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Sanford says Farewell to Williston; moves to Bismarck for New Opportunity



The Williston community is losing one of its biggest fans. Cindy Sanford, Customer Service Office Manager at Job Service North Dakota in Williston, has announced she is moving to Bismarck to be closer to family and pursue a new career opportunity.

A farewell open house was held for Sanford Wednesday to allow friends, colleagues and co-workers

to wish her well.

Sanford joined Job Service on a memorable day in late 2011; the day after NBC's Rock Center with Brian Williams premiered with a story about the oil boom in the Bakken. The prime time coverage opened the flood gates to thousands of job seekers looking for high paying jobs in the oil patch.

"I started on November 1, 2011, the day after Brian Williams told the nation on the Rock Center program to go to Williston, and I was on my way!" she said.

Job Service was inundated with job seekers from that day forward. Looking back, Sanford said some of those early news stories tarnished Williston's image and contributed to lasting misconceptions.

“Overcoming the negative story that was painted from people who never had boots on the ground,” said Sanford. “We had some bad press and it was, and sometimes still is, difficult to change people’s perceptions of what a great place Williston is to live.”

As job seekers poured into Williston, job service and economic development formed a partnership to offer bi-annual job fairs for all employers from all industries. The collaboration, as well as Sanford’s consistent support of Williston, helped her earn the Williston Economic Development Ambassador of the Year award in May of 2018. The executive director of Williston Economic Development said she will be missed.

“Although excited for the new opportunities on the horizon for Cindy, her departure is bittersweet,” said Shawn Wenko. “Cindy was instrumental in the success of our job fair partnership. At the time, it was a pioneering idea that is now catching on across the state.”

Sanford is leaving northwestern North Dakota to be closer to her family in Bismarck, which includes her elderly father and new granddaughter. She will also be pursuing a new career with the Bank of North Dakota. She said the hardest part about moving is saying goodbye to all of the individuals she has met during her stay.

“By far the people! There are so many wonderful people who have lived here all of their lives, some who have left and have come back and others who came and went back home. Everyone has a story and that is what has made Williston people rich.”

Sanford’s final day in the office will be July 3 while her first day with the Bank of North Dakota will be July 9.