

# THOMAS COUNTY Herald

Your Source Of News In The Sandhills

THOMAS COUNTY, THEDFORD, NEBRASKA 69166 (USPS 596-550) THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 2019 NO. 36

## Farm Bureaus host Senator Brewer

MARCIA HORA

Logan, McPherson, and Thomas County Farm Bureaus hosted town hall meetings with Senator Tom Brewer in March.

Senator Brewer visited with constituents Friday, March 8, at DeJoWa's Diner in Stapleton, and at Uncle Buck's in Brewster, later that day.

Nebraska Farm Bureau representatives were on hand to welcome those in attendance and spoke briefly on what Farm Bureau is doing in the state legislature regarding property taxes.

Senator Brewer said there were 739 bills this session and over 100 deal with property tax reform.

Along with LB 58 that would chip away at gun ownership which he is against, Senator Brewer said he felt there needed to be a greater level of professionalism on the floor of the legislature.

He presented the Legislature's Revenue Committee with what he described as a "last resort" proposal designed to apply pressure for enactment of meaningful property tax relief this year.

LB 158 would freeze assessed valuation of property for four years in an attempt to "cap property taxes at the 2019 level" for a period ending in 2025.

Brewer believes it will be an incredibly difficult goal to achieve meaningful tax relief this session.

LB 158 received support from the Nebraska Farm Bureau and six other agricultural organizations, along with the Lincoln Independent Business Association.

City, county, and school representatives lined up alongside the Open Sky Policy Institute in opposing the LB 158 proposal.

"Property taxes are on the minds of all farmers and ranchers," Brewer said. "We have a collapsing economy right now and the end is near. It will get long and ugly."

The problem with property tax relief is there are 25 solid rural senators



Senator Tom Brewer speaks to a good number of constituents assembled at DeJoWa's Diner in Stapleton, Friday, March 8.

who will vote for property tax relief, but 33 votes are needed.

"We need to look at a lot of unnecessary spending in our state, including UN-L. There are ways that their budget could be cut, but it has always been hands off."

When asked about Senator Ernie Chambers' comments on the U.S. flag on the floor of the legislature, Senator Brewer said he couldn't take the comments any longer. He had to speak out.

"Things are being said that should never be said on the floor of the legislature."

Senator Brewer said he has never been so disappointed in his life as he was on the failure of LB 155 to advance from first-round debate on a 25-8 vote, two short of the needed majority for advancement.

Brewer introduced LB 155 on behalf of his constituents in the Sandhills. Brewer said it is unfair that a neighbor to a wind farm could be forced to accept a feeder line across their property and said LB 155 was a "landowner rights" proposal.

"Fifty people from the Sandhills drove to Lincoln on an extremely cold day and left their ranch duties

to see their government fail," Brewer said.

Fourteen senators were present, but did not vote. Senator Brewer said there would be repercussions for senators who voted against his bill, or registered as "present but not voting."

OPPD opposed LB 155 because they said it would stifle wind development.

"Private companies should not have the power normally reserved for government to use against their neighbors to make money," Brewer has said.

Brewer said the fight against industrialization of the Sandhills is not over.

The huge discrepancy between rural and urban Nebraska will continue.

"In 1935 the majority of people lived in rural areas, somewhere in the 1980's it crossed and now the majority live in eastern Nebraska. In 2020 we will probably lose two more senators. The 43rd district will in all likelihood be expanded to take in Sioux Co., Rock, Boyd and Holt," Brewer said. "On the path we are on it will mean every rural state senator will have to be on their toes to fight for rural Nebraska."

## Senator Fischer will be holding local office hours

U.S. Senator Deb Fischer (R-Neb.) has announced that her staff will be holding local office hours in Thomas, Hooker, and Grant counties on Monday, March 25, 2019. These office hours serve as a convenient opportunity for constituents to meet personally with Senator Fischer's staff to receive help with casework and other issues at the federal level.

Brandi McCaslin, Senator Fischer's greater Nebraska director of constituent services, will hold local office hours at the times and locations below:

**THOMAS COUNTY**  
Mon., March 25, 2019  
Thomas County Courthouse  
503 Main Street  
Thedford, NE 69166  
12:00 - 1:00 p.m. CT

**HOOKE COUNTY**  
Hooker County

Courthouse  
Commissioners Room  
303 Northwest  
1st Street  
Mullen, NE 69152  
12:30 - 1:30 p.m. MT

**GRANT COUNTY**  
Grant County Courthouse  
Commissioners Room  
105 East  
Harrison Street  
Hyannis, NE 69350  
2:30 - 3:30 p.m. MT

## Thedford Life Center to host annual fundraiser

The Thedford Life Center will hold its annual spring pancake supper on March 22 from 5:00 -7:00 p.m.

This is one of three fund-raisers that have helped keep the Center operational since 2002,

along with generous donations from the community. Activities include morning coffee, puzzling, and pool playing. Another group meets in the afternoon for coffee.

Dinners are held on the first and third Tuesday of

the month. Friends gather for cards on Friday evenings at 7:00. New faces are always welcome! Check the notices in the window for dates. Thanks to Amazing Grace Church for allowing us to continue in this location.

