

= Grand Forks , North Dakota =

Grand Forks is the third @-@ largest city in the State of North Dakota (after Fargo and Bismarck) and the county seat of Grand Forks County . According to the 2010 census , the city 's population was 52 @,@ 838 , while that of the city and surrounding metropolitan area was 98 @,@ 461 . Grand Forks , along with its twin city of East Grand Forks , Minnesota , forms the center of the Grand Forks , ND @-@ MN Metropolitan Statistical Area , which is often called Greater Grand Forks or The Grand Cities .

Located on the western banks of the Red River of the North in a flat region known as the Red River Valley , the city is prone to flooding and was struck by the devastating Red River Flood of 1997 . Originally called Les Grandes Fourches by French fur traders , Grand Forks was founded in 1870 by steamboat captain Alexander Griggs and incorporated on February 22 , 1881 . Its location at the fork of the Red River and the Red Lake River gives the city its name .

Historically dependent on local agriculture , the city 's economy now encompasses higher education , defense , health care , manufacturing , food processing , and scientific research . Grand Forks is served by Grand Forks International Airport and Grand Forks Air Force Base . The city 's University of North Dakota is the oldest institution of higher education in the state . The Alerus Center and Ralph Engelstad Arena host athletic and other events , while the North Dakota Museum of Art and Chester Fritz Auditorium are the city 's largest cultural venues .

= = History = =

Prior to settlement by Europeans or Americans , the area where the city now sits ? at the forks of the Red River and Red Lake River ? had been an important meeting and trading point for Native Americans . Early French explorers , fur trappers , and traders called the area Les Grandes Fourches meaning " The Grand Forks " . By the 1740s , Les Grandes Fourches was an important trading post for French fur trappers . A U.S. post office was established on the site on June 15 , 1870 , and the name was changed to " Grand Forks " . Alexander Griggs , a steamboat captain , is regarded as " The Father of Grand Forks " . Griggs ' steamboat froze in the Red River on a voyage in late 1870 , forcing the captain and his crew to spend the winter camping at Grand Forks . Griggs platted the community in 1875 and Grand Forks was officially incorporated on February 22 , 1881 . The city quickly grew after the arrival of the Great Northern Railway in 1880 and the Northern Pacific Railway in 1887 . In 1883 , the University of North Dakota was established , six years before North Dakota was formally recognized as an independent state born from the Dakota Territory . The first half of the 20th century saw steady growth and the development of new neighborhoods farther south and west of Downtown Grand Forks . The 1920s saw the construction of the state @-@ owned North Dakota Mill and Elevator on the north side of the city . In 1954 , Grand Forks was chosen as the site for an Air Force base . Grand Forks Air Force Base brought thousands of new jobs and residents to the community . The military base and the University of North Dakota would become integral pieces of the city 's economy . The second half of the 20th century saw Grand Forks spreading further away from the older part of town . Interstate 29 was built on the western side of the city and two enclosed shopping malls ? South Forks Plaza and Columbia Mall ? were built on the south side .

The city was struck by a severe flood in 1997 , causing extensive damage . With Fargo upstream from the bulk of the waters and Winnipeg with its flood control structures , Grand Forks became the hardest hit city in the Red River Valley . During the height of the flooding , a major fire also destroyed eleven buildings in the downtown area . Many neighborhoods had to be demolished to make way for a new levee system , which was ultimately completed ten years later . The land bordering the Red River was turned into a massive park known as the Greater Grand Forks Greenway . Since the flood , Grand Forks has seen both public and private developments throughout town . Two new , large sports venues opened in 2001 , including the Alerus Center and the Ralph Engelstad Arena . In 2007 , the Winnipeg @-@ based Canad Inns hotel chain opened a 13 @-@ story hotel and waterpark adjacent to the Alerus Center . By 2007 Grand Forks had a

larger population than it did before the 1997 flood , and area employment and taxable sales had also surpassed pre @-@ flood levels .

