

NEBRASKA MUNICIPAL REVIEW

■ Ribbon cut as York community solar field is up and running

■ New Laurel fire hall already paying dividends

■ Grand opening held for Powerhouse Trail in Columbus

Official Publication of the League of Nebraska Municipalities

NOVEMBER 2022



Contents

NOVEMBER 2022

No. 1,171
ISSN 0028-1906

About the Cover:

Nebraska's Capital City in fall.

Source – iStock Photo.

4	The Director's Message by L. Lynn Rex, LNM Executive Director – Thanks to Mayor Doug Hanson and Mayor Don Groesser for their leadership as longtime chairs of the League Legislative Committees
6	The Commentary by Gov. Pete Ricketts – Leading the way to cleaner, more affordable, American-made fuel
8	The Commentary by U.S. Sen. Deb Fischer – Our heroes
9	Omaha's first Homeless Services Coordinator joins team in December
10	City of Hastings property disked for Wetland Reserve Program
11	Village of Raymond's new lagoon system nearly completed
12	Grand opening held for Powerhouse Train in Columbus
14	LARM – Rules for trails that municipalities may want to consider
15	Lincoln Mayor, LTU Director showcase 12 new multi-use trucks
16	AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC): A resource for Nebraska municipalities
17	LARM – Preventing vandalism in your community
18	New Laurel fire hall already paying dividends
19	Arthur, Bellwood, Clearwater, Emerson, Newcastle receive Community Development Block Grant funds
20	Ribbon cut as York community solar field is up and running
22	Crete Fire and Rescue volunteers part of wildfire control efforts in October
23	Tips for testifying before legislative committees
24	Outstanding Clerk Award Form
25	Classifieds
26	Professional Directory

Larger Cities Legislative Committee

Mike Dafney, Mayor, Alliance
Seth Sorensen, City Manager, Alliance
Stan Wirth, Mayor, Beatrice
Tobias Tempelmeyer, City Administrator/General Manager, Beatrice
Rusty Hike, Mayor, Bellevue
Jim Ristow, City Administrator, Bellevue
Richard Hansen, Mayor, Blair
Rod Storm, City Administrator, Blair
Desirae Solomon, City Attorney, Blair
Mark Werner, Mayor, Chadron
Miles Bannon, Council Member, Chadron
Jim Bulkley, Mayor, Columbus
John F. Lohr, Council Member, Columbus
Tara Vasicek, City Administrator, Columbus
Dave Bauer, Mayor, Crete
Tom Ourada, City Administrator, Crete
Jerry Wilcox, Clerk/Treasurer, Crete
Joey Spellerberg, Mayor, Fremont
Jody Sanders, City Administrator, Fremont
Tony Kaufman, Mayor, Gering
Vaughn Minton, Council Member, Grand Island
Jerry Janulewicz, City Administrator, Grand Island

Mike Evans, Mayor, Gretna
Paula Dennison, City Administrator, Gretna
Corey Stutte, Mayor, Hastings
Doug Young, Mayor, Holdrege
Chris Rector, City Administrator, Holdrege
Stan Clouse, Mayor, Kearney
Doug Kindig, Mayor, La Vista
Pam Buethe, Clerk, La Vista
John Fagot, Mayor, Lexington
Joe Pepplitsch, City Manager, Lexington
Margaret Blatchford, Assistant City Attorney, Lincoln
Amanda Barker, Advisor to the Mayor, Lincoln
Mike Gonzales, Mayor, McCook
Nate Schneider, City Manager, McCook
Bryan Bequette, Mayor, Nebraska City
Lou Leone, City Administrator, Nebraska City
Josh Moenning, Mayor, Norfolk
Andrew Colvin, City Administrator, Norfolk
Brandon Kelliher, Mayor, North Platte
M. Layne Groseth, Interim City Admin./Public Works Director, North Platte
Kevin Wilkins, City Manager, Ogallala
Jack Cheloha, Deputy City Attorney/City Lobbyist, Omaha

David Black, Mayor, Papillion
Amber Powers, City Administrator, Papillion
R. Paul Lambert, Mayor, Plattsmouth
Emily Bausch, City Administrator, Plattsmouth
Don Groesser, Mayor, Ralston
Brian Kavanaugh, Council Member, Ralston
Rick Hoppe, City Administrator, Ralston
Jon Knutson, Mayor, Schuyler
William De Roos, City Administrator, Schuyler
Jeanne McKerrigan, Mayor, Scottsbluff
Kevin Spencer, Interim City Manager/Police Chief, Scottsbluff
Joshua Eickmeier, Mayor, Seward
Greg Butcher, City Administrator, Seward
Roger Gallaway, Mayor, Sidney
David Scott, City Manager, Sidney
Carol Schuldt, Council Member, South Sioux City
Lance Hedquist, City Administrator, South Sioux City
Cale Giese, Mayor, Wayne
Jill Brodersen, Council President, Wayne
Wes Blecke, City Administrator, Wayne
Barry Redfern, Mayor, York
Dr. Sue Crawford, City Administrator, York

Smaller Cities Legislative Committee

Lanette Doane, Clerk/Treasurer, Ansley
Jessica Quady, City Administrator, Ashland
Marlin Seeman, Mayor, Aurora
Eric Melcher, City Administrator, Aurora
Chris Anderson, City Administrator, Central City
Nikki Schwanz, City Administrator, Cozad
Andrew Lee, Admin./Clerk/Treasurer, Curtis
Alan Michl, Chairperson, Exeter
Becky Erdkamp, Clerk/Treasurer, Exeter
Eric Kamler, Mayor, Geneva
Kyle Svec, City Administrator, Geneva
Deb VanMatre, Mayor, Gibbon

Gary Greer, City Administrator, Gothenburg
Doug Hanson, Mayor, Hickman
Kelly Oelke, City Administrator, Hickman
Alec Baillie, Mayor, Loup City
Sandra Schendt, Clerk/Treasurer, Nelson
Chris Dibbern, NMPP Energy
Sandy Kruml, Clerk/Treasurer, Ord
LeAnn Brown, Clerk/Treasurer, Oshkosh
Denise Peterson, Admin./Clerk/Treasurer, Ponca
Mike Feelen, Council Member, St. Paul
Nancy Bryan, Clerk/Treasurer, Stromsburg
Sandra Foote, Council Member, Superior

Jeff Hofaker, City Administrator, Sutton
Jessica Meyer, City Administrator, Syracuse
Kyle Arganbright, Mayor, Valentine
Melissa Harrell, City Administrator, Wahoo
Stephanie Fisher, City Administrator, Waverly
Michael Kindle, Council Member, Weeping Water
Tom Goulette, City Administrator/Utility Superintendent, West Point
Randy Woldt, Utilities Superintendent, Wisner
CJ Heaton, City Administrator, Yutan

Executive Board 2022-2023

President	Deb VanMatre Mayor, Gibbon
President-Elect	Marlin Seeman Mayor, Aurora
Vice President	Bryan Bequette Mayor, Nebraska City
Past President	Paul Lambert Mayor, Plattsmouth
Directors	
Jean Stothert	Mayor, Omaha
Leirion Gaylor Baird	Mayor, Lincoln
David Black	Mayor, Papillion
Eric Kamler	Mayor, Geneva
Tony Kaufman	Mayor, Gering
Julie A. Deepe	Mayor, Deshler
Catherine-Jo Mills	Village Chair, Ansley
Joey Spellerberg	Mayor, Fremont
Jeff Hofaker	City Administrator Sutton
LeAnn Brown	Clerk/Treasurer, Oshkosh
Layne Groseth	City Administrator/Utilities Manager, North Platte

Affiliated Sections

City Managers	Phil Green Papillion
Clerks	Wendy McKain Trenton
Municipal Accounting & Finance	Dawn Miller North Platte
Fire Chiefs	Dennis Thompson North Platte
Utilities	Bill Bischoff Wauneta

League Staff

L. Lynn Rex	Executive Director
Christy Abraham	Legal Counsel
Lash Chaffin	Utilities Section Director
Brenda Henning	Membership Services Assistant
Lynn Marienau	Communications Director
Ethan Nguyen	LONM/LARM Information Technology Manager
Rob Pierce	Utilities Field Representative/ Training Coordinator
Shirley Riley	Membership Services Director

LARM Staff

Dave Bos	Executive Director
Tracy Juranek	Assistant Executive Director, Customer Service Specialist
Diane Becker	Communications/Marketing Director
Fred Wiebelhaus	Loss Control/Claims Manager
Drew Cook	Customer Service Specialist
Kyla Brockevelt	Executive Administrative Assistant
James Kelley	Loss Control Specialist

CALENDAR

Utilities/Public Works Section Annual Conference	Jan. 11-13, 2023, Embassy Suites, Lincoln
Midwinter Conference.....	Feb. 27-28, 2023, Cornhusker Marriott Hotel, Lincoln
NLC Congressional City Conference.....	March 12-15, 2023, Washington, D.C.

