

# THOMAS COUNTY Herald

Your Source Of News In The Sandhills

THOMAS COUNTY, THEDFORD, NEBRASKA 69166 (USPS 596-550) THURSDAY, APRIL 5, 2018 NO. 38

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## Zutavern Winner In NDA Poster Contest

When the Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA) asked students in grades 1-6 to enter their annual poster contest, the students responded in large numbers. NDA received more than 2,200 posters sharing the story of Nebraska agriculture and highlighting the diversity of the state's number one industry. "NDA is pleased to announce the winners of this year's poster contest



SANDHILLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS PHOTO

Sandhills second grader, Paizley Zutavern, is pictured above with the first place poster she entered in the NDA Poster Contest to promote agriculture.

as part of our National Ag Week activities," said NDA Director Steve Wellman. "National Ag Week is a celebration of agriculture and the people who provide the food, feed and fuel we depend on every day. This year's posters were very creative and helped share the story that agriculture plays in our lives every day."

The posters were judged in three separate categories: first and second grade; third and fourth grade; and fifth and sixth grade. The theme for this year's poster contest was "Sharing the Story of Nebraska Agriculture."

In the first and second grade division:

- First place: Paizley Zutavern, second grade,

Sandhills Elementary in Halsey

- Second place: Violet Augustyn, second grade, Milford Elementary

- Third place: Kason McCaulley, first grade, Weeping Water Public School

- Governor's Choice: Wensi Cui, second grade, Maxey Elementary School in Lincoln

In the third and fourth grade division:

- First place: Tristan Baxter, third grade, Weeping Water Public School

- Second place: Grace Hahn, fourth grade, Concordia Academy in Omaha

- Third place: Elle Jess, third grade, Ord Elementary

- Governor's Choice: Daniel Scott, fourth

grade, St. Mary's Catholic School in Ord

In the fifth and sixth grade division:

- First place: Justin Jacobsen, fifth grade, Knickrehm Elementary in Grand Island

- Second place: Marin Riley, sixth grade, Ord Elementary

- Third place: Martin Martinez, fifth grade, Knickrehm Elementary in Grand Island

- Governor's Choice: Isabella Armstrong, 6th grade, Columbus Middle School

The winning posters and the names of the schools submitting entries are on NDA's website at [www.nda.nebraska.gov/kids](http://www.nda.nebraska.gov/kids).

## Control Musk Thistle In The Spring



Finally it's spring! At least that's what the calendar says. Noxious weeds are still dormant for the most part, except for the persistent musk thistle.

Musk thistle, classified as a biennial, is already springing up in the rosette stage. Rosettes range in size from quite small (a few inches) to three feet in diameter. They hug the ground and can be difficult to see until they're under foot. The larger rosettes are usually the seedlings that germinated last fall and over-wintered as a rosette. As a biennial, this second year growth will produce flowers and seeds during this season. As the seeds germinate, the process begins again. Musk thistle reproduces only by seed, however a single musk thistle plant can produce thousands of seeds, which can lie dormant in the soil for years. Plants that are chopped and left in the field may have enough energy to produce viable seed, so proper disposal is important.

Musk thistle plants are quite easy to control with herbicides when treated in the rosette stage of growth. Herbicides should be applied in the spring before the flower stalks begin to form and

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## Taylor Selected For Girls State

Marlee Raye Taylor of Thedford has been selected to attend American Legion Auxiliary Cornhusker Girls State.

Taylor was selected based on her accomplishments in community and high school activities. Taylor will study local, county and state government processes in this nonpartisan political learning experience.

Every spring, the American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Program provides approximately 25,000 young women with a hands-on educational opportunity designed to instruct tomorrow's leaders in the privileges and duties of responsible citizenship.

Kalee Jae Jepsen of Valentine, is the alternate and will have the opportunity to attend American Legion Auxiliary Cornhusker Girls State in the event that Taylor is unable to attend.

Taylor and Jepsen are both juniors at Thedford High School.

Delegates receive special instruction in parliamentary procedure and organize themselves into two mythical political parties. They then campaign, hold rallies, debate and ultimately vote to elect city, county, and state officials. Once elected to office, delegates are sworn in and perform their prescribed duties. Citizens not elected to office are given appointments and visit the offices of their elected or appointed counterparts in actual state, county and city government.

Two outstanding citizens, known as "senators" are selected at each of the 50 Girls State sessions

## American Legion Auxiliary Meets March 12

American Legion Auxiliary Steidley-Kayton Unit #250 met March 12, 2018 at 5:00 p.m.

The meeting was called to order by Vice-President, Brenda Buechler

Prayer was led by Audrey, and all recited the Pledge of Allegiance and preamble

Roll call was answered with five members present.

Minutes of the last meeting were read and approved.