= = Geography = =

Grand Forks is located 74 miles (119 km) north of the Fargo @-@ Moorhead area and 145 miles (233 km) south of Winnipeg , Manitoba . Grand Forks is situated on the western bank of the Red River of the North in an area known as the Red River Valley . The term " forks " refers to the forking of the Red River with the Red Lake River located near downtown Grand Forks . According to the United States Census Bureau , the city has a total area of 20 @.@ 09 square miles (52 @.@ 03 km²) , of which , 19 @.@ 91 square miles (51 @.@ 57 km²) is land and 0 @.@ 18 square miles (0 @.@ 47 km²) is water . Since it is in one of the flattest parts of the world , the city has few differences in elevation . There are no lakes in the city limits of Grand Forks , but the meandering Red River and the English Coulee flow through the community and provide some break in the terrain . The Red River Valley is the result of an ancient glacier carving its way south during the last Ice Age . Once the glacier receded , it formed a glacial lake called Lake Agassiz . The ancient beaches can still be seen as rolling hills west of the city .

= = Cityscape = =

Grand Forks has several distinct neighborhoods . The area adjacent to the Red River developed first so this is where some of the oldest neighborhoods , including the downtown area , can be found . The area between downtown and the University of North Dakota campus was another early growth area and historic properties can be found here as well .

Downtown Grand Forks is the oldest part of the city and thus contains many historic buildings . It is the governmental center of the city and county . It is used as a gathering place for large events and festivals . Also , a farmer 's market is held every Saturday (9AM to 2PM) from mid @-@ June to mid @-@ September in the Town Square on the corner of 3rd Street S. and DeMers Avenue .

Recently , city leaders and developers have announced plans to convert older buildings into high @-@ end condos and apartments , and to construct new buildings for the same purpose . Located directly south of downtown , the streets of the Near Southside Historic District are lined with classic houses . Reeves Drive was once one of the most fashionable neighborhoods in the city and , to this day , it is still the home of many old mansions exhibiting several unique architectural styles . Also in this neighborhood are areas of original granitoid paving , several historic churches , and the Lincoln Drive Park . The Near Southside neighborhood was granted the historic district designation by the National Register of Historic Places .

In general , the newer neighborhoods of Grand Forks are in the southern and western parts of town . The 32nd Avenue South corridor has been the commercial center of the city since the Columbia Mall opened in 1978 . Many big box stores and restaurants are now located along the avenue . A large strip mall , called the Grand Forks Marketplace , opened in 2001 near the Columbia Mall . University Village is a new commercial district that was built on vacant lands owned by the University of North Dakota . The centerpiece of the Village is the Ralph Engelstad Arena , which is used by the University 's North Dakota men 's ice hockey team . All the buildings in the Village have been built in a similar style to buildings on the nearby UND campus . The area now includes restaurants and stores , as well as the University bookstore . In 2006 , a new Wellness Center for UND students opened on the Village 's west side .

= = Climate = =

Due to its location in the Great Plains and its distance from both mountains and oceans , the city has a humid continental climate (Köppen (Dfb)) , USDA Plant Hardiness Zone 4a . This type of climate is distinguished by four very distinct seasons and great variation in temperatures over very short periods of time . As there are no nearby mountain ranges or bodies of water to ameliorate the

climatic conditions , Grand Forks lies exposed to numerous weather systems including bitterly cold Arctic high pressure systems . The city experiences long , cold , and snowy winters . In sharp contrast , summers are often warm to hot and often quite humid with frequent thunderstorms . Although warm weather normally ends soon after Labor Day , a few warm days can , on rare occasions , be seen as late as October . Spring and autumn are short and highly variable seasons . Record temperature extremes range from -43°F (-42°C) on January 11 , 1912 to 109°F (43°C) on July 12 , 1936 . The daily mean temperatures of the Grand Forks winters are associated with subarctic climates with frequent subzero temperatures , but due to the extended warm period of daily means above 50°F (10°C) from May to September it stays within the humid continental temperature range .