Municipal Legal Calendar

(All statute citations to Revised Statutes of Nebraska)

JANUARY 2023

CITIES OF THE FIRST CLASS

Each month.....	Clerk publishes ordinances passed within 15 days after passage. (16-405)
Within 10 working days from meeting or before next meeting (whichever is sooner)....	Clerk to have minutes available for public inspection. (84-1413)
First Regular Meeting	Mayor and Council appoint member of Park Board. (16-696)
Within 30 days from Council meeting	Clerk publishes official proceedings of meeting. (19-1102)
Within 20 days after end of month.....	Treasurer files monthly financial report. (16-318)
On or before January 31	Provide county assessor each new lease or changed preexisting lease which went into effect during the previous year and a listing of previously reported leases that are still in effect. (77-202.11)
Each Quarter	Report from depository banks due. (16-714)
Reminder.....	Notice of automatic renewal of liquor and beer other than Class C licenses must be published between January 10 and January 30 of each year. (53-135.01)

CITIES OF THE SECOND CLASS

Each month.....	Clerk publishes ordinances passed within 15 days after passage (17-613)
Within 10 working days from meeting or before next meeting (whichever is sooner)	Clerk to have minutes available for public inspection. (84-1413)
Within 30 days from Council meeting	Clerk publishes official proceedings of meeting. (19-1102)
Within 20 days after end of month.....	Treasurer files monthly financial report. (17-606)
On or before January 31	Provide county assessor each new lease or changed preexisting lease which went into effect during the previous year and a listing of previously reported leases that are still in effect. (77-202.11)
Reminder.....	Notice of automatic renewal of liquor and beer other than Class C licenses must be published between January 10 and January 30 of each year. (53-135.01)

VILLAGES

Each month.....	Clerk publishes ordinances passed within 15 days after passage (17-613)
Within 10 working days from meeting or before next meeting (whichever is sooner)	Clerk to have minutes available for public inspection. (84-1413)
Within 30 days from Trustees' meeting.....	Clerk publishes official proceedings of meeting. (19-1102)
Within 20 days after end of month.....	Treasurer files monthly financial report. (17-606)
On or before January 31	Provide county assessor each new lease or changed preexisting lease which went into effect during the previous year and a listing of previously reported leases that are still in effect. (77-202.11)
Reminder.....	Notice of automatic renewal of liquor and beer other than Class C. licenses must be published between January 10 and January 30 of each year. (53-135.01)

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

The **NEBRASKA MUNICIPAL REVIEW** is the official publication of the League of Nebraska Municipalities, an association of the cities and villages of Nebraska, published at 1335 L St., Lincoln, Nebraska 68508 — Telephone 402-476-2829; FAX 402-476-7052; Website: www.lonm.org. Periodicals postage paid at Lincoln, Nebraska. Views of contributors, solicited or unsolicited, are their own and not to be construed as having the endorsement of the League unless specifically and explicitly stated by the publisher.

The **NEBRASKA MUNICIPAL REVIEW** is a nonprofit publication administered and supervised by the League of Nebraska Municipalities. All revenue derived from the publication is used by the association to defray publication costs.

The **NEBRASKA MUNICIPAL REVIEW** is published monthly. Subscription rates are \$5 per single copy — \$50 plus tax for 12 issues.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to **NEBRASKA MUNICIPAL REVIEW**, 1335 L Street, Lincoln, Nebraska 68508.



Thanks to Mayor Doug Hanson and Mayor Don Groesser for their leadership as longtime chairs of the League Legislative Committees

BY L. LYNN REX, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, LNM

Thanks to **Hickman Mayor Doug Hanson** and **Ralston Mayor Don Groesser** for their many years of dedication and steadfast leadership in Chairing the League's **Smaller Cities Legislative Committee (SCLC)** and **Larger Cities Legislative Committee (LCLC)**, respectively. As noted in the October *Review*, Mayor Hanson has been the Chair of the SCLC since 2003; he chaired his last meeting of the SCLC on Oct. 13 since he decided not to seek re-election as Mayor of Hickman. Mayor Hanson was League President from 2009-2010 and serves as Chair of the League Association of Risk Management (LARM), a position to which he has been continuously elected by the LARM Board of Directors. His last LARM meeting will be Dec. 14, 2022.

Mayor Groesser has Chaired the LCLC since 2011 and will continue to do so in the years ahead. Mayor Groesser also served as League President from 2004-2005. Municipal officials serving on the LCLC and SCLC meet in person at least three times in the fall and several other times virtually, as necessary, to review numerous requests for legislative action from League members, Senators, state agencies and other statewide organizations. These municipal officials from across

the state make recommendations to the League Executive Board on policy issues, including the development of the League's legislative package.

The LCLC is comprised of the Mayor and City Manager/Administrator of every city of the first class; frequently, council members and other municipal officials from first class cities also serve on the committee. Representatives of the City of Omaha (metropolitan class city) and the City of Lincoln (primary class city) also serve on the LCLC. The SCLC has 33 municipal officials representing villages and cities of the second class. (*Page 2 of the Review lists members of the LCLC and SCLC.*) Thanks to these devoted municipal officials for taking time from their busy schedules throughout the year to recommend to the League Executive Board whether we should advocate for or against proposed legislation, remain neutral or take no position at all. **If you have an interest in serving on one of the League Legislative Committees, please let me or another League staff member know.**

As a courtesy to other cities and villages, the League Executive Board and staff strongly encourage municipal officials to FIRST submit ideas and concepts for proposed legislation to the League staff for initial consider-

ation by the LCLC and SCLC before contacting State Senators or state agencies. Doing so will significantly enhance successful passage of a proposal already vetted by both League Legislative Committees and avoid (or at least minimize) the possibility of conflicting or adverse testimony at a legislative hearing on the bill from another municipal official. Though this situation rarely occurs, it has happened and is awkward, at best, for the Senator, the League and your city or village.

On Dec. 2, the League Executive Board will be considering recommendations of the LCLC and SCLC on new legislative requests as well as bills of municipal concern introduced in the 2021 or 2022 sessions which did not pass and would need to be reintroduced since these bills do not carry over to the 2023 session. The First Session of the One Hundred Eighth Legislature will begin Jan. 4, 2023 and is scheduled to adjourn *sine die* June 9, 2023.

The First Session of the One Hundred Eighth Legislature is a 90-day session, followed by a 60-day session in 2024. The League Executive Board will be considering numerous requests for legislative action which relate to a

Continued on page 5

Continued from page 4

wide variety of municipal issues, including, but certainly not limited to: broadband, publication requirements, Open Meetings Act, tax increment financing, micro-TIF, lid on restricted funds, other property tax limitations, when a mayor is allowed to vote, land banks, LB 840 plans, petition requirements for remonstrance, the postcard bill (Property Tax Request Act), entertainment district licenses, firefighter pensions and appropriation of state funds for demolishing commercial buildings. Undoubtedly, Sen. Carol Blood will be introducing a version of LR 263CA, a constitutional amendment to require the Legislature to reimburse political subdivisions when imposing unfunded mandates or new programs or increasing levels of service under existing programs.

The upcoming legislative session will be quite challenging for a number of reasons. With Gov. Pete Ricketts term limited out of office after serving two terms, we look forward to working with Governor-Elect Jim Pillen and his team which will include several department heads and key staff from Gov. Ricketts' administration. In addition, 14 of Nebraska's 49 State Senators will not be returning in the 2023 session. We also look forward to working with the new Senators as well as those returning.

Patrick O'Donnell, Clerk of the Nebraska Legislature, recently announced his retirement. Patrick was re-elected by the Legislature every two years since 1978. O'Donnell is the longest serving Clerk of a state Legislature in the United States. Several Senators, lobbyists and reporters have emphasized, O'Donnell was not just the "Clerk," O'Donnell's comprehensive understanding of legislative rules



Hickman Mayor Doug Hanson, Longtime Chair of the League Smaller Cities Legislative Committee.



Ralston Mayor Don Groesser, Longtime Chair of the League Larger Cities Legislative Committee.

and process has enabled Senators to operate efficiently for decades.

In addition to O'Donnell's retirement, several key staff and legal counsel to important legislative committees also will be retiring before the 2023 session begins, resulting in over 500 years of legislative experience and institutional memory leaving at once. For example, **Bill Marienau**, Legal Counsel of the Legislature's Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee, served the Legislature for more than 40 years. Bill is the husband of Lynn Marienau, League Communications Director, who sadly also is going to be retiring at the end of this year. **Kate Allen** has been Legal Counsel of the Legislature's Retirement Committee for 13 years and has served in other legislative positions for over 37 years. **Mary Jane Egr Edson** was a staff attorney at the Revenue Department for three years and then served as Nebraska's State Tax Commissioner for seven years before becoming Legal Counsel of the Legislature's Revenue Committee for 10

years. **Janice Satra**, Legal Counsel of the Legislature's Executive Board for over 30 years, also recently announced her retirement. **These are just a few of the individuals with tremendous expertise who have served various legislative committees as legal counsel with dedication and distinction.** Several other legal counsel who served legislative committees for just a few years have recently accepted positions in the private sector. Christy Abraham, Lash Chaffin and I truly will miss working with these dedicated public officials! **Trevor Fitzgerald**, who has served as Legal Counsel of the Legislature's Urban Affairs Committee for eight years, now will be Legal Counsel of the Legislature's Executive Board; we look forward to working with him in his new role. ■



Leading the way to cleaner, more affordable, American-made fuel

BY GOV. PETE RICKETTS

There's no reason why the United States should be reliant on authoritarian regimes like Iran, Russia and Venezuela to supply the fuel we need. We have more than enough resources to restore our energy independence and bring fuel prices down. In Nebraska, we're doing our part to grow biofuels production right here in America's Heartland.

