

# TouchPoints

a publication of **Dawson** Insurance

Spring 2010



Moore Engineering, Inc.  
Board Members (l to r):  
Jeff Volk, Nick Gludt,  
Roger Fenstad, Kevin Bucholz

## Hand in Hand

It's about clients, not projects for West Fargo-based Moore Engineering, Inc. For more than 50 years, the firm has been delivering a valuable one-two engineering and financing punch for clients' infrastructure projects in North Dakota and Minnesota.

# President's Message



## What's Your 20x10?

by Tom Dawson

There's a phrase for asking where someone is – "What's your 20?" My question for May 22, 2010 is, "What's your 20x10?" In other words, where will you be for the 6th Annual Fargo Marathon?

The 2010 Fargo Marathon will be one of the year's most spectacular happenings. Organizers are attempting to recruit 20,000 participants (thus, 20x10) and, if they're successful, our city will be overflowing. That many people would be a sellout crowd in the Fargodome, and that's an economic boon for our community.

It's hard to believe this all started just five years ago with only 2,400 participants. More than a race for serious competitors, it has grown into an annual event that puts Fargo-Moorhead on the running world map. It brings people from across the United States and around the globe, and offers us a golden opportunity to showcase our friendliness, hospitality and community. Dawson has been a sponsor in each of the first five years, and we're proud to be one again this year. Many of our associates also will be running, and others will staff an aid station along the route.

Whatever you're doing on May 22, I hope at least part of your day will involve the Fargo Marathon. Even if you're not up for the full 26 miles, you might consider the half marathon, one of the team relays or the 10K or 5K. There's even a youth run for the kids, and you should see their faces when they cross the finish line. You don't run? No problem. You can volunteer, or at minimum, plant a folding chair along the route and cheer on the runners.

It's a great way to support our community. So...

What's your 20x10?

*Tom Dawson*

# Consider Converting Your Traditional IRA to a Roth



**T**ax-free IRA distributions are now within reach for anyone, even those with higher incomes.

In 2010, for the first time ever, family income limits have been eliminated for the purposes of converting a Traditional IRA to a Roth IRA. Previously, depending on restrictions based on filing status, people with higher annual incomes were barred from making a conversion. Now, everyone is eligible.

"A primary benefit of Roth IRAs is that people can withdraw from them without paying taxes on the distributions," said Jim Nyhof, Dawson financial services manager. "If tax rates are going up, that's a real advantage. A Roth also is ideal for those who will be in a higher tax bracket at retirement than they are in now."

If you are thinking about taking advantage of converting your Traditional IRA to a Roth IRA, you must also take into consideration the tax implications. You will be responsible for the tax liability on the entire balance. However, if you convert to the Roth IRA in 2010, you can spread your tax liability over a two-year period. If you wait to convert until 2011 or after, you will only have one year to pay your tax liability.

### Roth Advantages

Since you pay taxes on contributions, withdrawals of contributions are tax-free as long as the Roth has existed for at least five years and you are at least 59½ years old. With a Traditional IRA, you can deduct contributions each year but distributions will be taxed, possibly at a higher rate.

You can make Roth contributions beyond retirement age. Traditional IRAs only allow contributions up to age 70½. This makes the Roth particularly attractive to anyone who will need to keep working into the retirement years.

With a Traditional IRA, you are required to begin making withdrawals at age 70½. With a Roth, you are not required to begin withdrawing funds at any specific age.

### Income Limitations

While anyone can now convert a Traditional IRA to a Roth, those with higher incomes will not be able to make additional Roth contributions. The income limits for 2010 are:

- Single filers with a modified adjusted gross income (MAGI) between \$105,000 and \$120,000.
- Married couples filing jointly with a MAGI of \$167,000 to \$177,000.

Roth IRA, continued on page 6



## Surety Bonds:

### Information You Present, and How You Present It, Can Make the Difference

Main street businesses from construction companies to financial institutions rely on bonding to stay in business. The economic slowdown is making it more difficult to obtain a surety bond, but with the right information and support, it's still possible.

Bonds come in all sizes and formats. Notary bonds, for example, require little underwriting, while contract bonds are tightly underwritten and financial guarantee bonds are difficult to obtain under the best of circumstances.