== Demographics ==

According to the 2006 @-@ 2008 American Community Survey , the racial composition was as follows :

White : 91 @. @ 6 % (Non @-@ Hispanic Whites : 90 @. @ 4 %)

Black or African American : 1 @. @ 6 %

American Indian : 3 @. @ 2 %

Asian : 1 @. @ 0 %

Pacific Islander : 0 @. @ 0 %

Some other race : 1 @. @ 1 %

Two or more races : 1 @. @ 5 %

Hispanic or Latino (of any race) : 2 @. @ 4 %

The top five European ancestry groups were the following :

Norwegian : 35 @. @ 7 %

German : 34 @. @ 3 %

Irish : 9 @. @ 5 %

Polish : 7 @. @ 4 %

French : 5 @. @ 4 %

=== 2010 census ===

As of the census of 2010 , there were 52 @, @ 838 people , 22 @, @ 260 households , and 11 @, @ 275 families residing in the city . The population density was 2 @, @ 653 @. @ 8 inhabitants per square mile (1 @, @ 024 @. @ 6 / km²) . There were 23 @, @ 449 housing units at an average density of 1 @, @ 177 @. @ 7 per square mile (454 @. @ 7 / km²) . The racial makeup of the city was 89 @. @ 7 % White , 2 @. @ 0 % African American , 2 @. @ 9 % Native American , 2 @. @ 2 % Asian , 0 @. @ 7 % from other races , and 2 @. @ 5 % from two or more races . Hispanic or Latino of any race were 2 @. @ 8 % of the population .

There were 22 @, @ 260 households of which 24 @. @ 3 % had children under the age of 18 living with them , 37 @. @ 3 % were married couples living together , 9 @. @ 7 % had a female householder with no husband present , 3 @. @ 7 % had a male householder with no wife present , and 49 @. @ 3 % were non @-@ families . 34 @. @ 8 % of all households were made up of individuals and 8 @. @ 6 % had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older . The average household size was 2 @. @ 21 and the average family size was 2 @. @ 87 .

The median age in the city was 28 @. @ 4 years . 18 @. @ 4 % of residents were under the age of 18 ; 24 @. @ 6 % were between the ages of 18 and 24 ; 25 @. @ 1 % were from 25 to 44 ; 21 @. @ 7 % were from 45 to 64 ; and 10 @. @ 1 % were 65 years of age or older . The gender makeup of the city was 51 @. @ 2 % male and 48 @. @ 8 % female .

=== 2000 census ===

As of the 2000 Census , there were 49 @, @ 321 people , 19 @, @ 677 households , and 11 @, @

058 families residing in the city . The population density was 2 @, @ 563 @. @ 0 per square mile (989 @. @ 8 / km2) . There were 20 @, @ 838 housing units at an average density of 1 @, @ 082 @. @ 8 per square mile (418 @. @ 2 / km2) .

The racial makeup of the city was 93 @. @ 4 % White , 0 @. @ 9 % African American , 2 @. @ 8 % Native American , 1 @. @ 0 % Asian , 0 @. @ 1 % Pacific Islander , 0 @. @ 6 % from other races , and 1 @. @ 4 % from two or more races . Hispanic or Latino of any race were 1 @. @ 9 % of the population . The top six ancestry groups in the city were Norwegian (36 @. @ 4 %) , German (34 @. @ 7 %) , Irish (10 @. @ 6 %) , French (6 @. @ 5 %) , Polish (6 @. @ 2 %) , English (6 @. @ 1 %) . There were 21 @. @ 4 % of the population under the age of 18 , 22 @. @ 9 % from 18 to 24 , 27 @. @ 7 % from 25 to 44 , 18 @. @ 3 % from 45 to 64 , and 9 @. @ 8 % who were 65 years of age or older . The median age was 28 years . For every 100 females there were 102 @. @ 0 males . For every 100 females age 18 and over , there were 100 @. @ 2 males .

Of the 19 @, @ 677 households , 28 @. @ 7 % had children under the age of 18 living with them , 43 @. @ 2 % were married couples living together , 10 @. @ 0 % had a female householder with no husband present , and 43 @. @ 8 % were non @-@ families . 31 @. @ 4 % of all households were made up of individuals and 8 @. @ 5 % had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older . The average household size was 2 @. @ 3 and the average family size was 3 @. @ 0 . The median income for a household in the city was \$ 34 @, @ 194 , and the median income for a family was \$ 47 @, @ 491 . Males had a median income of \$ 30 @, @ 703 versus \$ 21 @, @ 573 for females . The per capita income for the city was \$ 18 @, @ 395 . About 9 @. @ 3 % of families and 14 @. @ 6 % of the population were below the poverty line , including 14 @. @ 6 % of those under age 18 and 7 @. @ 7 % of those age 65 or over .