Embracing ethanol offers several benefits to consumers and communities. For starters, it saves drivers money at the pump. At a time when American families are strapped for cash due to inflation, ethanol offers savings. A study released Oct. 13, 2022, by ABF Economics estimated that "expanding E15 use to the nation's entire motor gasoline supply" would save an average American household \$168 per year. Nationwide, it would reduce annual consumer spending on motor fuel by \$20.6 billion.

Cleaner environment

Filling up with ethanol also leads to a cleaner environment. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, ethanol reduces greenhouse gas emissions by 43 percent compared to gasoline. Additional studies have shown that, when compared to E10, E15 further reduces emissions of particulate matter by 18 percent, carbon monoxide by

17 percent and NOx by 3 percent. This effect is even more pronounced when higher ethanol blends are considered. Converting just 10 percent of the United States on-road fleet to E30 would result in a reduction of at least 34 megatons of carbon dioxide emissions annually.

Strengthens agriculture

Ethanol strengthens Nebraska agriculture by providing opportunities for our farm families. Ethanol production generates demand for locally grown corn and increases the price farmers are paid for their harvest. Roughly 40 percent of corn grown in Nebraska is used to make ethanol. In July 2022, a joint study by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) and the Nebraska Ethanol Board reported that farmers in the immediate vicinity of ethanol facilities receive about 21.3 cents more per bushel for their corn. It's not just our farm families who benefit from ethanol. The commodity also creates great-paying jobs in rural communities. The UNL/Nebraska Ethanol Board study estimated that the ethanol industry directly supports 1,460 jobs in Nebraska and indirectly supports over 3,000 more. These jobs have annual average earnings of \$70,800.

We're conducting cutting-edge re-

search to demonstrate the benefits of higher ethanol blends. In June 2019, the State of Nebraska began a study on the use of locally sourced E30 biofuel in conventional vehicles. State teammates outfitted 50 state-owned vehicles with onboard tracking systems to capture data on vehicle performance. They monitored those vehicles for an entire year. Data was submitted to engineers at UNL for analysis. In February 2021, UNL's Engineering Department released a report with its analysis of the data. It clearly showed that E30, a blend of gasoline and 30 percent ethanol, is safe and efficient to use in regular vehicles and created no maintenance issues.

EPA approval received

This October, we received EPA approval for an expanded study of the benefits of E30. It will include up to 825 state vehicles. Scaling up our use of E30 in the state's vehicle fleet will underscore what we've already proven – E30 can be used in regular vehicles without reducing performance. Under current EPA guidelines, only flex-fuel vehicles can use ethanol blends higher than E15. With our second phase study, we'll be in an even stronger position to advocate regulatory change to make E30 accessible to everyone.

Continued on page 7

Continued from page 6

We've also passed legislation to help our ethanol facilities make the most of new technologies. Last year, I signed LB 650 into law to establish a legal and regulatory framework to store carbon dioxide underground in Nebraska.

Companies like Carbon America, Navigator CO2, Summit Carbon Solutions and Tallgrass Energy have embarked on major projects that will allow Nebraska ethanol facilities to securely capture, transfer and store carbon emissions. For example, Carbon America announced a partnership with Bridgeport Ethanol to capture and store 95 percent of the plant's annual emissions – roughly 175,000 tons of CO2 per year. As Nebraska produces cleaner-burning fuels using carbon sequestration, we're helping conventional vehicles achieve a carbon footprint similar to, if not cleaner than, the footprint from manufacturing and charging electric vehicles.

Promoting benefits

As we invest in research and use technologies to grow ethanol in Nebraska, we're actively promoting the benefits of biofuels around the world. In 2021, Nebraska exported over \$375 million of ethanol. That's up more than 50 percent from 2014. We're looking to

build on this growth.

In August, we highlighted the benefits of ethanol during our trade mission to the United Kingdom (UK). Last year, the UK upped its ethanol blending requirement for all gasoline from 5 percent to 10 percent, generating demand for biofuels. Ethanol offers a great solution for consumers in the UK concerned about rising fuel costs and looking to reduce their carbon footprint. We will continue to highlight the advantages of ethanol to Nebraska's key international trade partners.

Great opportunity

As the United States looks for cleaner, more sustainable sources of energy, renewable diesel also offers a great opportunity to use Nebraska products to create clean fuels. Over the past few years, communities in Nebraska have successfully attracted processors producing or treating the feedstocks used to make renewable diesel. In March 2021, Marathon started operations at a facility in Beatrice to pretreat 3,000 barrels per day of feedstock for its renewable diesel plant in North Dakota. In September 2021, JST Global, a joint venture between Tyson Foods and Jacob Stern & Sons, began construction on a facility in Dakota City to pretreat animal fats for renewable diesel production. Earlier this year, AGP (David City) and Norfolk Crush announced major investments to build soy crush facilities. These plants use soybeans to produce the oils that renewable diesel plants use as feedstock.

This week, Heartwell Renewables (a partnership between Love's and Cargill) is breaking ground on a renewable diesel production facility in Hastings. The facility is scheduled to open in the

summer of 2024 and will use rendered beef fat to produce 80 million gallons of renewable diesel each year. It's bringing 50 jobs to Hastings. ■

Building a better future in NEBRASKA with a strong Public Finance Partner

D.A. Davidson & Co. is committed to strengthening the infrastructure and enriching the lives of people in our communities throughout Nebraska and across the nation.

Our bankers specialize in:

- Bond Anticipation Notes
- Paving Bonds
- Water and Sewer Bonds
- General Obligation Bonds
- Utility System Revenue Bonds
- Lease-Purchase Financing

Call:

(800) 528-5145 | **Paul Grieger**
(866) 809-5596 | **Cody Wickham**
(866) 809-5443 | **Andy Forney**
(866) 466-9368 | **Jerry Spethman**

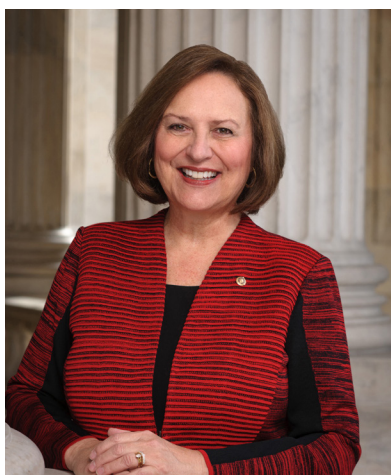


D|A|DAVIDSON

450 Regency Parkway, Suite 400
Omaha, NE 68114 | (800) 206-7523
D.A. Davidson & Co. member FINRA and SIPC
dadavidson.com

Checkout the League's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/leaguene

Be sure to "Like" us



Our heroes

BY U.S. SEN. DEB FISCHER

At 11 a.m. on Nov. 11, 1918, everything went silent. The deafening sounds of gunfire and artillery shells had come to a halt. World War I, which at the time was the deadliest conflict in human history, was finally over.

While millions across the globe could finally breathe a sigh of relief, many American service members didn't live to see the celebrations. Fifty-three thousand American troops died in combat during the Great War and another 63,000 died due to influenza and other causes while in service. An additional 204,000 American troops were wounded.

The massive conflict and its impact on service members weighed heavily on the nation.

To commemorate the end of the Great War, Congress passed a resolution in 1926 declaring that Nov. 11 should be recognized as Armistice Day.

By 1954, after another World War and the Korean War, the name of the holiday was changed to Veterans Day to ensure all service members were included.

Since then, Veterans Day has given the country a solemn opportunity to come together and honor the men and women who have served our country bravely and make up such a valued

part of our communities. It also is an opportunity to thank veterans for their service and give back to the community. Whether you served for one day or 40 years, this is your day.

Throughout the week, patriotic Nebraskans across our state are leading efforts to honor, recognize and care for our veterans.

In Holdrege, a new bronze sculpture called "Never Forgotten" will be dedicated in Veterans Memorial Park and the new granite benches and veterans' names added to the monument in the past year will be dedicated. I had the opportunity to visit the memorial this summer and it is a beautiful testament to one community's enduring commitment to lifting up its veterans.

Husker football did their part to honor veterans at their annual Military Appreciation game this year. Fans were able to get a close look at the Nebraska National Guard's military vehicles, help others through the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve's Toys for Tots program and visit the recently dedicated Veterans' Tribute at the Pershing Military and Naval Science Building.

In Congress, I have continued to work with my colleagues to help our veterans. Earlier this year, for example, I supported a bill to help our brave servicemen and women who were

exposed to toxic burn pits receive the medical care and benefits they need. The PACT Act was signed into law Aug. 10, 2022.

I also recently introduced bipartisan legislation to cut red tape and help more veterans take advantage of their GI benefits at commercial driver's license (CDL) schools. Service members give up so much for our country – the least we can do is ensure they have access to the economic opportunities they have earned after their service in the military.

There are other ways we can honor our veterans and their service. The Maple Street Post Office in Benson, Neb. now bears the name of Petty Officer 1st Class Charles Jackson French. During World War II, French rescued 15 shipmates after swimming for hours through shark-infested waters in the South Pacific. I was proud to work with Congressman Don Bacon on that legislation to finally give Petty Officer French some of the recognition he deserves.

