

# 2024 COMMUNITY REPORT

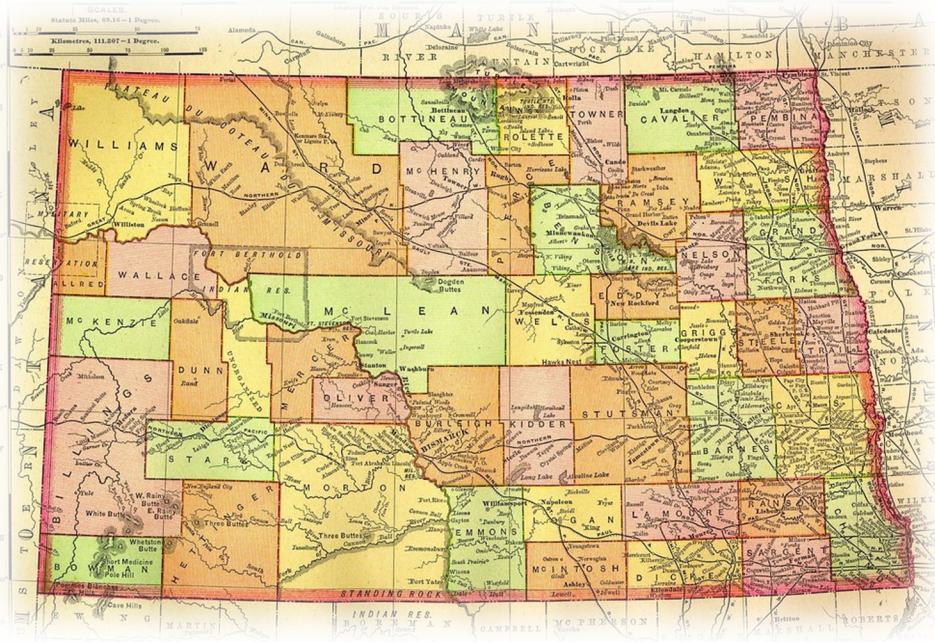
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE  
DISTRICT OF NORTH DAKOTA

MAC SCHNEIDER  
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY



# THE DISTRICT OF NORTH DAKOTA

- ★ The District of North Dakota encompasses the state of North Dakota and its population of over 780,000 people.



- ★ The U.S. Attorney's Office, with locations in Bismarck and Fargo, employs 27 Assistant United States Attorneys (AUSAs) and over 30 support staff.
- ★ The office is organized into two divisions: Criminal and Civil.



## SUMMARY

The United States Attorney's Office for the District of North Dakota (USAO-ND) is committed to upholding the rule of law, keeping our country safe, and protecting civil rights.

In 2024, the career prosecutors, civil litigators, and staff charged with carrying out that critical mission protected kids from West Fargo to White Shield, relentlessly prosecuted drug traffickers and drivers of violent crime, and enforced laws that ensure fair access to services and opportunity for all North Dakotans.

This report touches on just a fraction of the office's work in 2024.

With the hiring of two additional Indian country AUSAs, USAO-ND was in an even better position to meet its decades-old commitment to public safety in tribal communities. In addition to their role as trial lawyers, the office's Indian country prosecutors worked closely with community partners to protect families during regular multi-disciplinary team meetings on all four major reservations in North Dakota. USAO-ND also eagerly performed its duties under Savanna's Act by coordinating with tribal leadership and law enforcement to address missing person cases.



*U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland visits USAO-ND's Fargo office in August of 2023.*

With drugs like fentanyl and methamphetamine affecting every community in the country, our experienced AUSAs aggressively prosecuted criminal organizations that targeted North Dakota for distribution of those dangerous substances. To help address violence that all too often follows the drug trade, USAO-ND obtained new resources from Main Justice to target violent criminals for federal prosecution and prevent gangs from putting down roots in North Dakota.

Protecting kids continued to be a critical part of the office's work. In some of the most heartrending cases imaginable, our federal, state, and local law enforcement partners worked with USAO-ND prosecutors to stop predators and put them in federal prison where they can no longer prey on children.