The median income for a household in the city was \$ 34 @, @ 194 , and the median income for a family was \$ 47 @, @ 491 . Males had a median income of \$ 30 @, @ 703 versus \$ 21 @, @ 573 for females . The per capita income for the city was \$ 18 @, @ 395 . About 9 @. @ 3 % of families and 14 @. @ 6 % of the population were below the poverty line , including 14 @. @ 6 % of those under age 18 and 7 @. @ 7 % of those age 65 or over .

= = Economy = =

The economy of Grand Forks is not dominated by any one industry or sector . While agriculture continues to play a role in the area 's economy , the city of Grand Forks now has a relatively diverse economy that includes public and private employers in sectors such as education , defense , health care , manufacturing , and food processing . The state and federal governments are two of the largest employers in the Grand Forks area . The University of North Dakota , located in the heart of the city , is the largest employer in the metropolitan area . Grand Forks Air Force Base , just west of the city , employs a large number of civilian workers in addition to its military personnel . Altru Health System is the largest private employer in Grand Forks .

= = = Largest employers = = =

According to the City 's 2013 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report , the largest employers in the city are :

Major manufacturers in Grand Forks include wind turbine manufacturer LM Glasfiber and small aircraft manufacturer Cirrus Design . Major food producers include potato processor J. R. Simplot Company and the state @-@ owned North Dakota Mill and Elevator which is the largest flour mill in the United States . Amazon.com and SEI Information Technologies both operate call centers in Grand Forks . Other large private employers in the city include the locally owned Alerus Financial branch of banks , Home of Economy , and the locally owned Hugo 's chain of supermarkets .

The retail and service sector is also an important part of the economy . The historic center of shopping in Grand Forks was the downtown area . Today , downtown is home to small shops and restaurants and south Grand Forks has become the major retail district in the city . Grand Forks has three large shopping centers . The oldest , Grand Cities Mall , is located on South Washington

Street and contains mainly small , locally owned stores as well as a Kmart . With about 80 stores , the area 's largest indoor mall is Columbia Mall which is anchored by Macy 's , Sears , J.C. Penney , and a small food court . The newest major shopping center in the city is the Grand Forks Marketplace power center mall which features SuperTarget , Best Buy , Lowe 's , Gordmans , and several smaller stores . Depending on the relative strength of the Canadian dollar versus the American dollar , the Greater Grand Forks area attracts large numbers of tourist shoppers from Manitoba and especially from Winnipeg .

= = = Economic development = = =

The city government is actively involved in the economic development process , helping existing firms grow and attracting new ones . A portion of sales tax revenues is set aside for this , some of it going into the Grand Forks Growth Fund . Companies can request low @-@ interest loans or grants from this fund provided they meet certain criteria , such as paying a relatively high wage and doing most of their business outside the city 's trade region . The city also contributes to the Grand Forks Region Economic Development Corporation (EDC) , a public @-@ private organization that also receives funding from banks and other major businesses . The EDC plays a consulting role for businesses , such as identifying suitable sites for expansion or assembling public funding packages . Its other key role is to vet businesses to see if they are suitable for funding by the Growth Fund .

Community leaders have long seen UND as an " economic engine " for the city . Besides its regular faculty , it also has business @-@ like components such as the Energy and Environmental Research Center . UND hosts a technology incubator called the Center for Innovation . More recently , the University has been working to commercialize its research . A major thrust in that direction is the construction of a research park on the western fringes of the campus . Another potential economic opportunity for the city is the addition of the unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) mission to Grand Forks Air Force Base . The base currently hosts KC @-@ 135 Stratotankers , which will gradually be transferred to other bases around the country .

