City of Gretna holds ribbon-cutting ceremony for public works facility

Editor’s Note: This story also appeared in the July 2019 Nebraska Municipal Review.

The City of Gretna held a ribbon-cutting ceremony June 8 for a new $5.5 million public works facility that brings the City of Gretna’s street, water, sewer and parks departments together under one roof.

The 38,400-square-foot facility sits on a site area of 10 acres. It provides the public works departments with 23,400-square-feet of vehicle storage that includes an interior wash bay, administrative space of 4,700-square-feet and approximately 10,300-square-feet of department-specific storage space, which has been distributed over three building levels.

The administrative wing includes private offices, general office space, meeting and training space, a break area and restroom/locker room spaces. The balance of the square footage is assigned to storage areas at a mezzanine level and also for covered outdoor storage. The technology-rich facility also contains an in-floor heating system and incorporates energy-saving measures such as daylighting and LED light fixtures.

Construction, which involved 17 different contractors, began in February 2018 and was completed in June 2019.

To meet the current and future needs of Gretna’s quickly growing community, the facility is designed to allow for future expansion of administrative space, as well as the vehicle storage area.

Gretna Mayor Jim Timmerman said that the city has been using several buildings in the community for public works employees and equipment.

“The addition of the new Public Works building allows us to consolidate employees and equipment into one location resulting in better communication among departments,” Mayor Timmerman said. “This building was designed to serve the community for several years; planning also determined that the site will let us expand as the community grows.”

Source – Jeff Kooistra, Gretna City Administrator

Holding the scissors in the middle is Gretna Mayor Jim Timmerman. Surrounding him are several city employees who will work out of the new building; Gretna City Council Members Bill Proctor and Angie Lauritsen; Steve Vencil of Prairie Construction; Eric Obert of JEO Consulting; Kris Faris, Gretna Public Works Director; Steve Perry of Olmsted and Perry Consulting Engineers who serve as City Engineer; Jeff Kooistra, City Administrator; two representatives for JEO Consulting; Dan Gittinger, Development Services Director; Gretna Chamber of Commerce Representative. Photo submitted by City of Gretna.
Nebraska Breaktime Trivia “Just For Fun”

Q-1. How many communities or areas in Nebraska once started with the letter Z?
Q-2. What was the Nebraska state nickname prior to 1945 when it was changed to the “Cornhusker State”?
Q-3. The “Willow Point Gallery” is located in what Nebraska city?
Q-4. The middle building in the photo is the village hall in what Nebraska village?

Answers on page 10.

Updated Open Meetings Act posters available

During the 2019 legislative session, the Legislature amended the Open Meetings Act by adopting Laws 2019, LB 212 which made several changes to the Act, with an effective date of Sept. 1, 2019. One updated Open Meetings Act poster was sent to each village clerk and three posters were sent to each city clerk in the larger cities. This updated poster replaces the May 2017 Open Meetings Act poster.

A limited number of additional posters are available. Please contact the League Office if you need an updated Open Meetings Act poster.

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Safety reminder when using 'hot tar buckets'

By Rob Pierce, LNM Field Rep./Training Coordinator

Operation tips when using hot tar buckets:
1) Employees need to be properly/thoroughly trained before attempting to do any work with or on any hot tar bucket.
2) Always read and understand the material in the Operations Manual.
3) Wear gloves with wristlets and avoid gauntlet-style gloves.
4) Wear a long sleeve shirt with the sleeves down and cuffs buttoned.
5) Wear heavy leather boots or shoes.
6) Wear long pants with no cuffs.
7) Wear a face mask when loading or changing the bucket with material and cleaning.
8) Load the bucket at ground level.
9) Keep the material door closed at all times, except when adding material.
10) Never stand on any part of the machine.
11) Do not pull, twist, stretch or kink the material hose.
12) Do not operate without the safety cover on the hose.
13) Never allow another person to adjust or operate the controls while you are sealing or cleaning the unit.
14) Do not overfill the melting tank. For best results, add only as much material as required for the job or a maximum of 75 percent of tank capacity.