This Veterans Day, I want to thank each and every Nebraska veteran for their service to our great nation. We owe a debt of gratitude to these heroes who have sacrificed so much to keep us safe. ■

Omaha's first Homeless Services Coordinator joins team in December

The City of Omaha's first Homeless Services Coordinator dedicated to working with organizations that provide services and shelter to people experiencing homelessness will join Mayor Jean Stothert's team in December.

Mayor Stothert has hired Tamara Dwyer, who begins her new role Dec. 5.

Dwyer is currently employed by the Metro Area Continuum of Care for the Homeless (MACCH). Her previous experience also includes Youth Emergency Services Street Outreach Specialist and supportive housing and shelter case management at Stephen Center.

"We have many excellent programs in Omaha that offer assistance and opportunities to help individuals and families. Tamara will coordinate access to services so more people are able to make a successful transition from homelessness to safe housing, employment, health care and other necessities," Mayor Stothert said.

Dwyer will work with service providers, MACCH and local, federal and state agencies to create a comprehensive strategy and implement policies and initiatives to end homelessness. She will identify grant and other funding to support prevention and outreach and become a member of the City's Homeless Task Force, which meets monthly. The task force includes representatives of city departments, the non-profit sector and service providers.

"I am honored for this opportunity to work in Mayor Stothert's office, addressing the issues of homelessness in our community. I plan to continue my work with the many amazing organizations and individuals in Omaha who work tirelessly to meet the needs of our most vulnerable neighbors and adding the many other important organizations and stakeholders who

need their voices heard," Dwyer said. "As a person who has experienced homelessness and housing insecurity at various times throughout my life, I am deeply committed to this work and understand the complexi-

ties that are involved. My goal is to bring Omaha together to help create strategies to end homelessness in our community." ■

City of Omaha

Power Plant Problem Solvers



Stationary Diesel Engine Mechanics

Multi-point Engine Inspection Service

Complete Engine Sales, Installation and Removal

Power Plant Design, Construction & Automation

Large Heavy Equipment & Machinery Transportation

Engine Parts & Service



Ask about our stock of **NEW Fairbanks Morse Style Naturally Aspirated, & Turbo OP Liners** in both **Chrome and Black Iron**

We also have **re-manufactured liners in-stock** **AND** the ability to **re-manufacture your liners**

Call today for more information!

FMI

Farabee Mechanical, Inc.

Hickman, NE 68372 • (402) 792-2612

farabee@inebraska.com

www.farabeemechanical.com

City of Hastings property disked for Wetland Reserve Program

In October, a 40-acre property owned by the City of Hastings, located west of Hastings Middle School, was disked. The property is located in a Wetland Reserve Program through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

The City of Hastings has a contract with the NRCS to manage the wetlands. Through this process, the NRCS annually surveys the wetlands and conducts maintenance practices. Maintenance includes yearly spot spraying to control noxious weeds and volunteer trees.

Maintenance also includes disking, which occurs every three-five years. Disking can effectively control invasive species in the wetland such as cattails and river bulrush. It also promotes early successional species, which



Wetland Disking

Hastings Middle School

The property, pictured above, is located in a Wetland Reserve Program through the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Photo courtesy of the City of Hastings.

is important to the wetland ecosystem, providing plentiful forage for migrating waterfowl. Disking also exposes

seed in the underground seed bank, which can invigorate wetlands. ■

Source – City of Hastings

Public Works Opportunity second round of funding available under CDBG

The Nebraska Department of Economic Development (DED) announces the 2022 Public Works Opportunity second round of funding available under the community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program.

A federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) program administered by DED on behalf of Nebraska's non-entitlement communities, CDBG dollars exist to help communities tackle projects that enhance public health and safety, economic well-being, local vitality and quality of life.

The purpose of the Public Works Category is to provide for a broad range of activities investing in communities providing effective and affordable infrastructure and/or facilities that

address strategic long-term developments. Every Nebraska county and Nebraska incorporated municipality (that is not a CDBG Entitlement Community) is eligible to apply for funding. The project activities must meet either the national objective of benefiting low-to-moderate income persons on an Area Basis (LMA) or LMC – Low/Moderate Clientele.

The 2022 Public Works Opportunity provides funding for two application classifications, which are separate applications: (1) Public facilities, which includes buildings and park facilities (e.g., community centers, senior centers, fire stations, day care centers, neighborhood parks, tornado shelters, etc.); and (2) Public infrastructure, which includes streets, sidewalks, drainage systems, water systems,

sanitary systems and other public infrastructure.

The maximum CDBG award for project costs is \$400,000. Matching funds are required depending on the size of the community.

The link to the DED website and Public Works Opportunity can be found at <https://opportunity.nebraska.gov/programs/community/cdbg/>

Applications need to be submitted through our AmpliFund system beginning Jan. 13, 2023. Applications are due no later than 11:59 p.m. Feb. 28, 2023.

For additional information, contact Community Development Specialist Aaron Boucher, Aaron.Boucher@nebraska.gov. ■

Source – Nebraska Department of Economic Development

Village of Raymond's new lagoon system nearly completed

The Village of Raymond's lagoon wastewater treatment system is nearly completed, replacing a 60-year-old mechanical facility that had long exceeded its useful life, according to Frank Robbins, the Raymond Village Board Chairperson.

"It was a day-to-day operation as to what we'd be fixing next," Robbins said, referring to the old facility. In addition, the operating costs for the old facility were higher than the new system because it used electricity and had higher maintenance costs.

Previous board

A previous village board had recognized the importance of replacing the old system and started what he characterized as a long process beginning with using a condemnation procedure to acquire land for the lagoon system to moving dirt. The lagoon system lies on 11 acres south of the old system.

"It's a big deal for a small village," Robbins said.

Board members decided on a lagoon system because it would be simple to build, operate and maintain, which made it the most cost effective, Robbins said. The new system is designed for full retention so that the village's treated wastewater will no longer be sent into Oak Creek.

Clay liner, large dyke

The new system has a clay liner with a large dike all around it to prevent the wastewater from seeping into the groundwater. Wastewater flows into the lagoon from the village sewer system and then is broken down by natural forces through sunlight and wind.

The project had been approved at the Raymond Village Board meeting in May, when board members selected a bid from Rutjens Construction for \$729,910.20. (JEO Consulting Group



Village of Raymond's lagoon system. Photo by Frank Robbins, Raymond Village Board Chairperson.

was hired as the engineer for the project.) While JEO engineers presented other options to board members such as rehabilitating the old facility, the board selected the lagoon system, which Robbins said was the correct decision.

Construction on the lagoon system took about six months and the total cost was projected to be about \$1.2

million, but the project came in under budget, Robbins said. The costs will be covered through a 0 percent State Revolving Fund (SRF) loan that will be paid back with sewer rates over the next 40 years. (The SRF is a federal and state program that helps communities finance water infrastructure projects.) ■

Economic forecasting board raises revenue projections

The Nebraska Economic Forecasting Advisory Board voted to raise revenue projections for the current fiscal year during an Oct. 28 meeting at the Capitol. The board provides an advisory forecast of general fund receipts that is used by the Legislature to create the state's budget.

The board's projections for fiscal year 2022-23 were raised based on anticipated increases in revenue receipts across all categories, including projected increases of \$405 million in individual income tax and \$113

million in corporate income tax.

Total projected revenue receipts for FY2022-23 were raised to \$6.44 billion, an increase of \$621 million. The board also set the forecast for projected total revenue receipts for FY2023-24 at \$6.47 billion, an increase of \$809.5 million. Projected total revenue receipts for FY2024-25 were set at \$6.55 billion, an increase of \$1.05 billion.

The next board meeting is scheduled for Feb. 24. ■

Source – Unicameral Update



Columbus Mayor Jim Bulkley, with scissors, cuts the ribbon during a grand opening held for the new Powerhouse Trail on Oct. 13. Also pictured are officials with the City of Columbus, Columbus Area Recreational Trails and the Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce. Photo by Hannah Schrodt, The Columbus Telegram. Reprinted with permission.

Grand opening held for Powerhouse Trail in Columbus

BY HANNAH SCHRODT
THE COLUMBUS TELEGRAM

Reprinted with permission

The City of Columbus' goal to connect all the trails in town became one step closer to reality in October during a grand opening for the new Powerhouse Trail.

Provides connection

The nearly one-mile long concrete paved trail is located between the south bank of the Lost Creek flood control and the north side of Lost Creek Parkway from Wilderness Road to 33rd Avenue. It provides a connection to the Columbus High School, Columbus Community Hospital and Sunset Park area to the trail system north of Columbus around Lake Babcock, Lake North and Loup Power Park and

Campground.

"These trails, as most of you here know, have become extremely popular in our community," Mayor Jim Bulkley said during the grand opening/ribbon cutting. "They're used every day. Everywhere you look in town where we have trails, any time of the day, there's somebody on them, walking and running."

Recent survey

Bulkley noted a recent parks and recreation department survey that asked Columbus community members what they wanted to see.

"What were those things that really make people excited and make them enjoy their community?" Bulkley said. Trails were listed as a need in the survey, he added.

"We're looking forward to where you'll be able to go from one end of town to the other, completely utilizing the trails," Bulkley said. "We know it's important for the health of our community, the recreation in our community. Again, it's something people want."

