

# NEBRASKA MUNICIPAL REVIEW

■ **Fremont City Auditorium**  
holds grand re-opening

■ **North Platte receives Governor's**  
**Showcase Community Award 2021**

■ **Grimes celebrates 50 years**  
as Kearney city employee

Official Publication of the League of Nebraska Municipalities

**APRIL 2021**



*Brownville on Missouri River*

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APRIL 2021

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*About the Cover: Brownville on Missouri River.*

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## CALENDAR

Annual Conference..... Sept. 22-24, 2021, Cornhusker Marriott Hotel, Lincoln

## Municipal Legal Calendar

(All statute citations to Revised Statutes of Nebraska)

### JUNE 2021

#### CITIES OF THE FIRST CLASS

Within 10 working days following meeting or before next meeting (whichever is sooner).....	Clerk to have minutes available for public inspection. (84-1413)
Within 15 days of Passage.....	Clerk publishes ordinances passed. (16-405)
As determined by the Mayor and Council .....	Board of Equalization meets. (16-707)
Within 30 days following Council meeting.....	Clerk publishes official proceedings of meetings, including claims. (19-1102)
Within 20 days after end of month.....	Treasurer files monthly financial report. (16-318)
* * .....	Clerk must prepare agenda prior to next Council meeting. (84-1411)

#### CITIES OF THE SECOND CLASS

Within 10 working days following meeting or before next meeting (whichever is sooner).....	Clerk to have minutes available for public inspection. (84-1413)
Within 15 days of Passage.....	Clerk publishes or posts ordinances passed. (17-613)
Within 30 days following Council meeting.....	Clerk publishes official proceedings of meeting. (19-1102)
Within 20 days after end of month.....	Treasurer files monthly financial report. (17-606)
* * .....	Clerk must prepare agenda prior to next Council meeting. (84-1411)

#### VILLAGES

Within 10 working days following meeting or before next meeting (whichever is sooner).....	Clerk to have minutes available for public inspection. (84-1413)
Within 15 days of Passage.....	Clerk publishes or posts ordinances passed. (17-613)
Within 30 days following trustees' meeting.....	Clerk publishes official proceedings of meeting, including claims. (19-1102)
Within 20 days after end of month.....	Treasurer files monthly financial report. (17-606)
* * .....	Clerk must prepare agenda prior to next Board meeting. (84-1411)

**Nebraska Municipal Review Editor and Advertising Sales: Lynn Marienau, 402-476-2829 or lynn@lonm.org**

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Paul Lambert, Mayor of Plattsmouth  
League President

## Municipal Accounting & Finance Conference Webinar Series: Another great learning opportunity for elected and appointed officials!

BY PAUL LAMBERT, PLATTSMOUTH MAYOR  
AND LEAGUE PRESIDENT

Thanks to the Municipal Accounting & Finance Conference Planning Committee for preparing an outstanding webinar series with excellent topics and speakers! To accommodate our members, the webinars will be held the afternoons of **June 15-17** and **June 22-24**. These webinars will enable our municipal elected and appointed officials to become even better informed about best practices and ever-changing laws and regulations. The Mandatory Continuing Legal Education Commission has approved **11.5 hours of continuing legal education credit** and the Auditor of Public Accounts (APA) has approved **10 hours of continuing education for municipal treasurers**.

One of the most important webinars will provide the most current *Guidance from the U.S. Department of the Treasury* relating to the eligible expenditures and requirements of the **American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act** to help our cities and villages emerge even stronger from the global pandemic! As emphasized in numerous League Legislative Bulletins and correspondence, all 19,000 cities, villages and towns in the United States will receive funds from the ARP Act, including all 529 municipalities in Nebraska. **The ARP Act is a \$1.9 trillion bill; \$65.1 billion is allocated to our nation's cities, villages and towns.** This historic, unprecedented direct assistance to municipalities and others struggling to recover from the pandemic passed because of the **EXTRAORDINARY leadership and lobbying efforts by NLC with its year-long "Cities Are Essential" advocacy campaign.** Until passage of the ARP Act, Congress NEVER provided funds directly to every municipality in the United States.

As League President and Mayor of Plattsmouth, **I am so proud of how our dedicated municipal elected and ap-**

**pointed officials and employees throughout Nebraska responded so effectively to this once-in-a-century pandemic by continuing to provide essential services to our citizens!** **Erv Portis**, Plattsmouth City Administrator, recently stated the following in a compelling email to one of our state leaders underscoring and contrasting the steadfast work of our municipal officials and employees: *"City halls and county buildings across the state were open. Water, sewer, electricity, streets and other public works employees REPORTED TO WORK to keep the water flowing, electricity on, streets free and clear of snow and ice, potholes paved, etc. EMS employees showed up to deliver frontline emergency out-of-hospital care.... The business of local government continued."*

From our administrative staff to our public safety and utility personnel, our municipal officials and employees were boots-on-the-ground providing municipal services, while many in the private and public sectors worked remotely and safely from home. I always believe in the motto: *"With Opportunities, Good People Do Great Things."* However, I am adding another motto to my list: *"With Life-Changing Challenges (like COVID-19), Great People Do Even Greater Things!"* When I consider the long hours and outstanding public service provided by municipal officials and employees who transported COVID-19 patients, comforted families and kept the wheels of local government rolling, I appreciate how fortunate we, as Nebraskans, are to have such a dedicated and compassionate workforce.

Thanks again for your leadership on the local level! I look forward to seeing you in person at the **League Annual Conference scheduled for Sept. 22-24, 2021, at the Cornhusker Marriott Hotel in Lincoln.** ■





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## *Innovative ag research*

BY U.S. SEN. DEB FISCHER

Every state is home to an industry that drives its economy forward. In Hawaii, that's tourism. In Massachusetts, many exceptional hospitals attract first-rate doctors. And in Michigan, the automobile industry employs nearly 291,000 people across the state.

In Nebraska, that industry is agriculture. Our farmers and ranchers grow produce and raise livestock that is among the world's best, and they feed millions of people around the country and the world while they're at it. Our international ag exports have risen in recent years, too, providing nearly \$7 billion for our economy in 2018 alone. All told, agriculture supports one in four Nebraska jobs and provides one-third of our economic output each year.

It shouldn't be surprising that Nebraska is a leader in agricultural research. The Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources (IANR) at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln takes advantage of Nebraska's diverse range of climates and growing conditions to conduct experiments on everything from food science to soil ecosystems to water quality and their findings are crucial for Nebraska ag producers looking for new best practices.

That transition from lab to field is especially smooth for IANR because

many of its scientists also teach at UNL. They spend some of their time on research and some of their time with Nebraska's next generation of farmers and ranchers – the perfect combination for a state that boasts both a booming ag industry and a thriving university system.

IANR works with Nebraska Extension to offer this excellent education to people all across the state, not just those who live near a college campus. Extension does some of its best work on ag issues, too, which makes them invaluable to our producers and our economy.