Color code for marking underground utility lines

White – Proposed Excavation
Pink – Temporary survey markings
Red – Electric lines, cables, conduit and lighting cables
Yellow – Gas, oil, steam, petroleum or gaseous material
Orange – Communication, alarm or signal cables or conduit
Blue – Potable water
Purple – Reclaimed water, irrigation and slurry lines
Green – Sewer and drain lines

Excavator responsibilities: call before you dig, allow two business days for marking, respect the marks and excavate carefully.
Reference: Nebraska 811 wallet reminder card

Crow Line: A line of positive communication that all can share

Congratulations to Albion!
The National Parks Service recognized the Albion Carnegie Library by adding it to the National Register of Historic Places. In Nebraska, the Carnegie Foundation helped fund 69 libraries, which were built between 1902-1922. The Albion library was built in 1908 and opened in December. Congratulations, Albion Library.

Do you, your department or facility have something to crow about? Received an award, had an article written highlighting an event or person? Do you have a project worthy of acknowledgement in the Utilities Section Newsletter?
If so, please send your information to any of the League/Utilities staff so we can share your excitement with other members.
Nebraska utilities history

The Utilities Section Newsletter will continue to feature histories of both utilities and associate members. Any historical data and/or photos of your utilities, a specific facility, or articles already written are welcome, along with permission to print. If you have questions, contact Rob at 402-476-2829 or robp@lonm.org.

By Rob Pierce, LNM Field Rep./Training Coordinator

Pleasant Dale, located in Seward County, had settlers homesteading in the area by 1870. On Feb. 13, 1871, a post office was established at James Iler's home, a dugout in the side of Dancer Hill. A site was located on the brow of a hill, forming the narrow vale of Middle Creek, and a stage coach service was started. A school district was formed and on Sept. 18, 1879, the Atchison & Nebraska Railroad completed through the area. A town site was laid out and in 1882, Pleasant Dale was incorporated as a village. In 1883, the post office was moved to the town site and was located in the new store of James Lynch. A grain elevator was erected and in 1885, a rural Pleasant Dale Cemetery Association was organized. The Happel School building was moved to the town site as telephone lines were installed to the west. In 1890, the population was 100 and a two-story frame school-house was built. A blacksmith shop was started about 1891 and a well was dug in the park in 1893. In the 1890s, a brief gold rush was noted as a small amount of gold and silver were apparently found. In 1898, a public hall building and a hotel were built and a bank was established in 1902. With a population of 250 by 1905, the businessmen erected a windmill over the town pump and a huge high-pressure tank was built. Pipe and hose were purchased and laid for fire protection. From 1903-1906, about 6,000 feet of concrete sidewalks were laid. The public school added a high school to the 10th grade in 1902. By 1906, a hardware store and the Pleasant Dale Telephone Company were operating. In 1907, the railroad relocated about one mile south of town.

By 1910, the population was 257 with two stores and two grain elevators in operation. In July 1912, arc (gas) lights were installed along the main street business district. In 1913, the 1893 well in the park went dry and in October, the village dug a new well. By 1915, the village had two miles of cement sidewalks, 10 businesses, about 34 residences and a new brick high school was built. Ice was harvested from Fred Mueller's pond by W. S. Dunten. In January 1916 a contract was let for the building of electric line to the Blue River Power Company. The cost of the transmission line was $7,898.44 from Milford to Pleasant Dale. The project used 351 poles for $1,262.14 (tallest pole about 35 feet), 383 cross-arms at a cost of $171.52. Records showed 128,600 feet of copper

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wire were used for $3,024.60 along with 72 kVA transformers at $45 each. The total labor cost was $766.15 and engineering/miscellaneous costs were $1,183.10. Electric current was generated by hydroelectric plants/dams owned by Blue River Power Company with the nearest located on the north edge of Milford. All electric poles were in place by March and by July, the streets were first lit on a Saturday evening.

By 1920, the population was 221 and an addition was made to the cemetery. Residents had individual wells and several houses had concrete cisterns to catch rain water. In March 1921, a spark from a passing train ignited and burned the railroad bridge south of town. Highway 6 was graded from Emerald to Milford in 1921.