## Prescribed Broadcast Burns Scheduled to Begin

Fire managers on the Bessey Ranger District of the Nebraska National Forests & Grasslands plan to conduct a series of prescribed broadcasts burns beginning the week of March 25 through May 1, as weather conditions allow. The broadcast burns are planned on up to 12,500 acres of native grasslands on the Bessey Ranger District.

The prescribed burns are intended to reduce the encroachment of Eastern red cedar trees into the native prairie. Staff on the District have already cut and piled about 1,450 acres of large East-

ern red cedar trees off the grasslands on the Bessey Ranger District this year. Conducting a broadcast burn should kill most of the trees that are three feet tall or less. Burning is the most economical method of preventing cedar encroachment, and fire is a natural disturbance process that can rejuvenate the grasslands and promote forbs that support pollinators.

Prescribed fires are managed with firefighter and public safety as the first priority.

Smoke from the prescribed burns may be visible from Thedford,

Dunning, Stapleton, Purdum, Highway 2, Highway 85, and other areas around the Middle Loup and Dismal Rivers. Linger smoke may be present for up to one week after ignitions are complete.

If you would like to be notified the day the broadcast burns will take place, please call the front desk at (308) 533-2257 or email [angelmaldonado@fs.fed.us](mailto:angelmaldonado@fs.fed.us). For technical questions about the prescribed burns, please contact Tedd Teahon at (308) 880-0540 or (308) 533-8108.

## Flooding May Contaminate Private Wells

DHHS encourages testing

Recent flood conditions can pose threats to the quality of private water supplies. Flooded private water wells or wells suspected of being impacted by flooding may need to be tested to ensure that they are safe according to the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services.

"Cloudiness or a change in taste or smell are signs of possible contamination," said Sue Dempsey, administrator of the DHHS Drinking Water Program. "However, if there is any indication that the water supply has been breached by flood waters, even without noticeable changes in taste or smell, I encourage residents to get a water sample kit for testing."

Nebraskans can request kits from the Nebraska Public Health Environmental Laboratory to test for coliform bacteria. Order kits online at <http://www.nebraska.gov/dhhs/water-test-kits/private.html> or by calling (402) 471-3935 between 8 and 5 Monday through Friday.

If people don't know whether or not their private well has been impacted, only drink bottled, boiled, or disinfected water. To disinfect water bring it to a rolling boil for at least 1 minute. Water may also be disin-

fectured by mixing six drops (1/8 teaspoon) of ordinary household bleach per gallon of water. Mix the solution thoroughly, and let it stand for 30 minutes before using. Very cloudy water may be strained through a clean cloth before disinfecting or boiling, and the amount of household bleach should be doubled.

Since bacterial contamination may reoccur after a flood, conducting another water analysis a month or two after the first test is advised.

Public drinking water supplies are being closely monitored by a team of DHHS field staff and some systems have been impacted by the flooding. Local officials already have or will notify impacted residents as infor-

mation becomes available.

The State Emergency Operations Center has been opened to address this and other emergencies related to the storms and flooding this week in Nebraska. A link to updates from the SEOC can be found at <https://governor.nebraska.gov/> or <https://nema.nebraska.gov/news>.

DHHS activated its flooding resources webpage at <http://dhhs.ne.gov/flooding>.

Local health departments are a good resource for more health information and information about cleaning up after a flood. A list of local health departments can be found at <http://dhhs.ne.gov/lhd>.

## Flood Landscape Resources and Assistance Available

Damaging floods have recently swept across vast stretches in Nebraska this week. Farmers, rancher and homeowners alike are being negatively impacted. One of the casualties of this flood are the many home and commercial landscapes that have flooded, causing damage that can be realized now

and later in the growing season. Nebraska Extension has a resource to assist how to respond to this damage.

Weather Ready Landscapes is a set of eight infographics created by the Nebraska Extension Water Efficiency and Weather Issue Teams to address these extreme

weather events that Nebraska experiences each year. These infographics are front/back handouts on various weather events, and how to respond to them. One is the module that contains specific information on

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### Notices

- Thomas County Board of Commissioners Notice of Meeting
- Thomas County Visitors Committee Notice of Meeting
- Village of Thedford Special Meeting Notice

### Obituaries

- Dorothy Maxine Montanye
- Jerry Lee Merz

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## Donations being taken for flood victims

The Clothing Closet in Burwell is available to anyone who has been affected by the recent flooding occurring across the state.

Donations are welcome to be dropped off anytime inside the entryway at the Loup Basin RC&D office and Loup Rivers Scenic Byway Interpretive Center.

A few items that are needed include boots,

overshoes, gloves, western shirts slightly worn, coveralls, work jeans, new men's and women's socks.

Please call Kathy Mann, Sonja Wagner, Amy Hughes or Janet Sanders at 308-346-3393 or email [KeepLoupBasinBeautiful.org](mailto:KeepLoupBasinBeautiful.org) or [kathy@keeploupbasinbeautiful.org](mailto:kathy@keeploupbasinbeautiful.org) or [amy@keeploupbasinbeautiful.org](mailto:amy@keeploupbasinbeautiful.org)