Collaboration

Bulkley noted the first phase of the Powerhouse Trail could not have happened without the collaboration of many people from different entities.

"CART, the Columbus Area Recreational Trails group, Lower Loup NRD and the Nebraska Game and Parks for their help in funding this broad project. I want to thank Rick Bogus and our engineering department."

Continued on page 13

Continued from page 12

ment. They drew up the plans and they oversaw this project. And finally, I'd like to thank Diamond construction for constructing the project," Bulkley said. "All those people helped make this come together and make it an asset for our community."

Dave Scharff, treasurer of CART, added the group committed to the project three years ago.

Substantial contribution

"We did make a pretty substantial contribution," Scharff said. "I'd like to say a lot of people that have been in CART in the past did a lot to come up with those funds. I'm just glad to be here today and I'm glad to see this trail."

The project – which cost around \$500,000 – was funded by a grant from the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission with funding also coming from the City of Columbus, Lower Loup NRD and CART.

The second phase of the project would be located along the Lost Creek Flood Control/Lost Creek Parkway from Wilderness Road to Third Avenue.

Replacing bridge

In the foreseeable future, the Nebraska Department of Transportation has been working toward replacing the U.S. Highway 30 Bridge that extends over the Loup River.

Bulkley said at the Powerhouse Trail grand opening that there will eventually be a trail on the new bridge. When the bridge is completed in a few years, a trail will connect the north side and the south side of the Loup, he added.

"That's pretty awesome because you've never had that," Bulkley said.



Columbus Mayor Jim Bulkley spoke at a grand opening/ribbon cutting held for the new Powerhouse Trail held Oct. 13. Photo by Hannah Schrodt, The Columbus Telegram. Reprinted with permission.



RICE SIGNS

Your Leader In Transportation Safety

Free Traffic Sign Catalog:

Call 888-728-7665

- or -

Visit www.RiceSigns.com

- Traffic Signs
- Roll-Up Construction Signs
- Sign Stands
- Traffic Cones & Barricades
- Custom Street Name Signs
- Sign Posts & Hardware

Contact Us / Bids / Quotes:

Toll-Free: 888-728-7665

Fax: 877-546-6165

Email: sales@RiceSigns.com

Web: www.RiceSigns.com



LARM – Rules for trails that municipalities may want to consider

■ **BY DIANE BECKER**
COMMUNICATIONS/MARKETING
DIRECTOR, LARM ■

A 28-year-old woman was jogging on the famous Katy Trail in Dallas, Texas, when she turned into the path of a bicyclist. She suffered severe head injuries that ultimately claimed her life. With trails becoming more prevalent in many Nebraska communities, citizens also must understand there are rules to be followed when using them.

Trails are considered an essential aspect of a community's quality of life. As citizens of all ages look for opportunities to exercise and enjoy the outdoors, they've also asked for increased community trails. Many municipalities regularly include trail construction and maintenance in their budgets.

The Village of Dannebrog has a three-mile trail popular with residents and others visiting the Danish Capital of Nebraska. The City of Hickman maintains four miles of trails throughout its community. The Village of Arlington has invested in trails that encircle Bell Creek Park and its sports complex. Avid walkers, parents with strollers, pet owners walking their dogs, runners, bicyclists and people on rollerblades love to use the trails in their communities, but do these users all follow the rules of the road on the trails?

Here are some rules that municipalities may want to post along various points of the trails they have in their city or village.

1. **Stay on the trail.** This rule is essential when private property abuts the path, as some users consider all the areas along the trail open for picnics or pets.



Dannebrog trail sign. Photo by Diane Becker, Communications/Marketing Director, LARM.

2. **Keep right. Pass on left. Warn before passing.** Most people adhere to the standard rules of the road that they use when biking as they would when driving; however, they need to communicate to other people when they will be passing them. They can't take for granted that the pedestrian knows they are approaching and passing them on their bike.

3. **Dogs must be leashed.** Many pet owners feel their dog is well-trained and doesn't need a leash. An unleashed dog isn't a problem until another trail user comes along with their dog or someone who isn't a dog lover encounters a loose dog on the trail.

4. **Pick up pet waste.** All trails should provide bags for picking up pet waste and trash receptacles to place the waste.

5. **No motorized vehicles are allowed.** Many communities allow motorized vehicles on public streets, so those vehicle drivers may think permission to ride on the roads includes

the trail system. It should be clear that the trails are reserved for pedestrians, bikes and other non-motorized vehicles.

6. **Trail hours are from dawn to dusk.** Consider limiting the hours of use of municipal trails, as safety may be an issue when there isn't enough light.

7. **Alcohol is prohibited.** Although alcohol is banned in most municipal parks, it may be necessary to remind citizens that alcohol also is prohibited on the trail system.

8. **No horses are allowed on the trail.** Many small communities have trails that extend out of town, so trail users must be reminded that horses are not permitted.

Trails are some of the most essential amenities in a community and, in order for people to use them safely, municipalities need to make the trail rules easily accessible. ■

Lincoln Mayor, LTU Director showcase 12 new multi-use trucks

Lincoln Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird, Liz Elliott, Lincoln Transportation and Utilities (LTU) Director; and city officials Oct. 27 showcased new snow-fighting equipment and discussed elements of this season's winter operations plan.

"When it comes to preparation for winter weather events, we go big so you can go home," Mayor Gaylor Baird said. "Our 12 new, super-combo trucks replace the oldest ones in our fleet, nearly doubling our capacity to clear arterial streets of ice and snow."

Elliott said that the new snowplow trucks are unique in that each truck is equipped to spray anti-icing material, spread granular salt pre-wet with brine and plow snow from Lincoln's streets – as well as haul materials during warmer months. The city prioritized and appropriated funding for the trucks in the 2020-2021 budget. Each truck cost \$301,583.50.

"Because the new super-combo

trucks can complete multiple tasks on their routes, drivers can avoid time-consuming trips to maintenance shops to change vehicles," Elliott said. "That means crews have more time to keep people safe and streets clear of snow and ice."

LTU continues to see the benefits by custom-making deicing brine before winter storms, Elliott said, with the city saving \$100,000-\$300,000 annually. To increase efficiency of the deicers, LTU has invested in a new truck fill station that allows crews to vary the combination of brine ingredients to match the severity of each unique storm. The new equipment allows crews to quickly load various



Lincoln Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird

brine recipes that coordinate with different amounts of snow and ice across the city. ■

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 by e-mail. ■



JEO CONSULTING GROUP

Helping communities thrive since 1937



jeo.com

Architecture | Engineering | Surveying | Planning

AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC): A resource for Nebraska municipalities

What is AmeriCorps NCCC?

AmeriCorps NCCC is a full-time, team-based residential service program for young adults ages 18-26 years old. AmeriCorps members serving in the NCCC program are recruited nationally and placed into teams ranging between eight-12 members. Teams complete a variety of service projects that are generally six-eight weeks in duration. Nonprofit and government entities are eligible to apply to receive a team to help respond to local community needs.

Teams live in the communities they serve to better understand the culture, participate in service-learning and build leadership and life skills. Cities and villages across Nebraska, as well as nonprofits in your communities, are eligible to apply to be considered for an AmeriCorps NCCC team.

What's in it for my community?

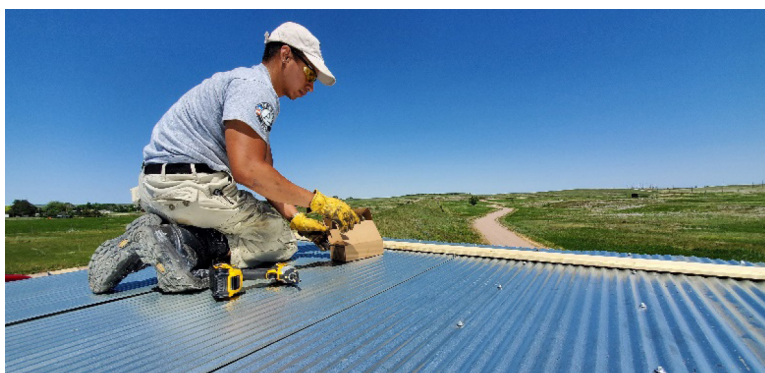
The AmeriCorps NCCC program is intended to provide short-term, sustainable service to communities to meet critical needs as identified by the sponsoring organization requesting a team at no direct cost. Teams can serve to address a wide variety of issue areas, including affordable housing construction, environmental conservation, neighborhood beautification and blight reduction, in-school and after school tutoring, disaster response and more. Each team has a specially trained team leader who serves with the team.

What do I need to do to sponsor a team?

Sponsors provide a meaningful experience for AmeriCorps members while overseeing the team's service. There is no fee for service. Sponsors are responsible for:

- On-site technical oversight and direction
- At least 40 hours of service per week
- Project supplies, equipment, materials and any necessary building permits
- Schedule of work and training plan
- Lodging with showers (eg: Churches, community centers, dorms, campsites, cabins, etc.)
- Cooking facilities (unless meals are provided)
- Service-learning support and opportunities to understand community impact

Organizations, including local governments, that are interested in requesting an AmeriCorps NCCC team need to submit a Concept Form. Upon review of the Concept Form, organizations will be invited to submit the full project application. More than one organization within a community can jointly apply to be co-considered for a team. Applications are reviewed and qualified sponsors are selected to receive teams for each available project



An AmeriCorps NCCC member installs a corrugated roof onto a new shade shelter built by his team in Kimball, NE in 2021. The team served with multiple agencies including the Plains Historical Society, Kimball Area Foundation Fund, and the Kimball Visitors Center on a wide variety of community improvement and historic preservation projects.

timeframe. Consult the *AmeriCorps NCCC North Central Region Request for Proposals* for available project dates and application deadlines for proposed service projects in 2023. An AmeriCorps NCCC staff member can provide a Concept Form, application instructions and additional information upon request.