= = Culture = =

= = = Arts and theatre = = =

Due at least in part to the presence of the University of North Dakota , Grand Forks offers a variety of arts and cultural events . The North Dakota Museum of Art , located on the UND campus , brings many nationally touring exhibits to Grand Forks as well as the work of regional artists . In addition to the Museum of Art , UND offers other gallery space for student art . UND also has active Theater Arts and Music departments . Students stage theater productions each year at the Burtness Theater on campus . UND 's Chester Fritz Auditorium also brings music and theater events to Grand Forks including national touring companies of Broadway musicals .

The Greater Grand Forks Symphony Orchestra has been performing since 1905 and the Grand Forks Master Chorale was formed in 1983 . Both groups stage productions each year at various locations in the community . The North Dakota Ballet Company is headquartered in Grand Forks and often performs at the Chester Fritz Auditorium . The Grand Forks City Band was formed in 1886 and still stages shows year round .

The Empire Arts Center , in downtown Grand Forks , is home to several cultural events throughout the year . The Empire , a 1919 movie theater , was restored after the Flood of 1997 and now includes performance space , a large movie screen , a gallery , and space for artists . The Fire Hall Theatre , also located downtown , is used by community members to put on several theater productions each year . The Summer Performing Arts Company (SPA) is a popular summer arts program for area K @-@ 12 students . SPA stages three major musicals mid @-@ July . The Myra Museum , on Belmont Road near the Greater Grand Forks Greenway , is a small history museum with exhibits that trace local history from the Ice Age , through settlement , and into the modern age .

. Other buildings on the Myra Museum grounds include the original 1868 Grand Forks Post Office , a 1917 one room school , and the historic Campbell House .

== Sports ==

College sports are popular in Grand Forks , with an intense following for the University of North Dakota . The UND men 's ice hockey team competes in the NCAA Division I level and has been the Frozen Four championship team eight times and the runner @-@ up five times . The UND football team was the 2001 NCAA Division II champion and the 2003 runner @-@ up . In 2006 , the university announced that it would be moving its entire athletic program to Division I.

Grand Forks is home to two major indoor athletic arenas . The city @-@ owned Alerus Center opened in 2001 . The Alerus Center is home to the University of North Dakota football team and also plays host to a variety of other events including major concerts . The Alerus Center is the largest arena and convention center complex in the upper Midwest area . The University of North Dakota hockey teams compete in the Ralph Engelstad Arena , located in the University Village district of the UND campus . " The Ralph " , as it is commonly called , was funded by UND benefactor Ralph Engelstad and opened in 2001 at a cost of over \$ 100 million . Adjacent to the Ralph Engelstad Arena is the smaller Betty Engelstad Sioux Center . " The Betty " is the home of the University of North Dakota basketball and volleyball teams .

== Recreation ==

The Grand Forks Park District , established in 1905 , operates 14 neighborhood parks , 28 tennis courts , and a swimming pool . The parks include features such as playgrounds , baseball fields , softball fields , soccer fields , basketball courts , and picnic areas . Sertoma Park includes a Japanese garden . The Park District also operates eleven outdoor skating rinks and indoor ice arenas : Purpur Arena , Eagles Arena , Blueline Club Arena , and Gambucci Arena . The district also owns the Center Court Fitness Club .

There are several golf courses in the city and the surrounding area . The Park District operates the 18 @-@ hole , Arnold Palmer @-@ designed , links style King 's Walk Golf Course and the historic , 9 @-@ hole Lincoln Golf Course . The University of North Dakota operates the 9 @-@ hole Ray Richards Golf Course . The 18 @-@ hole Grand Forks Country Club is located directly south of the city . There are also golf courses in nearby East Grand Forks , Minnesota and Manvel , North Dakota .

The Greater Grand Forks Greenway is a large park that runs the length of the Red River in the city . It includes an extensive path system , large festival grounds , ski trails , and wildflower gardens . Including the Greenway , the Andrew Hampsten Bikeway System in Grand Forks is over 43 miles (69 km) long . These paths are located in The Greenway , adjacent to major streets , and on the banks of the English Coulee . There are also two pedestrian / bicycle bridges that span the Red River .