The treasurer's report was given. The checking account has \$1,151.86; and two bills totaling \$90 to Village of Thedford, and \$375 to Girl's State were paid. The CD has \$3,011.47 with an increase in interest to 1%.

Membership was discussed. There is one

THEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS PHOTOS



Marlee Taylor



Kalee Jepsen

held across the country to represent their state at American Legion Auxiliary Girls Nation held in Washington, D.C. in July.

Founded in 1919, the American Legion Auxiliary is the world's largest patriotic women's service organization. With a membership of nearly 850,000, local Auxiliary units have a strong presence in more than 9,500 communities nationwide. The Auxiliary's mission is to serve veterans their families and their communities is carried out through its hundreds of outreach programs delivered by its members, volunteers and National Headquarters.

more member to pay their dues

Unfinished Business: Girls State representative and alternate have been selected

It was decided to get someone to clean the building.

A discussion was held about several people to ask to speak for Memorial Day and we will check with them before the next meeting.

It was decided not to do the November tray favors for the Veteran's Home in Scottsbluff. That month was already taken. We may take the August tray favors.

Audrey said a lovely prayer

The meeting was adjourned, and the next meeting will be April 9 at 5:00 p.m.

## Mullen Entrepreneurs Tap into an Essential NE Resource – With the Help of Lifelong Nebraskans

Sandhills Natural Water's new owners are carrying on a decades-long business tradition

Families who have chosen to grow their livelihoods across the 19,000+ miles of Nebraska's Sandhills may be few and far between, but they often "think" like one unit. Sue and Roger Licking know this all too well; they were born and raised in Mullen.

"In these parts of Nebraska, you can live 20 miles apart or 200, but we usually have a lot in common. Many of us have been here for generations, and most of our communities are rural. Like most Nebraskans, the people here value the opportunity to 'help your neighbor.'"

On the vast 130-mile stretch of Highways 2 and 92 between Mullen and Oshkosh, the Lickings have had time to reflect on that principle as a way to grow their new business. Just three months ago, they bought a 30-year-old company from another pair of lifelong Nebraskans, Kay and Myron Peterson. The Petersons developed their Oshkosh company with a rich natural resource at their fingertips; Sandhills Natural Water is bottled from the Ogallala Aquifer. When Roger got word that the Petersons' bottling equipment was for sale, he reached out to the couple. Visits to the Petersons' Oshkosh ranch paved the way for a new bond between two generations of Nebraska entrepreneurs.

"Roger has been researching the science of a business like this for almost a decade," Licking said. "When Myron and Kay said that they wanted to retire, and that they were looking at a succession plan, we saw an opportunity to learn from some of the most experienced Nebraskans in this business."

Getting a jump on invaluable experience from the previous owners also presented a new opportunity to grow the company. The Lickings' property has a well that taps directly into the Ogallala Aquifer and resulted in the family's decision to move the business to Mullen. Purchase of the business included bottling and labeling machines, and the Lickings are now putting them to use in two 1,200 square foot buildings on the edge of town. Weeks after their purchase, Sue and the couple's three children went to work on labeling more than

3,000 bottles.

"Our oldest daughter was a quick study on the labeling machine and stopped the presses when she got to the 999th bottle," Licking said. "She ran into our other building to get Roger, so she could show her dad as she was labelling the 1,000th bottle."

After the family completes an order of labels, empty bottles are transported to the Lickings' adjacent building where bottling machines are stored. Sandhills Natural Water is now bottling half-liter and liter bottles for clientele, and has the capacity to fill 1,400 bottles an hour.

"Our water comes from the Ogallala Aquifer and won't need reverse osmosis prior to bottling," Roger Licking said. "This is purified water with natural health benefits from silica, and we are excited to offer this benefit to our customers."

A slight change to the company's label and an expanding local customer base are adding to Sandhills' well-known reputation among Nebraska wholesalers like Cash Wa and private label clients, such as equipment dealers and dentist offices. As word about the Lickings' new location continues to spread, interest from potential clients in Keith and Lincoln Counties is also growing.

Roger and Sue have partnered with Roger's brother Richard to build their business. Within the next few months, the couple plans to hire five additional employees to assist with labeling, bottling and boxing water orders as the company grows. Last month, the family labeled and bottled 25 cases of water to complete their first official order, and it has grown from there.

"We are in the process of filling all of our inventory bottles, and look forward to a future of expanding the company with new jobs in Mullen and a growing customer base," Licking said. "We are being reintroduced to the 'Nebraska way' of doing business, because so much of that comes from word-of-mouth. It's an amazing feeling."

For more information about Sandhills Natural Water, contact [sales@sandhillsnaturalwater.com](mailto:sales@sandhillsnaturalwater.com) or [roger@sandhillsnaturalwater.com](mailto:roger@sandhillsnaturalwater.com).