Bonds typically guarantee someone's performance or ability to pay. With the economic slowdown and reduced business activities, it has become much more difficult for some bondholders to perform or pay their obligations. Due to poor performance, claims and inadequate underwriting, surety companies have become increasingly skeptical of underwriting information and less willing to write bonds.

The skepticism often becomes obvious when a surety company processes a bond request and follows through with the underwriting procedures. They are asking more questions of the bondholder, considering more financial information and requiring additional guarantees such as the use of collateral or other financial commitments to support the request.

#### Consider the following points when working toward approval for your bonding needs:

**Information** – The best way to help a surety get comfortable with your request is to provide as much information as possible. Be clear about who is requiring the bond (a government entity, state law, Federal Acquisition Regulations, etc.), the bond form (if available), and any other circumstances surrounding the need for the bond. Sureties routinely write certain bonds so they already understand the requirements, but it always pays to provide everything you know.

**Financials** – The surety almost always will require financial information from the company or its owners. Depending on the type of bond or bond program, you might be required to provide independently prepared financial statements.

**Background** – If you're dealing with a continuing bond program, you might need to provide background information about the company, banking relationships, past performance, creditor information and a payment history (credit report).

With the right people managing the process, submitting a bond request can be a relatively easy process. The experts in our dedicated Bond Department have more than 40 years of experience in the surety area, and Dawson represents a majority of the top surety companies operating in this market.

For more information, contact Wayne Lauwers ([wayne@dawsonins.com](mailto:wayne@dawsonins.com)) or Becky Hecker ([becky@dawsonins.com](mailto:becky@dawsonins.com)) or call us at 701-237-3311. **D**

# Dawson Associates

#### Sales Staff

Todd Anderson, CPCU, CIC  
 Dan Armbrust, CIC, CPIA, CPCU, CRIS  
 Penny Crowder, CISR, CIC  
 Tom Dawson, CPCU, CIC  
 Zack Dawson  
 Ryan Hoffman, CPCU, AIC  
 Mark Julik, CIC, CRIS  
 Jay Kleingartner, CIC  
 Wayne Lauwers, CIC  
 Jim Nyhof  
 Matt Peterson  
 Roger Peterson  
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#### Administration

Mary Bjerke, CPCU  
 Bea Christensen  
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 Steve Miller, CPA  
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 Angie Wohl

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 Jen Kopel, CISR  
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 Natalie Schultz, AIC

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Konnie Chaffee

##### Personal Lines

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 Joan Hagen, CISR  
 Sharon Maasjo, CISR  
 Phyllis Manthei, CISR  
 Kathy Richard  
 Renae Thomas  
 Mary Vargo, CISR



Senior Project Managers Steve Ahlschlager, Kent Ritterman and Kyle Meyer review plans for a project.

## Keeping it Simple

### Moore Goes Beyond Engineering with Continuous, Comprehensive Service

**D**raw a drink from a kitchen tap in Enderlin, N.D., and the work of Moore Engineering is in the clear water. Cruise many of West Fargo's streets and the firm's expertise is under the tires. And, if the vehicle runs on ethanol, chances are Moore is in the tank, too.

For more than 50 years, West Fargo-based Moore Engineering, Inc. has been involved in projects, large and small, that impact the everyday lives of citizens in dozens of communities in North Dakota and Minnesota. Even if most people don't know or care, Moore is there, responsible for designing and implementing the municipal infrastructure that contributes to their health, safety and well being. In recent years, the firm also has become the region's engineer of choice for flood protection projects.

Through it all, Moore has grown by holding on to its client-centered philosophy. "The root of our business is the same as when this firm was founded," said Roger Fenstad, chair of the board. "We serve political subdivisions and meet their needs, whether they involve water resources, transportation or anything else. Even if we

aren't doing a specific project, we're there providing support."

#### Growth by Design

Continuous attention to client needs began with brothers Clifford "Kip" and Marshall Moore, who started Moore Engineering in Fargo in 1960. In 1962 they landed their first full-fledged municipal client when the city of Casselton designated Moore Engineering its city engineer.

Other cities and water resource districts followed, and over the years Moore has handled projects as diverse as water and sewer systems, streets, drainage systems, treatment plants, dams and everything else that's expected from a full-service civil engineering firm.