== Notable people ==

== Media ==

The Grand Forks Herald is the major daily newspaper serving Grand Forks and is also the second most widely circulated newspaper in North Dakota with a daily circulation of around 31 @,@ 000 . The Exponent is a weekly newspaper published in East Grand Forks , Minnesota . The University of North Dakota also has its own student @-@ published newspaper called The Dakota Student , which is published twice weekly during the school year .

The major AM radio station in Grand Forks is KNOX 1310 , which is a news and talk station . The city 's FM stations include NPR affiliates KUND @-@ FM 89 @.@ 3 , KFJM 90 @.@ 7 , KQMN 91

@. @ 5 and KNTN 102 @. @ 7 . Commercial FM stations include rock station KJKJ 107 @. @ 5 ; top 40 stations KKXL @- @ FM 92 @. @ 9 and KZGF 94 @. @ 7 ; and country stations KSNR 100 @. @ 3 and KYCK 97 @. @ 1 .

WDAZ @- @ TV channel 8 , an ABC affiliate , is the only broadcast television station in Grand Forks that provides local news . All other major U.S. television networks are broadcast from Fargo .

= = Government = =

Grand Forks uses the mayor @- @ council model of municipal government . The mayor , who is elected every four years , has the power to oversee the daily administration of city government and to work directly with department heads to ensure the proper provision of services . The mayor of Grand Forks is obstetrician Dr. Michael Brown . He was first elected in 2000 and was re @- @ elected in 2004 and again in 2008 .

The city is divided into seven wards with each ward electing a single city council representative for a four @- @ year term . The council meets twice a month as the council proper and its two main committees , the Finance / Development Committee and Service / Safety Committee , each meets twice a month . All these meetings are broadcast on a local cable channel .

= = Education = =

= = = Higher education = = =

The University of North Dakota (UND) , the oldest university and home of the only schools of medicine and law in the state , is located at Grand Forks . Enrollment is about 15 @, @ 000 . UND is known for its John D. Odegard School of Aerospace Sciences which includes an Air Traffic Control Training program that in October 2009 was ranked No.1 in the nation for the second consecutive year by the FAA . UND and North Dakota State University make up the Red River Valley Research Corridor .

Northland Community and Technical College , a two @- @ year school , is located across the Red River in East Grand Forks . The University of Minnesota Crookston is in nearby Crookston , Minnesota .

= = = Primary and secondary schools = = =

The Grand Forks Public Schools system includes the Grand Forks and Grand Forks Air Force Base school districts . Enrollment is about 7 @, @ 600 . There are twelve elementary schools , four middle schools , and two high schools (Central High and Red River High) , an alternative high school , and an adult education program . Grand Forks Public Schools is governed by a nine @- @ member board of elected representatives , separate from the city and county governments .

There are several primary schools that are not part of the public school system including the state @- @ operated North Dakota School for the Blind . There are two Catholic schools offering classes from kindergarten through sixth grade . The only private high school in the metropolitan area is Sacred Heart High School , a Catholic school , in East Grand Forks . There is a non @- @ denominational Christian elementary and middle school operating in East Grand Forks .

= = Infrastructure = =

= = = Transportation = = =

= = = = Air = = = =

Grand Forks International Airport (GFK , KGFK) is served by Delta Air Lines with several daily round trips to Minneapolis @-@ St. Paul International Airport ; and Allegiant Air , which operates flights a few times a week to Mesa , Arizona (Phoenix @-@ Gateway) , Sanford , Florida (Orlando @-@ Sanford) and Las Vegas , Nevada . A new passenger terminal was completed in early 2011 , adding additional space to allow more passengers to come through the airport as well as providing the airport with better circulation , a new baggage claim as well as addressing additional security and safety concerns necessary to complete the new terminal project . The airport is a major distribution center for FedEx , which conducts flights daily within the state and northern Minnesota . The airport is one of the busiest airports in the country , due in large measure to the presence of the John D. Odegard School of Aerospace Sciences of the University of North Dakota .