Extension and IANR also partner with 4-H to bring these same skills to Nebraska's youth. Over 140,000 Nebraskans between the ages of 5-18 can get hands-on ag experience through 4-H and Nebraska Extension, whether they live in a small town or in the middle of a city like Lincoln.

IANR's work spans many other fields. One of them is food security, and through the Daugherty Water for Food Global Institute, they are quite literally changing the world. This program combines Nebraska's prosperous ag industry with the world-class research coming out of UNL to develop new ways to help other countries make their food and water supplies more secure. One of the Daugherty Insti-

tute's most impressive initiatives is the Nebraska Water Center, where UNL faculty come together with outside researchers to help make sure people everywhere have access to a safe and reliable source of water.

Nebraska Innovation Campus also is doing excellent work. Innovation Campus is right next door to city campus and the office space they provide gives some of Nebraska's most creative entrepreneurs the chance to work alongside the best researchers UNL has to offer.

The Food for Health Center is just one of Innovation Campus' many remarkable programs. Here, UNL professors Andrew Benson and Robert Hutkins use their research on digestive health to develop hybrid crops and foods that can fight back against illnesses like cancer and heart disease. Their work has helped Nebraska become a world leader in this important field.

Nebraska's agriculture industry is among the best in the country and our state is home to remarkable cutting-edge research and dynamic growth. With both of these things happening side by side, the future is exciting for Nebraska. ■

## New economic development office opens in North Omaha

Gov. Pete Ricketts presided over the ribbon-cutting April 28 of the state's new economic development field office in North Omaha. The office – a satellite of the Nebraska Department of Economic Development (DED) – is co-located with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) at 5319 N. 30th Street. Its purpose is to promote economic opportunity, create high-wage jobs and pursue the overall growth of North Omaha and the surrounding communities.

"North Omaha has a rich heritage and great potential for growth," Gov. Ricketts said. "I appreciate the partnership between state agencies and local leaders to support the opening of the North Omaha field office. I am excited to see the ways it will facilitate investment and job creation in the community."

### Mayor joins Governor

The Governor was joined by Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert, who highlighted how DED's office will help bring new opportunities to the area.

"Every time we cut a ribbon, we create opportunities for people and businesses to be successful and we make progress toward our goals to increase employment, attract new business and talent to our city and expand affordable housing options," Mayor Stothert said.

DED Director Anthony L. Goins discussed the mission of the new office while speaking at the ribbon cutting ceremony. He talked about how it would give businesses, organizations and area residents better access to state economic development resources and programs, while enabling the state to hone in on new initiatives and partnerships to help accelerate growth.



*Gov. Ricketts (holding scissors), Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert (to the left of the Governor), state leaders and community partners cut ribbon on the new economic development office in North Omaha. Photo courtesy of Governor's office.*

"We pride ourselves in being a state where every citizen has a level playing field and an equal chance to succeed. That's who we are," said DED Director Goins.

DHHS CEO Dannette R. Smith and Nebraska Department of Administrative Services (DAS) Director Jason Jackson gave remarks at today's celebration regarding their agencies' work to support growth in North Omaha.

### Expanding opportunities

"This North Omaha office is another key component of the state's overall efforts at expanding opportunities for small and minority-owned businesses," said DAS Director Jackson.

Additionally, President and CEO of North End Teleservices Carmen Tapio and President of the North Omaha Business Improvement District LaVonya Goodwin spoke about the importance of the new office and the ways it can benefit North Omaha.

"I believe that economic development is not only about revitalizing the

physical makeup of a community or just about creating jobs," said Tapio. "Economic development also is about returning hope to communities and laying the foundation for what is possible. The broad benefits of economic development and jobs can improve a person's life circumstances, bring about connectedness and literally help extend a person's life."

### Reaching out

Trevon Brooks, Business Development Manager for the North Omaha office, said the first steps for the satellite office will involve reaching out to area businesses and stakeholders to form relationships and disseminate information.

"There are so many exciting opportunities happening throughout North Omaha and the surrounding region and we look forward to being in closer proximity so we can contribute and work directly alongside the community to achieve goals," Brooks said. ■

*Source – Governor's office*





## Property tax issues for governmental subdivisions

BY TRENT SIDDER, CLINE WILLIAMS WRIGHT JOHNSON  
& OLDFATHER, L.L.P.

Property taxes are a familiar, if perhaps unwelcome, slice of life for Nebraskans. For governmental subdivisions, however, the common assumption is that property taxes are only to be received rather than paid. While that is usually the case, it is not entirely correct. There are scenarios where governmental subdivisions may be faced with unexpected property tax issues and the possibility of a tax bill.

Nebraska law currently provides that property of the state and its governmental subdivisions is exempt from property taxes only to the extent it is being used or developed for use for a public purpose. Ownership of the property by a governmental subdivision standing alone is not enough to qualify for a property tax exemption. Rather, public purpose is broadly defined.

### Public purpose

Under Neb. Rev. Stat. § 77-202(1)(a)(ii), public purpose includes the use of property to provide public services with or without compensation to the recipient. This includes the general operation of government, public education, public safety, transportation, public works, civil and criminal justice, public health and welfare, developments by a public housing authority, parks, culture,

recreation, community development, and cemetery purposes, or to carry out the duties and responsibilities conferred by law with or without consideration.

A scenario where governmental subdivisions can perhaps unexpectedly run into potential property tax issues is triggered by the lease of public property. As a matter of law, public purpose does not include leasing of property to a private party unless certain requirements are met. For leased governmental property to be exempt in Nebraska, the lease of the property must be both at fair market value and for a public purpose. For example, a village that leases a vacant parcel to an adjoining property owner for \$1 million per year to store widgets is not entitled to a property tax exemption because the lease is not for a public purpose. Similarly, a village that leases a vacant parcel to an adjoining property owner for \$1 per year in order to develop a public park for the village may not be entitled to a property tax exemption if the rent is not deemed to be fair market value.

### Lease definition

For purposes of the Nebraska property tax exemption statutes and regulations, a lease is defined simply as a contract between landlord and

tenant where the landlord conveys to the tenant the exclusive right to possess, use and enjoy the property for a specified period of time in exchange for legal consideration. A lease does not include an easement or a license in property.

In evaluating the taxable status of leased governmental property, the focus is on whether the lease is: (1) for a public purpose; and (2) at fair market value. Both requirements must be satisfied to maintain the tax exempt status of governmental property. As noted above, public purpose is broadly defined in the statutes to include any use of the property to carry out duties or responsibilities conferred by law. Use of the property for any general operation of the governmental subdivision will satisfy this requirement.