Likewise, 2024 saw convictions against international fraudsters and white-collar criminals, prosecutions against those who threaten national security and safety along the northern border, and complex civil matters that protected U.S. taxpayers and North Dakotans with disabilities. Our attorneys and staff also secured justice for victims and guarded the public fisc by recovering millions in criminal restitution and civil collections.

I could not be prouder of their work, and I know the United States Attorney's Office will continue to be a strong federal partner in public safety and the protection of civil rights in 2025 and the years to come.

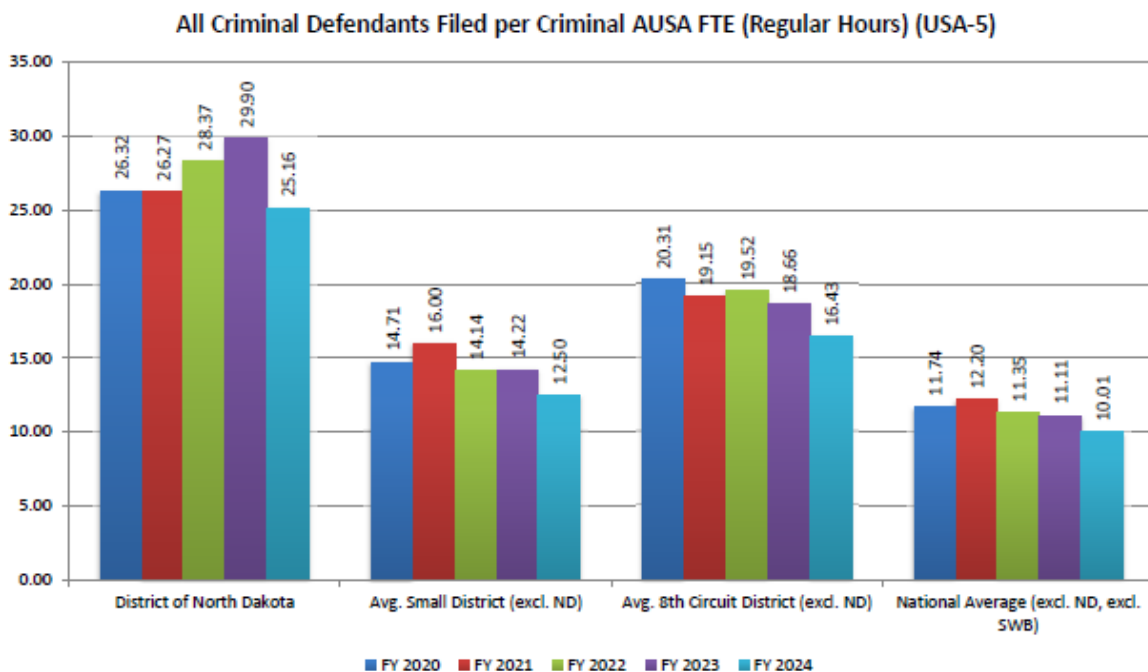
A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mac Schneider".

*Mac Schneider  
United States Attorney  
District of North Dakota*

## 2024 BY THE NUMBERS:

### USAO-ND works:

- ★ USAO-ND was **number one** among the 10 districts in the Eighth Circuit in defendants per AUSA and **six** out of 94 districts nationally.



### USAO-ND gets it done:

- ★ USAO-ND's conviction rate was over 95%.

### USAO-ND gets it right:

- ★ Over 95% (21/22) of criminal appeals decided on the merits were resolved in USAO-ND's favor.

## KEEPING NORTH DAKOTA SAFE

### Targeting the drivers of violent crime for federal prosecution:

Seeking to serve as a strong and reliable federal partner to North Dakota law enforcement in protecting public safety, USAO-ND built on existing partnerships and utilized new federal resources in 2024 to aggressively target the individuals driving violent crime in North Dakota communities.

**U.S. v. Obregon:** In December of 2022, a Williston Police Officer approached Eric Obregon, whose vehicle was partially blocking an intersection and had warrants for his arrest. When asked to step out of the vehicle, Obregon pushed one of the officers and fled on foot, later discharging a firearm toward the officers. One of the officers returned fire and struck Obregon in the leg. In May of 2024, Obregon was sentenced to serve 15 years in federal prison, followed by three years of supervised release, after he pleaded guilty to possession of a firearm and ammunition by a convicted felon.