A private power plant was operating in 1925 with rates of $0.15 per kilowatt (kW). Fires destroyed the barbershop in 1924 and the pool hall in November 1928. By 1930, the population decreased to 138 and in 1931, several streets were paved with brick and cement. In 1932, a fire destroyed half the business houses in town, including the firefighting equipment that was stored in a building between the Ficke and Blacker building. In 1936, a two-wheel hose cart was lost at the variety store fire. Other fire equipment included a 1927 LaFrance fire truck, which was purchased from Wayne, Neb. The population by 1940 was 140 and a fire department was organized in 1942. The Consumers Public Power District may have purchased the system from Iowa-Ne-

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Nebraska Light & Power Company in 1941.

In 1950, the population increased to 163 and the Pleasant Dale Volunteer Fire Department was established with articles of incorporation approved Jan. 9, 1950. Streets were paved with asphalt in 1952-53. By 1956, the last high school seniors graduated; in 1959, the school merged with the Milford school system.

License Renewals

Just a reminder that 2019 is the due date for renewal of water and wastewater licenses. Information on test applications, test dates, recertification contact hours credited for 2018 (up to Jan. 17, 2019) and remaining application deadlines can be found at the NDEQ website at http://deq.ne.gov/NDEQ. To check your 2018 hours, go to http://deq.ne.gov/NDEQProg.nsf/OnWeb/OCPCEH and for test dates go to http://deq.ne.gov/NDEQProg.nsf/OnWeb/Train05. If you still need contact hours for this renewal period, refer to your training calendar or go on the providers' websites.

The electric distribution system was owned by Consumers Public Power District and the village and rural fire departments consolidated by 1958. By 1960, the population reached 190, the natural gas system was privately owned and the fire department had 25 volunteer firefighters. The cost of street lighting was $35 per month and in 1962, I-80 was completed from Omaha to Pleasant Dale. Land was purchased to construct a sewer lagoon for $39,124.61. In November 1962, sewer bonds for $27,000 were issued with about $10,000 raised before construction started. On April 2, 1968, an election was held for a water bond issue of $47,000 for a water system. Bids were let for the installation of water mains, drilling a new well and the construction of a pump house. The water system project was completed by April 15, 1968. The fire department purchased two new tanker units in 1968.

By 1970, the population was 258 and in July 1972, ground was broken for a new (75 feet x 36 feet) city/fire hall building. An open house was held Oct. 21, 1972. The fire department had been housed in a 1942 building. The electrical system was operated/supplied by Nebraska Public Power District. In 1976, a new K-8 elementary school was built and the old two-story brick high school was made into apartments. In 1979, a tennis court (80 feet x 120 feet) was constructed east of the preschool for $32,000, with 75 percent of the cost from the Land and Water Conservation Fund and 25 percent from the village. The project included fencing and lighting.

With a population of 280 by 1979, work began on adding two more lagoon cells north of the existing cells, giving the system total retention. The $122,000 project was 80 percent funded by federal funds. The new system was estimated to last until at least 2020. From 1980-1990, the population decreased slightly from 259 to 253. The village square park was located in the business district with a shelter, playground equipment, ball field and tennis court.

In 2005, landscaping work was done in the park. The population from 2000-2010 remained at about 245. Solid waste collection from 2008-2014 was provided by three private collection services.

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In 2009, a water project included a new water well with a nitrate treatment plant and the close looping of existing mains for $120,351.

Pleasant Dale has been incorporated for 138 years (1882-2019) and has been a League and Utilities Section member. The village has operated a water system for 51 years (1968) and operates a facultative retention lagoon system designed for 0.024 million gallons per day, which was installed in 1962 and updated in 1979. The village maintains asphalt streets and a park. The solid waste collection is provided by private collection companies. The natural gas is privately operated with individual propane tanks around town. The electric system is operated/supplied by NPPD.