### More complex

Determining whether a lease is at fair market value may be a little more complex. Fair market value in this context is defined as reasonable compensation in terms of money or services provided by the tenant to the governmental subdivision as landlord in connection with the tenant's use of the property. The reasonableness of the compensation may be based,

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*Continued from page 8*

if available, on the rent paid under leases for similar property that is not owned by a governmental subdivision. Applicable regulations indicate that the county assessor and county board of equalization are required to examine factors other than the dollar amount of the lease payments in examining whether the lease is for fair market value. As long as the value of all the benefits received by the governmental subdivision under the lease is reasonable compensation for allowing the third party to use the property, the lease is considered at fair market value. Any services provided by the tenant under the lease are included in determining whether the lease is at fair market value. For example, under our village lease scenario discussed above with rent of \$1 per year for a public park, all of the services provided under the lease (such as mowing, weeding, watering, etc.) should be a factor in evaluating whether the village received fair market value.

### **Sets out framework**

The relevant Nebraska statutes set out a framework that governmental subdivisions are required to follow in order to notify county officials if the governmental subdivisions have leased public property. Neb. Rev. Stat. § 77-202.11 requires each governmental subdivision to provide a copy of each new lease (or pre-existing lease which has been materially changed) to the county assessor. Under Neb. Rev. Stat. § 77-202.12, upon receipt of a copy of the lease, the county assessor is charged with reviewing the lease and providing notice to the governmental subdivision if it determines

that the property is not being used for a public purpose and should be subject to tax. The governmental subdivision may protest the decision of the county assessor to the county board of equalization, and the county board of equalization's decision may be appealed to the Tax Equalization and Review Commission.

While a tax may be due on leased property owned by a governmental subdivision, that is not the end of the process. Neb. Rev. Stat. § 77-202.11(1) specifies that leased public property, if it will be subject to tax, is taxed as if the property was owned by the tenant. Essentially, the law mandates that the tenant is obligated to pay the property taxes. The taxes are to be paid in the same manner as any other applicable property taxes. From the governmental subdivision's perspective, the taxes are not required to be paid directly by the government even if the tenant does not pay the tax bill. The taxes are a first lien upon the personal property of the tenant until paid, but no lien attaches to the governmental subdivision for failure to pay the tax by the tenant. Neb. Rev. Stat. § 77-202.11(3).

### **Some scenarios**

There are some scenarios where unleased property of the governmental subdivision may be subject to tax. A property tax bill may be due if the governmental subdivision has vacant property that is not actively being used, or at least developed, for a public purpose. Under Neb. Rev. Stat. § 77-202(1)(b), unleased property that is not being used or developed for use for a public purpose is only exempt if a payment in lieu of taxes is made. Unlike the case with leased public property, taxes due in this scenario

are directly assessed to the governmental subdivision and will become a first lien upon the property until it is

*Continued on page 15*

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# Fremont City Auditorium holds grand re-opening

■ **BY TAMMY REAL-MCKEIGHAN**  
FREMONT TRIBUNE ■

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As she looked around the newly renovated Fremont City Auditorium, Sandra Koski imagined how excited her daughter, Kim, would have been.

Sandra Koski was among several area residents who gathered Saturday morning for the auditorium's grand re-opening. Kim Koski spearheaded the renovation as Director of the Fremont Parks and Recreation Department, a position she had until her death in January.

## 18-month project

It took 18 months to complete the \$3.87 million project, which came in more than \$400,000 under budget.

The renovation includes:

- a new roof;
- new heating, ventilation and air conditioning system;
- fire sprinkler system;
- main floor restrooms with handicap accessibility;

- newly refurbished main area with technology and a movable wall that can divide the area in two;
- new meeting spaces;
- cater-friendly kitchen; and
- entries and exits that are Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible.

Dedicated in 1937, the building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and has served generations of Fremont-area residents. For decades, people have come here for a host of activities from wedding receptions to pancake feeds and volleyball games.

## Community gathering spot

Fremont Mayor Joey Spellerberg, whose dad Moostach Joe hosted polka parties in the auditorium for years, talked about the building's importance to the city.

"It's always been a community gathering spot for Fremont," Spellerberg said. "I'm proud today, because the Fremont City Auditorium will continue to be a gathering spot and a place for events here in Fremont."

Funds for the project came from a voter-passed \$2 million bond issue; a \$1.125 million Civic and Community Center Financing Fund grant from the Nebraska Department of Economic Development; and a City Council-approved budget of \$750,000.

Spellerberg thanked Fremont voters who passed the bond issue.

"I'm proud that we're under budget," Spellerberg added. "That's always a good thing."

## Paid tribute to Koski

During his comments, Spellerberg paid tribute to Koski.

"We remember her today for her hard work in getting to where we are. This was her baby. She loved the City Auditorium and put a lot of blood, sweat and tears into this," Spellerberg said.

Nate Schwanke, Recreation Superintendent, thanked city staff for their work and Cheever Construction of Lincoln, the project's general contractor.

"You really did a phenomenal job and we're really hoping these updates

*Continued on page 11*



*A view from inside the newly-renovated Fremont City Auditorium. Photo by the Nebraska Department of Economic Development.*



*Continued from page 10*

will take us 50 years into the future,” Schwanke said.

Justin Kurtzer, President of Cheever Construction, expressed his appreciation.

“This is a monument to the City of Fremont and important to the people, so we’re truly honored to be a part of it,” Kurtzer said.

Kurtzer thanked Jon Dybdal, Project Supervisor for Cheever, for his hard work.

“This was a challenging project. You did an amazing job,” Kurtzer said.

Kurtzer also paid tribute to Koski.

“She was so energetic and excited about this coming to fruition,” Kurtzer said. “Hopefully, she’s looking down today and proud of her accomplishments.”

### **Feasibility study**

Fremont City Administrator Brian Newton, who described Koski as the lifeblood of the parks and recreation department, talked about a Needs Assessment and Feasibility Study.

The study, conducted in 2015, was made to decide the future of the auditorium, which needed repairs.

With an average of 170 events each year, renovation became the choice.

Newton remembered a study finding, which indicated that the stately building “had great bones.”

“Can you imagine if this building could come to life and tell us the stories that have gone on in this building?” Newton asked. “Can you imagine the history that we would hear from the bones of this building? It would be awesome.”

Vicki Brown, former Senior Office assistant, Virginia Studt, former Recreation Coordinator, and Dorothy Winter, retired Senior Office Assistant



*Fremont Mayor Joey Spellerberg speaks during the grand re-opening of the newly renovated Fremont City Auditorium. Photo by Tammy Real-McKeighan, Fremont Tribune. Reprinted by permission.*

for the Fremont Parks and Recreation Department, relived some memories.

Brown noted that annual and once-in-a-lifetime events occurred in the auditorium.

### **Variety of classes offered**

All sorts of classes took place here including: macramé, candle making, china painting, belly dancing, exercise, gourmet cooking and calligraphy. Dances, holiday parties, receptions, boxing matches, basketball games and pro-wrestling events occurred here, too.

Years ago, the city auditorium housed the senior center and nutrition site.

Studt remembers when seniors’ birthdays were celebrated with cake. The parks and recreation department would buy birthday cakes from the former Vienna Bakery owned by the late Fremont Mayor Art Peters.

“As a joke one day, he sent a cardboard angel food cake to us,” Studt remembered. “Ever try cutting a cardboard angel food cake?”