Where can I get more information?

More information about AmeriCorps NCCC can be found online at <https://americorps.gov/partner/how-it-works/americorps-nccc>. Potential sponsors or those interested in learning more about the program can reach out to Anna Yeagle, Assistant Program Director, AmeriCorps NCCC at ayeagle@cns.gov or (202) 507-0037. If you are interested in other AmeriCorps programs, including grant-based programs, open funding opportunities are available at <https://americorps.gov/partner/funding-opportunities>. ■

Source – Anna C. Yeagle, Assistant Program Director, NCCC, North Central Region, AmeriCorps

LARM – Preventing vandalism in your community

■ **BY DIANE BECKER**
COMMUNICATIONS/MARKETING
DIRECTOR, LARM ■

Sadly, graffiti on buildings, damaged playground equipment and defaced road signs is a common sight in many Nebraska communities. Vandalism can be a problem, no matter the size of the community. Not only is the damage to public property costly to municipalities, but it also can cause hazards for citizens. A stop sign that a person or group of people has knocked down in the early hours of the morning can cause a traffic death later that day. Cities should be proactive when it comes to preventing acts of vandalism. Here are some steps a municipality can take to reduce the incidents of destruction or defacement of public property.

- Bright lights are a common deterrent to prevent criminal mischief, as vandals are not likely to break or damage items if they are doing so in plain sight of whoever may be driving or walking by. Motion lights can be installed in areas where an all-on light is not required. Although there will be some vandals who aren't hesitant to damage items in daylight, it still is a good practice to place good lighting in places where vandalism might occur.
- Install security cameras if possible. Many communities already have set up cameras on their public buildings to monitor activity in the area. These cameras may be connected via WiFi to staff phones or PCs for live-time surveillance. If cameras are needed in an area that does not have internet access, like a dump station, trail cameras can be used to record movement. Vandals have



Vandalism on fence. Photo by Diane Becker, Communications/Marketing Director, LARM.

been known to damage or steal cameras and WiFi-connected cameras have the advantage over trail cameras in sending photos of the people manipulating the camera.

- Community members should be encouraged to quickly report any incidents of vandalism on any property within the municipality.
- Increased law enforcement presence also can deter acts of vandalism. Officers can drive through parks and other public spaces as part of their routine patrols.
- A municipality may need to install security fences in areas that are difficult to monitor.
- Enlist community members to help with cleanup resulting from vandalism. Many communities have ordinances requiring businesses to paint over graffiti on their property quickly. The Broken Windows Theory is a proven concept that has shown broken windows that are not repaired perpetuate the idea that other windows in the area can

be damaged also. A sprayed wall that is left damaged encourages would-be vandals to add to the graffiti. City staff must keep city parks and other public areas clean of trash and broken benches or playground equipment, as an unkempt public space encourages people to add to the disorder.

- Research has shown that young people, usually male, are responsible for most acts of vandalism. Enlisting schools and youth groups in community cleanups and improvement projects may be beneficial so they develop a sense of pride in their community. Some cities sponsor contests for artists to enter, with the winning artist producing a work of art on a large alley wall that vandals might otherwise deface.

Vandalism isn't just a municipal problem; it's a community problem. The more citizens are aware of the costs of vandalism and what they can do to prevent it, the better. ■

New Laurel fire hall already paying dividends

■ BY AUSTIN SYEHLE ■
NORFOLK DAILY NEWS

asvehla@norfolkdailynews.com

Reprinted by permission

The Laurel community has compiled quite the list of accomplishments in the past few years alone.

The town of about 1,000 people has seen the completion of a downtown revitalization project and a new community center, in addition to renovation that is progressing on a massive school expansion project as part of a \$25 million bond issue passed by the Laurel-Concord-Coleridge school board last year.

But there's more – the southeastern Cedar County community also recently celebrated the grand opening of a new fire hall for its volunteer fire and rescue department.

Hundreds celebrated opening

Hundreds of Laurel residents, along with some county and state officials, celebrated the official opening of the 45,000-square-foot fire hall on Sept. 11.

After close to four years of consideration, construction of the facility along Highway 20 on the west end of town began in the fall of 2020 following several state government regulation hurdles.

The old facility, located along First Street downtown, was simply too small to hold the necessary equipment and rigs required at a department in a growing community. Craig Bathke, Laurel's fire chief, estimated that the new facility is about three times larger than the old one, which was about 60 years old.

The new facility includes five fire truck bays, three ambulance bays, a wash bay, ample training space and a meeting room that can hold



Laurel's new fire hall is located along Highway 20 on the west edge of town. The volunteer fire and rescue department moved into the facility May 1 and the final stages of construction were completed July 1. Courtesy photo.

90 people. The department consists of about 40 firefighters and EMTs but occasionally hosts mutual aid meetings with other fire and rescue departments.

Quicker access

Multiple locations for the new fire hall were discussed, but the Highway 20 spot was selected in part because it allows for quicker access to the highway for rural fire responses.

Bathke said the volunteer department moved into the new fire hall May 1 and finishing touches on the building were completed July 1. The department already is benefiting from being at its new facility, Bathke said, as trucks and ambulances no longer have to be jammed inside the fire hall.

The fire chief also said response times already have decreased, a factor that is beneficial not just to Laurel itself, but to the department's entire fire district.

"It was always believed that there were ways to make our response times faster and you're already starting to see that," Bathke said. "We've really benefited from the location we're at

in the short amount of time we've been here."

In the early-morning hours of Aug. 4, tragedy fell upon Laurel when four residents were shot and killed and had their homes set on fire. The Laurel Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department was credited by law enforcement with quickly responding to emergency calls at two homes and helping preserve evidence at both crime scenes.

Officers needed place to meet

As a result of the homicides, dozens of law enforcement officers at the local and state levels needed a place to meet while they were sifting through evidence at the crime scenes. Their meeting place was the fire hall.

"It was nice to have room to work with the Nebraska State Patrol and other law enforcement agencies," Bathke said. "That was a moment that helped us realize how important it was for us to have the new fire hall and helped affirm how much we needed a bigger facility."

Bathke credited the work of the rural

Continued on page 19

Arthur, Bellwood, Clearwater, Emerson, Newcastle receive Community Development Block Grant funds

The Nebraska Department of Economic Development (DED) awarded \$182,500 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to five communities through the 2022 Planning Opportunity. Projects include comprehensive plans, floodplain mapping and downtown revitalization studies.

A federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) program, administered by DED on behalf of Nebraska's non-entitlement communities, provides CDBG dollars to help communities tackle projects that enhance public health and safety, economic well-being, local vitality and quality of life.

All the funded communities demonstrated a reasonable and collaborative approach to community development within their project design to carry out much needed studies for community-wide planning projects. These projects meet the CDBG national objective of benefit to low and moderate-income (LMI) persons on a community-wide basis under the low-moderate income

area (LMA) national objective.

Arthur: The Village of Arthur, Arthur County, was awarded \$43,500 for planning grant funds to assist with development of an environmental study that presents flood plain findings to support a letter of map revision submittal to FEMA to amend the flood plain designation.

Bellwood: The Village of Bellwood, Butler County, was awarded \$25,500 for a planning project to update the comprehensive plan, zoning and subdivision regulations. These updates will allow the community to address property deterioration better and provide updated steps to meet community needs.

Clearwater: The Village of Clearwater, Antelope County, was awarded \$53,000 for the preparation of a downtown study to help them create a cohesive, cost-effective and vibrant commercial district.

Emerson: The Village of Emerson,

located in Dakota, Dixon and Thurston Counties, was awarded \$33,000 for the preparation of a study that will provide a plan to redevelop the downtown area's infrastructure. The plan identifies the existing business structures' conditions and provides methods for coordinating the delivery of community services.

Newcastle: The Village of Newcastle, Dixon County, was awarded \$27,500 to prepare a comprehensive development plan. The plan provides guidance for community officials to make decisions on public and private land development proposals.

For more information about funding available to Nebraska communities under the CDBG program, visit <https://opportunity.nebraska.gov/programs/community/cdbg/> or contact Steve Charleston at steve.charleston@nebraska.gov. ■

Source – Nebraska Dept. of Economic Development

New Laurel fire hall

Continued from page 18

fire board and several local residents who helped push for the new fire hall. He also noted the countless hours worked by members of the department and some of their family members in moving equipment and helping the fire hall's aesthetics appear as they do.

"A lot of people came together to make this all work," he said. "The facility has been needed for a few years and we're seeing a good outcome from the whole process." ■

INVIGORATING communities

ENGINEERING • SURVEYING • PLANNING • DESIGN

Leading a successful and thriving community in our constantly changing world is no small task.

Take advantage of our free online resources to help your community address these challenges.