Litchfield, located in Sherman County, had settlers in the area by 1873 and a school area designated as School District #15 by 1878. A cemetery was established with the first recorded burials in September 1879. On Jan. 14, 1884, a post office was established as Cedarville (two miles east) on a farm southwest of present-day Litchfield. A grist mill with dam was erected on Muddy Creek, known as Muddy Mills, located northwest of the future townsite. Later in 1882, the flour mill was moved to the southwest edge of the town site as the railroad selected stations sites in 1885 and was building through the area by 1886. A depot was built, a water well was dug and an elevated (wooden) water storage tank was erected in 1886 for the steam engines. In May 1886, land was purchased from John Kisling, L.D. Engleman and Mrs. A. Powell and that spring, was platted by the Lincoln Townsite Company. On Oct. 7, 1886, the first issue of the Litchfield Monitor newspaper was printed. Later that year, a lumber business and two hotels were operating. The Litchfield community was incorporated as a village in 1886. In 1887, one acre of land was given to the Litchfield Cemetery. On June 18, 1888, the Cedarville post office was moved to the site and on June 19, the name was changed to Litchfield. In 1888, a new two-story frame school building (grades 1-8) was built, replacing the sod school building. One square block of land was donated for use as a park in the 1880s. In May 1887, land was surveyed and deeded to the village for development as Fairview Park on a plot 722 feet by 1,172 feet. The population by 1890 was about 300 and in 1891, a roller mill, two banks and two churches were operating. Telephone lines were connected to Loup City in 1897 and in April 1899, a tract of land was given to the cemetery and land also was sold to the cemetery on May 4. About 1900, the cemetery association was organized.

The population was 240 by 1900 and the school added the 9th and 10th grades. On June 1905, the Sherman County Telephone Com-

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pany was formed by uniting the independent telephone companies. In 1906, connections with Litchfield were made over the Central Telephone Company exchange. Later, the phone company sold out to the Nebraska Telephone Company. An Opera House was running by 1906 and by 1907, a bank building was erected. On May 8 or 9, the railroad depot was destroyed by fire. The first water system depended on windmills for power. By 1910, the population increased to 403, trees were planted in the cemetery and the water system had a standpipe operated with a gasoline engine for pumping power. About 1914, a volunteer fire department was started. A steel water crane was completed in 1914 at the Burlington Station and engines took water from the newly installed system. The old wooden railroad water tank was taken down a month later. A special election was held in 1915 for a bond issue to erect a school building for $17,300. It passed on a 96-12 vote. A contract was let for a foundation and building for $14,246 with $1,879 for plumbing and heating. A new two-and-a-half story brick school was completed (for grades 1-12) in 1916 and in March, a new floor was installed at the railroad depot. In August 1918, lights (gas) were installed in the park and by November, the telephone company added new wiring and a switchboard.

The population increased slightly to 428 in 1920, park improvements were made and the water tank and windmill were repainted. There were 35 businesses operating and in 1923, a power transmission line was erected from Loup City to Litchfield. The Loup City Power Plant, owned by Nebraska Electric Power Company, began to provide electric current to Litchfield. By 1924-25, the student enrollment at the high school was 92, and in 1929, a bond was issued for constructing a vocational ag building at the school. A weekly Litchfield Monitor newspaper was published and by 1930, the population was 404. In 1931, the Harrison Township Library was organized and in 1937, a bond was issued for a gymnasium at the school. The electric system was served via transmission line from Loup City operated by the Western Public Service Company.

From 1940-1950, the population decreased from 412 to 337 and in October 1942, the electric system was acquired by Consumer Public Power District from Western Public Service Company. Later, the system was served by Custer Public Power District. Natural gas lines were installed from Odessa to Litchfield in 1949 with a branch line continuing to Mason City, Ansley, Berwyn and Broken Bow. In 1950, a new brick library was built, which also housed the village offices. The library leased the lot on Main Street with a 99-year lease.

In 1952, the public water system, owned by the village, had a water standpipe with gasoline engines for pumping power with a meter deposit of $5 in 1956. In the 1950s, the railroad depot and section house was torn down and the telephone system was converted to a dial system in 1956. The fire hydrant rental charge was $1 per month with flat rates of $1 per month in 1956-58. The electrical distribution system was operated

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by Custer Public Power with the cost of street lighting in 1956 of $116.50 per month. By 1958, the cost of street lighting was $66 per month and rates for residential were: first 15 kWh at $0.08, next 35 kWh at $0.065, next 50 kWh at $0.04, next 300 at $0.015, with minimum of $1 for 12 kWh. Rates for power water pumping were: first 3,000 kWh at $2.75, next 27,000 kWh at $1.65, over 30,000 kWh at $1.10, with a minimum between $15-$40. The natural gas system was operated/supplied by Kansas-Nebraska Natural Gas with rates of 1,000 cubic feet (cuft) at $0.02, next 5,000 cuft at $0.06, next 10,000 cuft at $0.09. Propane also was available in town. The fire department had 15 volunteer firefighters.

