

THOMAS COUNTY Herald

Your Source Of News In The Sandhills

THOMAS COUNTY, THEDFORD NEBRASKA 69166

(USPS 596-550)

THURSDAY, MARCH 9, 2017

NO. 39

Informational Wind Turbine Meeting

JAMES E. DUCEY

Sandhill residents concerned about the potential for wind turbines and the R-project power line gathered the evening of February 4 at the Hamilton Ranch in southeast Cherry county.

In addition to local residents, people drove the roads from nearby Brownlee, from up at Valentine and Wood Lake, as well as from Burwell.

Everyone appreciated the hospitality of Kort Hamilton and his parents, John and Cindy Hamilton, who provided a warm equipment shed for the meeting sponsored by Preserve the Sandhills.

After ranch country conversation, a hearty homemade soup meal was served on a cool winter evening. There were also fine tasting desserts.

Each cook needs to be congratulated on their culinary skills used to prepare food that was enjoyed and savored.

Several items of current interest were then discussed.

Amy Ballagh, a distinct leader of Save the Sandhills and from the north Burwell ranch country, discussed the R-Project transmission line. A key concern is the route which this huge industrial power line will follow and the easement process being conducted by NPPD. She indicated hundreds of pages of documentation associated with an environmental assessment of this project. There are alternate routes southward of the corridor currently selected by Nebraska Public Power District which could avoid many of the problems associated with the current route, including potential impacts on the endangered Whooping Crane, expected impacts on the American Burying Beetle and damage to essential ranchland resources.

Details of this project readily convey that it would be essential in providing a means to distribute power generated by local turbine farm facilities. This would include a proposed turbine farm near the Hamilton ranch where there are known details for a 147 turbine facility, since a means of distribution would be available. NPPD prefers to slight this reality despite multiple instances of records that indicate the R-Project would provide a means where locally generated power could be sent outside Nebraska.

Another primary topic of the evening were the legislative bills being considered by the Nebraska



legislature in Lincoln as presented by Twila Witt, with ancillary comments.

These bills include LB 504 introduced by District 43 representative Tom Brewer. This is the "Save the Sandhills" bill which would establish a two-year moratorium on any development of industrial wind energy projects within the region, and establish a task force to study the issue.

People were urged to get involved in the legislative process to work to get this bill passed, by either attending the public hearing on March 1 in Lincoln, or to communicate their view via a phone call, letter or email to members of the Natural Resources committee.

A couple of particulars of this bill were expressed:

1) On Line 26 it says the region had "300 species of birds." Based upon 35 years of personal effort to know and understand bird occurrence in the sandhills region, and as based upon a database of more than 150,000 records starting in 1886, the tally is actually more than 400 species, which is a significant difference. There are also other prior records that occurred as far back as 1857.

2) On line 28 there is a typographic error: It is species not "specifies." It is up to the legislators to deal with this mistake in spelling, perhaps through an amendment; and

3) There are other particulars that can be variably considered.

There is also LB 392 which is a "wind friendly counties act" where counties could receive recognition through the Nebraska Department of Agriculture.

The local consensus was that counties should have the option to be "wind friendly" and keep turbines out. Another bill to oppose was LB87, as indicated by a member of the

group with experience in "net metering" in regards to energy development facilities.

Another item of concern, based upon conversation with a Nebraska state trooper in the Neligh area, was shared at the soup supper.

There was an obvious influx of construction workers being paid union wages to construct local turbine facilities that apparently resulted in unwanted and illegal activities. There were several obvious results which were not welcomed in the community.

Kevin Willert, formerly of Minnesota, and an appreciated expert on wind turbine development, of the Duck-Bar Ranch at Kennedy, shared some of his experiences from the northland.

"The building process is very ugly," he said in regards to the massive Buffalo Ridge facility were 1,100 wind turbines have been built near his former home and county. More are planned. Developers don't care what they destroy," he said.

Willert also shared his experiences with various noises associated with operational wind turbines based upon their mechanics, leaking oil and other miscellany.