Studt could only imagine the look on her face as she wondered: “What am I going to do? I’ve got all these people and a cardboard cake.”

### **Another joke**

Brown and Winter remember another joke that didn’t go as planned.

Back then, the late Willie Williams was custodian at the auditorium.

The day before April Fools’ Day, the women wrote a note saying tables and chairs had to be set up for several hundred people for an event in the auditorium.

They left the note, figuring Williams would question them when they got to work at 8 the next morning.

*Continued on page 12*

# Fremont City Auditorium holds grand re-opening

*Continued from page 11*

But when they arrived the next day, they found Williams and his staff already working on the project.

Their April Fools' Day joke had backfired, Winter said.

Williams and crew had set up half the tables and chairs needed.

The women helped the staff take them down.

## Tender memory

Studt has a tender memory of an adult with special needs. The young man would go downstairs to Studt's office, which was in the auditorium's lower level.

"He called me the 'lady in the basement.' Even after I no longer worked here and I'd run into him, I was still 'the lady in the basement,'" Studt remembered.

The three women said they like the renovated auditorium.

"I love it," Winter said. "It's beautiful. I love the colors. I like the fact that there's no carpet. It's just cleaner with this new floor."

The auditorium's main area features a light and airy look with walls painted in a neutral tone.

Newton, who steadily watched the renovation construction, said he first had sad memories when seeing the seating and stage being covered.

"But they're still there," Newton said. "The old basketball floor is still underneath this one."

Newton pointed out something else. "A hundred years from now when they go through the next remodel – they'll tear it up and say 'What the heck were those people thinking? This is a beautiful floor.'... They are still there (the seats, stage and floor). They can use them someday," Newton said.

Newton publicly thanked Kim and Sandra Koski, the Fremont Parks and Recreation Department advisory board and Friends of the Fremont Area Parks.

## Friends groups

He asked attendees to think of Friends groups – like those that raise funds for the parks and the library – during the Big Give fundraiser, coordinated by the Fremont Area Community Foundation in May.

"Without their efforts and their fundraising events, things like what we

do in the city wouldn't be possible," Newton said.

## Make more memories

Newton encouraged his listeners to make more memories in the auditorium.

Brown, Winter and Studt later pondered what Koski would think of the renovated auditorium.

"I think she'd be very pleased," Studt said.

Sandra Koski considered how her daughter would react to the re-opening.

"She would have been bouncing off the walls all week about just getting ready for this," Koski said. "She would have been so excited. She probably would have had confetti coming from the ceiling if she could — a big splashy deal. She was very excited about this remodel and how it would turn out. She probably would have had me making 3,000 cookies." ■



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## Elwood, Arapahoe among communities offering free lots to encourage home building

During the past 10-15 years, some Nebraska communities have reached back in history to the Homestead Act of 1862 for inspiration to help their cities and villages grow by offering incentives and free lots for homes. The Village of Elwood and the City of Arapahoe are two of those communities that have found success with this idea.

If you visit the Village of Elwood's website, the first thing you see is "Elwood, Nebraska. A great place to call home." The second thing you see is a question, asking whether you want a free lot to build your home and assistance to do it. The website shows photos in what is called the "Wheatfield Addition," near the west edge of the community, a few blocks from the school, parks and swimming pool.

### Home ownership program

The lots are part of a home ownership program that makes available to an owner a buildable lot for an owner-occupied residential property and home. Construction must begin within one year and be occupied within two years of the purchase date. While the lots are free, they require a \$500 deposit that is refunded when the home is completed.

Elwood has earned recognition for its free lot program, which is designed to recruit new residents to this community of just more than 700 people in Gosper County.

### CRA established

Laurie Jauken, Village Clerk/Treasurer, said the village established a Community Redevelopment Authority (CRA) and then purchased the land west of the school for development through the Community Development Law with the Tax Increment

Financing (TIF) program.

"The owners of the land who sold it to the village created a set of covenants for the property to create a nice subdivision," Jauken said, adding that homes have been built or are being built on 12 of the lots. Three lots remain available.

### Similar program

A similar program is offered in nearby Arapahoe in Furnas County with a population of 1,026.

Located close to the school, the Northern Estates subdivision in Arapahoe has been set aside for building new homes. Lots are free if individuals can provide a written request and documentation that they are willing to build a home within 18 months.



© iStockphoto.com

Donna Tannahill, Clerk/Treasurer for the City of Arapahoe, said the first round of incentives applied to three people who received \$25,000 each and a free lot if the homes were built within 18 months of signing the purchase contract. All three of

*Continued on page 14*

## City of Ravenna Clerk/Treasurer named Nebraska Library Association's 2021 Outstanding Volunteer

Congratulations to Kellie Crowell, City of Ravenna Clerk/Treasurer, for being named the Nebraska Library Association's 2021 Outstanding Volunteer.

Crowell, who has worked for the City of Ravenna for 21 years, said she has volunteered at the Ravenna Public Library for almost 20 years and became involved with the Ravenna Friends of the Library during the past 10 years.

Crowell also has served as President of the Nebraska Municipal Clerks Association. ■



*Kellie Crowell,  
Ravenna Clerk/Treasurer*



## Omaha to test protected bike lane project this spring

A protected bike lane pilot project will begin in downtown Omaha this spring.

The Market to Midtown Bikeway will be installed on Harney Street, from Dewey east to 10th Street. The bikeway project is a partnership between the City of Omaha, Metro Smart Cities, Inc., and Bike Walk Nebraska.

“The goal is to increase bicycle ridership and the use of bike shares and scooters,” Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert said. “The pilot will provide information and data that can be used to determine best practices for the potential installation of permanent bicycle infrastructure in the city.”

### Protected lane

The protected lane, created with flexible delineators, will separate the two right lanes on Harney, reducing the number of traffic lanes by one. Harney is one-way eastbound in the pilot area, with three traffic lanes and two curbside parking lanes. Traffic studies completed by the Public Works



Photo by © iStock.com.

Department show the reduction in traffic lanes will not have a significant impact on vehicle traffic.

Harney Street provides a good location for the pilot due to a mix of office, retail, residential, bar and restaurant businesses, Metro bus stops and parking meters.

Parallel parking spaces will be “float-ed” into the streets. Parked vehicles will provide additional separation between bicycle and vehicle traffic.

### Committee recommendation

The Market to Midtown Bikeway pilot is a recommendation made by the Smart Cities Advisory Committee. The coalition was convened by Mayor Stothert in 2017 to identify and

implement a series of pilot programs for innovative transportation changes. The Advisory Committee, representing business, non-profit, philanthropy, higher education and government agencies, also implemented a regional plan that solves transportation issues with policy, technology and innovation. This led to the ConnectGO initiative in partnership with the Greater Omaha Chamber.

### Bikeway agreement

The Bikeway agreement will be in effect until Sept. 30, 2022. It requires Metro Smart Cities to install and maintain the protected lane, meet with business and property owners along Harney Street, operate a hotline to encourage public input and respond to complaints, suggestions and requests for maintenance. Smart Cities also will provide snow removal and street sweeping in the bikeway. The city can terminate the agreement early if the terms of the agreement are not met.