*Law enforcement partners from the United States Postal Inspection Service present awards in August in recognition of the office's work in United States v. DeShaun Holmes.*

**U.S. v. Holmes:** On July 17, 2023, DeShaun Holmes robbed a postal carrier at gunpoint in Frontier and stole a key from the carrier to gain access to numerous post office boxes and mail receptacles with the intent to commit further crimes of bank fraud and mail fraud. In August, Holmes was sentenced to 114 months in federal prison for the offenses of robbery of a mail carrier and brandishing a firearm during and in relation to a crime of violence.

**U.S. v. Opdahl:** In April, Patrick Opdahl was found guilty by a jury of possession of a machinegun and possession of an unregistered silencer following a three-day trial in Fargo. On February 1, 2023, law enforcement was called to the residence Opdahl shared with his parents after he pulled out a firearm and shot it into the ceiling. While his parents were able to escape unharmed, Opdahl refused to surrender leading to a several hour standoff with officers from the Fargo Police Department and Red River Valley Regional SWAT team.

**U.S. v. Davis:** In April of 2024, Anthony Lee Davis pleaded guilty to possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. In October of 2021, Davis possessed a 9mm pistol and discharged this firearm at people and property while driving a vehicle erratically around Minot. Davis also fired this pistol, unprovoked, at an individual who was driving in a nearby vehicle, with two bullets from Davis's firearm hitting the driver's side door of the vehicle and one bullet striking the driver in the left elbow. Davis was sentenced to 110 months in federal prison in September.

## Increasing public safety in Indian country:

In addition to aggressively prosecuting violent crime, child abuse, and sexual assault cases, USAO-ND's Indian country AUSAs lead regular multi-disciplinary team meetings on all four major reservations in North Dakota. The office also plays a leading role in implementing Savanna's Act to prevent and respond to missing person cases in Indian country.



*USAO-ND attorneys and staff conduct a Savanna's Act meeting on the Spirit Lake Indian Reservation with law enforcement and tribal leadership.*

**U.S. v. Azure:** In June, Nathaniel Azure of St. Michael was sentenced to a total of 32 years in prison for his role in a non-fatal shooting in Fort Totten on the Spirit Lake Indian Reservation in January of 2021, an assault while brandishing a firearm in St. Michael in May of 2022, and a second non-fatal shooting in St. Michael in May of 2022.

**U.S. v. Wilkinson:** In August, Derick Wilkinson was charged with second degree murder in Indian country and assault of an intimate partner by strangulation after the body of a female was found at the scene of a fire in White Shield on the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation. (An indictment in this case is not evidence of guilt. The defendant is presumed innocent unless or until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt at trial.)

**U.S. v. Delorme/Baker:** In October of 2024, co-defendants Collin Ray Delorme Sr. and Kenzie Baker of St. Michael pleaded guilty to separate counts of child abuse in Indian country. In February of 2023, Baker called 911 from a home on the Spirit Lake Indian Reservation and reported a one-year-old child was not breathing. An autopsy concluded the cause of death was "battered child" due to multiple, repeated injuries. Delorme and Baker are detained and will be sentenced in 2025.

**U.S. v. Marcellais:** Rhawnie Marcellais was convicted of child abuse in Indian country, assault with a dangerous weapon, and malicious mischief following a jury trial in June. The conviction arises from an incident in which Marcellais threw an empty beer bottle at a minor female and pushed a pillow into her face. Marcellais was sentenced to 50 months in federal prison in November.

**U.S. v. Martinez:** Antonio Martinez was sentenced to 36 months in federal prison in November after pleading guilty to assault with a dangerous weapon and domestic assault by a habitual offender related to an incident arising on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation in January of 2021 in which he assaulted his girlfriend and intimate partner.

**U.S. v. Lester/Hinsley:** In April, Austin Lester and Krissy Hinsley of Tokio made initial appearances on charges of involuntary manslaughter and two counts of child neglect in Indian country. Lester is also charged with assault of a child with a dangerous weapon in Indian country. (An indictment in this case is not evidence of guilt. The defendants are presumed innocent unless or until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt at trial.)