Scan to learn
more or visit
snyder-associates.com





York Mayor Barry Redfern and City Councilman Tony North cut the ribbon at the new community solar field at the York landfill site. York is the first of NPPD wholesale communities to use 100 percent of the output to power all the city, county and school facilities. Photo by Melanie Wilkinson, York News-Times.

Ribbon cut as York community solar field's up and running

■ **BY MELANIE WILKINSON**
MANAGING EDITOR/NEWS
YORK NEWS-TIMES ■

Reprinted by permission

Officials with the City of York, Nebraska Public Power District, GRNE Solar, the Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors, York County Development Corporation and others gathered in the heart of the community's new solar field to cut a ribbon in celebration of the field to be up and running.

Celebration

They also celebrated York becoming the first (and currently only) NPPD wholesale city in Nebraska to take 100 percent of the output to power all the city, county and school facilities,

as well as the Holthus Field House at York University. York's solar field also is the third largest of the community fields in NPPD communities.

Stood on 17 acres of land

NPPD's Craig Vincent and York Mayor Barry Redfern noted it was Sept. 18, 2021, when the ground was officially broken on the 17 acres of city-owned land that had been vacant on the landfill property.

"Yes, it was just a little over a year ago when we stood out here in an empty field and it's really a wild moment when you get back in here, in the heart of it," Mayor Redfern said.

It is a wildly different atmosphere there now, especially when standing in the heart of the 9,648 solar panels. As far as the eye could see were solar

panels on steel structures, with alfalfa and grass growing underneath. While the solar field was in complete operation at that moment, there was no sound. And there was no glare, as the panels are in constant yet non-visible motion as they follow the sun in order to absorb the rays.

Great partners

"NPPD has always been a great partner with York, and we've had that same experience with GRNE Solar," Redfern said. "The great thing about this, too, is that all the power coming from here will take care of all the energy for the city, the schools and the county facilities, and for the fieldhouse at York University. When we were approached about how we wanted to

Continued on page 21

Continued from page 20

use our solar shares, we wanted it to be spread among the public entities, so this will save the taxpayers some money also. Thanks for bringing this to us – wow, this is really cool.”

“Without the three partners – the city, NPPD and GRNE – this would not have happened,” Vincent said. “This is solely a benefit for York, Nebraska.”

Pat Hanrahan from NPPD echoed Vincent’s sentiment. “This is really about partnership. We want to thank the city. I look back to July 2019, when we started talking about what this could be. Thank you to the city council, the mayor and Sue Crawford, the city administrator. And to the GRNE team for making it all a reality.”

He also noted that now the solar field is up and running – and producing those solar shares to power up all the local facilities – there will be educational opportunities on site as well.

Educational opportunities

GRNE’s Jess Baker noted the weather, at that moment, was “a perfect solar day and we can’t thank everyone enough, to NPPD and the city for fostering this. This directly benefits the communities where these are located. It’s great to see how this works in this renewable space.”

Baker also explained that York’s solar field is a “single axis tracking system and the bifacial solar panels allow us to collect reflective light.” In other words, when there is snow cover on the ground on a cold February day, the reflective light “will make a big difference.”

“And another cool feature on this site is that we have a charging station here where the technicians can charge up their vehicles when they need to be here,” Baker added.

Audience members asked how the solar panels fared during last summer’s devastating hail storm. Amazingly, Baker said, they had no hail damage whatsoever, “which shows how durable and resilient the material is.”

The field, officials say, generates 3.2 megawatts – in comparison, the one located in Kearney is 5.78.

There will be no livestock grazing on this city-owned site – as it is on landfill property – but special native grasses will accompany the alfalfa that’s already naturally growing there now.

“This is really amazing,” Mayor Redfern said as he walked among the panels of York’s first solar field. “Again, this is really pretty cool.” ■



We know Nebraska
LEAGUE ASSOCIATION OF RISK MANAGEMENT



LARM
LEAGUE ASSOCIATION OF RISK MANAGEMENT

Why LARM?

- Top notch customer service
- Specialize in providing coverage for Nebraska municipalities
- On-site loss control assistance

Promoting safety

The LARM staff takes safety seriously, as does your village or city. We strive to give you the tools you need to ensure your staff and community members are safe from injury. We provide safety grants each year to our members. Contact LARM to see how we can serve your community with stable, cost-effective, risk management coverage.

CONTACT A LARM AGENT TODAY



Clint Simmons and Nate Fox are independent LARM agents who can provide information about becoming a LARM member.

**1335 L Street Suite 200
Lincoln NE 68508
402-742-2600**

www.larmpool.org

Crete Fire and Rescue volunteers part of wildfire control efforts in October

Crete Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department members were part of efforts to control wildfires in extreme weather conditions Oct. 23.

Reports of 24 area departments and more than 100 firefighters fought fires in the southwestern portion of Lancaster County, west of Hallam and in the area of Olive Creek Lake State Recreation Area north to Panama Road. Property owners were asked to evacuate as fires spread quickly due to dry conditions and winds gusting over 50 mph.

According to a release from Hallam Fire and Rescue, mutual aid was requested from multiple departments after the initial 911 call at 1:58 p.m. Assistance was expanded to an “all call” where all departments from Lancaster and Saline counties were requested for any assistance they could provide. They estimated 9,000 acres burned with multiple structures lost, including one residence.

The release called these fires “the most difficult and largest that most, if not all, of the fire departments have faced.”

2 Crete firefighters injured

Two Crete firefighters sustained injuries requiring immediate treatment, one with burns to his face and another with burns to about 20 percent of his body.

Dr. Brad Elder was the more severely injured volunteer and remains hospitalized at CHI Health St. Elizabeth. Elder is a Professor of Biology at Doane University with 28 years of wildland firefighting experience and has been a member of the Crete department since 2019. He was taken from the immediate scene by Lancaster Sheriff’s vehicle to a waiting



Crete firefighters in action. Photo courtesy of the City of Crete.

Lincoln Fire and Rescue ambulance on U.S. Highway 77 for transport to the hospital.

The fires affected many in this rural area, including those with family and friends in nearby Crete, who responded with assistance in a variety of ways. Several City of Crete employees were impacted, including one who sustained minor injuries while volunteering with Southwest Rural Fire Department.

Sincere appreciation extended

City of Crete officials extend their sincere appreciation to the volunteer members of Crete Fire and Rescue, their counterparts on area departments and local landowners, as well as the Lancaster County Sheriff’s Office, Saline County Sheriff’s Office and Nebraska State Patrol for the hard

work and sacrifice in extreme conditions, saving the lives and property of neighbors.

Hallam reported that the following departments responded from Lancaster, Saline, Gage, Seward and Johnson Counties: Hallam, Crete, Southwest Rural, Southeast Rural, Hickman, Wilber, Pleasant Dale, Malcolm, Raymond, Waverly, Bennet, Eagle, Valparaiso, Cortland, Clatonia, Firth, Lincoln, Beatrice Rural, Adams, Pickrell, Sterling, Garland, Dorchester, and Filley; Nebraska Forest Service had representatives on the scene.

Also aiding in response efforts: Norris Public Power, Nebraska Game and Parks, Red Cross, Salvation Army and Lancaster County Emergency Management. ■

Source – City of Crete

Tips for testifying before legislative committees

The Nebraska Legislature is gearing up for a new session in January and you may want to testify on a particular bill in your capacity as a municipal official. The Legislature's website offers three ways for people to express their opinions on legislation and we have included some additional tips.

In person testimony

As always, persons attending a public hearing in person will have an opportunity to present verbal testimony to the committee and be subject to questioning by the committee members. In-person testimony is generally limited to five minutes, although the chair of each committee has discretion to modify that time limit.

Persons testifying before committee members will be listed as a testifier on the committee statement as has been the practice and have their position included within the official committee hearing record.

The benefit of this is that your support or opposition for a specific bill is recorded on the committee statement. This also means that you should be prepared to respond to committee members who may want to ask you questions.

It is important to keep your testimony short, make eye contact and refrain from reading your testimony. It is always good to distribute a handout when you testify in person and charts and graphs are helpful. Emphasize one or two important points. Also, always follow up if a Senator asks for additional information on a particular matter.

Written testimony for the record

If you are not testifying in person at a public hearing and would like to submit written comments to be included in the official hearing record



Legislative committee hearing. Staff photo.

as an exhibit, you will find a link to submit your comments online on the Chamber Viewer page for each bill or resolution. Comments are allowed once a bill has been scheduled for public hearing and must be submitted and verified before 12 p.m. CST on the last workday before the public hearing to be included in the official hearing record.

This is the only method for submitting official comments for the record other than testifying in person.

Letters and comments submitted via email or hand-delivered will no longer be included as part of the hearing record, although they are a viable option for communicating your views to an individual Senator.

Submission of online comments

In order to facilitate public input on legislation, a feature was added to the Nebraska Legislature's website for submission of written comments on pending legislation on the Legislature's website at any stage of the process. This feature will appear once a bill has been scheduled for a public hearing.

Legislative staff

Good legislative staff members are invaluable. They can tell you when a bill might be scheduled for a hearing or when the bill might come up during the committee's executive session. Always respect legislative staff and follow through on providing them with information that is requested. ■

Source – Nebraska Legislature, League staff

Contact your Senator

What address do I use to write my state Senator?

