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**North Dakota's T4 Program Rebrands as North Dakota Energy Education  
New Leadership Announced as Shawn Brink Takes Over as State Energy Education  
Coordinator**

One of North Dakota's most impactful career exploration programs is entering a new era, with a refreshed identity and leadership.

The long-standing T4 Program (Tools, Trades, Torque and Tech) will now operate under the name North Dakota Energy Education, signaling a broadened mission to engage and inspire the next generation of the state's energy workforce. The rebranded program will continue hosting its well-known T4 Summits during the 2025–2026 school year, now under the direction of newly hired North Dakota Energy Education Coordinator, Shawn Brink. This statewide position is part of a collaborative partnership between the Lignite Energy Council, the North Dakota Petroleum Foundation, and Bismarck Public Schools to strengthen energy education and workforce readiness across North Dakota.

Brink steps into the role following the retirement of Kent Ellis, who has led energy education initiatives in the state for the past 20 years. Under Ellis's leadership, the T4 Summits have become a welcome opportunity for many communities in North Dakota. The high-impact, hands-on summits offer career exploration and industry engagement for nearly ten thousand middle school and high school students each school year.

In addition, the North Dakota Energy Education program offers summer camps, fun activities at youth STEM expos, and other events to encourage students to pursue careers in the energy industry. Under Brink's leadership, involvement with these types of events will increase in the years ahead as he builds connections with business leaders, Chamber and Economic Development offices, Career and Technical Education centers, school districts, and higher learning institutions.

"The rebranding to North Dakota Energy Education reflects the evolving focus on equipping students with the tools and knowledge they need to explore meaningful careers in energy, beyond the T4 Summits," said Reva Kautz, Communications Director for the North Dakota

Petroleum Foundation, one of the program's major sponsors. "We are excited to welcome Shawn Brink and look forward to the innovative ideas and energy he brings to this important work."

Brink brings more than 25 years of experience in education to the role, including 16 years at the Bismarck Career Academy, where he helped develop the "Career Ready Practice Scores" system to give Career and Technical Education (CTE) students measurable feedback on employability skills. His work has been recognized for bridging the gap between classroom instruction and real-world workforce needs.

He has already been active this summer, participating in the Lignite Energy Council's and the North Dakota Petroleum Foundation's annual Teacher Education Seminars, each held on separate weeks in June. Brink had the opportunity to tour coal mines, a drilling rig, and other energy facilities, using this opportunity to collaborate with industry partners while planning for the school year ahead.

"Shawn's experience and drive make him the right person to lead this work forward," said Retha Mattern, Executive Director of Public Engagement at the Lignite Energy Council. "We know how critical it is to connect students with opportunities in North Dakota's energy sector, meeting workforce demand and showing them what's possible right here at home."

To expand its reach and improve access to events across the state, North Dakota Energy Education is actively seeking sponsorships and donations from industry partners and supporters. There is also a need for local businesses and organizations to facilitate hands-on sessions at the upcoming T4 Summits.

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