By 1960, the population was 264, a sewerage project was underway, the auditorium was maintained from rentals and the cemetery was maintained by a tax levy. The cost of street lighting in 1960 was $68 per month. The cost of current for pumping water in 1960 was $42 per month and in 1962 was $50 per month.

In January 1965, the Rural Fire Department was formed and negotiated with the volunteer fire department for use of its building. The population decreased in 1970 to 248 and the electric distribution system was operated/supplied by Custer Public Power District. The natural gas distribution system was owned by Kansas-Nebraska Natural Gas Company. The population increased from 256 in 1980 to 314 in 1990 and the wastewater system was upgraded in 1986. New playground equipment was installed in the park in the 1980s and trees were planted in 1985. The water system had two municipal wells pumped to a water storage standpipe, miles of mains, fire hydrants and valves. The village operated a facultative retention lagoon treatment system designed for 0.034 million gallons per day (mgd). With a population of 280 in 2000, most streets were hard surfaced (blacktop) with some curbing. The natural gas system by 2008 was operated by SourceGas with some customers operating with individual propane tanks around town. The electrical system was operated/supplied by Custer Public Power. The population was 262 in 2010 and by 2015, the natural gas system was operated by Black Hills Energy. The water system had two active and one inactive municipal wells with 37 commercial and 114 residential services.

From 2008-2015, the natural gas system was operated by SourceGas with some customers operating with individual propane tanks around town.

Litchfield has been an incorporated village for 133 years and has been a Utilities Section member for over 42 years (records only go to 1977). The village maintains several blocks of blacktop streets, a library, community center, a park, a facultative retention lagoon treatment and collection system along with a water distribution system with two municipal wells. The natural gas system is operated by Black Hills Energy and the electric system by Custer Public Power District.


“Just For Fun” Answers

A-1. Eight – (Zell, Zella, Zeven, Zigzag, Zimmer, Zion, Zurich, Zyba); four were only post offices (Zimmer, Zella, Zurich, Zyba) and two were railroad stations (Zion in Burt County and Zell in Chase County). Zigzag was a only a locale and Zeven which was once Wilhelmshohe became the incorporated village of Ashton.

A-2. "The Tree Planters State," was the official nickname from 1895-45 until it was replaced by "The Cornhusker State." Briefly, "The Beef State," for a decade from mid 1950s to the mid 1960s, this Nebraska nickname appeared on the license plates. Reference: www.legendsofamerica.com

A-3. Ashland.

A-4. Dix.
Public Works Director. The City of York is accepting applications for a Public Works Director. Department Overview and Responsibilities: Responsible for directing and managing the Public Works Department, including the divisions of water, wastewater, streets, landfill, airport, parks and code enforcement. This position also administers building and zoning regulations and floodplain management. Reports to the City Administrator; Experience with GIS, GPS, CAD, etc. and/or related software. Previous work in planning and zoning, floodplain management, building codes, public utility systems is desirable. Effectively represent the City in meetings with governmental agencies, community groups, various businesses, professional, and regulatory organizations, and in meetings with individuals. Be adept at combining a hands-on management style with confident professionalism and an ability to work with a variety of stakeholders. Requirements: Job requirements include: minimum of a Bachelor’s degree in Civil Engineering from an accredited college, and Licenses as a Professional Engineer (PE) and able to get licensed in Nebraska within one year of hire. Must be a licensed Street Superintendent in the State of Nebraska or have the ability to attain this license within 12 months. Must possess and maintain a valid driver’s license. Essential Functions: Assists in the development, implementation, and administration of divisional performance objectives, policies, processes, capital projects, and priorities: identifies resource needs and makes recommendations for improvement. The applicant should also have five to seven years of progressively responsible civil service experience. Ideal Candidate: The ideal candidate for the Public Works Director position will be an innovative and creative leader with a high level of integrity, will have a proven record of building and leading teams, and shall possess high expectations for customer service. Send cover letter, resume and completed application to: City Administrator, City of York, PO Box 276, York, NE 68467 or email to jfrei@cityofyork.net. Applications are available on the City’s website www.cityofyork.net. Position will remain open until filled. First application review will be Sept. 30, 2019.