To write your state Senator, you need only to include on the envelope:

Senator's name
District number
State Capitol
Lincoln, NE 68509

Most Senators also have email addresses. The web site address is <http://nebraskalegislature.gov/web/public/home>. ■

Nebraska Municipal Clerks' Association
OUTSTANDING CLERK AWARD
NOMINATION FORM

*PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT**

Deadline for nominations is Friday, December 30, 2022

Please Note: Nominees shall have served as municipal clerk for a minimum of 3 years.

_____ 1st Class City or larger _____ 2nd Class City _____ Village

I hereby nominate the following City/Village Clerk for the Nebraska Municipal Clerks' Association's "Outstanding Clerk Award:"

NAME OF CLERK NOMINATED: _____

Clerk's Mailing Address: _____

Clerk's E-mail Address: _____

Date: _____ Signature _____

Title _____

Mailing Address _____

City/Village _____

Zip Code _____

Telephone _____

A questionnaire will be mailed to your nominee for outstanding clerk.

PLEASE RETURN THIS NOMINATION FORM TO:

Elizabeth Butler, Chairperson
NE Municipal Clerks' Awards Committee
1819 Farnam Street, Suite LC1
Omaha, NE 68183
elizabeth.butler@cityofomaha.org

This column is provided, free of charge, for use and reference by Nebraska municipal officials and employees. All others pay 55 cents per word to place ads. Closing date is the first of the month of publication. Ads are subject to editing and will appear once unless otherwise requested. Classified ads also can appear on the League's website at www.lonm.org.

Positions

Deputy City Clerk. Plattsmouth, Neb. is a First Class city located in Cass County near the Omaha Metro area. Plattsmouth is a vibrant community with a long history of success. Plattsmouth has a population of 6500 and along with basic city services, offers a high quality of life with amenities such as an accredited public library, state certified police department, 24/7 paid emergency medical personnel, a cutting edge volunteer fire department, building and zoning department, staffed senior center with home delivery nutrition services, outdoor water park and indoor recreation center, numerous public parks and ballfields as well as a public cemetery.

The city is seeking an organized individual to assist the City Clerk and City Administrator in administrative duties including: accurate accounting of official city council and board meetings, management of project files, interrupting and administering municipal code, as well as interacting with members of the community.

Ideal candidate would have a basic knowledge of municipal operations. Minimum training and experience includes graduation from high school or General Equivalency Degree (GED), experience performing common clerical tasks, experience working in an office environment with telephones, files, personal computers, proficient with Microsoft office and other word processing and spreadsheet operating systems.

This is an exciting opportunity to join a city team to aid in the future of

Positions

Plattsmouth. Salary based on experience range from \$40,000 - \$50,000. This full time position includes benefit package including health and dental insurance, 7% matching retirement, vacation, sick and holiday pay.

To apply, submit a resume and completed job application to the City Clerk at smeyer@plattsmouth.org or City Office 136 N 5th Street Plattsmouth, NE 68048. More information available at www.plattsmouth.org

Zoning Administrator/Building Inspector. Plattsmouth, Neb. is a First Class city located in Cass County near the Omaha Metro area. Plattsmouth is a vibrant community with a long history of success. Plattsmouth has a population of 6500 and along with basic city services, offers a high quality of life with amenities such as an accredited public library, state certified police department, 24/7 paid emergency medical personnel, a cutting edge volunteer fire department, building and zoning department, staffed senior center with home delivery nutrition services, outdoor water park and indoor recreation center, numerous public parks and ballfields as well as a public cemetery.

The city is seeking a highly motivated individual to be the City's Zoning Administrator and Building Inspector. Administrative and technical work are required to ensure compliance with zoning ordinances and building regulations. Enforcement of floodplain regulations and serve as the certified

Positions

floodplain manager is required.

Ideal candidate would have a basic knowledge of municipal zoning and building construction. Minimum training and experience includes graduation from high school or General Equivalency Degree (GED), supplemented by college level courses in community planning and building construction. Job will require experience performing common administrative tasks, experience working in an office environment with telephones, files, personal computers, proficient with Microsoft office and other word processing and spreadsheet operating systems.

Necessary Special Requirements: Certified Floodplain Manager within 12 months, onsite wastewater professional certification with the State of Nebraska within 12 months, must possess and maintain a valid Driver's License.

This is an exciting opportunity to join a city team to aid in the future of Plattsmouth. Salary based on experience range from \$57,000 - \$70,000. This full time position includes benefit package including health and dental insurance, 7% matching retirement, vacation, sick and holiday pay.

To apply, submit a resume and completed job application to the City Clerk at smeyer@plattsmouth.org or City Office 136 N 5th Street Plattsmouth, NE 68048. More information available at www.plattsmouth.org



MUNICIPAL CODE SERVICES, INC.

- MUNICIPAL CODE REVISION
- BASIC CODE FOR SMALL VILLAGES
- UPDATING FOR YOUR CURRENT CODE
- UPDATING FOR ZONING REGULATIONS
- POLICY MANUALS

Personal Service / Nebraska Company

P.O. Box 164, Neligh, NE 68756
Phone 402.887.5022
leagle@mcnallylaw.net www.mcodeservices.com

SCHEMMER



ENGINEERING • ARCHITECTURE CONSTRUCTION FIELD SERVICES

Omaha - 402.493.4800 | Lincoln - 402.488.2500
SCHEMMER.COM



Miller & Associates CONSULTING ENGINEERS, P.C.

www.miller-engineers.com | 308.234.6456



Environmental Services, Inc.
www.milcoinc.com | 308.234.1146



League's Ordinance Codification Program

*Serving the League and Nebraska
Municipalities since 1998*

Code Updates • New Codes
Legal Reviews • Codes on Internet



AMERICAN LEGAL
ORDINANCE CODIFICATION

Contact Colleen T. Engle
Direct (714) 348-9529
cengle@amlegal.com www.amlegal.com

Financial & Single Audits
Budget Consulting & Preparation
Retirement Plans
Benchmarking & Rate Studies

Contact

Marcy Luth, Michael Hoback
Joe Stump, Kyle Overturf
or Tracy Cannon



1203 W. 2nd Street
Grand Island, NE 68801
Ph 308.381.1810
Fax 308.381.4824
www.gicpas.com

INVIGORATING communities

ENGINEERING • SURVEYING • PLANNING • DESIGN

Leading a successful and thriving
community in our constantly
changing world is no small task.
Take advantage of our free online
resources to help your community
address these challenges.



Scan to learn
more or visit
snyder-associates.com



nesbitt&associates

an international security consulting company



School Security Services
a nesbitt & associates company



RED TEAM
OPERATIONS
a nesbitt & associates company



Nesbitt
Investigations

6130 South 58th Street * Suite C

Lincoln, Nebraska 68516

www.nesbittassociates.com * www.nesbittinvestigations.com

402-325-1019 – Nesbitt and Associates
School Security Services – Red Team Operations
800-8882-9619 – Nesbitt Investigations

Tom Nesbitt * Lloyd Hansen



COMMERCIAL RECREATION SPECIALISTS



Your Complete Recreation Resource!

Consultation • Design • Installation

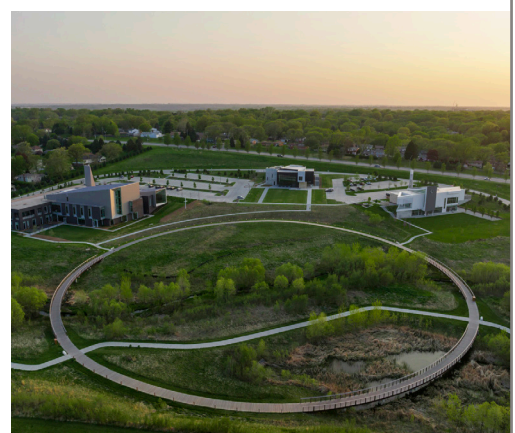
877-896-8442 | crs4rec.com

olsson.com



Most see a circular walkway.
We see connections.

ENGINEERING POSSIBILITIES.




NMPP
ENERGY

'NMPP' 'MEAN' 'NPCA' 'ACE'

- Electricity • Natural Gas •
- Utility Related Services •

A non-profit, member owned organization
benefiting nearly 200 communities
spanning six midwest and mountain states.

8377 Glynoaks Dr.
Lincoln, NE 68516
(800)234-2595
www.nmppenergy.org

 **GALLOWAY**
FINANCIAL ADVISORS, INC.

Terry Galloway
P.O. Box 108 • 307 Smith Ave. • Elwood, NE 68937
www.GallowayFinancialAdvisors.com

Retirement Planning • Investment Advising

*We design and implement the
best retirement plan for you.*

Investment advisory services and wealth management services are provided through
Wealth Management LLC, a Registered Investment Advisor firm



© 2022 BURBACH AQUATICS, INC — RIGHTS RESERVED, PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

Burbach Aquatics, Inc.
5974 State Highway 80 South
Platteville, Wisconsin 53818

BURBACH AQUATICS, INC.
ARCHITECTS & ENGINEERS

Your Quality Choice for Aquatic Design !

www.burbachaquatics.com | baae@centurytel.net

Phone: 608-348-3262
Fax: 608-348-4970
Email: baae@centurytel.net
Burbachaquatics.com