## Keeping kids safe:

Protecting kids is a critical part of keeping our country safe. USAO-ND works closely with its partners in law enforcement, child advocacy organizations, and nonprofits in North Dakota and across the country to deter crimes against children and take dangerous offenders out of the community.

**U.S. v. Holmberg:** Ray Holmberg, a former North Dakota State Senator, pleaded guilty in August of 2024 to traveling to Prague, Czech Republic, to have commercial sex with underage boys. According to court documents and facts established in public proceedings, Holmberg took approximately 14 trips to Prague between 2011 and 2021 to engage in commercial sex acts with minors. Holmberg is detained pending sentencing.



**U.S. v. Hutchinson:** Jason Hutchinson of Dunn County was sentenced to 450 months of imprisonment in August for the charges of three counts of producing and eight counts of attempting to produce images depicting the sexual exploitation of minors. In 2023, a report was made to law enforcement that Hutchinson was placing hidden cameras in bathrooms on his properties to capture images of minors while going to the bathroom or entering/exiting the shower. A search warrant was obtained, and it was determined that Hutchinson had been engaging in this practice since 1992 and had captured images of at least eleven different minors.

**U.S. v. Morgan-Derosier:** In May of 2024, Nicholas Morgan-Derosier of Grand Forks was sentenced to 40 years in federal prison and ordered to pay \$39,000 in restitution for receiving and possessing child pornography stemming from videos and images that Grand Forks Police and Homeland Security Investigations found during a search warrant at Morgan-Derosier's residence. Officers located more than 6,000 images and videos of graphic sexual abuse of prepubescent minors on at least six devices. Morgan-Derosier also possessed nude images of prepubescent family members, along with explicit chats about raping them. The evidence at sentencing showed that Morgan-Derosier raped or sexually assaulted several other individuals when those individuals were minors.

**U.S. v. Nesdahl:** Nicholas Nesdahl was sentenced to a total of 50 years in federal prison in June on seven counts of producing or attempting to produce images and videos depicting the sexual exploitation of minors in the District of North Dakota and two counts related to producing or attempting to produce and receiving images and videos of minors in the Western District of Pennsylvania. Nesdahl victimized two minors located in Pennsylvania and at least seven other victims located in North Dakota, Minnesota, Maryland, Texas, and New Jersey. The victims ages ranged from 6 to 15 years of age.

## Combatting drug trafficking organizations:

With overdose deaths outstripping traffic fatalities and devastating families in North Dakota, USAO-ND works together with federal, state, local, tribal, and international law enforcement to relentlessly target the organized criminal entities distributing dangerous drugs like fentanyl and methamphetamine in communities across the District.

**U.S. v. Celestin-Ortega et al.:** In June, nine defendants were indicted for drug trafficking and money laundering crimes after a year-long, multi-agency, transnational investigation. According to court documents, since January 2022, Jesus Amurahaby Celestin-Ortega, also known as Flaco, 26, allegedly engaged in drug-related and money laundering conspiracies, and a continuing criminal enterprise, while incarcerated at a federal prison on unrelated drug and firearm charges. Celestin-Ortega allegedly directed and coordinated the importation of the substances into the United States and their distribution within North Dakota and several other states. (The indictment in this case is not evidence of guilt. The defendants are presumed innocent unless or until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt at trial.)



**U.S. v. Ramos et al.:** In December, Kenneth William Ramos and Charice Alves Figueredo were indicted on drug conspiracy charges related to allegedly distributing and possessing with intent to distribute methamphetamine in the Bismarck-Mandan area. Court records indicate that Kenneth William Ramos allegedly possessed approximately 29 pounds of methamphetamine while traveling in a motor vehicle in Morton County in November. (The indictment in this case is not evidence of guilt. The defendant is presumed innocent unless or until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt at trial.)