The approximate cost of the bikeway pilot is \$250,000, paid by Metro Smart Cities. ■

Source – City of Omaha

## Elwood, Arapahoe offer free lots to encourage home building

*Continued from page 13*

the homes were built, she said. The second round of incentives went to four people at \$15,000 each and a free lot if the homes were built within 18 months of signing the contract, she said, adding that one of those homes has been completed and two more are being built.

Tannahill added that the area initially was developed using TIF to pay for infrastructure and that sales tax revenues funded the incentives. ■

**Checkout the League's Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/leaguene](http://www.facebook.com/leaguene)**

**Be sure to “Like” us**

## Property tax issues for governmental subdivisions

*Continued from page 9*

paid. There is a scenario where vacant property held by the governmental subdivision is still deemed to be used for a public purpose. If the governmental subdivision has acquired the property due to the failure of the property owner to pay taxes or special assessments and the property is held for sale at an amount equal or less than the tax or special assessment liability plus interest, it is property that is being held for a public purpose and is exempt from property tax.

While the general understanding that

governmental subdivisions are exempt from the property tax is largely correct, there are a number of scenarios where the county assessor may examine whether a particular parcel of property should be subject to tax.

There is a specific exception to the rule on fair market value that applies to public housing authorities.

Leases of property by a public housing authority to low-income individuals as a place of residence are specifically acknowledged to be for the authority's public purpose and remain tax exempt even if the lease is not at

fair market value. ■

*Trent Sidders is a partner with Cline Williams Wright Johnson and Oldfather, L.L.P. He has a transactional practice focusing on real estate transactions, including real estate tax matters. He can be reached at (402) 474-6900 or at [tsidders@clinewilliams.com](mailto:tsidders@clinewilliams.com). This article is not intended to serve as legal advice, but as information that may be relevant to readers of this publication. If you require legal advice, please contact Trent or another licensed lawyer.*

## La Vista senior, teen programs receive grants

The La Vista Senior Center and the teen program at the city library recently received grant funds from Google through the La Vista Community Foundation to add technology at those facilities.

The La Vista Community Foundation Board presented grants of \$5,000

each to staff and program participants.

The Senior Center grant will be used to buy equipment, including laptops and computer storage solutions for a computer lab designated for use by La Vista and surrounding communities' senior residents.

The library's teen program will create

a tech center for students ages 13-18 to include iPads, hot spots and a 3D printer.

City staff will be working in the coming months to make these purchases and install them.

*Source – City of La Vista*

## Grimes celebrates 50 years as Kearney city employee

In 1971, the microprocessor was invented, the voting age was lowered to 18 and Disney World opened. It also is when John Grimes, who was looking for a summer job, first began working for the City of Kearney. Fifty years later, he continues to work there, currently serving as the city's water commissioner and the water/sewer system supervisor. One of his favorite comments is

that "this has been a long summer," according to Anton Jelinek, Director of Utilities for the City of Kearney.

"We are truly blessed here in Kearney to have John as an employee," Jelinek said. "He is dedicated, knowledgeable and is always working to better the city's water and sanitary sewer systems. He embraces new technology and is always willing to listen to his employees' ideas." ■



*John Grimes  
Kearney Water Commissioner,  
Water/Sewer System Supervisor*

## City of Laurel receives recognition for efforts to revitalize and build downtown, business sustainability

Collaborative efforts to build downtown revitalization and business sustainability in the city of Laurel. (pop. 1,111), have earned ongoing recognition from the Department of Economic Development (DED). In April, Lt. Gov. Mike Foley honored local leaders for Laurel's continued membership in Nebraska's Economic Development Certified Community (EDCC) program. DED's Northeast Nebraska Business Development Consultant Lyndsy Jenness joined the Lt. Gov. for a special presentation to the community on April 12.

### City among 40 communities

Laurel is one of 40 Nebraska communities to earn EDCC status in the program, sponsored by the Nebraska Diplomats and administered by DED. State officials established the EDCC program in 2005 to recognize communities for preparedness to attract new industries and grow existing businesses. As part of the certification process, qualifying communities must identify a well-defined program that actively engages with their existing business community and offers a supportive environment for welcoming new economic development projects. This includes documenting available sites and buildings, developing local financing and incentive programs and creating ongoing strategic planning for economic growth. The community received original EDCC certification in 2010, and earned program recertification in 2015 and 2021.

"What an honor it is to be recertified for the EDCC program by the Nebraska Diplomats," Laurel Mayor Keith Knudsen said. "This designation, along with ongoing economic



*Photo from left to right in back row: Mark McCoy, Laurel City Administrator; Chad Johnson, City Councilman; Christine Rasmussen, Economic Development Coordinator; Mark Koch, City Council President. (Front Row): Justin Eriksen, City Councilman; Jeff Erwin, City Councilman; Lt. Gov Mike Foley; Mayor Keith Knudsen; Vikki Carlson, Laurel City Clerk.*

development programs and projects, will help to ensure a bright future and continued growth for our community."

### Top priorities

Over the past five years, community leaders have established support for several development projects following strategic planning efforts initiated in 2019. Top priorities among Laurel residents included development of a fire hall, community center and senior center.

The city's partnership with the state will provide infrastructure developments for the city's downtown revitalization project, funded by a local one percent sales tax and bonding. Anticipated for construction in 2021, the project will revamp three and

a half blocks in downtown Laurel through median removals and street, sewer and sidewalk replacements. A \$445,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for Downtown Revitalization (DTR), awarded by DED, will assist with project costs. Community beautification efforts also are underway to increase aesthetic appeal in the area.

### Long-term investments

"The City of Laurel's improvements to key downtown infrastructure provides a glimpse at its leaders' commitment to long-term investments in their community," said Lt. Gov. Mike Foley. "Doing so sends a strong message to new and existing business owners that they are valued and essen-

*Continued on page 17*



*Continued from page 16*

tial to economic growth. The state of Nebraska appreciates the opportunity to partner with the city in these efforts, which also highlight Laurel's success as an EDCC."

Construction of a new community center in downtown Laurel also is planned for the spring of 2021, made possible through the Community Center Committee's extensive fund-raising via local grants and pledges. DED's Civic and Community Center Financing Fund (CCCFF) also will contribute to the project, which will include space for Laurel's Senior Center.

### **Broke ground in 2020**

In November 2020, Laurel's Fire Protection District broke ground for the Laurel Fire and Rescue Building. The building, located on Highway 20, will increase accessibility to the community and serve as headquarters for the Laurel Volunteer Fire Department and area EMTs.

Economic Development Coordinator Christine Rasmussen says community development projects enhance local quality of life and compliment the city's efforts as an EDCC.

"The EDCC program's recertification process is a hands-on commitment to quality on all levels of economic development," Rasmussen said.

