

# THOMAS COUNTY Herald

Your Source Of News In The Sandhills

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## Final Book in Highway 83 Series Released

After eight years of work, award-winning author Stew Magnuson released *The Last American Highway: A Journey Through Time Down U.S. Route 83 in Texas*, the final book in his Highway 83 Chronicles series.

He set out in 2009 to chronicle the past and present along this historically rich highway, traveling its length with the idea to publish a book about what he discovered.

Like Highway 83 itself, it was a long road to finish the series. The Dakotas book came out in 2014 and the Nebraska-Kansas-Oklahoma book in 2015. His journey ended on March 27 with the publication of the Texas edition.

All three are available at Kimbers and A to Z Books in North Platte.

Magnuson says he has a lot of good excuses for taking such a long time to produce the book: chief among them was becoming a first time Dad at age 47 in 2011, then again in 2013. "It turns out that raising children takes up a lot of your free time for writing books. Who knew?" he says.

U.S. Route 83 is like no other highway in Texas. It extends from its northernmost border at Oklahoma, passes through the ranchlands and oil patches of the Panhandle, hits a big speed bump in Hill Country, then follows the Rio Grande Valley all the way to Brownsville.

Magnuson calls *The Last American Highway in Texas* a hybrid history-travel book.

"Every town has a story to tell," he says.

A massacre in Menard marked the beginning of the end for the Spanish Empire in America. Wellington is where the notorious criminals Bonnie and Clyde sent their car careening into the Red River. On a ranch just east of Brownsville, Ranger "Rip" Ford led the charge at the final battle of the Civil War.

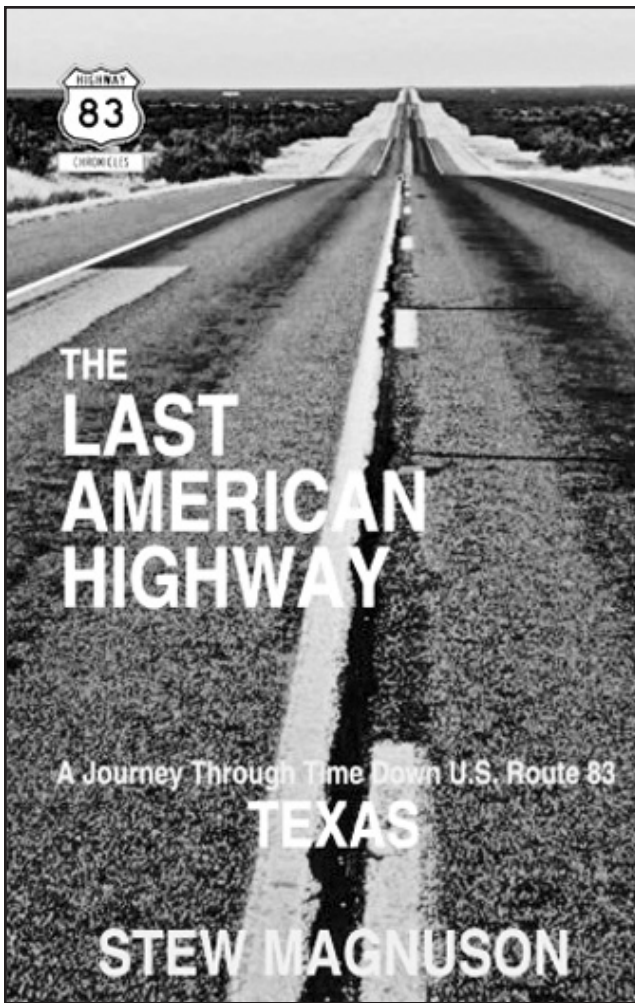
Magnuson uncovers the stories of the famous, the infamous and the forgotten as he explores a road like no other in America.

*The Last American Highway in Texas* is available on Amazon.com and bookstores and gift shops along the highway.

Over the past eight years, Magnuson has carved out a place as the foremost expert on the fifth longest federal highway that runs 1,885 miles from the Canadian border to Mexico. He founded and administers the Fans of U.S. Route 83 page on Facebook, which now has more than 3,300 members. His usroute83.com website serves as a place for travel tips for those who want to explore the road. He writes the Highway 83 Chronicles blog about current events.

He has appeared on South Dakota Public Television and Nebraska Public Television, and done dozens of book talks and radio spots extolling the pleasures of traveling what was once called the Great Plains Highway.

Magnuson is also the author of *The Death of Raymond Yellow Thunder: And Other True Stories from the Nebraska-Pine Ridge Border Towns*. Published by Texas Tech University Press, it was named the 2009 Nebraska Nonfiction book of the year, a finalist for the Center of Great Plains Studies book of the year, and was recently named one of the Nebraska's 150 most important literary works to mark the state's sesquicentennial this year. He also penned *Wounded Knee 1973: Still Bleeding*, a brief account of the Wounded Knee occupation.



## Rochester Mansion scene of Murder Mystery



COURTESY PHOTO

Pictured above are members of the community that helped to make the Murder Mystery fundraiser a success. Back row, l-r: Jason Coffman, Shelby Hamilton, Brad Pokorny, Russell Licking, Chris Higgins, Kat Kennedy, Courtney Jameson, Jonnie Staub, Linda Nutter, Matt Miles, Colton Schroeder, Tylee Coffman and Cindy Coffman. Front row, l-r: Jim York, PJ Higgins, Paula Pokorny, Andrea Hoopman, Michelle McIntosh, Bridger Chytka and Jody Anderson.