**U.S. v. Rambus et al.:** In February, Romel Rambus was sentenced to 168 months in federal prison for his leadership role in a drug trafficking organization targeting the Fort Berthold and Spirit Lake Indian Reservations after a multi-agency investigation led by the Bureau of Indian Affairs Division of Drug Enforcement learned of a drug trafficking organization affiliated with the 5674 Reub Gang, a violent street gang operating out of Michigan, was involved in transporting thousands of oxycodone/fentanyl pills to North Dakota for distribution. Over 40 defendants were charged for their involvement in the drug trafficking organization.

**U.S. v. Rushing et al.:** As noted in court documents, a search warrant for controlled substances was executed at an Airbnb in Bismarck that was allegedly utilized by a drug trafficking organization to distribute pills and tablets containing fentanyl. Approximately 20,000 pills, which law enforcement estimated as having a street value of \$300,000 to \$600,000, were seized pursuant to the warrant. James Rushing, Julie Mumford, and Maurtez Rushton were charged with conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute controlled substances in April. (The indictment in this case is not evidence of guilt. The defendants are presumed innocent unless or until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt at trial.)



## Prosecuting fraud and protecting taxpayers:

USAO-ND and its partners in law enforcement vigorously pursue white collar criminals and fraudsters when they threaten taxpayer dollars or the life savings of North Dakotans. In 2024, the office successfully prosecuted individuals who facilitated schemes from overseas and those who committed fraud closer to home.

**U.S. v. Agbaje:** After a four-day jury trial in May, Nigerian citizen Christopher Agbaje was found guilty of money laundering and aiding and abetting wire and mail fraud. Agbaje, who was extradited from the United Kingdom to North Dakota in February of 2024 to face these charges, participated in a sophisticated scheme to defraud a North Dakota law firm out of nearly \$200,000 by falsely purporting to be a business owner in a legal dispute with a Bismarck company. He was sentenced to 142 months imprisonment and ordered to pay \$188,935.74 in restitution in September.



**U.S. v. Tronson:** Darren Wade Tronson of Buxton, North Dakota, was sentenced in March for concealing a material fact in a matter within the jurisdiction of the Government of the United States, resolving the final pending case related to him and his potato farming operation, which included three civil cases and one criminal case. As part of the resolution of the four cases, Tronson forewent a \$272,365 crop insurance

indemnity payment for 2019, paid \$10,000 restitution to the United States in connection with the settlement of his 2017 and 2018 potato claims, was barred from participation in all federal programs for ten years, and is serving one year of supervised probation.

**U.S. v. Pfaff:** In March, Kent Pfaff of Washburn, North Dakota, was ordered to pay \$379,317.00 in restitution to the United States Department of Agriculture and serve a three-year period of supervised release on a charge of False Statement to Influence the United States Department of Agriculture – RMA, colloquially known as crop insurance fraud. Pfaff had previously pleaded guilty to the offense, voluntarily agreeing to be excluded from receiving benefits from any federal procurement transaction authorized or funded by the USDA. As noted in court documents, Pfaff severely understated his soybean production yield numbers to his crop insurance providers to falsely increase his crop insurance indemnity payments. In early 2020, insurance adjusters discovered that the appraised soybean yield amounts were between four to five times higher than what Pfaff reported.

**U.S. v. Nwafor:** Chinedu Nwafor of Bowie, Maryland, was sentenced to 25 months in federal prison and payment of \$180,000 in restitution in December after pleading guilty to conspiracy to commit mail fraud related to a romance fraud scheme that targeted elderly women. The scheme, which involved foreign actors falsely pretending to be military members, targeted elderly females by contacting them through social media or internet profiles and entered into what the romance fraud victims believed were legitimate romantic relationships. Over time, the foreign actors cultivated the romance fraud victims' trust and fraudulently induced them to send money at their request to United States based co-conspirators, including Nwafor.

## Protecting national security and keeping the northern border safe:

Enforcing federal law along the northern border and protecting national security go to the heart of the Department's mission to keep the country safe. USAO-ND works closely with our interagency partners in the United States Border Patrol and Homeland Security Investigations as well as local law enforcement to uphold the rule of law and deter illegal activity at the border.