Several entrepreneurs have gained community support for new and expanding businesses. T&H Meat Company and Fine Spirits recently relocated to a storefront in downtown Laurel, which offers meat from local farmers and promotes food products made in Nebraska. In addition, The Scoop ice cream and gelato shop provides a safe haven for local students to gather before and after school activities.

Local leaders have completed succession planning for newly retired, well-established business owners. New owners of Laurel Hometown Market (formerly Gary's Foodtown), Cubby's Convenience Store (formerly Urwiler's Cornermart), and heating and cooling company Campbell Service (previously Lackas Service) recently acquired their businesses and are fully operational. In addition, the owners of Laurel True Value converted the business to Laurel Ace Hardware. Building upgrades have allowed new space for rental equipment and a new greenhouse at the business. A full-service flower shop and greenhouse, Floral Footprints, also recently received renovations by the shop's new owner. A new seed business in the community, Top Crop, opened in late 2020.

### **Laurel is open for business**

"Laurel is open for business and stands ready to support its existing employers and meet the needs of busi-

nesses considering locating here," said Laurel City Council President Mark L. Koch. "Nebraska's EDCC program certification takes that message to the next level providing the proof and justification that Laurel has the infrastructure, financing and commitment to economic growth."

### **Childcare needs addressed**

Immanuel Lutheran Church recently assisted the community's efforts to address childcare needs in Laurel. Shepherd's Care opened in early 2021 and offers childcare for children from six weeks to five years old. Last month, the business announced that it is accepting enrollment for preschool in the 2021-2022 school year.

For additional information on the Economic Development Certified Community Program, contact Ashley Rice-Gerlach at 308-655-0919 or [ashley.gerlach@nebraska.gov](mailto:ashley.gerlach@nebraska.gov). ■

*Source – Nebraska Department of Economic Development*



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# Lincoln Police Department pledges to advance women in policing

The Lincoln Police Department announced in late March that it has signed the 30x30 Pledge – a series of low and no-cost actions that police agencies can take to improve the representation and experiences of women in law enforcement. These activities will help police agencies assess any gender equity issues, identify factors that may be driving any disparities, and develop strategies to eliminate barriers and advance women in policing. These actions address recruitment, assessment, hiring, retention, promotion and agency culture. LPD is one of only 36 police departments in the country that has signed the pledge to date.

## Foundational effort

The pledge is the foundational effort of the 30x30 Initiative – a coalition of police leaders, researchers and professional organizations who have joined together to advance the representation and experiences of women in all ranks of policing across the United States. The 30x30 Initiative is affiliated with the Policing Project at NYU School of Law and the National Association of Women Law Enforcement Executives (NAWLEE).

The ultimate goal of the 30x30



Photo by © iStock.com.

Initiative is for women to compose 30 percent of police recruit classes by 2030 and to ensure policing agencies are truly representative of the jurisdiction the agency serves. While 30x30 is focused on advancing women in policing, these principles are applicable to all demographic diversity, not just gender.

## Improving representation

According to Acting Assistant Chief Michon Morrow, “By signing this

pledge, the Lincoln Police Department renews its commitment to actively working toward improving the representation and experiences of women officers in our agency. We look forward to working with and learning from agencies across the country who share this priority.”

## Demonstrates commitment

Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird said: “The 30x30 Initiative further demonstrates the City of Lincoln’s commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. ...We have heard the desire of our residents to have the police force reflect the diversity of our community. I am committed to providing the resources needed to enhance our ability to attract and retain female officers to help achieve this goal.”

The 30x30 Pledge is based on social science research indicating that greater representation of women on police forces leads to better policing outcomes for communities. ■

Source – City of Lincoln

## League magazine available on website

The League of Nebraska Municipalities places the *Nebraska Municipal Review* on the League’s website at <http://www.lonm.org/> under the “News” and then the “Publications” tabs.

As always, we encourage you to share news from your city or village

with fellow municipal officials by sending information for the *Nebraska Municipal Review* to the League of Nebraska Municipalities, Attn: Lynn Marienau at 1335 L Street, Lincoln, NE 68508, 402-476-2829 by phone or [lynnm@lonm.org](mailto:lynnm@lonm.org) by e-mail. ■

# LARM – Common misconceptions about risk management pools

— **BY DAVE BOS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, LEAGUE ASSOCIATION OF RISK MANAGEMENT (LARM)** ■

Risk management pools are not rare. In fact, across the country, it's more the rule than the exception that public entities utilize a pool for coverages and risk management services.

The League Association of Risk Management (LARM) was established in 1995 and currently provides risk management coverages and services to 175 Nebraska cities, villages and other governmental agencies.

As a local, long-term, stable, cost-effective risk management solution, there are still some misconceptions about LARM.

One is that a large claim would bankrupt LARM. This is false. LARM manages its exposure by purchasing reinsurance. Each reinsurance policy or contract that LARM purchases has a set retention, like a deductible. In the event of a large claim (like multiple tornadoes across the state in one

day) LARM would pay the retention amount (deductible) and the reinsurance carrier pays the rest.

Another misconception is that LARM's Board of Directors can deny claims. This is false as LARM's coverage documents clearly state the coverages provided and the Board of Directors, under the Interlocal Agreement, has a duty to ensure that all covered claims are paid promptly. (IA 8.14) Claims are paid in accordance with the coverages provided in the coverage document language. If a claim determination is disputed, the Interlocal Agreement provides an opportunity for appeal and review by the Board of Directors.

Some people have stated that "LARM isn't a 'real' insurance company." LARM is an insurance pool created under the State of Nebraska's Intergovernmental Risk Management Act and by an Interlocal Agreement between the members. LARM purchases standard insurance from insurance companies to cover most of its exposure. The Nebraska Department of Insurance also regulates and oversees the



*Dave Bos, LARM Executive Director*

operation of risk management pools in Nebraska.

Another misconception about LARM is that "You can't get out once you're in." This is false. A LARM member may terminate membership at the end of the given fiscal year by providing proper notice. LARM members can make a commitment to LARM of more than one year. They are rewarded for this commitment by a substantial savings in their contribution to LARM through a discount program. In these cases, the member may not terminate membership until their contract commitment is fulfilled.

LARM has been providing coverages and risk management services to Nebraska cities, villages and other governmental agencies for over 30 years. LARM members have come to rely on LARM for top-notch coverages, competitive pricing, outstanding customer service, efficient claims service and loss control assistance.

For more information about becoming a LARM member, go to [www.larmpool.org](http://www.larmpool.org). ■

## ***Ralston installs new program to assign, track issues in city***

The City of Ralston recently installed a cloud-based software program that helps assign and track progress of reported issues within the City of Ralston. Citizens can use the website to report an issue 24 hours a day.

The reports will be reviewed during regular business hours and the problem or issue will be sent to the

appropriate department.

Residents go to the city website at [www.cityofralston.com](http://www.cityofralston.com) and click on Report an Issue. This directs the citizen to a portal and, after creating a user-id and password, the citizen will be able to pin the location of the issue and create a work order.