On Saturday, March 25 the Thomas County Fair Building near Thedford was transformed into Rochester Mansion. Members of the Sandhills-Thedford Booster community came together to raise money for the Sandhills-Thedford After Prom, solve a mystery and have a little fun along the way.

Jon Jacobs, aka Matt Miles, took home the "Dressed To Kill" honors as well as the best acting award. Allison Rochester, aka Shelby Hamilton, was the sneakiest with her money and walked away with the most mystery money award.

Numerous guests tracked down the murder, who turned out to be, Neal Worthers (Jason Coffman).

The After Prom committee was very thankful to

those who came out to support this worthwhile project, and to Melanie Daly and Bridget Licking for decorating and the entertaining expertise.

Suspect actors included Russell Licking, Andrea Hoopman, Bridget Chytka, Jason and Stephanie Coffman, Jody Anderson, Linda Nutter, Matt Miles, Shelby Hamilton, Jim York, Brad and Paula Pokorny, Courtney Jameson, Kat Kennedy, Colton Schroeder, Tylee Coffman, Michelle McIntosh, Chris and PJ Higgins and Johnnie Staub.

Extra roles were played by Michaela Miles, Marianne Nutter, Geri Smith, Ariane Arensdorf, Cindy Coffman and Shannon Ahlstrom.

The After Prom benefits all Sandhills-Thedford students who attend, giving them a fun and safe

way to spend the final hours of their prom night.

If you would like to help with After Prom, please contact PJ Higgins or Jody Anderson.

## Annual Easter Egg Hunt April 15

The Easter Egg Hunt, sponsored by the Thedford Service Club will be held Saturday, April 15 at 2:00 p.m. on the Thomas County Courthouse lawn. Participants need to be ready to go by 1:45 p.m. and meet on the street side of the Thomas County Library.

For more information contact Michelle McIntosh at 308-645-2585 or Kevin Hood at 308-645-2504.

## Statement by Steve Nelson, President, Regarding EPA Denying Petition to Ban Widely Used Crop Protection Product

Recent action by Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt to deny a proposed ban on chlorpyrifos, a widely used agricultural crop protection product, is a sign that we are moving in the right direction with this administration when it comes to fixing the problematic culture of an agency that has promoted regulation first instead of science and common sense.

"From the beginning of this process it was clear there were serious scientific concerns about the validity of trying to take this tool away from farmers, yet those concerns were ignored previously by the EPA. Not only did agriculture groups like Nebraska Farm Bureau raise concerns, but those concerns were shared by USDA and the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture."

"Pruitt's decision is clearly a 'win' for Nebraska and American agriculture."

## Bessey Ranger District Has a Grouse Viewing Blind for Free Public Use

There is no better spring welcome than to see and hear the courtship displays of Nebraska's prairie grouse against a sandhill sunrise. The Bessey Ranger District of the Nebraska National Forests and Grasslands near Halsey will be offering free use of viewing blinds to allow visitors up-close observation opportunities of sharp-tailed grouse during courtship rituals.



COURTESY PHOTO

Viewing blind use is free to the public and no reservations are needed. Guests are directed to contact the Bessey Ranger District Office to obtain a map with directions to viewing blinds. Each of the two viewing blinds can seat up to four persons and will remain up April 1 through mid-May. Best viewing activity can be expected in mid-April daily at sunrise.

Gregory Wright, Wildlife Biologist recommends for visitors to be in the blind at least 45 minutes before sunrise to reduce lek disturbance. Viewing usually lasts two to three hours. Things visitors may want to bring are warm clothing, a chair, binoculars, camera, snacks, a flashlight and a viewing blind map.

Wright said that one of the blinds is located approximately 300 yards from a two-wheel drive accessible road, while the other is accessible by four-wheel drive vehicles or a 0.7 mile walk.

For more information and for maps call the Bessey District Ranger Office at 308-553-2257.

## Loup Basin RC&D Assisting Kansas Ranchers

The Loup Basin Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council announces today that the nine county organization in central Nebraska is accepting donations to assist the Kansas ranchers recently devastated by fire. The immediate need for the Kansas ranchers is fencing supplies including: creosote posts; 3 1/2 inch x 8 feet, T posts; 6 1/2 feet, Red Brand 80 Ruthless 4 Pt Barbed Wire 12 1/2 Gauge, staples; 1 3/4 inch, T post clips, nine penny nails, number nine wire for tie-downs and fence corners, Goldenrod wire stretchers, post hole diggers, hammers, fencing pliers, and leather fencing gloves.

Donations to assist the Kansas Ranchers can be made payable to the Loup Basin RC&D Council a 501(c)(3) Mark in the for area: Donation - Kansas Ranchers Fence Supplies. Mail donations to P.O. Box 400, Burwell, Nebraska 68823 or drop by the office at 330 South Highway 11, Burwell. If you have questions, contact Dale Melia, President of the Loup Basin RC&D Council at (308) 728-7275 or Janet Sanders Executive Director of the Loup Basin RC&D Council at (308) 346-3393.

### Notices

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