===== Rail =====

The BNSF Railway runs track in several directions in and around the city . Amtrak passenger service on the Empire Builder line heads westbound daily at 4 : 52 am and eastbound daily at 12 : 57 am . The Empire Builder stops at the Grand Forks Amtrak station .

===== Road =====

Three federal highways pass through Grand Forks : U.S. Route 2 , Interstate 29 , and U.S. Highway 81 . U.S. Highway 2 , known as Gateway Drive in the city , runs east to west through the northern part of town and is a four @-@ lane highway . The highway is the primary connection between Grand Forks , East Grand Forks , the Grand Forks Air Force Base , Grand Forks International Airport , and nearby Crookston , Minnesota . Interstate 29 runs north to south along the western part of the city , officially multiplexed with U.S. Highway 81 in the Grand Forks area . The U.S. Highway 81 business route , Washington Street and 32nd Avenue , runs through many of the city 's major commercial districts .

===== Local transportation =====

Within the city , roads that run from north to south are traditionally called " streets " and roads that run from east to west are traditionally called " avenues " . Streets are numbered in blocks west of the Red River . Avenues are numbered in blocks north or south of DeMers Avenue ? the city 's historic dividing route adjacent to the rail yards . The city maintains a bus system called Cities Area Transit , also known by the acronym CAT . The system has operated since 1926 when it was introduced to replace an earlier trolley system . There are twelve bus routes including night service and service in the community of East Grand Forks .

===== Health care =====

With over 4 @,@ 100 employees and nearly 300 physicians and mid @-@ levels (nurse practitioners and physician assistants) , Altru Health System is the main provider of health care in Greater Grand Forks and the surrounding region . Serving more than 220 @,@ 000 residents in northeast North Dakota and northwest Minnesota , Altru provides an array of services to meet the needs of patients of all ages and levels of health . As the first member of the Mayo Clinic Care Network , Altru 's providers have access to clinically integrated tools extending Mayo Clinic 's knowledge and expertise to patients . Altru Health System is also the largest private employer in Grand Forks . Offering all private patient rooms , Altru 's Columbia Road Campus includes Altru Hospital (257 beds) , Altru Rehabilitation Center (20 beds) and multiple clinics . Altru 's South Washington Medical Park features Altru Specialty Center (45 beds) , Altru Professional Center and Yorhom Medical Essentials . The Sanny and Jerry Ryan Center for Prevention and Genetics , housed in Choice Health & Fitness , encourages individuals to think about their health through

preventive measures before it becomes medically necessary to seek care . The first of its kind in the region , the Center provides a unique opportunity for individuals to take an active approach to a healthier life . Truyu Aesthetic Center , with multiple locations in Grand Forks , East Grand Forks and across the region , offers a variety of surgical and non @-@ surgical procedures , services and products to rejuvenate your look , provided under the support of Altru . Altru Health System is the result of a 1997 merger of United Hospital (formerly Deaconess and St. Michael 's Hospitals) and the Grand Forks Clinic .

= = Sister cities = =

Grand Forks has an active sister city program designed to encourage cultural and economic exchanges . Grand Forks ' first sister city was Ishim in the Soviet Union . The relationship with the Siberian city formally began in 1984 during the Cold War . Sometime in the late 1990s , however , political and economic turmoil in Russia ended the relationship . While the relationship with Ishim faded , Grand Forks found a new sister in Awano , Japan . An informal relationship began in 1994 when the school districts of both cities began exchanging students . In 1998 , the two formally proclaimed themselves sister cities . The most concrete evidence of the relationship between the two is a Japanese rock garden in Grand Forks ' Sertoma Park and a sculpture of an American bison in an Awano park . However , the annexation of Awano by the larger city of Kanuma has led to the end of the sister city relationship . Grand Forks ' relationship with Dickinson , North Dakota , began in 2002 , when delegations from each city visited the other . Grand Forks Mayor Michael Brown has said he thinks having friends in western North Dakota , which typically has diverging interests from eastern cities , could help at the state legislature . Sarpsborg , Norway , became a sister city in 2005 following several exchanges among leaders from both cities . The city became interested in building a relationship with Sarpsborg because many Grand Forks residents have Norwegian heritage .