Early on, the brothers set a pattern of promoting from within by making their first employee, Lee Sprague, a partner, and the current board members all joined the firm as staff engineers. Fenstad came on board in 1974, President Jeffrey Volk in 1977, Secretary and Treasurer Kevin Bucholz in 1987, and Vice President Nick Gludt in 1989.

Together, they lead about 85 full-time

engineers, technicians and support staff in an organization that has more than doubled in size in the past decade. Many staff members have been with Moore for 10 years or longer, some as long as 35. Since Moore is employee-owned, they all have a personal stake in the company's success.

In 2008, Moore moved into a new 22,500-square-foot facility in West Fargo, and the board is already working with an architectural firm on expansion plans to accommodate additional employees.

### Municipal Go-To Guys

Moore represents 45 communities and several water resource districts in North Dakota and works with 20 Minnesota towns from its Fergus Falls office. They all have different needs from year to year, and Moore is always there to help.

"It's a very diverse area of engineering," said Gludt, who leads the Municipal Group. "We're in continuous contact, seeing if they have needs, helping to secure funding and taking care of the engineering."

The ability to make sense out of funding sources has been another key, says Volk. Moore develops projects in a manner that demonstrates need and priority to funding agencies, then applies its expertise in identifying sources and securing approvals. "Funding and engineering go hand in hand," he said. "Finding funding for infrastructure is really a challenge for small cities, and that's where we've been very effective."

Clients like Enderlin Mayor Deon Maasjo back that up. "The biggest reason we have stayed with Moore Engineering for so many years is their ability to help us deal with financing," he said. "They have a great resource and grant-writing



Moore Engineering has planned, designed and performed the contract administration for multiple projects such as the Eagle Run Development in West Fargo, N.D., above.

program and we rely on them heavily when we start looking at projects, whether it's our water treatment plant, streets or new runways at the airport."

Moore has delivered the one-two engineering-financing punch for thousands of improvements over the years. It also has been the lead on complex projects, from designing the 42nd and 45th street corridors in Fargo to developing its \$8.7 million Effluent ReUse Facility.

Each year, the facility treats nearly 350 million gallons of Fargo waste water, which is pumped 26 miles west and used to produce 120 million gallons of ethanol in the Tharaldson Ethanol Plant near Casselton. Its design brought Moore national recognition from the American Council of Engineering Companies in 2009, just one of dozens of regional and national honors the firm has earned over the years. The project also illustrates the evolving sophistication of municipal engineering.

"Our communities' needs have gotten bigger, more complex and more encompassing," said Bucholz, the West Fargo Group manager. "At one time we were doing drains. Now we're talking flood studies and protection plans for entire regions."

### Water, Water Everywhere

Moore was deeply involved as the local representative for West Fargo and the

Moore, continued on page 6

# The Extra Mile

## Nielsens Tag Some Nice Bucks

They weren't exactly the kind of bucks Al Nielsen had in mind, but in the end he was happy to get them.

The Nielsens hunt deer on family property south of York, N.D. On opening day each year, they treat hunting partners and family to an outdoor picnic. After long hours of trudging draws and wading through slough grass, the feast hits the spot and refuels the hunters for the rest of the weekend.

At picnic time last year, Al laid his Remington 30:06 on the ground near his son's vehicle and started pitching in to prepare the food. Figuring there were enough hands around the fire, his son decided to hit one more slough before the grub hit the table. As he began backing out there was a sickening crunch. The rifle was under one of the vehicle's rear tires with the stock twisted nearly 90 degrees to the left and the scope broken in two.

Nielsen called Dawson hoping he could file a claim under his homeowner's insurance to replace the \$1,500 rifle and scope. His agent, Matt Peterson, said the policy would cover the loss, but the claim would be just a few dollars more than his deductible.

"No problem," said Nielsen. "Just thought I'd check."

Peterson discussed the situation with Claims Representative Jenaah Emmerich, and they came up with the idea of exploring a property damage claim under the son's auto policy through another company. Matt called Al back with the suggestion.

