a reputation for producing results that exceed clients' expectations. His nominators credit him for helping their businesses succeed through improved culture practices, assistance in identifying and hiring the best candidates for the positions, and for providing executive-level coaching that improves their overall effectiveness within their organizations.

With just a month’s worth of cash left in his pocket, Ryan quit his job and dove headfirst into starting up his own company while he was still attending North Dakota State University. The risk proved worth it — Myriad Mobile now employs nearly 60 people in multiple offices throughout the U.S. As president, Ryan leads the rapidly growing tech company while playing an active role in cultivating Fargo's entrepreneurial community. In addition to his role at Myriad, he is the cofounder of Virtual Farm Manager and chairman of Adshark Marketing. While still only in his 20s, Ryan has already earned a reputation for having an astute business perspective, a farm-kid work ethic and top-notch management skills.

Patrick joined BSE in 2000 and has since held various key positions within the company. In his current role, he is responsible for a team of over 40 people who execute BSE's marketing strategy and manage the company's vendor relationships. BSE's total annual sales in fiscal year 2014 were $1.44 billion. As an officer of the company and member of its executive council, Patrick also helps drive the initiatives of BSE's strategic plan, providing enviable attention to detail and critical thinking skills to the process. Patrick has volunteered with the United Way since 2012 and became a member of the group’s campaign cabinet this year. He is also a member of various industry committees and is the current vice president of the North American Association of Utility Distributors.

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A 2001 graduate of North Dakota State University in Fargo, Nicole joined JLG in 2007 and has since made a tremendous impact on the company. In her first year, she developed tools to streamline how the company manages projects and cash flow and helped increase its profits by 1,400 percent. In 2011, she became staffing coordinator and director of project management to help realign the company with a greater emphasis on project management after an unprofitable year. As a result of her work, JLG's next year was its most profitable in the company's history. Nicole became one of the company’s youngest shareholders ever in 2013, was named branch manager in 2013 and promoted to principal this year. She is passionate about improving the quality of life for future generations in North Dakota and has been directly responsible for multiple affordable housing projects recently built in western North Dakota including Collins Place Apartments in Mandan and the Williston State College Frontier Hall.
SCOTT MCCARTHY

Age: 35
Vice President, Silicon Plains LLC
Bismarck, N.D.

Scott is an owner and vice president of sales at Silicon Plains, where he has become a trusted advisor and consultant to many of the area's most prominent companies. He is known for his ability to successfully lead board members, business owners and technology vendors through challenging projects. Before joining the company in 2009, he worked as an application developer for various companies in the area. He is a graduate of the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks.

TINA AMERMAN

Age: 39
Director Human Resources, Bobcat Co./Doosan InfraCore Construction Equipment
West Fargo, N.D.

Tina joined Bobcat in 2004 as a recruiting and staffing specialist. In her current role as HR director, she is responsible for providing human resources for more than 500 employees across multiple locations. Since joining the company, Tina has played an instrumental role in a number of major company changes, including the implementation of a workplace culture change, an open-concept office redesign, multiple restructurings, and the divestiture of Bobcat from Ingersoll Rand to Doosan. Under her leadership, the company's HR staff has grown from two people in 2010 to nine full-time staff members currently. She is also credited for developing an internship program which boasts over 100 students and serves as a critical talent pipeline for the entire company. She is an active volunteer for many local nonprofits, the GFMEDC workforce committee and is a former board member of the Fargo Moorhead Human Resource Association. She is also a graduate of United Way's 35 under 35 leadership program.

STEVE WATSON

Age: 32
Director of Business and Community Development, S.D. GOED
Sioux Falls, S.D.

Steve joined the Governor's Office of Economic Development as a business development representative nearly a decade ago and has since worked his way up to his current role of director. His passion for economic development is evident through his many efforts to recruit and help expand business, including the $144 million Bel Brands cheese plant in Brookings. The expansion was the largest industrial capital expenditure in the company’s history and would have taken place in another state if not for the work of state and local economic development officials and Steve’s leadership. He constantly strives for improvement and is a recent graduate of Gov. Dennis Daugaard’s Leadership Development Program.

TRISHA JUNGELS

Age: 36
VP, Clinical Services/Chief Nursing Officer, Jamestown Regional Medical Center
Jamestown, N.D.

Trisha has more than a decade of professional nursing experience and has provided care to patients in a variety of settings, from medical-surgical environments to home health. She became chief nursing officer and vice president of clinical services at JRMC in 2013 and has since proven herself to be an example for others to follow in developing relationships with peers, patients and the community. She has initiated a Community Health Improvement Plan with Central Valley Health as well as nursing residency programs and internships with the University of Jamestown and has taken the role of organizational excellence coordinator for JRMC. She is also a recipient of the Outstanding Rural Health Professional award from the National Rural Health Association.