It was obvious that Cherry County residents, as well as so many living in other Sandhill counties, need to continue to be active and involved in efforts and decisions made by county planning and zoning boards (since it is readily obvious that notably in Cherry county, decisions have been made that ignore regulatory requirements) and the county commissioners. There have been votes to approve conditional use permits which do not comply with zoning regulations.

A special announcement was made by Judy Rath, (Continued on page 8)

Sen. Fischer's staff to assist constituents

U.S. Senator Deb Fischer (R-Neb.) announced today that her staff will be holding local office hours in Thomas, Hooker, and Grant Counties on Tuesday, March 14, 2017. 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 be holding local office hours at the time and location below:

Thomas County
Thomas County Courthouse
503 Main Street
Thedford, NE 69166
12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. CT

Hooker County
Hooker County Court House
Commissioners Room
303 NW 1st Street
Mullen, NE 69152
12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. MT

Grant County
Grant County Library
105 East Harrison Street
Hyannis, NE 69350
2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. MT



Contact Information For
Sen. Deb Fischer
Washington D.C. Office
454 Russell Senate Office Bldg
Washington, D.C. 20510
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www.fischer.senate.gov

Lady Knights End Season At State



JAMIE TAYLOR PHOTO

The Sandhills-Thedford starting five wait on the bench to be introduced during the first round of the NSAA Girls State Basketball Tournament. Starters are, l-r: Kyra Miles, Tristan Haake, Rebecca Higgins, Hannah Higgins and Marlee Taylor.

The Sandhills-Thedford Lady Knights traveled to Lincoln on Thursday, March 2 for the first round of the Class D2 NSAA Girls State Basketball Tournament.

The #4 Knights (21-4) took on the #5 Exeter-Miligan Timberwolves (18-6) and lost the heartbreaker, 41 to 44 at Lincoln North Star High School.

The Sandhills-Thedford scoring 10 points in the first quarter and the Lady Timberwolves putting in 9. The Lady Knights went (Continued on page 7)

Benefit To Be Held For Nick Musser

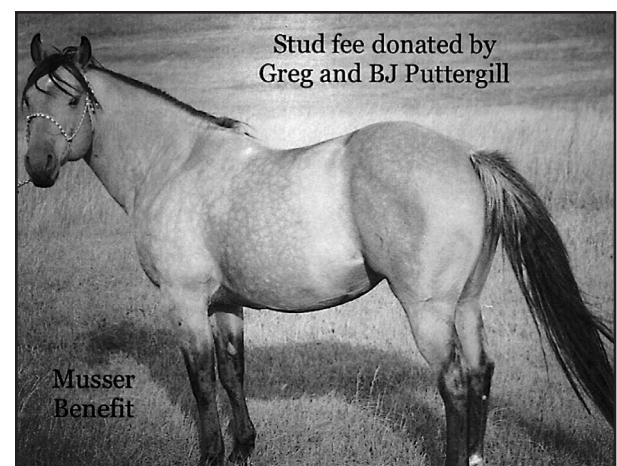
A hamburger feed and auction is being planned to help Nick Musser of Tryon. An account has been established at the McPherson Community Federal Credit Union for all monetary donations, or they may be taken to Neal Oil & Auto Center in Tryon.

The benefit will be held Saturday, March 11, beginning at 5:00 p.m. at the McPherson County High School in Tryon.

Numerous items have been donated for the auction including rifles, one ton of 40% cake and one ton of horse feed; Traeger grills; butchered hog; beef; a stud fee to Great Puttergill's buckskin stud; 30 bales of meadow hay, the delivery of the 30 bales; a 6 string banjo; wood pellet stove; landscaping design; and much more! Items are being accepted right up to auction time.

More information may be obtained by contacting K & C Feeds, Neal Oil or Ed Black.

Everyone in the area is invited to this fun evening of good food and a great auction that will support Nick and his family.

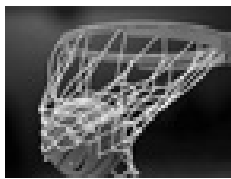


Stud fee donated by Greg and BJ Puttergill

Musser Benefit



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