A few weeks later Al called again, this time to inform Peterson he'd just received a check for the full replacement value. "Dawson's a great company to do business with," Nielsen said. "If it hadn't been for Matt and Jenaah, I never would have thought to check with the other company. I really appreciated that." **D**

Moore, continued from page 5

Southeast Cass Water Resource District in development of the Sheyenne Diversion, which was completed in 1992.

The firm had been engaged in surface water projects since the late 1970s, but that was the project that really ramped up its Water Resource Group. The next big job was the Maple River Dam, a \$30 million structure completed in 2006. The structure controls water from a 900-square-mile watershed and provides protection from flooding of the Maple, Red and Sheyenne rivers.

Then came 1997. After Fargo sandbagged its way through that year's historic flood, Cass County called on Moore to develop a plan for protecting the south side of the city from another major event. Then the flood of 2009 hit. "The risk for Fargo became evident in 1997," said Volk, who leads the Water Resource Group. "Then, when 2009 came along, people realized we need more than just south-side flood protection and the federal funding opportunity followed."

The staff that had been working on the south side protection project ramped up to develop options for all of Fargo-Moorhead and the surrounding areas. It's the largest, most visible and most technically challenging project in the firm's history.

Even with the complexity, both in municipal and water resource engineering, Moore keeps business simple. "We don't look at projects, we look at clients, and there's a difference," said Volk. "We're continuously asking each client what we can do to help them improve their community even more. That's what makes the difference."

Go to [mooreengineeringinc.com](http://mooreengineeringinc.com) for more information. **D**

A Moore Engineering surveyor at the Tharaldson Ethanol Plant site west of Casselton, N.D. in 2008.



# Dawson

## We're Here for You 24/7

Our commitment to service includes extended service hours and more service options. With both online and telephone services at your fingertips day or night, Dawson 24/7 is designed so that you choose how to interact with our agency and when it's convenient for you.

### Dawson 24/7 Online Access

Your insurance information is always available so you can:

- Obtain Certificates of Insurance
- Print auto ID cards
- Notify Dawson of a claim or loss
- View your policy information
- Make change requests such as address or adding vehicles/drivers (Keep in mind, coverages are not bound until you receive confirmation from our office.)

To get started, simply click the Dawson 24/7 icon on our homepage and press the SIGN ME UP! icon or call our office. We'll sign you up and provide you a login ID and password to keep your information secure.

### Dawson 24/7 Telephone Access

You can contact Dawson any time and a professional and courteous representative will take your call. After hours, simply dial our office at 701-237-3311 and press the number 1.

### Online Payments for Personal Insurance

Several of our personal lines carriers now offer an online payment option. It's a fast and easy way to pay your insurance premiums. To find out if your carrier offers this service, go to our website and click on "PAY ONLINE." **D**

### Roth IRA, continued from page 2

- Married couples filing separately cannot have a MAGI of more than \$10,000.

### Roth Requirements

You can create a Roth even if you already participate in a 401(k), a pension plan or a Traditional IRA, or even if you already have another Roth. You can contribute up to \$5,000 per year, and if you're over age 50 you can make an additional \$1,000 "catch-up" contribution. However, the types of funds you can contribute are limited.

- Contributions must be from wages, commissions or self-employment income.
- Contributions cannot be from investment, dividend or gift income. In addition, contributions from foreign income or profits from a personal business are not allowed.

### Now is the Time

If you are thinking about converting a Traditional IRA to a Roth, act quickly, says Nyhof. Now is the time to take advantage of this opportunity to invest in your future. And keep in mind, if you make the conversion in 2010 you will be able to pay your tax liability over a two-year period. If you wait until 2011 or after, you'll be required to pay your tax liability in only one year.

"This is a great opportunity, and one that isn't going to last," said Nyhof.

For more information, go to [irs.gov](http://irs.gov) and read IRS Publication 590 or contact Nyhof at 701-237-3311 or [jimnyhof@dawsonins.com](mailto:jimnyhof@dawsonins.com). **D**



United Way of Cass-Clay Resource Development Director Sue Wiger (l) with Dawson United Way Campaign Coordinator Renae Thomas

## Stitching It All Together

**Keep in mind, Renae Thomas's passion is quilting.**

**T**hen picture our personal lines account assistant at the Red River Valley Speedway, happily drawing in the mixed aromas of dust and sprint car exhaust. Or at the Fargodome, screaming through the roar of Grave Digger during Monster Jam. Or ringside at a WWF SmackDown, cheering wildly for the hulking, sweaty, trash-talking wrestlers.