**U.S. v. Smith:** On September 11, Cameron Monte Smith, a citizen of Canada, pleaded guilty in United States District Court in Bismarck to one count of destruction of an energy facility charged in the District of North Dakota and one count of destruction of an energy facility charged in the District of South Dakota. Smith admitted to damaging the Wheelock Substation, located near Ray, N.D. and operated by Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative, in an amount exceeding \$100,000 in May of 2023. Smith also admitted to damaging a transformer and pumpstation of the Keystone Pipeline located near Carpenter, South Dakota, in an amount exceeding \$100,000 in July of 2022. The case was prosecuted by USAO-ND and the United States Attorney's Office for the District of South Dakota with assistance of Main Justice's National Security Division's Counterterrorism Section. Sentencing is pending, and Smith is facing up to 20 years of imprisonment on each count.



**United States v. Jesus Israel Blanco-Sanchez; United States v. Juan Jose Velezquez-Castro, Gisela Garces-Vera, Ruben Hernandez-Arjon, and Guadalupe Yohana Sanchez-Martinez; United States v. Raul Hernandez-Padron, Eugenio Miron-Meza, Gerardo Morales-Najera, Marco Antonio Ocana-Gutierrez, Juan Jose Reali-Figueroa, and Cesar Santiago-Sanchez:** In July, U.S. Border Patrol agents in the Grand Forks Sector stopped three separate illegal entry events, two of which involved attempts to smuggle individuals into the United States from Canada. Criminal charges against the individuals were brought by USAO-ND. Individuals suspected of unlawfully entering the United States were charged with illegal entry, while individuals suspected of transporting them were charged with a smuggling-related offense.

## PROTECTING NORTH DAKOTANS' CIVIL RIGHTS AND U.S. TAXPAYER FUNDS

The office's Civil Division is committed to enforcing laws that provide fair treatment and access to opportunity for North Dakotans while skillfully representing the United States in complex litigation. Whether it's pursuing civil remedies against those who misuse federal funds or recovering fines and restitution to benefit victims and taxpayers, the Civil Division's litigators and staff are integral to protecting civil rights and upholding the rule of law in the District of North Dakota.

**Olmstead settlement compliance:** As part of a pre-litigation settlement agreement between the Department of Justice and the State of North Dakota four years ago, USAO-ND's Civil Division continues to conduct compliance monitoring throughout the District of North Dakota, working to connect people with disabilities with home and community-based services so they can remain in their homes instead of moving to nursing facilities to receive care. This year, the office and its partners at Main Justice successfully reached an agreement with the state to provide increased outreach to individuals with serious physical disabilities served under the state's developmental disabilities waiver as well as additional training to the case managers who care for them.



*AUSA Melissa Burkland and paralegal specialist Michelle Erdman perform field work on an ADA survey.*

**Bennigan's ADA settlement:** In April, the Civil Division completed an investigation and entered into a settlement agreement with Bennigan's restaurant in Mandan to resolve allegations that Bennigan's violated the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) by refusing to allow a veteran with a disability to enter the restaurant with their service animal. Under the settlement agreement, Bennigan's agreed to adopt a service animal non-discrimination policy, provide relevant training to its employees regarding the ADA, post signage indicating service animals are welcome, and pay \$1,000 in damages to the complainant.

**Gipp et al. v. Webb et al.:** The Civil Division, in conjunction with the Department of Justice's Torts Branch, successfully defended a Federal Tort Claims Act suit seeking \$15,000,000 in damages arising out of an officer-involved shooting on the Standing Rock Indian

Reservation. After reports of shots fired, a Bureau of Indian Affairs officer conducting a felony traffic stop shot and killed the suspect, who was resisting arrest, fleeing, and rapidly drew an object out of his hoodie pocket which the officer perceived to be firearm. The District Court granted summary judgment in favor of the United States, finding the shooting was objectively reasonable under the totality of the circumstances. The case is on appeal to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit.

**Civil and criminal collections:** In FY 2024, USAO-ND's Financial Litigation Unit and its partners within the Department of Justice obtained \$10,591,447.02 in total civil collections, a sum which includes \$8,016,298.99 received pursuant to a settlement reached by DOJ's Environment and Natural Resources Division in United States v. Belle Fourche Pipeline Co. During the same period, criminal



collections in the form of restitution and fines totaled \$4,197,426.56. For perspective, these combined recoveries are solidly more than twice the size of USAO-ND's 2024 budget.