Electrical Lineworker. The Board of Public Works, City of Cozad, is currently seeking applicants for a lineman position. Minimum qualifications for the job include: an Associate Degree from accredited line school, 2 years distribution line experience or a Utility Line Degree, or any combination of the above, CDL license or obtain within 60 days of hire. Duties include: working on both energized and deenergized distribution lines, building and maintaining underground and overhead systems. The City of Cozad offers excellent benefits and an excellent working environment.

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Classifieds

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ment. Salary based on experience and qualifications. Send resume to the Board of Public Works, P.O. Box 65, Cozad, Ne 69130-0065, Attn: Britt German. Email: britt.bpworks@cozadtel.net or call 308-784-2090. Position will remain open until filled. EOE

Water and Sewer Commissioner. The Board of Public Works, City of Cozad, is currently seeking applications for the position of Water and Sewer Commissioner, due to retirement.

The position requires knowledge and supervision of employees for the operation and maintenance of the water department, wastewater department and the wastewater treatment plant.

Responsibilities are: preparation and administration of budgets, call schedules, attending monthly Board and City Council meetings, reporting and record keeping required by the City, State Health Department, and NDEQ; insuring the continued safety of the municipal water supply be maintained through SCAD A, well head protection, and cross connection control.

Must possess a valid NE driver's license, high school graduate or GED equivalent, have 5 years' experience in the operation of a water and wastewater system or any equivalent combination of education and experience, hold a grade 3 and grade 6 water certification, and a grade 2 wastewater certification or the ability to obtain them within six months.

Starting salary dependent on applicant's qualifications. Full benefit package is included.

A full job description and applications are available at the Board of Public Works office, 211 W 8th St., PO Box 65, Cozad, NE 69130, Phone 308-784-2090, Fax 308-784-3590.

Interested applicants should submit applications and resume to Dallas Nichols, dallas.bpworks@cozadtel.net or mail to the above address. Position will remain open until filled. The City of Cozad is an EOE.

Utilities Lineman.

The City of Chappell is accepting applications for the position of an additional Utilities Lineman. This position works under the Utilities Foreman and in conjunction with current lineman. Assists in the operation and maintenance of the city owned electric distribution and water system. Applicant must be willing to obtain Grade 4 water operator license. Prefer electrical experience, but will train the right person. Wage is based on qualifications. Quality benefits package. Application can be obtained at PO Box 487, 757 2nd Street, Chappell, NE 69129 or by email to chappellcityhall@hotmail.com. Website is www.chappellne.org.

Inquiries can be sent to 308-874-2401 or faxed to 308-874-2508. EOE. Position will be open until filled.

2019 Solid Waste Screening Workshop held

A Solid Waste Screening Workshop was held Aug. 28, 2019, in Wayne at the Cobblestone Hotel meeting room. The workshop meets the state of Nebraska requirements covering hazardous waste screening for employees of transfer stations and landfills. Other topics included safety operations at transfer stations and landfills, a confined space refresher and an industry and regulatory update. All participated received certificates of attendance.
Training calendar

Visit our website at www.lonm.org for a complete list of workshops and conferences.

October
Oct. 22 .......... Water Operator Training Workshop ..................... Engineering Building, Grand Island
Oct. 24 .......... Water Operator Training Workshop ..................... Fire Hall, Tecumseh

December
Dec. 10 .......... Water Operator Training Workshop ..................... Engineering Building, Grand Island

Upcoming Meter, Snowball Conferences

The dates for future Meter Conferences have been scheduled and contracts signed with the Kearney Holiday Inn. Note the upcoming Meter Conference schedule:
- Feb. 11-12, 2020
- Feb. 9-10, 2021
- Feb. 8-9, 2022
- Feb. 7-8, 2023

The dates for future “Snowball” Wastewater Conferences have been scheduled and contracts signed with the Kearney Holiday Inn. Note the upcoming Snowball Conference schedule:
- Jan. 22-23, 2020
- Jan. 27-28, 2021
- Jan. 26-27, 2022
- Jan. 25-26, 2023