Somehow, Renae stitches all those interests together into a patchwork that rivals the most intricate quilt she's ever made. It's safe to say she's no demure lady rocking back and forth with a quilt spread across her knees. No, this quilter does her intricate work with the roar of stock cars coming from the television.

"I'm always willing to try something new," Renae says. "When I find something I like, I go at it hard."

She approaches her job the same way she goes after her unique combination of hobbies, with high-revving energy, positive excitement and exacting attention to detail. "I want to get the job accomplished," she says. "I want to make sure we dig in, set things up the right way from the start and make sure all the pieces are covered."

Renae has been working with Dawson clients since 2004. For the past five years, she also has been our volunteer United Way Campaign Coordinator. Dawson has surpassed each previous year's fundraising total during that time, our company earned the United Way of Cass-Clay's Frederick W. Donath Campaign Award of Excellence in 2005 and 2007, and Dawson was named Pacesetter of the Year in 2007. Renae also has been a United Way employee campaign coordinator trainer and has served on the Employee Campaign Coordinator Council.

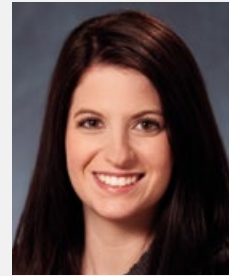
Before she got into insurance, Renae was setting the pace as a small business owner who started a bridal shop in her basement. Before long, she was acting as a wedding planner, getting down to the nitty gritty details so the brides didn't have to.

"That's what I try to do here, too," she says, "take care of everything so nothing is forgotten and the coverage goes off without a hitch."

And when the job's done, Renae is off to the races... or the SmackDown, the Monster Jam or something else new. Or, more likely, she's in the living room with her family, needle and thread in hand.

Just one thing – the TV has to be tuned to NASCAR. **D**

## New Employees



**Lesley Koehler**

**Commercial Lines Account Assistant**

Lesley works with account managers and agents in managing commercial accounts. She processes new and renewal policies, endorsements, audits and certificates of insurance. Prior to joining Dawson in March, Lesley was the finance and business manager at U Motors, Fargo. Before that, she was a channels program coordinator at Microsoft Business Solutions, Fargo, and a customer service representative at Arvig Communications Systems, Perham, Minn. Lesley graduated from American Intercontinental University, Dunwoody, Ill., with an associate's degree in business administration marketing.



**Natalie Schultz**

**Commercial Lines Account Manager**

Natalie is the liaison between commercial customers and your agents. In addition to processing new applications and renewal policies, she handles commercial accounts to ensure your insurance programs include the coverages you desire. Before joining Dawson in February, she was a client service representative at Vision Bank, where she assisted customers with a variety of account services. Prior to that, she was a claims representative for State Farm Mutual Insurance Company, Fargo, and for State Auto Insurance Company, Milbank, S.D. Natalie holds an Associate in Claims designation and is currently working on her Chartered Property Casualty Underwriter designation. She earned her Bachelor of Science degree in business administration from North Dakota State University.

# Dawson INSURANCE

Dawson Insurance is proud to be a locally owned, independent agency that provides a full line of property and casualty coverage, as well as life and health benefits, surety and financial services for individuals and businesses. For more than 90 years, we have been working hard to ensure our customers always come first, both in the services we offer and the protection we provide. Thank you for your business.

**Dawson Insurance**

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**Q: Do I need renters insurance?**

A: Renters insurance is relatively inexpensive and can protect you in several situations. While your landlord may insure the physical building, that will not cover your personal property that is damaged or lost due to wind, fire, theft or vandalism. Renters insurance covers necessities like furniture and clothing, as well as valuables such as laptops and bikes. If you are forced out of your home or apartment, it can help cover rental costs for an alternative place to live. It can even protect you against liability for bodily injury or property damage from personal activities such as golfing or hunting. It's worth the low cost for that kind of peace of mind.

*To have your question answered, send it to info@dawsonins.com.*

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