## OUTREACH, PARTNERSHIPS, AND INITIATIVES

The office's lawyers are trial attorneys and civil litigators to the core, dedicated to representing the United States with integrity, fairness, and excellence. In addition to their role as advocates, they are also leaders in communities throughout North Dakota where they work closely with law enforcement partners, social service agencies, and nonprofits to keep communities safe. In 2024, the office advanced a number of initiatives that build on existing partnerships to increase public safety.



*USAO-ND Indian country prosecutor Nick Baker (right) meets with law enforcement partners, including Dierks, a bloodhound trained in search and rescue, at the MHA Nation Emergency Operations Center in New Town following a Savanna's Act meeting in August.*

### Savanna's Act:

Named after Savanna LaFontaine-Greywind, a resident of Fargo and member of the Spirit Lake Nation who was murdered in 2017 while she was eight months pregnant, Savanna's Act vests United States Attorneys' Offices across the country with important duties related to preventing and responding to cases involving missing indigenous persons.

USAO-ND wholeheartedly embraces its role under that law, leading multi-jurisdictional Savanna's Act meetings on each of the four major reservations in the District of North Dakota and performing other important duties related to data collection, reporting, and law enforcement training on missing

persons issues. Since April of 2022, USAO-ND has received and helped respond to 73 missing person reports, comprised of 33 adult and 40 juvenile cases. 70 those cases were resolved, and three are subject to open investigations.

### **Project Safe Neighborhoods:**

Building on the office's efforts to improve public safety in and around the Arbors housing complex in Fargo as part of Project Safe Neighborhoods, a program bringing together all levels of law enforcement and the communities they serve to reduce violent crime and gun violence, USAO-ND announced the Strategic Assistance for Fargo through Federal Enforcement and Resources (S.A.F.F.E.R.) initiative in June.

S.A.F.F.E.R. utilizes new federal investigative tools, namely the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) equipment recently placed in Fargo, and additional prosecutorial resources in the form of a full-time violent crime AUSA and the assignment of a trial attorney from Main Justice's Violent Crime and Racketeering Section, as force multipliers to assist local law enforcement in targeting the drivers of violent crime in the Fargo area. Representative cases include the following:



*Law enforcement partners joined USAO-ND and David Rody (right), Acting Deputy Assistant Attorney General overseeing the Department's Violent Crime and Racketeering Section, to announce the S.A.F.F.E.R. initiative in June.*

**U.S. v. Logan:** As noted in court documents, a federal grand jury indicted Amire Logan on two counts of possession of firearms and ammunition by a convicted felon, two counts of possession of firearms and ammunition by a drug user or addict, and one count of possession of a firearm with an obliterated serial number, arising from a June 24, 2024, shooting at the Arbors in Fargo and a September 24, 2024, incident in West Fargo. (The indictment in this case is not evidence of guilt. The defendant is presumed innocent unless or until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt at trial.)

**U.S. v. Pearson:** In November, Kadar Pearson of Fargo pleaded guilty to one count of possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. As noted in court documents, in the afternoon of June 5, 2024, Fargo Police Department officers were in the area of the Arbors apartment complex after an earlier shots-fired report. They observed a person, later identified as Pearson, wearing a sweatshirt and pulling up a ski mask over his face, though the temperature was in the mid-70s. Officers observed Pearson enter into a backyard in the neighborhood, where a resident of the home said Pearson did not have permission to be. After Pearson refused to halt and officers gave chase, he threw what appeared to be a firearm beneath a vehicle in a nearby parking lot. Surveillance cameras captured the toss. On the ground beneath the vehicle, officers found a SIG Sauer 9mm pistol, loaded with 10 rounds of ammunition, which was previously reported stolen in Fargo.

**United States v. Jellah, et al.:** As noted in court documents, Leo Jellah, aka "Chapo," was charged via indictment in April with conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute and distribute a controlled substance and money laundering. Public records indicate that in 2023, Jellah pled guilty to robbery in North Dakota state court under section 12.1-22-01(1) of the North Dakota Century Code, which makes it a felony to menace or inflict serious bodily injury in the course of committing a theft. (The



indictment in this case is not evidence of guilt. The defendant is presumed innocent unless or until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt at trial.)