*Source – City of Ralston*





*North Platte Mayor Brandon Kelliher accepts the Governor's Showcase Community of the Year award along with North Platte City Council Members seated: (from left to right) City Council President Jim Nisley, Donna Tryon, Pete Völz, Ty Lucas, Mayor Kelliher, City Administrator Matt Kibbon, Brad Garrick and Ed Rieker. Standing on left side is the North Platte Area Chamber and Development Corp. exec team: Gary Person, President and CEO; Dr. Rich Raska, immediate past chair; Brandon Jones, vice-chairman; Leland Poppe, finance chairman and Josh Harm, board chairman. Right side: Chris Bruns, Lincoln County Commissioner; Brent Burklund City Engineer; Marilyn McGahan, Planning Commission Chairman; Sarah Talbott, Downtown Association President; and Judy Clark, City and County Planning and Zoning Director. Photo courtesy of the Nebraska Department of Economic Development.*

## North Platte receives Governor's Showcase Community Award for 2021

Gov. Pete Ricketts in April named the City of North Platte as the recipient of 2021's "Governor's Showcase Community Award" for outstanding achievements in economic development and the impactful use of state and federal funds.

The announcement came as Gov. Ricketts signed a proclamation declaring April 5-9, 2021, as Community Development Week (CD Week) in the state.

### Created opportunities

"The community of North Platte has successfully created opportunities for businesses to grow and for residents to enhance their quality of life," Gov. Ricketts said. "Programs like the Community Development Block Grant and HOME Investment Partnerships are helping cities throughout Nebraska

pursue their goals. Congratulations to North Platte for winning this year's Showcase Award. Thanks to communities across our state for your dedication to making the Good Life even better for families in Nebraska."

### Celebrating success stories

Modeled on National Community Development Week, CD Week in Nebraska is about celebrating the economic development success stories happening around the state year-in and year-out. It also is about recognizing the important contribution of state and federal resources – such as the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) programs – towards community accomplishments.

"North Platte is a shining example

of what can be achieved at the local level when you approach economic development with a spirit of proactivity, an all-hands-on-deck mentality and the ability to leverage available resources," said Nebraska Department of Economic Development Director Anthony L. Goins. "Congratulations are due to the entire community for what they have been able to achieve, and for what's on the horizon."

### Accepts nominations

Each year leading up to CD Week, DED accepts nominations for the Showcase Community Award on the basis of economic development excellence and locals' successful leveraging of CDBG, HOME and other resources over a five year-period. The selected Showcase Community is

*Continued on page 21*

*Continued from page 20*

then approved by Gov. Ricketts and announced during the annual celebration.

This year's awardee, North Platte, showcases an extensive list of past, present and currently underway projects that are sparking new energy, opportunity and pride throughout the community while creating a flurry of excitement for things to come.

### **Validates hard work**

"Being honored by the Governor as this year's Showcase Community is beyond anything we hoped for when we set out to revitalize North Platte through our five-year economic development plan," said North Platte Mayor Brandon Kelliher. "This award is validation of the hard work of countless individuals, groups and citizens that banded together to make our accomplishments possible. There's incredible enthusiasm for the future,

and this recognition puts even more wind in our sails."

A major revitalization of the downtown district; new workforce housing development through a successful "Shot in the Arm" initiative; the expansion of the local hospital and medical services system; the planned redevelopment of a former mall into a retail and entertainment district unlike anything previously seen in the community; and a bevy of major business developments, including a new industrial rail park and a proposed beef processing plant spearheaded by local and Nebraska ag producers – both of which are projected to add significantly to the local economy – are just a few of the achievements that have locals abuzz with optimism and anticipation.

### **Amazing progress**

"It's amazing how much progress we've made as a community in the past five years alone and even more amazing

to think of what's ahead," said North Platte Chamber and Development Corporation President and CEO Gary Person. "We're talking about potential game-changers for the future of North Platte."

### **Programs are a catalyst**

"If we don't believe in our community," he added, "if we're not the ones out there making it emerge into something different and more exciting and building toward the future, nobody else from the outside is going to look at us and believe otherwise. Programs like CDBG and Nebraska's Rural Workforce Housing Fund – I call them great partnership programs – are a catalyst for making things happen. Once people see the progress being made, they find confidence in themselves, confidence in their community and can believe anything's possible." ■

*Source – Neb. Dept. of Economic Development*

## ***Directory of Municipal Officials***

### **Position/Information Changes**

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Delete</b>	<b>Add</b>
Cairo	Board Member	vacant	Michael Dibbern
Crete	Clerk	Judi Meyer	Jerry Wilcox
Grand Island	Council Member	Clay Schutz	Maggie Mendoza
Humphrey	Council Member	vacant	Adam Bode
	Council Member	vacant	Alan Eisenmenger
Plattsmouth	Attorney	Welch Law Firm, P.C.	
	Public Works Director	Neil Frodermann	Emily Bausch
Wahoo	Clerk	Lucinda Morrow	Cody Brem
	Treasurer/HR Coordinator		Jessica Mastny
Winnebago	Board Member	Valerie Mallory	Rena Brownrigg
	Board Member	Audreianna Levering	vacant

# Playground safety: Look at playground with a critical eye

— **BY DAVE BOS**, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, LEAGUE ASSOCIATION OF RISK MANAGEMENT (LARM) —

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, more than 200,000 children ages 14 and younger are taken to emergency rooms each year with injuries from playground equipment. Not only broken bones and abrasions but concussions and severe head injuries have been the result of mishaps on a piece of equipment that was meant to provide fun. Dave Bos, Executive Director of the League Association of Risk Management (LARM), reminds city officials that they need to inspect municipally owned playground equipment regularly as outdated and even new playground equipment may have the potential to cause injuries.

## Make it a habit

“City or village staff or board/council members should make it a habit of looking at their playgrounds with a critical eye. Is there an improper ground surface? Is the equipment too close together for the space provided? Are there unprotected elevated areas? Look for spaces that a child’s head might be entrapped. Playground equipment also should be free of protruding bolts and other sharp points and edges,” Bos said.

The National Safety Council (NSC) recommends that surfaces around playground equipment have “at least 12 inches of wood chips, mulch, sand or pea gravel, or mats made of safety-tested rubber or rubber-like materials.” Other tips include making sure there aren’t any exposed concrete footings, rocks or tree stumps in the area. Playground equipment should be free of protruding bolt ends, hooks



*Cedar Creek playground. Photo provided by LARM.*

and other sharp points and edges. Since 80 percent of playground accidents are due to falls, make sure that all platforms higher than 30 inches have guardrails or barriers.

“Many of us grew up playing on some pieces of playground equipment that weren’t entirely safe. With new products that are made of safer materials and equipment being designed as a result of research done on playground safety, cities are more equipped to provide a safer playground experience for the kids in their community,” Bos said.