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TYLER OKERLUND

Age: 35
North Dakota SBIR/STTR Director, UND Center for Innovation
Grand Forks, N.D.

Tyler holds a master’s degree in business administration from the University of Mary in Bismarck, a marketing degree from the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks, is a veteran of the U.S. Navy and North Dakota Army National Guard, and has 14 years of experience in procurement and contracting. While working as procurement manager for the North Dakota SBDC, he worked to secure $24 million in contracts for 2013 alone. Tyler is a certified procurement professional and has served in his current role at the University of North Dakota’s Center for Innovation since March. He coaches entrepreneurs through the SBIR/STTR federal grant application process and also provides entrepreneur coaching to grow their ventures. He recently helped launch 1 Million Cups Grand Forks, a weekly gathering for entrepreneurs, and is chapter adviser for UND’s Delta Tau Delta fraternity.

SCOTT MCCARTHY

Age: 35
Vice President, Silicon Plains LLC
Bismarck, N.D.

Scott is an owner and vice president of sales at Silicon Plains, where he has become a trusted advisor and consultant to many of the area’s most prominent companies. He is known for his ability to successfully lead board members, business owners and technology vendors through challenging projects. Before joining the company in 2009, he worked as an application developer for various companies in the area. He is a graduate of the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks.

TINA AMERMAN

Age: 39
Director Human Resources, Bobcat Co./Doosan InfraCore Construction Equipment
West Fargo, N.D.

Tina joined Bobcat in 2004 as a recruiting and staffing specialist. In her current role as HR director, she is responsible for providing human resources for more than 500 employees across multiple locations. Since joining the company, Tina has played an instrumental role in a number of major company changes, including the implementation of a workplace culture change, an open-concept office redesign, multiple restructurings, and the divestiture of Bobcat from Ingersoll Rand to Doosan. Under her leadership, the company’s HR staff has grown from two people in 2010 to nine full-time staff members currently. She is also credited for developing an internship program which boasts over 100 students and serves as a critical talent pipeline for the entire company. She is an active volunteer for many local nonprofits, the GFMEDC workforce committee and is a former board member of the Fargo Moorhead Human Resource Association. She is also a graduate of United Way’s 35 under 35 leadership program.

STEVE WATSON

Age: 32
Director of Business and Community Development, S.D. GOED
Sioux Falls, S.D.

Steve joined the Governor’s Office of Economic Development as a business development representative nearly a decade ago and has since worked his way up to his current role of director. His passion for economic development is evident through his many efforts to recruit and help expand business, including the $144 million Bel Brands cheese plant in Brookings. The expansion was the largest industrial capital expenditure in the company’s history and would have taken place in another state if not for the work of state and local economic development officials and Steve’s leadership. He constantly strives for improvement and is a recent graduate of Gov. Dennis Daugaard’s Leadership Development Program.

TRISHA JUNGELS

Age: 36
VP, Clinical Services/Chief Nursing Officer, Jamestown Regional Medical Center
Jamestown, N.D.

Trisha has more than a decade of professional nursing experience and has provided care to patients in a variety of settings, from medical-surgical environments to home health. She became chief nursing officer and vice president of clinical services at JRMC in 2013 and has since proven herself to be an example for others to follow in developing relationships with peers, patients and the community. She has initiated a Community Health Improvement Plan with Central Valley Health as well as nursing residency programs and internships with the University of Jamestown and has taken the role of organizational excellence coordinator for JRMC. She is also a recipient of the Outstanding Rural Health Professional award from the National Rural Health Association.

TYLER OKERLUND

Age: 35
North Dakota SBIR/STTR Director, UND Center for Innovation
Grand Forks, N.D.

Tyler holds a master’s degree in business administration from the University of Mary in Bismarck, a marketing degree from the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks, is a veteran of the U.S. Navy and North Dakota Army National Guard, and has 14 years of experience in procurement and contracting. While working as procurement manager for the North Dakota SBDC, he worked to secure $24 million in contracts for 2013 alone. Tyler is a certified procurement professional and has served in his current role at the University of North Dakota’s Center for Innovation since March. He coaches entrepreneurs through the SBIR/STTR federal grant application process and also provides entrepreneur coaching to grow their ventures. He recently helped launch 1 Million Cups Grand Forks, a weekly gathering for entrepreneurs, and is chapter adviser for UND’s Delta Tau Delta fraternity.

ZACHARY PAULSON

Age: 33
President, TrueIT
West Fargo, N.D.

Zac worked various jobs before getting his start in IT sales in 2003 at Ignus Technologies. He spent several years there, eventually becoming partner in 2010, before becoming a founding partner of TrueIT. In his current role, he is responsible for process development, consulting and delivery management, ensuring that the company meets its goal of providing “warm, fuzzy” IT services to its customers.