## **Violence Against Women Act designation for Grand Forks:**

In September, Grand Forks was selected by the United States Attorney General as a jurisdiction of focus to address intimate partner gun violence under the Violence Against Women Act. Following discussions between USAO-ND, the Grand Forks State's Attorney's Office, the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms, local law enforcement, and the Community Violence Intervention Center, Assistant State's Attorney Rachel Egstad was sworn in as a Special Assistant United States Attorney (SAUSA) in November. Egstad will focus on reducing intimate partner firearm violence in the Grand Forks area by bringing prosecutions in federal district court under 18 U.S.C. § 922(g) while continuing to work full-time as a state prosecutor.



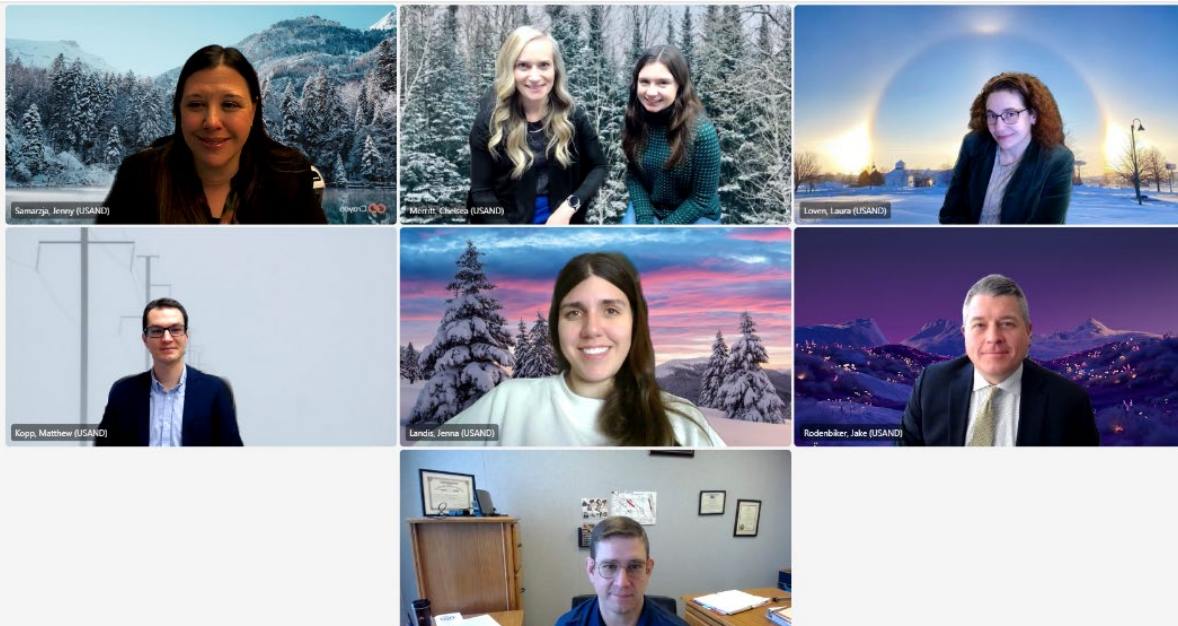
*From left to right, SAUSA Rachel Egstad and Grand Forks State's Attorney Haley Wamstad, who are partnering with USAO-ND to reduce intimate partner firearm violence.*

## **eLitigation:**

Bringing federal prosecutions and litigating civil cases increasingly requires working with massive amounts of electronic evidence from cell phones, social media, encrypted apps, and more. To help, Main Justice allocated a full-time eLitigation AUSA to USAO-ND in 2023. In early 2024, AUSA Jenny Samarzja was onboarded to fill that new and important role, working with the office's eLitigation team, Litigation Support Unit, and law enforcement partners to ensure evidence is obtained and disclosed in a way that leads to successful prosecutions, meets critical discovery obligations, and helps civil litigators more effectively represent the United States in complex cases.

12:07

Chat People Raise Hand React View Rooms Apps More Camera Mic Share Leave



*USAO-ND's eLitigation team.*