## Steps taken

LARM Loss Control staff have taken steps to learn more about playground safety. Bos, Fred Wiebelhaus, LARM Field Adjuster Supervisor/Loss Control Assistant, and Randy Peters, LARM Field Auto Adjuster/Loss Control Assistant, received training and earned the Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI) designation through the National Recreation and Park Association. The CPSI certification program provides comprehensive

training on playground safety issues including hazard identification, equipment specifications, surfacing requirements and risk management methods.

## Number one priority

“It may be as simple as tightening up a bolt that has become loose but there are probably some pieces of equipment in playgrounds across Nebraska that need to be repaired or possibly replaced. An audit of your playground by a certified playground inspector can go a long way towards preventing a liability for cities and villages. Safety of the children of our community is a number one priority and it’s the responsibility of elected officials and staff to make sure their playgrounds are free of hazards,” Bos said.

For more information about scheduling a playground audit, LARM members can call Randy Peters at (402) 310-5356 or Fred Wiebelhaus at (402) 440-9129. For more information about LARM, please visit our website at [www.larmpool.org](http://www.larmpool.org). ■



## Grand Island Public Library becomes FamilySearch Affiliate Library

The Grand Island Public Library is now a FamilySearch Affiliate Library, which means it has access to more genealogy resources to help library patrons make more family discoveries. FamilySearch is a world leader in family history research.

“Interest in our ancestral roots continues to grow with the popularity of DNA tests, reality TV shows like ‘Long Lost Family’ or ‘Who Do You Think You Are?’ and the growing access to online genealogy records. Adding the Grand Island Public Library as our newest FamilySearch Affiliate Library will enable patrons to make fun, personal discoveries and family connection,” said Paul Nata, FamilySearch Public Relations Manager.

### A few hundred

There are only a few hundred affiliate libraries in the country. This designation means local patrons will have greater and more convenient access to the wealth of genealogical resources available through FamilySearch. The popular web service has over six billion searchable names and two billion images of historical genealogical records – and patrons receive the helpful assistance of library staff.

Joining this free partnership adds FamilySearch to the popular Ancestry Library Edition service Grand Island Public Library provides and MyHeritage provided to all Nebraska residents by the Nebraska Library Commission.

### 300 million free records

FamilySearch adds over 300 million free genealogical records and images online yearly from all over the world and manages the famous Family History Library in Salt Lake City. It has amassed billions of birth, marriage, death, census, land and court records from more than 130 countries to help

you discover and make family connections. FamilySearch is accessible only within the library building and it is the largest genealogy organization in the world.

The Grand Island Public Library

also offers print materials, audiobooks, DVDs, electronic materials and access to dozens of online databases including genealogical and historical services. ■

*Source – City of Grand Island*

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## Kearney Police Department receives grant for speed control equipment

The Kearney Police Department in April announced that it is being awarded a highway safety grant from the Nebraska Department of Transportation Highway Safety Office (NDOT-HSO) to help obtain two mobile radar units, according to William Kovarik, Administrator for the NDOT Highway Safety Office. Kovarik said: "Technology holds immense promise when it comes to mitigating human error. This equipment is vital in helping agencies to more effectively target reckless drivers, making roadways safer for motorists and passengers."

The mobile radar speed detection equipment provides the agency with

reliable, advanced technology that will enhance speed control efforts. The total grant funding assistance for this project is up to \$1,800.

"This grant award will allow law enforcement to purchase equipment that will assist the agency in its mission to enhance public safety on our roadways. It provides the tools they require to focus on problematic traffic areas throughout Kearney to promote safer roadways and reduce speed related traffic crashes, fatalities and injuries," Kovarik said.

Chief Bryan D. Waugh said the department appreciated "the continued support and partnership with the NDOT Highway Safety Office and



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maintaining technology related to public safety through grant opportunities such as this. Our goal with this equipment is to continue our focus on roadway and public safety through traffic enforcement and education." ■

Source – City of Kearney

### Meet Tracy Juranek

Tracy is a Nebraska native who graduated from Shelby High School. She and her husband raised their two kids in Nebraska City and they now live in Syracuse.

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## Positions

**Chief of Police.** Village of Coleridge, Nebraska, an EOE, is currently accepting applications for the full-time position of Chief of Police. Candidate must be a certified police officer within the State of Nebraska, possess a valid driver's license and pass all applicable background checks. Preferred candidates will have at least three years of law enforcement management experience, an Associate's degree or higher education.

Starting salary is dependent on qualifications and experience. Benefit package includes uniform allowance, health insurance allowance, retirement, paid holidays, sick leave and vacation leave.

To apply for the position obtain an application from the Village Clerk's Office. The position remains open until filled.

Applications accepted in person during regular business hours at:

Village Clerks Office

111 S Main Street

Coleridge, NE 68727

Ph (402) 283-4464

Village of Coleridge

Attn: Police Chief Search

P.O. Box 276

Coleridge, NE 68727-0276

Web address: <http://coleridge-ne.com/>

Email address: [villageofcoleridge@gmail.com](mailto:villageofcoleridge@gmail.com)

**Utility Position.** Village of Ansley is accepting applications for a utility employee position. Job responsibilities include but are not limited to assisting the superintendent in the operation of

## Positions

the generating plant, distribution line maintenance, repair and upgrades, maintenance and repair of the water system, taking water samples, and maintenance of the lift station and sewer system. This is an assistant position and successful candidate would be required to work with other departments when needed. The employee must be willing to work after hours in emergency situations and must live within 20 minutes of Ansley. Applicants must possess a valid Nebraska driver's license with a clean driving record, must have or the ability to obtain a Nebraska Class B CDL, be willing to become a certified water operator within the first year of employment. (The Village will pay for training/certifications.) Electrical, line person and bucket truck experience is preferred. Pre-employment drug screening may be required. Wages are negotiable and will be based on experience and qualifications. Benefits include health insurance, matching retirement plan, vacation, sick leave, and paid holidays. Resume and references can be mailed to: Village of Ansley, PO Box 307, Ansley, NE 68814, delivered to the Village Office at 217 Nile Street, Ansley, NE, or emailed to [villageofansley@nctc.net](mailto:villageofansley@nctc.net). Please call 308-935-1400 with any questions. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. Village of Ansley is an EOE.

**Utility Maintenance Worker.** City of Loup City is accepting applications for the position of Utility/Maintenance Worker. Applicants will need to have a High School Diploma or

## Positions

equivalent. They must possess a valid drivers license with a good driving record. Successful candidate will be required to live within a reasonable distance from the City limits and will be required to complete and pass the necessary tests for water, sewer certifications in a timely manner. Some experience is preferred. Work duties will be labor intensive which can include, but not limited to testing, repair and maintenance of the municipal streets, water and sewer systems. Other duties include snow removal, heavy lifting, light construction, heavy equipment operator, general labor and upkeep of City owned properties and equipment will be expected. Salary to commensurate with experience. Drug testing required. City of Loup City offers competitive benefits which include 100% of employee health insurance paid and 70% of family health insurance paid. Applications will be accepted until the position has been filled. Job descriptions and applications are available at the City Office 134 South 8th St. (308) 745-0222. City of Loup City is an equal opportunity and a veteran's preference employer.

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